

1 Peter 1:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible,
by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

Analysis

Peter grounds imperishable love in imperishable new birth. "Being born again" (anagegennēmenoi) repeats verse 3's regeneration theme—new birth is Christianity's foundation. The contrast: "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible" (ouk ek sporas phthartēs alla aphthartou)—natural birth uses perishable seed producing mortal life; spiritual birth uses imperishable seed producing eternal life. The seed is identified: "by the word of God" (dia logou theou)—God's word is the imperishable seed. The description: "which liveth and abideth for ever" (zōntos kai menontos)—God's word is living (active, powerful) and abiding (permanent, eternal). Natural seed dies; God's word endures eternally.

Historical Context

Peter echoes Jesus (John 3:3-8) and James (1:18) on regeneration through God's word. Unlike pagan mystery religions teaching reincarnation or philosophical enlightenment, Christianity proclaims supernatural new birth by God's Spirit through His word. The "imperishable seed" metaphor emphasizes salvation's permanence—those born of God's word possess eternal life that can't be lost. This assured persecuted believers that persecution couldn't destroy what God birthed. Early church emphasized Scripture's central role in conversion—gospel preaching was God's ordained means of regeneration.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does understanding new birth's source (God's imperishable word, not human effort) affect your assurance of salvation?
2. In what ways is God's living and abiding word currently producing spiritual fruit in your life?

Interlinear Text

ἀναγεγεννημένοι οὐκ ἐκ σπορᾶς φθαρτῆς ἀλλὰ

Being born again

G313

not

G3756

of

G1537

seed

G4701

corruptible

G5349

but

G235

ἀφθάρτου διὰ λόγου ζῶντος θεοῦ καὶ μένοντος εἰς

of incorruptible

G862

ever

by

G1223

the word

G3056

which liveth

G2198

of God

G2316

and

G2532

abideth

G3306

for

G1519

τὸν αἰῶνα

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ever

G165

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 1:3 (References God): Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Hebrews 4:12 (Word): For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

John 3:3 (References God): Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

John 1:13 (References God): Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 6:63 (Word): It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

1 John 5:18 (References God): We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

1 John 3:9 (References God): Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

John 3:5 (References God): Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

James 1:18 (Word): Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

Matthew 24:35 (Word): Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.