

Regeneration

Introduction:

Regeneration refers to the work of God that takes place in an individual when he or she is born again through believing the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word “regeneration” is only found twice in our English Bible — Matthew 19:28; Titus 3:5 — and it is synonymous with the new birth.

‘Generation’ — birth

“RE-generation’ — born again

I. The Source of the New Birth

A. It is Entirely of God.

John 1:13 teaches we are born ‘of God.’ The act of regeneration is entirely the work of God. Man is incapable of regenerating himself.

B. It is a Sovereign Act of God.

James 1:18

God’s sovereign will is to save all those who believe on His Son.

C. It is By the Spirit of God.

That the work of regeneration is by the Spirit of God is taught in Titus 3:5. This is confirmed by John 3:5-6.

There are two interpretation of what is meant by the “water” in this passage:

1. The “Water” refers to the Word of God.

Water is elsewhere used as a symbol of the Word of God — Ephesians 5:26; I Peter 1:23 — and we are saved through hearing the Word of God.

2. The “Water” refers to the Physical Birth.

This interpretation best fits the context.

a) That which is born of flesh is flesh — water birth

b) That which is born of Spirit is spirit — new birth

“if you’re born once, you’ll die twice — but if you’re born twice, you can only die once!”

II. The Nature of the New Birth

Regeneration is defined as “the gracious ‘quickening’ work of the Holy Spirit whereby He imparts the divine nature and life to the spirit of man.”

It is accomplished through the Word of God and brings about the reversal in man’s attitude toward God and sin. It is an instantaneous and eternal change.

The act of regeneration involves two things:

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A. A Partaking of the Divine Nature II Peter 1:4

Regeneration is truly a supernatural miracle — man plays no part. When man believes, God performs the work.

See: II Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:24; Hebrews 12:10; I John 3:2.

It is the miracle of life — eternal life.

In natural generation, life is communicated from the natural parents to the child. In re-generation, life is communicated from the Heavenly Father to the child of God.

- First Birth \longrightarrow Human Nature
- Second Birth \longrightarrow Divine Nature

In both kinds of birth, the child has absolutely nothing to do with the process. Furthermore, there must be:

- A WOMB — The human heart
- A SEED — The Word of God
- A CONCEPTION — The Spirit's quickening
- A BIRTH — Regeneration

1. It is a spiritual quickening. — Ephesians 2:1, 5
2. It is a new creation. — II Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:10
3. It is a new life. — Colossians 3:4

The New Birth is not the transformation of the sinner's old life - it is the impartation of a brand new life. This life is symbolized by the union between the vine and its branches — John 15:1-10.

B. A New Relationship with God. Regeneration means:

1. The believer is in Christ.
John 14:20; Romans 8:1-2; I Corinthians 6:15-20; II Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 1:4; 2:13; Colossians 3:3.
2. Christ is in the believer.
John 6:56; 14:20-23; Romans 8:9-10; Galatians 2:20; I John 4:16
3. The believer is in the Family of God.
John 1:12-13; Galatians 3:26-29
4. The believer is in the Kingdom of God.
John 3:3-5; Colossians 1:13

III. False Notions of the New Birth

A. The New Birth is NOT a Reformation.

Turning over a new leaf and living a better life is not regeneration.

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1. Nicodemus

In John 3:1-12, we read that Nicodemus had:

- a) Religion — he was a Pharisee
- b) Riches — his position in society makes that probable.
- c) Respect — he was a ruler of the Jews, a member of the venerated Sanhedrin.

2. Saul of Tarsus

By his own testimony in Philippians 3:5-7, Saul had:

- a) Ritual — “circumcised the eighth day”
- b) Relationship — “of the stock of Israel”
- c) Respectability — “of the tribe of Benjamin”
- d) Race — “an Hebrew of the Hebrews”
- e) religion — “a Pharisee”
- f) Reputation — “concerning zeal, persecuting the church”
- g) Righteousness — “blameless”

Nevertheless, “what things were gain to me, I counted loss for Christ.”

See: verse 8-9

B. The New Birth is NOT a Ritual.

Many teach regeneration is to be found through the observance of religious ceremonies and ordinances. The most blatant form of this false teaching is “Baptismal Regeneration” or “Baptism Remission”. This is the teaching that the waters of baptism wash away sin.

Several Scriptures are used to support this belief, notably:

- John 3:5; Titus 3:5
- Mark 16:16
- Acts 22:16
- Acts 2:38
- I Peter 3:21

Every Baptist ought to be able to reply to these Scriptures when they are used to teach baptismal regeneration.

There are three points with which we answer such false teachers:

1. The answer of logic — how can outward water remove inward sin?
2. The answer of symbol — that which baptism pictures is what saves!
3. The answer of silence — many Scriptures relating to salvation never mention baptism.

IV. The Results of Regeneration

- A. A Changed Life. — II Corinthians 5:17
- B. A Divine Sonship. — John 1:12-13
- C. A Victory over the World — I John 5:4
- D. A Changed Attitude Toward Sin. — I John 3:4, 9

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E. A New Love. — I John 3:14