

Regeneration

- The doctrine of regeneration goes hand-in-hand with effective calling. It is the other half of Irresistible Grace.
- Definition: “regeneration is a secret act of God in which he imparts new spiritual life to us” (Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 699).
- Synonyms for regeneration are: being born again; being made alive; brought forth by God.
- Regeneration is being born again and made into the new creation.

Why Regeneration?

- Man is spiritually dead. We need God to fix this problem .
- Human nature is desperately in need of transformation. Scripture speaks about the necessity of regeneration.
 - Ephesians 2:1 says we were spiritually dead, not sick.
 - In 4:18, we were by nature blinded to spiritual matters.
 - In John 3:3, Jesus said you cannot see or enter the kingdom of God unless you are born again.



John 3:3-8

- Joh 3:3-8 Jesus replied, “Truly I tell you, unless someone is born again,⁵ he cannot see the kingdom of God.”⁴ “How can anyone be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked him. “Can he enter his mother’s womb a second time and be born?”⁵ Jesus answered, “Truly I tell you, unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.⁶ Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit.⁷ Do not be amazed that I told you that you must be born again.⁸ The wind blows where it pleases, and you hear its sound, but you don’t know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”
 - We must be “born again” or “born from above.”
 - Ezekiel 36:25-26 prophesied of this new birth as receiving a new spirit, having the Holy Spirit placed in them, and being sprinkled with water. All three refer to being born again. The Holy Spirit gives the new spirit and is Himself the water (metaphorically).
 - This is why Jesus rebukes the “Teacher of Israel” for not knowing this.
 - Jesus then concludes that being born again is the work of the Holy Spirit and is unpredictable. This means we don’t make it happen. It happens to us.

Other Born Again Passages

- 1 Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead
- 1 Peter 1:23 because you have been born again—not of perishable seed but of imperishable—through the living and enduring word of God.
- John 1:12-13 But to all who did receive him, he gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were born, not of natural descent, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but of God.
- James 1:18 By his own choice, he gave us birth by the word of truth so that we would be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

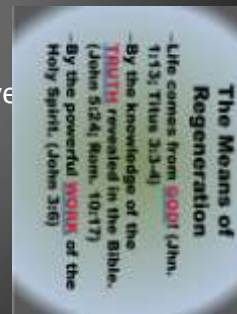


What Regeneration Does

- It grants spiritual life (which presupposes spiritual death).
 - Joh 5:25 Truly I tell you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.
 - Eph 2:1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins
 - Eph 2:4-5 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace!
 - Col 2:13 And when you were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, he made you alive with him and forgave us all our trespasses.
- Paul speaks of us dead in the past tense and alive in the present tense.
- Regeneration is the actual “making us alive.” When did it happen? “While we were dead.” That is a key factor in answering the later question of what comes first, regeneration or conversion.
- John 5:25 offers a strong rationale for seeing the effective call and regeneration occurring simultaneously (aka the Reformed position).
 - The spiritually dead person hears His voice (the call), and yet the one who hears comes alive (regeneration). He has to be alive to hear and has to hear to be alive!

Nature of Regeneration

- It is wholly the work of God. We contribute nothing to it. It is a secret work of God. Lydia in Acts 16:14 is a wonderful example of regeneration.
- The agent of regeneration is the Holy Spirit since the Holy Spirit is the one who imparts new spiritual life; but God the Father is also mentioned in this act (Eph. 2:4-5; Col. 2:13; James 1:12-18; 1 Pet. 1:3) – more will be said shortly.
- The instrument of regeneration is the Word of God. As the gospel is communicated, God speaks to summon the elect to Himself (effective call), and give people new spiritual life (regeneration).
- It is instantaneous. The impartation of new spiritual life happens instantaneously, and it happens only once.
 - It may be easily known (you clearly recognize it), or it may not be. Children raised in a Christian home, or long term Bible study attendees are possibly harder to detect.



Nature of Regeneration

- It needs to be distinguished from the effective calling, even though both are simultaneous.
 - Regeneration makes it to where you can believe. Calling makes it to where you will believe.
 - Regeneration is primarily work of the Holy Spirit. Calling is primarily the work of the Father.
 - Regeneration—working powerfully in us. Effective calling – speaking powerfully to us.
- Involves a negative and positive aspect.
 - Negative: That old self, script, identity, nature is put to death. Positive: We also receive new life, script, identity, and nature.
 - We are rightly called a new creation. The old things have passed away and new things have come into place.
 - Jesus said in John 3:8, this event is largely mysterious. It is like wind. We don't see the wind, but the effects of it. It is the same with regeneration.



Effects of Regeneration

- A life free of continual sin (1 John 3:9; 1 John 2:29).
 - A person who has been regenerated has a spiritual seed. It is a life-generating and growing power that keeps us free from habitual and persistent sin. We live for righteousness sake.
- Genuine love (1 John 4:7) that is directed toward God and others. We used to be self-centered.
- Overcoming the world (1 John 5:3-4). We now have power to have victory over the pressures and temptations of this world.
- Protection from Satan (1 John 5:18). We will not fall away. We cannot be “unborn again.”
- More details when we talk about internal evidences.



Regeneration and the Father

- Since Jesus (and Ezekiel) make it clear the Holy Spirit is the one that does the New Birth within us, this means when the Son of God calls in John 5:25, at that exact same time, the Holy Spirit regenerates.
 - It is interesting to note that some passages credit the call to the Father (Rom 8:29-30), and others to the Son (John 5:25).
- Passages we already looked at indicate the Father as the cause of the New Birth, but cause does not equal agent. The Holy Spirit is the agent that carries it out, though the Father is the one who decreed it.
 - Tit 3:5 he saved us—not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy—through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit.
 - Jam 1:18 By his own choice, he gave us birth by the word of truth so that we would be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

Purposes of Regeneration

- James 1:18 already said one reason is so that we would be the firstfruits of God.
- Regeneration also serves to make us God's children as demonstrated by Romans 8: 16-17.
 - Rom 8:16-17 The Spirit himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God's children,¹⁷ and if children, also heirs—heirs of God and coheirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.
- We were also regenerated or given the new birth so that we would do good works.
 - Eph 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.



Internal Evidences of Regeneration

- What are internal evidences of regeneration?
- Faith
 - 1Jo 5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father also loves the one born of him.
 - We must note that “has been born of God” is perfect tense, and “believes” is present tense. In Greek, the former is the reason for the latter. Therefore, we believe because we were regenerated. It is not the other way around.
- We love Christ.
 - Joh 8:42 Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, because I came from God and I am here. For I didn’t come on my own, but he sent me.
- Witness of Holy Spirit to assure us of salvation.
 - Rom 8:16 The Spirit himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God’s children

Internal Evidences of Regeneration

- Loving the brethren within the church.
 - 1Jo 3:14 We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers and sisters. The one who does not love remains in death.
 - Many people claim to be Christians, but also claim that they do not need to fellowship in church. Not fellowshiping with other believers demonstrates a lack of love for them. This means they lack a key evidence of regeneration.
- Good Works
 - 1Jo 2:29 If you know that he is righteous, you know this as well: Everyone who does what is right has been born of him.
 - If good works are lacking and good fruit is not being produced from a person, then we might want to ask them to reconsider whether or not they are in Christ.
- Not living according to the flesh.
 - Romans 8:5-9

