

The Truth about being
Born Again

A Bible Study of a Confused Subject

The Church of Greenville
November 17, 2002

Assumptions

1. God is.
2. God gave Scripture.
3. Scripture is **absolute** truth.
4. The King James Version is Scripture.
5. Satan is at **war** against God and truth.

Goals

1. Present the truth of regeneration
2. Deny the heresies of regeneration
3. Explain the origin of “easy-believe-ism”
4. Show the true evidence of regeneration
5. Distinguish regeneration and conversion
6. Comfort the souls of the truly regenerate
7. Magnify the Lord Jesus Christ

The Importance

Jesus said to Nicodemus, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, **he cannot see the kingdom of God...** Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, **he cannot enter into the kingdom of God**”.

John 3:3-5

Paul wrote, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy **he saved us**, by the washing of **regeneration...** “

Titus 3:5

Being born again = salvation

Regeneration = salvation

Being born again = Regeneration

The Setting

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the **latter times** some shall **depart from the faith**, giving heed to **seducing spirits**, and **doctrines of devils** ... “

1 Timothy 4:1-6

“This know **also**, that in the **last days** perilous times shall come. For men shall be ... **ever learning**, and never able to come to the **knowledge of the truth.**”

2 Timothy 3:1-7

“For **the time will come** when they will not endure **sound doctrine**; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they **shall turn away their ears from the truth**, and shall be turned away **unto fables.**”

2 Timothy 4:1-4

The Warning

“For if he that cometh preacheth **another Jesus**, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive **another spirit**, which ye have not received, or **another gospel**, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.”

2 Corinthians 11:4

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto **another gospel**: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would **pervert the gospel** of Christ.”

Galatians 1:6-7

The Popularity

1. Jimmy Carter was elected President in 1976 partly on his claim that he was born again.
2. A Gallup poll in September, 1976, reported “more than one-third of those who are old enough to vote have experienced ‘born again’ religious conversions.”
3. The September 27, 1976, issue of Time magazine carried a feature article entitled “Born Again Faith.”
4. Billy Graham authored a book in 1977 entitled, How To Be Born Again.
5. Jesus said, “That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God” (Luke 16:15).
6. What effect have all these born again “experiences” had in improving the character of America?
7. The subject has been so abused that no one wants to talk about it anymore theologically or politically.

The Necessity - I

Man is **legally** a sinner by Adam | Romans 5:12-19

Man is **practically** a sinner by nature | Eph 2:1-3

Man's **nature** is corrupt and loves sin | Romans 8:7-8

Jesus died to save sinners **legally** | Romans 5:12-19

But God must also **change our nature.**

He cannot have corrupt enemies and sinners in heaven.

We must be born again with a **new nature.**

The Necessity – II

“**But** of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof **thou shalt surely die.**”

Genesis 2:17

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be **born again**, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

John 3:3

“And you hath he **quickened**, who were **dead** in trespasses and sins ...”

Ephesians 2:1

“And you, being **dead** in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he **quickened** together with him ...”

Colossians 2:13

| |
|---|
| Quick = Alive Quickened = Made Alive |
|---|

Four Heresies

- The Scriptures warn against **heresies, another gospel, false doctrine, and fables.**
- Satan has made great efforts to pervert the true gospel of Christ with a false substitute.
- **Error** on this important subject will **leave men with false hope** that they are born again.
- **Error** on this subject will **fill churches with those never truly born again.**
- **Error** on this subject will **distort and destroy** the power and **glory of God** in regeneration.
- **Error** on this subject will **exalt man** by granting him ability with God that the Scriptures deny.

Heresy #1

1. The new birth comes by **physical birth**.
2. The Jews thought this way about their relationship to Abraham (Matthew 3:9; John 8:33-41; Romans 9:7).
3. Certain sects today believe that your physical birth determines whether you are a child of God.
4. These sects include elements or aspects of British Israelism, the Worldwide Church of God, the Identity movement, Neo-Nazis, Aryan Nation, and other groups.
5. We call this heresy **racial regeneration**.

Heresy #2

1. The new birth comes by **pouring or sprinkling water on a baby's head.**
2. The Jews thought this way about the rite of circumcision (Acts 15:1; Galatians 5:2-4).
3. Many denominations today believe that applying a little water on the head makes a baby a child of God.
4. Denominations believing and practicing this are Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, and other groups.
5. This heresy is **infant baptismal regeneration.**

Heresy #3

1. The new birth comes by **immersing a believer in water**.
2. The Jews thought this way about their rite of circumcision (Acts 16:3).
3. Many denominations today believe that immersion in water makes a child of God.
4. Denominations believing and practicing this are Mormons, Pentecostals, the Church of Christ, Jehovah's Witnesses, and other groups.
5. This heresy is **baptismal regeneration**.

Heresy #4

1. The new birth comes by a **personal decision** to be born again.
2. Invitations and “altar calls” are used to manipulate people into making a decision to be born again.
3. Many churches today believe that a personal decision for Christ makes a child of God.
4. Denominations believing and practicing this are Baptists, Bible churches, Fundamentalists, Charismatics, and other groups.
5. This heresy is **decisional regeneration**.

The Four Heresies

1. These are the four heresies used by Satan to pervert the gospel of Christ about regeneration.
2. These four heresies include the **vast majority** of professing “Christian” religions and denominations.
3. These heresies are **generally well accepted**.
4. These heresies are **taught by “great men.”**
5. These heresies are **supported by history and tradition**.
6. Any other position will be **ridiculed as novel**.
7. **But** ... remember our third assumption . . .

Scripture is **absolute truth**.

The Definition

From an examination of the Biblical passages concerned we can derive a definition of being born again: A **creative act of God** whereby **He gives spiritual life** to a **sinful human soul** who is **passive in the act** and is **made a child of God**.

Scriptural terms used:

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Born Again | John 1:13; 3:3,5 |
| Regeneration | Titus 3:5 |
| Quickening | Ephesians 2:1,5; Colossians 2:13 |
| Creation | Ephesians 2:10; James 1:18 |
| Begetting | 1 Peter 1:3; James 1:18 |
| Resurrection | Revelation 20:6; Matthew 19:28; John 5:25 |

- These terms require **divine power**.
- These terms require **divine choice**.
- These terms require **man's passivity**.
- These terms require an **instantaneous act**.
- These terms require the **giving of life**.
- These terms **deny any creaturely activity**.
- These terms require **creature death**.

Man's Condition - I

Man is **totally unable** and **unwilling** to cooperate or assist with his regeneration.

1. He is **dead spiritually** | Genesis 2:17; Ephesians 2:1,5; Colossians 2:13
2. He is **without strength** | Romans 5:6
3. He is an **enemy of God** | Romans 8:7
4. He **cannot please God** | Romans 8:8
5. He is **blind** spiritually | John 3:3
6. He is **deaf** spiritually | John 8:43, 47
7. He is **without understanding** | 1 Corinthians 2:14; Romans 3:11; John 8:43
8. He is without fear | Romans 3:18

Man's Condition - II

Man is **totally unable** and **unwilling** to cooperate or assist with his regeneration.

There is **none** that **understandeth**, there is **none** that **seeketh after God**.

Romans 3:11

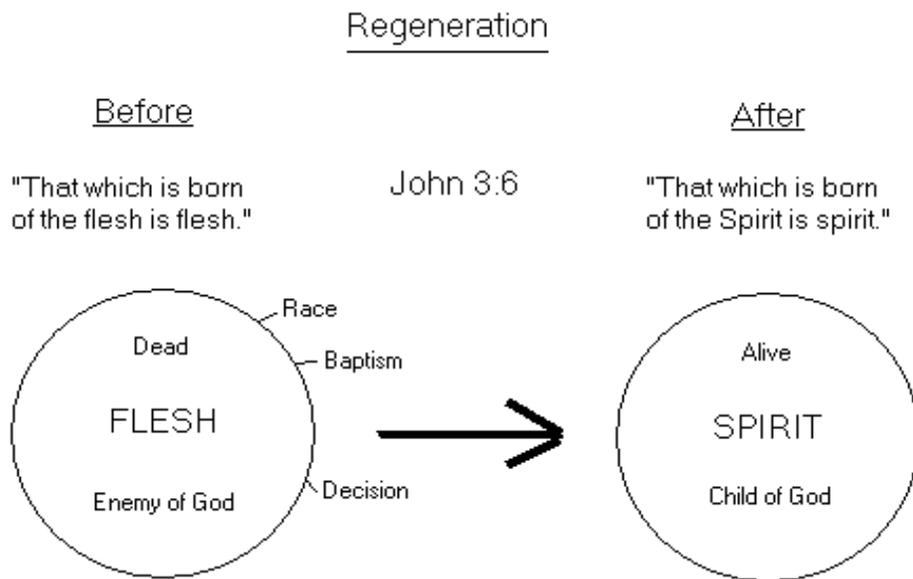
Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will **he not learn righteousness**: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord.

Isaiah 26:10

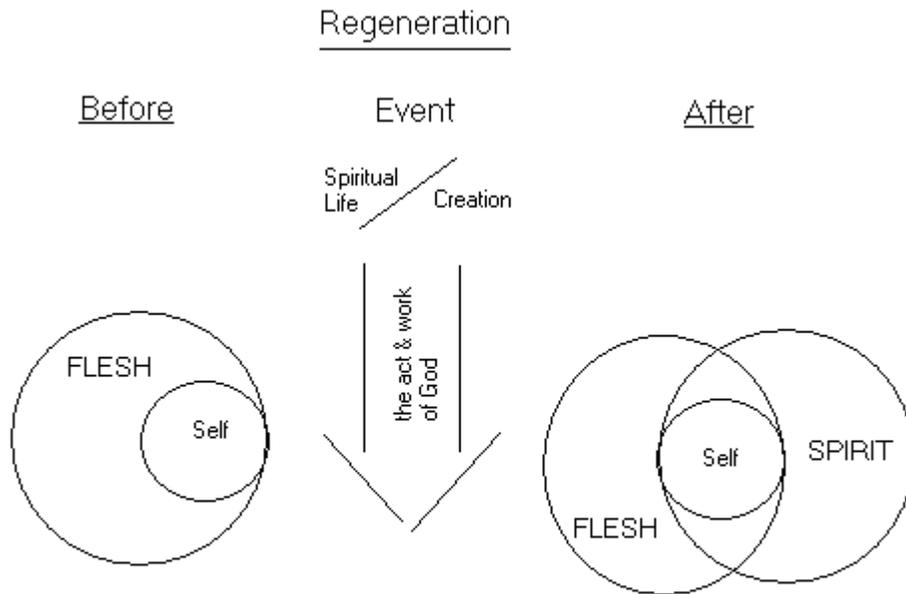
And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, **though on rose from the dead**.

Luke 16:31

Man's Condition - III



Man's Condition - IV



Refuting Heresy- I

“**Which were born**, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but **of God.**”

John 1:13

- This verse refutes **all four heresies.**
- It refutes racial regeneration - “**not of blood.**”
- It refutes infant baptismal regeneration – “**nor of the will of man.**”
- It refutes baptismal regeneration – “**nor of the will of the flesh.**”
- It refutes decisional regeneration – “**nor of the will of the flesh.**”

Refuting Heresy- II

“And hath made of **one blood** all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.”

Acts 17:26

This refutes racial regeneration.

“Not by **works of righteousness** which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration.”

Titus 3:5

“**Not of works**, lest any man should boast.”

Ephesians 2:9

These refute baptismal regeneration.

“So then it is **not of him that willeth**, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.”

Romans 9:16

This refutes decisional regeneration.

Baptismal Regeneration

1. It requires **the will of man** and/or the **will of the flesh**.
2. It is plainly **a work of righteousness**.
3. Therefore, it cannot be involved in regeneration.
 - Faith is necessary to baptism.
 - Regeneration is necessary to faith.
 - Therefore, regeneration precedes baptism.
4. There is not the least evidence in Scripture of any relation between regeneration and baptism.
5. “The like **figure** whereunto even **baptism** doth also now save us (**not** the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but **the answer of a good conscience toward God**,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” 1 Pet 3:21
6. Regeneration **precedes** a good conscience, which precedes Bible baptism.

Decisional Regeneration - I

| <u>Before</u> | <u>Event</u> | <u>After</u> |
|---|---|---|
| “That which is born of the flesh is flesh.” | If you want to be born again, then you simply make a personal decision to accept God’s offer to regenerate you by His Spirit. | “That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” |
| FLESH | “The Holy Spirit will do everything possible to disturb you, draw you, love you – but finally it is your personal decision.” | SPIRIT |
| Dead | | Alive |
| Enemy of God | Billy Graham in <u>How To Be Born Again</u> | Child of God |

Decisional Regeneration - II

| <u>Before</u> | <u>Event</u> | <u>After</u> |
|---|--|---|
| “That which is born of the flesh is flesh.” | “Nor of the will of the flesh ” John 1:13 “They that are in the flesh cannot please God. ” Romans 8:8 | “That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” |
| FLESH | “It is not of him that willeth. ” Romans 9:16 “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit. ” Galatians 5:17 | SPIRIT |
| Dead | | Alive |
| Enemy of God | | Child of God |

Decisional Regeneration - III

1. **The flesh** cannot and will not cooperate to become spirit.
2. It is impossible to influence the flesh to think spiritually (1 Cor 2:14).
3. **Decisional regeneration** is **Baptist sacramentalism** – accepting Jesus is the sacrament rather than sprinkling water.
4. But the flesh will **never** believe and follow Jesus Christ.
5. God must **regenerate first**, and then a man may believe on Christ.
6. Satan wins every time man is made his own savior.
7. Let God be true: the Spirit must make a man spiritual.

The Truth - I

1. Man is in a spiritual state of “**death**” and “**enmity**” such that he can neither cooperate nor assist in his regeneration.
2. Scripture expressly describes regeneration as a mighty act of **creative power** belonging only to God himself.
3. Scripture expressly **denies** the involvement of man’s will or works in his own regeneration.
4. **Therefore, regeneration must be a creative act of God apart from all human cooperation and assistance that changes the very nature of a sinner, who is passive in the act.**

The Truth - II

“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.”

John 3:5

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, **by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.**”

Titus 3:5

1. The **Spirit** is the Agent of the new birth.
2. The “**water**” represents the **Spirit** (see **John 7:39**).
3. The “**washing**” represents the **Spirit’s action**.
4. The new birth **does not involve man’s works**.
5. “Birth” and “regeneration” **leave man passive**.

The Truth - III

“The wind bloweth where **it listeth**, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: **so is every one that is born of the Spirit.**”

John 3:8

“And **because** ye are sons, God hath sent forth the **Spirit of His Son** into your hearts, crying, **Abba, Father.**”

Galatians 4:6

1. The Spirit works where **He chooses**, as the wind.
2. The Spirit works above our knowledge and control.
3. The Spirit regenerates **every one the same way** (including infants & adults).
4. The Spirit's work causes us to cry, Father.
5. The Spirit regenerates those already legal sons.

The Voice of Christ - I

#1 “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour **is coming** and **now is**, when **the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God**: and **they that hear shall live....”**

#2 “Marvel not at this: for the hour **is coming**, in the which **all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth**; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

John 5:25-29

1. Life is given by **the voice of Jesus Christ**.
2. “They that hear” are those addressed, since dead men do not hear at all.
3. **His voice gives life** as it once gave light.
4. It is **His voice** and not the **voice of preachers** about Him that gives life.
5. This fits our need for a **sovereign Savior**.

The Voice of Christ - II

6. Jesus regenerated Lazarus in this **same manner** (see John 11:43).
7. Our regeneration is **compared** to the resurrection of the body.
8. Hearing His voice **in both** cases is a **passive event**.
9. In both cases all that hear **shall live**.
10. **It is Christ's voice** (1 Thessalonians 4:16), since no man will assist with the resurrection.
11. These two resurrections are Christ's (see Revelation 20:6).
12. Jesus Christ calls His sheep into life.

The Voice of Christ - III

John 5:25

Regeneration of Souls

First resurrection

He Himself speaks

All addressed shall hear

All that hear shall live

Man is passive

Jesus' voice gives life

His call is irresistible

No priests are involved

No preachers are involved

Jesus is Lord!

John 5:28-29

Regeneration of Bodies

Second resurrection

He Himself speaks

All addressed shall hear

All that hear shall live

Man is passive

Jesus' voice gives life

His call is irresistible

No priests are involved

No preachers are involved

Jesus is Lord!

What About the Gospel?

Many who deny the four heresies claim that the Spirit uses **gospel preaching** to regenerate. This ignores, however, the following points:

1. It can't help the unregenerate (see 1 Corinthians 1:18; 2:14).
2. Life must precede believing (see 1 John 5:1).
3. The gospel involves man's will (see Romans 9:16).
4. The gospel brings life **to light** (see 2 Timothy 1:10).
5. The gospel cannot **create life**.
6. The Scriptures do not teach it so.
7. Consider the following passages of Scripture honestly.

What about Hebrews 4:12?

“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.”

1. **The context** of the passage tells us this is Jesus Christ (4:13-14).
2. These **characteristics** are true only of Christ.
3. Jesus Christ is **alive** (Revelation 1:18).
4. Jesus Christ is **powerful** (Matthew 28:18).
5. Jesus Christ is a **twoedged sword** (Revelation 1:16; 19:15).
6. Jesus **discerns all thoughts** (John 2:24-25).
- 7. Jesus is the Word of God (John 1:14).**
8. Jesus Christ, not Scripture, regenerates us.

What about 1 Peter 1:23?

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

1. The Scriptures cannot regenerate.
2. Jesus is **incorruptible** (Acts 13:35).
3. Scripture is **corruptible** (2 Corinthians 2:17).
4. Jesus lives forever (Revelation 1:18).
5. Jesus abides forever (John 12:34).
6. Jesus is God’s Seed (Galatians 3:16).
7. Jesus is the Word of God (Revelation 19:13).
8. The word preached by the gospel (1 Peter 1:25) is different by virtue of “this.”
9. The Greek confirms the two “words” are different.
10. Jesus Christ, not Scripture, regenerates us.

What about James 1:18?

“Of his own will begat he us with **the word of truth**, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.”

1. It is **God’s will** that regenerates in this verse.
2. **Begetting** requires much more than Scripture.
3. Regeneration here is **God’s creative act**.
4. Jesus is the **Word** (John 1:14).
5. Jesus is the **Truth** (John 14:6).
6. John calls Him the **Word of Life** (1 John 1:1).
7. There are two “words” in this context also (see James 1:21).
8. Jesus Christ, not Scripture, regenerates us.

What about Ephesians 5:26?

“That **he** might sanctify and cleanse it with the **washing of water by the word,**”

1. Jesus Christ is the **active person** here (Ephesians 5:25).
2. “**Washing**” is the Spirit’s action (Titus 3:5).
3. “**Water**” is the Spirit’s symbol (John 7:39).
4. Jesus Christ directs the Spirit **by His voice**.
5. This is true elsewhere as well (Psalm 33:6; Job 26:13; 33:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:8; John 20:22; 1 Corinthians 15:45).
6. Jesus cleanses by His voice (John 15:3).
7. Jesus spoke spirit and life to men (John 6:63).
8. Jesus Christ, not Scripture, regenerates us.

What about 1 Corinthians 4:15?

“For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *have ye* not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus **I have begotten you** through the gospel.”

1. Paul did not regenerate the Corinthians (**John 1:13**).
2. In the context he is **comparing** their **gospel teachers**.
3. He was their **first gospel teacher**.
4. He was responsible for their **initial conversion**.
5. He **generated** their **initial conversion**.
6. He generated the Galatians twice (Galatians 4:19).
7. He was their **father** in gospel **faith**.
8. Jesus Christ, not Scripture, regenerates us.

What is Conversion? - I

Conversion is the **educational process** by which a **born again person** comes to a **fuller knowledge and practice** of God's will.

- Conversion is **not** regeneration at all.
- Regeneration **must precede conversion**.

- Regeneration is an **instantaneous act**.
- Conversion is a **process**.

- We are **regenerated once**.
- We are **converted repeatedly**, or perpetually in this life.

- In regeneration **we are passive**.
- In conversion **we are active**.

- **God works regeneration** by Himself.
- **Men work conversion** by God's blessing.

- Regeneration is the **prerequisite of conversion**.
- Conversion is the **proof of regeneration**.

What is Conversion? - II

Then will I **teach** transgressors **thy ways**; and sinners **shall be converted** unto thee.

Psalms 51:13

But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when **thou art converted**, strengthen thy brethren.

Luke 22:32

- This was spoken of Peter and his denial of Christ.
- Was Peter an unregenerate man for 3 ½ years as one of the apostles?

Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one **convert** him; Let him know, that he which **converteth** the sinner from the error of his way shall **save a soul** from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

James 5:19-20

Consider Cornelius (Acts 10)

1. He heard the gospel, believed, and was baptized by the ministry of Peter.
2. **He feared** God before hearing Peter (contrast Romans 3:18).
3. **He prayed** and **was heard by God** before he heard Peter preach.
4. **He gave alms** which **were accepted by God** before hearing Peter.
5. **He worked righteousness** before hearing Peter.
6. **He was accepted by God** before hearing Peter.
 - **God regenerated** Cornelius **without** Peter.
 - **God converted** Cornelius **with** Peter.
 - **His works** proved his regeneration.
 - His conversion **brought forth more works**.

Whom Does Christ Quicken?

- Jesus Christ's regeneration is irresistible.
 - Not all men are regenerated.
 - Therefore, Jesus only regenerates some.

For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them*; even so **the Son quickeneth whom he will.**

John 5:21

For he saith to Moses, **I will** have mercy on whom **I will** have mercy, and **I will** have compassion on whom **I will** have compassion.

Romans 9:15

And this is the **Father's will** which hath sent me, that of all **which he hath given me** I should **lose nothing**, but should raise it up again at the last day.

John 6:39

As thou hast given him **power over all flesh**, that he should give eternal life **to as many as thou hast given him.**

John 17:2

Are You Born Again? – I

Faith is Evidence

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that **heareth** my word, and **believeth** on him that sent me, **hath** everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but **is passed** from death unto life.

John 5:24

And what *is* the exceeding **greatness of his power** to us-ward **who believe**, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he **raised him from the dead**, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*,

Ephesians 1:19-20

Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ **is born of God**: ... For whatsoever **is born of God** overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, **even our faith**. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

1 John 5:1-5

Are You Born Again? – II

Fruit is Evidence

And beside this, giving all diligence, **add** to your **faith virtue**; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge **temperance**; and to temperance **patience**; and to patience **godliness**; And to godliness **brotherly kindness**; and to brotherly kindness **charity**. ...
Wherefore the rather, brethren, **give diligence** to make your **calling and election sure**: for **if ye do these things**, ye shall never fall ...

2 Peter 1:5-11

We **know** that we have passed from death unto life, **because we love the brethren**. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death.

1 John 3:14

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth **is born** of God, and knoweth God.

1 John 4:7

Are You Born Again? – III

Good works are Evidence

If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that **doeth righteousness** is born of him.

1 John 2:29

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.

1 John 3:9

For it is God which worketh in you both **to will** and **to do** of *his* good pleasure.

Philippians 2:13

“Easy Believe-sim”

1. It begins with the **decisional regeneration** heresy.
2. The “**decision**” can be made at any time.
3. The system is furthered by “**once saved always saved**”.
4. A **past decision** becomes **proof of salvation**.
 - **Good works** are ignored as evidence.
 - **Righteousness** is ignored as evidence.
 - **Perseverance** is ignored as evidence.
 - A past decision **overrides** folly and failure in the life.
5. Ranks of “saved” individuals are filled with the lost.
6. Truly saved individuals are **discouraged** by the falsely saved.
7. Christianity is **disgraced** by those falsely saved.
8. Righteousness for assurance is **minimized**.

A Few Thoughts - I

Regeneration is compared to birth, so we should see ...

- How passive we are in regeneration.
- How life must precede activity.
- That it does make a living, vital child.
- That in time we act like a child.
- It is not our choice, but another's that counts.

Taking responsibility for regeneration brings ...

- Pride: man thinks he can do God's work.
- Burden: man assumes more guilt than he can bear.

The "invitation" as practiced today is only 150 years old (invented by Charles Finney) and a direct result of the decisional regeneration heresy. Consequently, "going forward" today is considered synonymous with being born again.

Some cannot reconcile God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. The truth leaves God sovereign in regeneration and man responsible in conversion. It does not promote wickedness, since a man can only be sure of regeneration by diligent obedience.

A Few Thoughts - II

Ever wonder if God could, or how he would, save infants? Wonder no more.

As food is not the means to obtain physical life, neither is truth the means to obtain spiritual life.

Since John the Baptist was led by the Spirit in the womb, when was he born again?

Regeneration by means of financial missionary and evangelistic efforts cause men to glory in the flesh. But this will never happen before God.

If regeneration were removed as an object of preaching, then profitable instruction would greatly increase.

Will the flesh choose to be spiritual, if it is fed a warm meal when hungry? If it is allowed to play on the church softball team? If it hears "Just As I Am" fifteen times? If it watches a horror film about hell?

Conclusion

1. **All popular theories about being born again are wrong.**
2. Regeneration is **the work of God.**
3. It is by the means of **Christ's voice.**
4. It is totally a **matter of grace.**
5. **Conversion is the evidence** of regeneration.
6. **Without conversion** there is no evidence of
7. Regeneration.
8. "Easy believe-ism" is a **symptom of heresy.**
9. Fruitless lives and churches are **symptoms of heresy.**
10. The truth **exalts the glory of Jesus Christ**, the only Saviour.
11. **No flesh can glory in His presence (see 1 Corinthians 1:29-31).**

Consequences

1. We should **deny the four heresies**.
2. We should **demand** the true gospel.
3. We should **prove our own selves**.
4. We should **trust God** to regenerate.
5. We should **work to convert men**.
6. We should **be thankful for God's mercy**.
7. We should **love doctrinal truth**.

Appendix 1 – Regeneration & Conversion Compared

| <u>Regeneration</u> | <u>Conversion</u> |
|---|------------------------------------|
| A creative act of God | A revealed duty of man |
| An instantaneous act | A gradual and repeated process |
| God is sovereign | Man is responsible |
| Without human means | By many means |
| Apart from the gospel | By means of the gospel |
| Gives life to sinners | Brings activity from life |
| Necessary for eternal life | Needed for fellowship with God |
| Man is entirely passive | Man is considerably active |
| Can reach even an infant | Cannot influence an infant |
| Can exist without conversion | Cannot exist without regeneration |
| Is compared to conception & birth | Is compared with walking & growing |
| The condition for conversion | The evidence of regeneration |
| Origination of life | Manifestation of life |
| Irresistible by man | Resistible by man |
| Uniformly complete in each child of God | Variouly partial in each man |
| No flesh can glory | The flesh gets some credit |
| Guaranteed by grace | Made possible by grace |
| Make one a child of God | Manifests one as a child of God |
| Involves creation | Involves conviction |
| Unconditional on man's part | Conditional on man's part |
| Apart from human consciousness | Based in human consciousness |
| Perfect | Imperfect |
| Man cannot influence or direct | Man can labor to bring about |
| Cornelius before meeting Peter | Cornelius after meeting Peter |

- 1) All men are sinners and must be born again (John 3:3; Rom 3:10-18, 23).
- 2) God elected some to salvation and left the rest to their just punishment (John 5:21; 6:38-39; 17:2; Rom 9:6-24; Eph 1:3-12; 2 Tim 1:9; 1 Pet 1:2).
- 3) The elect by natural birth are like the rest (John 3:6; Eph 2:1-3; Tit 3:3-7).
- 4) However, God regenerates them to life (John 5:21; Rom 8:29-30; 1 Pet 1:2).
- 5) Conversion is the learning process of increasing in knowledge and obedience to the will of God as Peter (Luke 22:32) and fallen brethren (Jam 5:19-20). The degree of conversion varies from Paul (1 Cor 15:10; 2 Tim 4:7) to Lot (Gen 13:12; 19:1-38; 2 Pet 2:7-9). False teachers (2 Cor 11:4; Eph 4:14; 2 Tim 2:17-18) and slothful teachers (1 Tim 4:16; Heb 13:9) are two of many factors hindering conversion.
- 6) The regenerated elect obtain everlasting life and the rest enter the lake of fire with the devil and his angels (Rom 8:29-30; 2 Pet 1:10-11; Rev 20:6).

Appendix 2 – The Gospel Is Not Involved In Regeneration

- 1) The **Condition of Man** precludes it.
 - a) The gospel cannot help those who are dead (Gen 2:17; Eph 2:1-3; Col 2:13).
 - b) The gospel cannot help those who cannot see it (John 3:3).
 - c) The gospel cannot help those who cannot hear it (John 8:43).
 - d) The gospel cannot help those who cannot understand it (John 8:43; Rom 3:11).
 - e) The gospel cannot help those who will not understand it (Rom 3:11).
 - f) The gospel cannot help those who will not seek God (Ps 14:2-3; Rom 3:11).
 - g) The gospel cannot help those who cannot please God (Rom 8:8).
 - h) The gospel cannot help those who cannot be subject to it (Rom 8:7).
 - i) The gospel cannot help even if one preached from the dead (Luke 16:31).
 - j) The gospel cannot help those who are beyond any reformation (Isa 26:10).
 - k) The gospel cannot help those beyond the Spirit's influence (1 Cor 2:14).
 - l) The gospel cannot help those at war with the Spirit (Gal 5:17).
 - m) The gospel cannot help those at war with God (Rom 5:8; 8:7).
 - n) The gospel cannot help those without any fear of God (Rom 3:18; Ps 36:1).
 - o) The gospel cannot help those that do not have any faith (Heb 11:6; Ps 10:4).
 - p) The gospel cannot help those who think it is foolishness (1 Cor 1:18).
 - q) The gospel cannot help those whose minds are blinded by Satan (2 Cor 4:3-4).
 - r) The gospel cannot help those without any strength (Rom 5:6).

- 2) The **Denials of Man's Involvement** precludes it.
 - a) Scripture denies man's will in regeneration (John 1:13; Rom 9:16).
 - b) Scripture denies man's ability to please God (Rom 8:8; Phil 2:13).
 - c) Scripture denies any works by man (Rom 9:16; Eph 2:9; Titus 3:5).
 - d) Scripture denies any activity contrary to grace (Rom 4:4; 11:6; Eph 2:5).
 - e) Scripture affirms only God's will involved in it (John 3:8; 5:21; Rom 9:15).

- 3) The **Results of Regeneration** preclude it.
 - a) Faith results from regeneration (Acts 18:27; Gal 5:22; Eph 1:19; 2 Pet 1:1).
 - b) Any activity toward God is the result of regeneration (Phil 2:13; Ps 110:3).
 - c) We were regenerated for good works, not because of them (Eph 2:10; 4:24).
 - d) Ability to see, hear, or know God is by regeneration (Pro 20:12; John 8:47).
 - e) Faith and works are evidence (Acts 10:34-35; 1 John 2:29; 3:7, 14; 4:7; 5:1, 4).

- 4) The **Means of Regeneration** preclude it.
 - a) Regeneration is ascribed to God (John 1:13; 2 Cor 4:6; 1 Pet 1:3).
 - b) Regeneration is ascribed to the Son (John 5:21, 25-29; 17:2; 1 Pet 1:23).
 - c) Regeneration is ascribed to the Spirit of God (John 3:8; Ecc 11:5).

- 5) The **Description of Regeneration** precludes it.
- a) It is called a birth (John 1:13; 3:3-8; 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18).
 - b) It is called a quickening (Eph 2:1, 5; Col 2:13).
 - c) It is called a regeneration (Titus 3:5; Matt 19:28).
 - d) It is called a creation (Eph 2:10; 4:24; Jam 1:18).
 - e) It is called a begetting (Jam 1:18; 1 Pet 1:3; 1 John 5:1, 18).
 - f) It is called a resurrection (John 5:25; Rev 20:6; Matt 19:28).
 - g) It is called a renewing (Titus 3:5).
- 6) The **Purpose of the Gospel** precludes it.
- a) The gospel reveals the power of God to those already saved (1 Cor 1:18, 24).
 - b) The gospel brings life and immortality to light (1 Tim 1:10).
 - c) Paul sought to preach the gospel to saints already with faith (Rom 1:15-17).
 - d) The gospel is to give men assurance of eternal life (1 John 5:13).
 - e) The gospel is to convert men from error to the truth (Jam 5:19-20).
 - f) The gospel is to give men fellowship with God and His Son (1 John 1:1-5).
 - g) The gospel would leave salvation shaky rather than sure (Rom 4:16; 8:29-34).
- 7) The **Examples of Regeneration** preclude it.
- a) John the Baptist was regenerated before birth (Luke 1:15; Rom 8:14; Gal 5:22).
 - b) Cornelius was regenerated before hearing the gospel (Acts 10:2-4, 34-35).
 - c) Lydia's heart was opened before rather than by the gospel (Acts 16:14).
 - d) Ministers are to feed sheep (John 21:15-17) and perfect saints (Eph 4:12).
- 8) The **Glory of God** precludes it.
- a) Regeneration, an integral part of salvation, is all of God (1 Cor 1:26-31).
 - b) God will not allow men to boast or to obligate Him (Rom 4:4; Eph 2:9).