

The Doctrine of Regeneration

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Preface: The common understanding of *regeneration* is being *born again*. That is, at the moment you believe in Jesus Christ, God the Holy Spirit places a human spirit within you, which is your potential location for storage of doctrine and your ability to have temporal fellowship with God.

1. The Holman Bible Dictionary gives this definition: *The radical spiritual change in which God brings an individual from a condition of spiritual defeat and death to a renewed condition of holiness and life. The biblical doctrine of regeneration emphasizes God's role in making this spiritual change possible.*¹
2. *Another word for regeneration is rebirth, from which we get the phrase born again. To be born again is opposed to, and distinguished from, our first birth, when we were conceived in sin. The new birth is a spiritual, holy, and heavenly birth signified by a being made alive in a spiritual sense. Our first birth, on the other hand, was one of spiritual death because of inherited sin. Man in his natural state is "dead in trespasses and sins" until we are "made alive" (regenerated) by Christ when we place our faith in Him (Ephesians 2:1).*²
3. What exactly is done in regeneration?
 - 1) We are born dichotomous, with a body and soul. 1Cor. 2:14 Jude 1:18
 - 2) We are born spiritually dead (meaning that we do not have an functioning human spirit). Rom. 5:15 6:17 2Cor. 5:14 Eph. 5:14
 - 3) It is the soul that is saved in salvation. Heb. 10:39 1Peter 1:9
 - 4) Being born again means that God creates a human spirit within us. Therefore, Christians are trichotomous. 1Cor. 2:14–15 15:46 1Thess. 5:23
 - 5) The soul is not equivalent to the human spirit (Heb. 4:12). They are both invisible portions of our being, the former allowing fellowship with man and the latter allowing fellowship with God. Rom. 7:6
 - 6) In order for us to have fellowship with God, we need to know something about God. That information is stored in the human spirit. 1Cor. 2:10–16
4. Regeneration is the work of God. We believe in Jesus Christ and God regenerates us.³
 - 1) John 1:13 "...who were born, not of blood, or of the will of the flesh, but of God."
 - 2) James 1:18 By His own choice, He gave us a new birth by the message of truth so that we could be the firstfruits of His creatures.
 - 3) 1 Peter 1:3 ...According to His great mercy, He has given us a new birth...

¹ From <http://www.studylight.org/dic/hbd/view.cgi?number=T5283> accessed November 17, 2010.

² From <http://www.gotquestions.org/regeneration-Bible.html> accessed November 17, 2010.

³ The point and list of Scriptures taken from <http://www.boomerinthepew.com/2008/05/regeneration---.html> accessed Nov. 18, 2010.

- 4) John 3:3-8 Jesus replied, "I assure you: Unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "But 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?" Jesus answered, "I assure you: Unless someone is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Whatever is born of flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I told you that you must be born again. 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."
5. Being *made alive* is a synonymic phrase for *regeneration*. Rom. 6:13 8:11 Eph. 2:5 Col. 2:13
6. Another synonym for being regeneration is being made a *new creation* (2Cor. 5:17 Gal. 6:15).
 - 1) As a new creation, all the old things have passed away (our eventual destiny in hell, the control of the sin nature over our life, the inability to have a relationship with God); and all things have become new (we have a new eternal destiny, the Holy Spirit can control our lives defeating the old sin nature, and we now have an eternal relationship with God. 2Cor. 5:17
 - 2) In Gal. 6:15, we are told that the sign of this new birth, circumcision, is only a sign; it is not the new birth, nor is it a condition for the new birth.
7. We are first exposed to the concept of being born again in John 3:1-12 There was a man from the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Him at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher, for no one could perform these signs You do unless God were with him." Jesus replied, "I assure you: Unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "But 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?" Jesus answered, "I assure you: Unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I told you that you must be born again. 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."
8. There are two words used in John 3:
 - 1) First, we have the very common verb *gennáō* (γεννάω) [pronounced *gen-NAH-oh*], which means *to sire [father] [a child], to bear [a child]*; metaphorically, it means *to engender, cause to arise, excite; in a Jewish sense, of one who brings others over to his way of life, to convert someone; of God making Christ his son; of God making men his sons through faith in Christ's work*. In the passive, it means *to be born*. Strong's #1080.
 - 2) Secondly, we have the less common (but not rare) adverb *anōthen* (ἀνωθεν) [pronounced *AN-oh-thehn*] which means, 1) *from above, from a higher place*; 1a) *of things which come from heaven or God*; 2) *from the first, from the beginning, from the very first*; 3) *anew, over again*. Thayer definition only. Strong's #509.
 - 3) It is important that we understand that the second word has the dual concept of coming from *above* and yet can also be understood as *anew, again*. We know this simply because of Nicodemus's question about being able to reenter the womb of one's mother to be born again. This is how he understood the term.
9. Our Lord describes this experience thus: "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." The wind is a phenomenal force in this world, and one which is difficult to put into words. Living near the Texas coast, I am reasonably familiar with hurricanes and tornadoes. A storm may begin to brew off the coast of Africa and find its way into the Gulf of Mexico, thousands of miles away. What is fascinating is, none of the air molecules or water molecules from the original storm may even be involved in this same storm a week or two later when it finds its way into the gulf, and yet it is the same storm.
10. At the moment of salvation, we are given 40 things, which list has been posted in many places on the internet.
 - 1) Slide show: www.gracedoctrine.org/chartmap/40things.pps (this will open up in PowerPoint or Presentations on your computer)
 - 2) Listed, and then each is explained below: <http://www.egracebiblechurch.org/forty.htm> (This is properly credited)
 - 3) From Generation Word (and properly credited:

- <http://generationword.com/40%20Things%20That%20Occur%20in%20word%20format.htm>
- 4) Audio lessons and notes: <http://www.countrybiblechurch.us/40Things/Audios/00/index.html>
 - 5) McLaughlin's PDF http://www.gbible.org/_files/pdf/GraceGifts.pdf
 - 6) 48 things: <http://cibaptist.org/doctrine/ThingsThatHappenAtSalvation.shtml> (Not properly credited and just a list with verses; no complete explanation).
 - 7) 95 Things God Provides at the Point of Salvation Two Categories: Positional & Experiential: <http://www.lvggc.org/pdf-pamphlets/95%20Things%20at%20Salvation.pdf>
 - 8) Salvation components categorized: <http://www.brainout.net/Salvindex.html>
 11. One of the things which we receive at salvation is called *regeneration*. The most common passage that we find this is the one already quoted, John 3:1–16, where Jesus tells Nicodemus, “**You must be born again [from above].**”
 12. *Regeneration is part of this "salvation package," along with sealing (Ephesians 1:14), adoption (Galatians 4:5), reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-20), and many other salvation concepts. Being born again or born from above is parallel to regeneration (John 3:6-7; Ephesians 2:1; 1 Peter 1:23; John 1:13; 1 John 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18). Simply put, regeneration is God making a person spiritually alive, a new creation, as a result of faith in Jesus Christ. The reason regeneration is necessary is that prior to salvation we are not God's children (John 1:12-13); rather, we are children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3; Romans 5:18-20). Before salvation, we are degenerate. After salvation we are regenerated. The result of regeneration is peace with God (Romans 5:1), new life (Titus 3:5; 2 Corinthians 5:17), and eternal sonship (John 1:12-13; Galatians 3:26). This regeneration is eternal and begins the process of sanctification wherein we become the people God intended for us to be (Romans 8:28-30).*⁴
 13. We find the actual word *regeneration* in Titus 3:5 **But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing [i.e., individual cleansing] of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, Whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life** (Titus 3:4–7).
 - 1) The Greek word here is *paliggenesia* (παλιγγενεσία) [pronounced *pal-ing-ghen-es-EE-ah*], which means, 1) *new birth, reproduction, renewal, recreation, regeneration*; 1a) *hence renovation, regeneration, the production of a new life consecrated to God, a radical change of mind for the better. The word often used to denote the restoration of a thing to its pristine state, its renovation, as a renewal or restoration of life after death*; 1b) *the renovation of the earth after the deluge*; 1c) *the renewal of the world to take place after its destruction by fire, as the Stoics taught*; 1d) *the signal and glorious change of all things (in heaven and earth) for the better, that restoration of the primal and perfect condition of things which existed before the fall of our first parents, which the Jews looked for in connection with the advent of the Messiah, and which Christians expected in connection with the visible return of Jesus from heaven.*; 1e) *other uses*; 1e1) *of Cicero's restoration to rank and fortune on his recall from exile*; 1e2) *of the restoration of the Jewish nation after exile*; 1e3) *of the recovery of knowledge by recollection.* Thayer definition only. Strong's #3824.
 - 2) Although some translate *washing* as *baptism*, this is not the word for *baptism*; it is simply the word for *bathing, taking a bath; or bath*. Strong's #3067. *Cleansing* is a good translation, as it is an individual application of taking a bath.
 - 3) In other words, one of the things which occurs in regeneration is a cleansing of a person. That would be the **removal of condemnation**.
 - 4) In salvation, we have accepted what Jesus has done for us on the cross; that He died for our sins, that He paid for our sins, and that we are forgiven because of His substitutionary death.
 - 5) This cleansing is not the act of bathing or the act of baptism, which things represent the act of cleansing (1Peter 3:21).
 14. Jesus Christ regenerates those who believe in His Name. John 1:12–13 **But to all who did receive Him, who believed in his name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.** Under this new birth, we become children of God, which

⁴ From <http://www.gotquestions.org/regeneration-Bible.html> accessed November 17, 2010.

- is a result of God's will (that is, God's plan). 1John 5:1 **Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him.**
15. Being born again is dependent upon Christ's work on the cross. 1Peter 1:3 **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.**
 16. You cannot understand or participate in God's plan apart from regeneration.⁵ 1Corinthians 2:14 **But the natural man does not welcome what comes from God's Spirit, because it is foolishness to him; he is not able to know it since it is evaluated spiritually.** Romans 3:11 Paul is speaking of people apart from Christ and writes, **...there is no one who understands, there is no one who seeks God.** Ephesians 2:4-5 **But God, who is abundant in mercy, because of His great love that He had for us, made us alive with the Messiah even though we were dead in trespasses. By grace you are saved!** Colossians 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.**
 17. Although circumcision is a sign of regeneration (circumcision is the type; regeneration is the antitype), circumcision is not necessary for regeneration. Gal. 6:15
 18. We were dead in our trespasses and sins, and God made us alive with (or, in) Christ Jesus. Eph. 2:1–7
 19. Being born again is based upon the Word of God, which is a permanent thing, unlike all those things of the earth which dry up and wither away. 1Peter 1:22–25
 20. *After regeneration, we begin to see, and hear, and seek after divine things, and to live a life of faith and holiness. Now Christ is [potentially] formed in the hearts; we are now partakers of the divine nature, having been made new creatures. God, not man, is the source of this (Ephesians 2:1, 8). It is not by men's works, but by God's own good will and pleasure. His great love and free gift, His rich grace and abundant mercy, are the cause of it and these attributes of God are displayed in the regeneration and conversion of sinners.*⁶
 21. *This concept of the new birth is unique to Christianity. No other religion offers a cure for the total depravity of the human heart (Jer. 17:9), preferring instead to outline an often massive body of works and deeds that must be done to gain favor with God. God has told us, though, that "by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight" (Romans 3:20). Total regeneration of the heart is necessary for salvation. Paul explains this concept perfectly in Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." This is true regeneration.*⁷
 22. Although regeneration is sufficient and will result in our ultimate salvation, ideally speaking, it is the beginning of the life for the believer and not the end. Since God has given us new life, we are to walk in this life (Rom. 6:4 8:1, 4). In other words, we are given the Holy Spirit and the human spirit in order to fellowship with God while we are here on earth (1Cor. 1:9 1John 1:3, 6–7). God does not create a human spirit within us and give us the Holy Spirit, and then wander off, saying, "See you in eternity." God leaves us alive for a time on this earth for a reason (1Cor. 6:20 7:23). Otherwise, we would simply be saved and then taken from this life. Therefore, God has a purpose for our lives following regeneration. We fulfill this purpose by (1) re-attaining fellowship with God when we lose it and (2) our spiritual growth (Rom. 6:4 Gal. 5:16 1Peter 2:2 2Peter 3:18). See also Rom. 12:1–2 Eph. 2:10.
 23. Although regeneration does not guarantee a life of integrity, it can be the first step in a life of integrity. If we grow spiritually, then what we do with our lives will change.⁸ 1John 4:7 **Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.** 1John 5:3 **This is love of God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.** 1John 4:4 **You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.** 1John 5:18 **We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him.** Galatians 5:22-23 **But the fruit**

⁵ The list of Scriptures taken from <http://www.boomerinthepew.com/2008/05/regeneration--.html> accessed Nov. 18, 2010.

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⁸ The point and list of Scriptures taken from <http://www.boomerinthepew.com/2008/05/regeneration--.html> accessed Nov. 18, 2010.

of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

24. There is also the eschatological understanding of the word regeneration, which refers to the new birth of the heavens and the earth.

1) In Matthew 19:28 the word refers to the restoration of the world, in which sense it is synonymical to the expressions *apokatastasis panton*, "restoration of all things" (Acts 3:21; the verb is found in Matthew 17:11, *apokatastasei panta*, "shall restore all things"), and *anapsuxis*, "refreshing" (Acts 3:19), which signifies a gradual transition of meaning to the second sense of the word under consideration. It is supposed that regeneration in this sense denotes the final stage of development of all creation, by which God's purposes regarding the same are fully realized, when "all things (are put) in subjection under his feet" (1 Corinthians 15:27). This is a "regeneration in the proper meaning of the word, for it signifies a renovation of all visible things when the old is passed away, and heaven and earth are become new" (compare Revelation 21:1). To the Jew the regeneration thus prophesied was inseparably connected with the reign of the Messiah.⁹

2) We find this word in the same or very similar senses in profane literature. It is used of the renewal of the world in Stoical philosophy. Josephus (*Ant.*, XI, iii, 9) speaks of the *anaktesis kai paliggenesia tes patridos*, "a new foundation and regeneration of the fatherland," after the return from the Babylonian captivity. Philo (*ed. Mangey*, ii.144) uses the word, speaking of the post-diluvial epoch of the earth, as of a new world, and Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (*xi. 1*), of a periodical restoration of all things, laying stress upon the constant recurrence and uniformity of all happenings, which thought the Preacher expressed by "There is no new thing under the sun" (*Ecclesiastes 1:9*). In most places, however, where the word occurs in philosophical writings, it is used of the "reincarnation" or "subsequent birth" of the individual, as in the Buddhistic and Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls (*Plut.*, edition Xylander, ii.998c; *Clement of Alexandria*, edition Potter, 539) or else of a revival of life (*Philo i.159*). Cicero uses the word in his letters to Atticus (*vi.6*) metaphorically of his return from exile, as a new lease of life granted to him.¹⁰

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There are several sites where regeneration is explain:

For Further Study...

Regeneration, Justification and Sanctification

<http://bible.org/article/regeneration-justification-and-sanctification>

The Holman Bible Dictionary on Regeneration:

<http://www.studylight.org/dic/hbd/view.cgi?number=T5283>

⁹ From <http://www.internationalstandardbible.com/R/regeneration.html> accessed November 17, 2010.

¹⁰ From <http://www.internationalstandardbible.com/R/regeneration.html> accessed November 17, 2010.

For Further Study...

From *All the Doctrines in the Bible* by Herbert Locker:

http://books.google.com/books?id=BywUZArOxMkC&pg=PA176&lpg=PA176&dq=doctrine+of+regeneration+bible&source=bl&ots=lefzE3YPSx&sig=XiBVwk1FPdnjOyzM8EoJUS6LzGY&hl=en&ei=iSbITPHCBcH6lweYjeGADA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=8&ved=0CD4Q6AEwBzgK#v=onepage&q=doctrine%20of%20regeneration%20bible&f=false

The False Doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration by John R. Rice

http://www.ovrInd.com/FalseDoctrine/Refuting_baptismal_Regen.html

Disclaimer: listing an article here does not always indicate a complete endorsement of that particular site. My personal quick determination of the accuracy of a ministry is, do they teach salvation by faith alone in Christ alone and do they teach spirituality by grace (restoration to fellowship is based upon naming one's sins to God)?

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The complete doctrine is here: <http://kukis.org/Doctrines/regeneration.htm>

The Abbreviated Doctrine of Regeneration

1. Definition of regeneration: Being regenerated or born again is passing from spiritual death to spiritual life by means of faith in Jesus Christ.
2. Mechanics of regeneration:
 - 1) We are born dichotomous, with a body and soul. 1Cor. 2:14 Jude 1:18
 - 2) We are born spiritually dead (meaning that we do not have an functioning human spirit). Rom. 5:15 6:17 2Cor. 5:14 Eph. 5:14
 - 3) It is the soul that is saved in salvation. Heb. 10:39 1Peter 1:9
 - 4) Being born again means that God creates a human spirit within us. Therefore, Christians are trichotomous. 1Cor. 2:14–15 15:46 1Thess. 5:23
 - 5) The soul is not equivalent to the human spirit (Heb. 4:12). They are both invisible portions of our being, the former allowing fellowship with man and the latter allowing fellowship with God. Rom. 7:6
 - 6) In order for us to have fellowship with God, we need to know something about God. That information is stored in the human spirit. 1Cor. 2:10–16
3. Synonyms for regeneration:
 - 1) Being born again in John 3:1–12.
 - 2) Being *made alive* is a synonymic phrase for *regeneration*. Rom. 6:13 8:11 Eph. 2:5 Col. 2:13
 - 3) Another synonym for being regeneration is being made a *new creation* (2Cor. 5:17 Gal. 6:15).
 - (1) As a new creation, all the old things have passed away (our eventual destiny in hell, the control of the sin nature over our life, the inability to have a relationship with God); and all things have become new (we have a new eternal destiny, the Holy Spirit can control our lives defeating the old sin nature, and we now have an eternal relationship with God. 2Cor. 5:17
 - (2) In Gal. 6:15, we are told that the sign of this new birth, circumcision, is only a sign; it is not the new birth, nor is it a condition for the new birth.
4. Jesus teaches Nicodemus regeneration in John 3:1–12 **There was a man from the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Him at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher, for no one could perform these signs You do unless God were with him." Jesus replied, "I assure you: Unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "But 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?" Jesus answered, "I assure you: Unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I told you that you must be born again. The wind blows where**

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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."

5. Although regeneration is sufficient and will result in our ultimate salvation, ideally speaking, it is the beginning of the life for the believer and not the end. Since God has given us new life, we are to walk in this life (Rom. 6:4 8:1, 4). In other words, we are given the Holy Spirit and the human spirit in order to fellowship with God while we are here on earth (1Cor. 1:9 1John 1:3, 6–7). God does not create a human spirit within us and give us the Holy Spirit, and then wander off, saying, "See you in eternity." God leaves us alive for a time on this earth for a reason (1Cor. 6:20 7:23). Otherwise, we would simply be saved and then taken from this life. Therefore, God has a purpose for our lives following regeneration. We fulfill this purpose by (1) re-attaining fellowship with God when we lose it and (2) our spiritual growth (Rom. 6:4 Gal. 5:16 1Peter 2:2 2Peter 3:18). See also Rom. 12:1–2 Eph. 2:10.
6. Less commonly spoken of in relationship to *regeneration* is the regeneration of the heavens and earth in Matt. 17:11 19:28.

The more complete doctrine can be accessed here: <http://kukis.org/Doctrines/regeneration.htm>

Topics

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Doctrines