

Christians at Texas State Bible Study

God's Complete Salvation #5

Regeneration

Scripture Reading:

John 1:12-13 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name, **13** Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Footnote: children

For human beings to become children of God is for man to have the divine life and the divine nature.

John 3:1-7, 15-16 **1** But there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. **2** This one came to Him by night and said to Him, Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher, for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him. **3** Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God. **4** Nicodemus said to Him, How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he? **5** Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. **6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. **7** Do not marvel that I said to you, You must be born anew. **15** That everyone who believes into Him may have eternal life. **16** For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone who believes into Him would not perish, but would have eternal life.

1 Corinthians 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

1 Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has regenerated us unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Footnote: regenerated

Regeneration, like redemption and justification, is an aspect of God's full salvation. Redemption and justification solve our problem with God and reconcile us to God; regeneration enlivens us with God's life, bringing us into a relationship of life, an organic union, with God. Hence, regeneration issues and results in a living hope. Such regeneration is accomplished through the resurrection of Christ from the dead. "The resurrection of Christ, bringing in life and the gift of the life-giving Spirit, is that which potentiates the new birth unto a living hope" (Alford).

Portion from Life-Study of John

Regeneration is the start of the spiritual life. All spiritual experiences begin with regeneration. If we have regeneration, we are then qualified to participate in all the other items of the Lord's salvation.

When Nicodemus came to the Lord Jesus, the Lord took the opportunity to reveal the true need of mankind. In His conversation with Nicodemus, the Lord revealed that regardless of how good we are, we still need regeneration. Regeneration is the first need of man. Moral people, as well as immoral people, need regeneration. Many Christians hold the mistaken concept that people need regeneration simply because they are fallen. However, if man had never fallen, he still would have needed regeneration. Even if Adam had not fallen, he still

would have needed regeneration. That was why God put him in front of the tree of life. If Adam had partaken of the tree of life, he would have been regenerated.

Since we are human beings, we all have a human life. The problem is not a matter of whether or not our human life is good or bad. Regardless of the kind of human life we have, as long as we do not have the divine life, we need to be regenerated. To be regenerated simply means to have the divine life besides our human life. God's eternal purpose is that man be a vessel to contain the divine life. Our being with our human life is a vessel to contain God as life. The divine life is God's goal. The divine life is God Himself. God's goal is that we, as people with a human life, receive the divine life into our being as our real life.

What is the meaning of regeneration? Regeneration is not any kind of outward improvement or cultivation; neither is it only a mere change or conversion without life. Regeneration is a rebirth which brings in a new life. It is absolutely a matter of life, not a matter of doing. Regeneration is simply to have life other than the life we already have. We have already received the human life from our parents; now we need to receive the divine life from God. Hence, regeneration means to have the divine life of God in addition to the human life which we already possess. Therefore, regeneration requires another birth in order to possess another life. To be regenerated, to be born again, does not mean to adjust or correct ourselves. It means to have the life of God, just as to be born of our parents means to have the life of our parents. To be regenerated is to be born of God (John 1:13), and to be born of God is to have the life of God, that is, the eternal life (3:15-16). If we have the life of God, we are the sons of God. The life of God gives us the right to become the sons of God (John 1:12), because by this life we have the divine nature of God (2 Pet. 1:4) and have the life-relationship with God, that is, the sonship (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5-6; "adoption" in Greek is "sonship").

To be born anew is to be born of the Spirit in our spirit. The divine Spirit regenerates our human spirit with God's divine life. Regeneration, that is, receiving the divine life, is absolutely a matter that transpires in our spirit. Our spirit was made by God for this very purpose. We have such a special organ, our human spirit, deep within us. In His creation, God made us with a spirit for the purpose that one day we might exercise it to contact Him and to receive Him into our being. The function of the human spirit is to contact God. Regeneration is not a matter of our mind, emotion, or will; it is altogether a matter in our spirit. Verses 12 and 13 of John 1 say, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave authority to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." In what part of our being are we born of God? In our spirit. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit. God is a Spirit, and only a spirit can touch a Spirit. Only a spirit can be born of a Spirit. So, regeneration is absolutely a matter in our spirit. It does not matter whether you have a sober mind, a proper emotion, or a strong will. Such things are in another realm. Regeneration transpires in the realm of our spirit. Our spirit is the sphere in which regeneration transpires. In order to be regenerated, you do not exercise your mind, will, or emotion. Simply open yourself up, forgetting what you are, and from deep within your spirit, call on the name of the Lord Jesus, believing in Him. If you do this, immediately God the Spirit will touch your spirit. This will happen quickly, perhaps taking less than a second. If you open yourself from deep within your spirit, calling on the name of the Lord Jesus, in that one second, God the Spirit will enter into your spirit and you will be regenerated. When you say, "Lord Jesus, I believe in You," you are reborn in your spirit.

Once our spirit has been born of the Spirit of God with the life of God, it has the Spirit of God with the life of God in it and mingled with it. So it becomes a mingled spirit—our human spirit mingled with God's divine Spirit, as Romans 8:16 says, "The Spirit...with our spirit." It is in this mingled spirit that we are "one spirit" with the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17). Now, the two spirits are mingled as one within us. This mingling comes from regeneration. Regeneration brings forth in us a newborn spirit (Ezek. 36:26), indwelt by and mingled with God's divine Spirit. Now this spirit with God's divine life in it is our new being by which we should live and walk. We should no longer walk according to the flesh (Gal. 5:16; Rom. 8:4). It is in this spirit that we are regenerated persons.

*** Ministry portions from Living Stream Ministry. Verses and footnotes from *Recovery Version of Bible*.**