

The Sovereignty of God

Part 4: In Salvation

Regeneration

What does the Bible say?

The word *regeneration*, as used in Scripture, refers to new creation. The root of the word is *generate* or *genesis*, which means “beginning” or “to create”; the prefix *re* means “again.” Paul speaks of regeneration when he writes to the Christians in Corinth:

2 Corinthians 5:17: Therefore if any man is in Christ, **he is a new creature**; the old things passed away; behold, **new things have come**.

Those who have been born again by the Holy Spirit are *new creations* of God. They have been *recreated* by the supernatural creative power of God. Paul affirms that the effective change agent of saving faith is not human work, but the creative power of God.

Galatians 6:15: For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a **new creation**.

Salvation is undeniably *supernatural*. It is God’s work; it transcends all human abilities; and it blesses mankind with innumerable benefits. Let us now consider the following **definition of regeneration**:

A sovereign act of God, performed by the Holy Spirit, in which the sinner is given the capacities needed to understand, believe, and enter the Kingdom of God by God given faith and is granted eternal life. His/her mind and will are *divinely enabled* to comprehend sin and righteousness and judgment. His/her spirit is resurrected from its natural dead state, restoring communion with God who is Spirit. It is a fundamental change in the nature of mankind having the very nature and eternal life of God implanted into the human soul. At this time the Holy Spirit enters into the being of mankind performing this transformation eternally.

Question #123: From the definition above, list a few phrases that stick out to you. _____

Question #124: If you are a Christian, what clear evidence of regeneration do you see in your own life? _____

The nature of regeneration is clearly revealed in the Bible. As we survey the following biblical texts, consider how they all point to the supernatural and sovereign work of God in salvation.

Regeneration is the *act of God*:

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

1 Peter 1:22-23: ²²Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, ²³for you **have been born again** not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, **through the living and abiding word of God.**

James 1:18: **In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth,** so that we might be, as it were, the first fruits among His creatures.

Ezekiel 11:19-20: ¹⁹And **I shall give them one heart, and shall put a new spirit within them.** And **I shall take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh,** ²⁰that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances, and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God.

Question #125: In your own words and based on the above passages, describe the way God acts to regenerate sinners. _____

Regeneration changes the *mind and will*:

Ezekiel 36:26-27: ²⁶Moreover, **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you;** and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷And **I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes,** and you **will be careful to observe** My ordinances.

1 John 3:9: No one who is born of God *practices* sin, because His seed abides in him; and **he cannot sin, because he is born of God.**²⁷

1 John 5:18-20: ¹⁸We know that **no one who is born of God sins;** but He who was born of God keeps him and the evil one does not touch him. ¹⁹We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. ²⁰And we know that the Son of God has come, and **has given us understanding, in order that we might know Him who is true,** and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

1 John 5:4: For **whatever is born of God overcomes the world;** and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

1 Corinthians 2:12-16: ¹²Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but **the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God,** ¹³which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those **taught by the Spirit,** combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. ¹⁴But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for **they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them,** because they are spiritually appraised. ¹⁵But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man. ¹⁶For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? **But we have the mind of Christ.**

Question #126: From the above passages, list several examples of clear evidence (substantial enough to hold up in court!) that a sinner has been regenerated. _____

²⁷ Note that John is discussing the *practice of sin* in 1 John 3:9 and 5:18, i.e., sin as characteristic of one's life style. He is not saying that Christians do not sin at all.

Regeneration quickens dead spirits with *eternal life* and creates a new self in the *likeness of God*:

Colossians 2:13-14: ¹³And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, ¹⁴having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Ephesians 2:4-10: ⁴But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which he loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, ⁷in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ⁹not as a result of works, that no one should boast. ¹⁰For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 4:20-24: ²⁰But you did not learn Christ in this way, ²¹if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, ²²that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, ²³and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

John 5:24: Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

John 6:39-40: ³⁹And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.

Question #127: From the above passages, explain *how* regeneration creates a new self in the likeness of God. _____

Question #128: From the above passages, describe specific ways in which the new self differs from the old self. _____

Regeneration is the very essence of salvation itself. It is the *saving act* of salvation, performed by God, whereby salvation is applied to the elect in time and space. It is the point in time when the called of God are supernaturally transformed by God. The Bible actually describes salvation as "*the washing of regeneration.*"

Titus 3:4-7: ⁴But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, ⁵He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy