

Spirit, ⁶whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

For this very reason Jesus stressed the fact that **sinners must be born again** to **enter the kingdom of God**. The **Bible plainly declares** that no can **see or enter** the kingdom of God apart from the supernatural creative power of God in regeneration.

John 3:3-7: ³Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**” ⁴Nicodemus 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?” ⁵Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**” ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘**You must be born again.**’”

Here Jesus Christ, God Himself in the flesh, reveals to Nicodemus the exclusiveness of the kingdom of God. He says **unless** one is born again, he **cannot** see the kingdom of God. The word “**cannot**” speaks of human inability, not mere unwillingness. Fallen sinners are **unable** to see the kingdom of God until and unless they experience the supernatural creative power of God in the new birth. Those who are dead in trespasses and sins have no ability to see, hear or understand the Gospel (1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; John 8:42-47; Matthew 13:10-13; Romans 3:9-12,18, 6:16, 7:14). Only those who have been regenerated are **able** to see, hear and understand who God is, their great need for salvation because of sin and long to repent of it, and that Christ is the divine provision to cancel sin and its terrible consequence of death. These are the **only ones** who are able to enter the kingdom of God. Jesus emphasized the **necessity of the new birth** in salvation by affirming three times, “**You must** be born again” (John 3:3, 5, 7).

Question #129: Read each of the Scripture passages listed in parentheses in the above paragraph. Based on these passages, explain in your own words explain *why* regeneration is **necessary** for salvation.

The analogy of birth and new life

Consider the analogy of birth which Jesus uses. People have no more choice in their natural birth than they do in their spiritual birth. We did not choose to become physically alive through the process of physical birth; we were born as the result of the decisions and actions of others. The same is true of our spiritual birth. We were born again by **God's** sovereign decision and action. This took place before we had any capacity to see, hear, or understand the Gospel; it took place when we were **dead in sin**. Our ability to believe the Gospel and receive Christ as Savior was granted to us by the sovereign choice and quickening power of God.

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

John 6:44: **No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him;** and I will raise him up on the last day.

Romans 9:16: So then it **does not depend on the man who wills** or the man who runs, **but on God who has mercy.**

Matthew 11:27: All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son, except the Father; **nor does anyone know the Father, except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.**

Just as Lazarus had no ability to raise himself from the dead, neither was he able to resist the powerful call of Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, to be resurrected (John 11:43-44). Similarly, the nation of Israel will be corporately raised from its spiritual death and brought into the glorious kingdom of God in the day of their restoration.

John 11:43-44: ⁴³And when He had said these things, **He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth."** ⁴⁴**He who had died came forth**, bound hand and foot with wrappings; and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Ezekiel 37:11-14: ¹¹Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope has perished. **We are completely cut off.**" ¹²Therefore prophesy, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, **My people;** and I will bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³Then you will know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves, **My people.** ¹⁴**And I will put My Spirit within you, and you will come to life**, and I will place you on your own land. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken and done it,'" declares the LORD."

Do babies resist being born? Do the dead resist the free gift of life? Do they even have the ability to do so? Of course not! No one resists the regenerating work of God because the work itself overcomes any possible resistance. When fallen human nature is regenerated, people are given both: 1) clear understanding of their great need for salvation; and 2) deep desire to be saved by God's power and free grace.

Luke 18:13-14: ¹³But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, "**God be merciful to me, the sinner!**" ¹⁴**I tell you, this man went down to his house justified** rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted.

Acts 2:37-39: ³⁷Now when they heard this, **they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"** ³⁸And Peter said to them, "**Repent**, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, **as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself.**

Acts 10:43-45: ⁴³"Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name **everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.**" ⁴⁴While Peter was still speaking these words, **the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message.**

⁴⁵And all the circumcised believers who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles also.

Acts 13:48: And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and **as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.**

2 Corinthians 7:9-10: ⁹I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that **you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance**; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, in order that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. ¹⁰**For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation**; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

Question #130: According to the above passages, what is the necessary result of regeneration?