



# WHAT WE BELIEVE

## Lesson 6: WHAT WE BELIEVE ... ABOUT REGENERATION

*“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”*

*John 3:3*

### Introduction

#### **Doctrinal Statement: *What we believe about regeneration***

*Regeneration is a changed heart, wrought by the Holy Spirit, Who quickens the dead in trespasses and sins enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the Word of God, and renewing their whole nature, so that they love and practice holiness. It is a work of God's free and special grace alone. (Jn. 3:1-8; Eph. 2:1-6; Titus 3:5; 1 Pet. 1:3; 1 John 5:1)*

### **I. Regeneration is a changed heart**

- *Doctrinal statement: Regeneration is a changed heart*
- *Ezek 36:26-27, And I will give you a **new heart**, and a **new spirit** I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.*

## II. Regeneration is wholly a work of God

- There are three primary views regarding the cause of regeneration:
  - 1) The human will
    - This view holds that regeneration is the act of a person, cooperating with divine influence applied through the truth
  - 2) The truth
    - This view believes that the truth of the gospel in itself has the power to regenerate, and it is the role of the Holy Spirit and the preacher to present the truth only
  - 3) The Holy Spirit
    - This view holds that regeneration is wholly the work of God through the Holy Spirit by the Word of God
- *Doctrinal statement: Regeneration is a changed heart, wrought by the Holy Spirit, Who quickens the dead in trespasses and sins*
- *Titus 3:5, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.*
- *John 3:5-8, Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter 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 again.' 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."*

- We cannot cause our new birth any more than we could have caused our physical birth. It is wholly the work of the Spirit.
- *Eph 2:1-5, And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.*
- **R. C. Sproul**, “Rebirth or regeneration ... is done by God and by God alone. A dead man cannot cooperate with his resurrection. Lazarus did not cooperate in his resurrection. Regeneration is a sovereign act of God in which man plays no role. After God brings us to life, of course, we certainly are involved in "cooperating" with Him. We are to believe, trust, obey, and work for him. But unless God acts first, we will never be reborn in the first place. We must also realize it is not as if dead people have faith, and because of their faith God agrees to regenerate them. Rather, it is because God has regenerated us and given us new life that we have faith.”
- Regeneration is not synergistic, meaning, we cooperate with God. But rather, regeneration is monergistic, meaning, “the grace of God is the only efficient cause in beginning and effecting conversion” (John Murray).
- *John 1:12-13, But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, ... were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*

### III. Regeneration comes through exposure to the Word of God

- *Doctrinal Statement: “Who quickens the dead in trespasses and sins enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the Word of God”*
- While new birth occurs “before” saving faith, it is important to note that new birth and saving faith usually come so close together that they will mostly seem to us to occur at the same time.
- *James 1:18, Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.*
- *1 Pet 1:23, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.*

### IV. Regeneration results in a radical change

- *Doctrinal Statement: “... and renewing their whole nature, so that they love and practice holiness.”*
- *1 John 3:9, No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God.*
- *1 John 4:7, Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.*

### Conclusion