

The Doctrine of Regeneration

Scriptures on Regeneration

1. **John 3:3-5**

"Jesus answered him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.'"

2. **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."

3. **2 Corinthians 5:17**

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

4. **Ezekiel 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."

5. **1 Peter 1:23**

"Since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God."

6. **James 1:18**

"Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."

Early Church Fathers on Regeneration

1. **Justin Martyr (c. 100–165 AD)**

"For Christ also said, 'Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Now, that it is impossible for those who have once been born to enter into their mothers' wombs is manifest to all." (Dialogue with Trypho, Chapter 61)

2. **Irenaeus (c. 130–202 AD)**

"For as we are lepers in sin, we are made clean by means of the sacred water and the invocation of the Lord, from our old transgressions; being spiritually regenerated as new-born babes." (Against Heresies, Book I, Chapter 21)

3. **Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–215 AD)**

"Being baptized, we are illuminated; illuminated, we become sons; being made sons, we are made perfect; being made perfect, we are made immortal."
(*Paedagogus*, Book I, Chapter 6)

Reformers on Regeneration

1. **John Calvin (1509–1564)**

"By regeneration, the Spirit of God forms in us a new life by the destruction of the old man, which is the corruption of our nature derived from the first man. For this reason, the Scripture exhorts us to put off the old man, to be renewed in the spirit of our mind, and to put on the new man, created after God in righteousness and true holiness." (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book 3, Chapter 3)

2. **Martin Luther (1483–1546)**

"Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that a man would stake his life on it a thousand times. This faith, through the work of the Holy Spirit, brings about regeneration and transforms the heart of the believer."

3. **Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758)**

"Regeneration is that change by which the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us." (*A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*)

Modern Bible Scholars on Regeneration

1. **Charles H. Spurgeon (1834–1892)**

"Regeneration is a subject which lies at the very basis of salvation, and we should be very diligent to take heed that we really are 'born again,' for there are many who fancy they are, who are not."

2. **J.I. Packer (1926–2020)**

"Regeneration is a New Testament concept. It speaks of a supernatural change wrought in man by the Holy Spirit through which the governing disposition of the soul is made holy, and the first holy exercise of this disposition is secured."

3. **Wayne Grudem (b. 1948)**

"Regeneration is a secret act of God in which he imparts new spiritual life to us."

*This is sometimes called being 'born again' (using language from John 3:3-8)."
(Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine)*

Modern Bible Teachers on Regeneration

A.W. Tozer (1897–1963)

"Regeneration is not simply a word on a theological checklist; it is the power of God transforming the soul. It is not merely an intellectual decision to follow Christ, but a profound inward change wrought by the Spirit of God that re-creates a person in the image of Christ."

(The Pursuit of God)

R.C. Sproul (1939–2017)

"Regeneration is a sovereign act of God, by which the Holy Spirit changes the disposition of the soul. It is not a response to faith but rather the cause of faith."

(Chosen by God)

John MacArthur (b. 1939)

"Regeneration is the act of God by which He imparts eternal life to those who are 'dead in trespasses and sins.' It is not something we can achieve on our own but is entirely the work of God's grace."

(The Gospel According to Jesus)

Billy Graham (1918–2018)

"To be born again means that we are changed from the inside out. The Spirit of God transforms our hearts, and we are made new in Christ Jesus. This is the miracle of regeneration and the promise of the gospel."

Tim Keller (1950–2023)

"Regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit, taking what is dead and making it alive. It's not simply moral reformation but a complete reorientation of the heart toward God, brought about by grace."

(Center Church)

Dallas Willard (1935–2013)

"Regeneration is not a human project; it is the life of God entering the human soul. The Spirit works in us to bring about a kind of spiritual rebirth that begins now and continues into eternity."

(Renovation of the Heart)

Alistair Begg (b. 1952)

"Regeneration is the starting point of the Christian life. It's the divine work of the Holy Spirit, bringing new life where there was once death, and enabling us to respond to the gospel with faith and repentance."
