

## Regeneration and Conversion

- I. It is commonly assumed that *regeneration* and *conversion* are referring to the one and the same thing: the change of man's inward nature which brings him out of death in trespasses and sins into a state of grace and spiritual life.
- II. Definitions.
  - A. regenerate: In religious use; to cause to be born again in a spiritual sense; to invest with a new and higher spiritual nature.
  - B. convert: To turn in position or direction. To turn (a thing or oneself) about, to give a different (or specific) direction to.
- III. Regeneration refers to the *inward* change of God's elect.
  - A. The soul and spirit are within. **JOB 14:22; 1CO 2:11.**
  - B. God's design in salvation is to first change only the inward parts. **JER 31:33-34; ROM 7:22; 1JO 3:2.**
  - C. This regeneration is based upon sheer mercy and is exclusive of our works. **1PE 1:3; TIT 3:5; HEB 8:10-12.**
    1. mercy: Forbearance and compassion shown by one person to another who is in his power and who has no claim to receive kindness; kind and compassionate treatment in a case where severity is merited or expected.
    2. work: Something that is or was done; what a person does or did...
    3. Nothing that the sinner *does* gives him a claim to this kindness.
  - D. Noting the exclusion of sinners' works, regeneration is also called:
    1. a *new birth, born again* or *born of God*. **JOH 3:3, 5-8 c/w JOH 1:13.**
    2. a *begetting*. **1JO 5:1.**
    3. a *quickenings*. **EPH 2:1; JOH 5:21; 6:63; COL 2:13.**
    4. a *creation*. **EPH 4:24; 2CO 5:17; 2CO 4:6.**
    5. a *calling*. **1PE 5:10; 2TI 1:9.**
  - E. This inward change (regeneration) is effectually wrought by the VOICE of the Son of God calling the dead to life. **JOH 5:25; 10:27-28; ROM 8:30.**
    1. It is HIS voice, not that of the gospel preacher.
    2. It is the same power that resurrected Lazarus. **JOH 11:43-44.**
    3. No preacher had a hand in that.
- IV. Conversion involves hearing, understanding, believing and obeying the declared word of God (Scripture). **PSA 19:7; 51:13; MAT 13:15.**
  - A. Understanding, believing and obeying the gospel are outside of the abilities of a natural, unregenerate man. **JOH 8:43-47; 1CO 2:14; ROM 8:7-8 c/w 1JO 3:22-23.**
  - B. Conversion requires repentance. **ACT 3:19.**
    1. Repentance is a work. **ACT 26:20; MAT 12:41 c/w JON 3:10.**
    2. Remember, regeneration is not based upon works. **TIT 3:5.**
    3. Therefore, conversion cannot be the very same thing as regeneration.
- V. A person may be a regenerated child of God, yet not converted.
  - A. Peter was in need of conversion. **LUK 22:32.**
    1. Peter had previously confessed Jesus as Christ. **MAT 16:16.**
    2. One who does such IS born of God. **1JO 5:1.**

- B. Brethren in Christ may need converting. **JAM 5:19-20.**
- C. John the Baptist was invested with the Holy Ghost before he was even born. **LUK 1:15, 41, 44.**
  - 1. The indwelling of the Spirit of God IS regeneration and proof of sonship. **GAL 4:6; ROM 8:9, 14.**
  - 2. It is the earnest of full salvation. **ROM 8:11.**
- D. Cornelius was a regenerate man before hearing the gospel, which is the instrument of conversion. **ACT 10.**
  - 1. He genuinely feared God, which a spiritually dead sinner (a natural man only) will not do. **ACT 10:2 c/w ROM 3:18.**
  - 2. He earnestly prayed and his prayers were accepted of God, which cannot be said of the wicked. **ACT 10:2-4 c/w PSA 10:4; 1PE 3:12.**
  - 3. Before Peter got to him, Cornelius had been working righteousness. **ACT 10:35.**
    - a. Therefore, he was already righteous before God. **1JO 3:7.**
    - b. Therefore, he was already born of God. **1JO 2:29.**
- E. Paul had received the gracious inward call before he ever heard the gospel. **GAL 1:15-16.**
  - 1. God did not on the road to Damascus *offer* His Son to Paul, nor *place* His Son in Paul, but to REVEAL His Son in Paul and convert him into His minister. **ACT 26:16.**
  - 2. Like Jacob, Paul had been unwittingly resisting his own Lord. **GEN 32:24-32.**
- F. Paul spoke of certain *unconverted* Gentiles who were keeping the law of God from a lively inward nature. **ROM 2:13-15.**
  - 1. They had “not the law.” The law under consideration was the written revelation which, by contrast, the Jews had but disobeyed. **ROM 2:23-24; 3:1-2.**
  - 2. The law of God is the instrument of conversion. **PSA 19:7.**
  - 3. By their noble actions they manifested the fact that God had written His laws in their heart! **ROM 2:15.**
  - 4. Therefore, they were beneficiaries of the new covenant of cancelled sins and so were regenerate. **HEB 8:10-12 c/w COL 2:13.**

- VI. Clearly, regeneration and conversion are not the very same thing.
  - A. Conversion requires the gospel.
  - B. The unregenerate cannot receive the gospel.
  - C. Regeneration PRECEDES conversion by the gospel.
  - D. Regeneration occurs in spite of conversion by the gospel.
  - E. Regeneration *imparts* life and immortality.
  - F. Conversion *reveals that a person HAS* life and immortality. **2TI 1:9-10.**
  - G. Conversion gives men assurance that they are God's elect in possession of eternal life. **1TH 1:4-6; 1JO 5:13.**
  - H. Conversion brings a supplemental salvation to God's elect, cleaning up their defiled record and moving them from the darkness of error unto walking in Christ's light. **2TI 2:10; ACT 3:19; 1JO 1:3-9.**

## Regeneration and Conversion Compared

### Regeneration

A creative act of God  
An instantaneous event  
God's will is sovereign  
Without any means  
Apart from the gospel  
The voice of Christ to the dead  
Gives life to sinners  
Necessary for eternal life  
Man is entirely passive  
Can reach even an infant  
Can exist without conversion  
Is compared to conception/birth  
The condition for conversion  
Origination of life  
Irresistible by man  
Uniformly complete in each man  
No flesh can glory  
Guaranteed by grace  
Makes one a child of God  
Involves creation  
Action of God  
Unconditional on man's part  
Perfect  
Man cannot influence or direct  
Cannot be undone  
Cornelius before meeting Peter  
Paul before Damascus road  
Analogous to Lazarus' resurrection

### Conversion

A revealed duty of man  
A gradual and repeated process  
Man is responsible  
By many means  
By means of the gospel  
The voice of the preacher to the living  
Brings activity from life  
Needed for fellowship with God  
Man is considerably active  
Cannot influence an infant  
Can't exist without regeneration  
Is compared to walking/growing  
The evidence of regeneration  
Manifestation of life  
Resistible by man  
Variously partial in each man  
Flesh gets some credit  
Made possible by grace  
Manifests one is a child of God  
Involves conviction  
Reaction of man  
Conditional on man's part  
Imperfect  
Man can labor to bring about  
Can be undone by sin  
Cornelius after meeting Peter  
Paul after Damascus road  
Analogous to Lazarus' unwrapping