**Biblical Foundations – Regeneration**

**What does it mean to be born again?**

**Regeneration- is a secret act of God in which he imparts new spiritual life to us.** This is often times referred to as ***“being born again.”*** (John 3:3-8)

**Regeneration Is Totally A Work of God**- In some elements of the application of redemption, we play an active part (i.e., conversion, sanctification, perseverance), but in the work of regeneration we play no active role at all. It is totally a work of God. The fact that we are passive in regeneration is evident when scripture refers to it as being ***“born”*** or being ***“born again.”*** (James 1:18, 1 Peter 1:3) We did not choose to be made physically alive, and we did not choose to be born- it is something that happened to us; similarly, these analogies in Scripture suggest that we are entirely passive in regeneration. This sovereign work of God in regeneration was also predicted in the prophecy of Ezekiel. Through him God promised a time in the future when he would give new spiritual life to his people. (Ezekiel 36:26-27)

Which member of the trinity causes regeneration? When Jesus spoke of being ***“born of the Spirit”*** (John 3:8), he indicates that it is especially the Holy Spirit who produces regeneration. But other verses also indicate the involvement of God the Father in regeneration. (Ephesians 2:5, James 1:18, 1 Peter 1:3) Therefore we can conclude that both God the Father and God the Holy Spirit bring about regeneration.

What is the connection between effective calling and regeneration? Scripture indicates that regeneration must come before we can respond to effective calling with saving faith. Therefore, we can say that regeneration comes before the result of effective calling (our faith). But it is more difficult to specify the exact relationship in time between regeneration and the human proclamation of the gospel through which God works in effective calling. At least two passages suggest that God regenerates us ***at the same time*** as he speaks to us in effective calling. (1 Peter 1:23,25) (James 1:18) Effective calling is thus God the Father ***speaking powerfully to us***, and regeneration is God the Holy Spirit ***working powerfully in us***, to make us alive.

**The Exact Nature Of Regeneration Is Mysterious To Us**- Exactly what happens in regeneration is mysterious to us. We know that somehow we who were spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1) have been made alive to God and in a very real sense we have been ***“born again.”*** But we don’t understand how this happens or what exactly God does to give us this new spiritual life. (John 3:8) Scripture views regeneration as something that affects us as whole persons, and not simply our spirits. (2 Corinthians 5:17) Because regeneration is a work of God within us in which he gives us new life, it is right to conclude that it is an ***instantaneous event***. It happens only once, but the change will become evident over time in patterns of behavior, desires, and speech that is pleasing to God.

**Genuine Regeneration Must Bring results In Life**- There are numerous examples of the results of regeneration in a person’s life throughout scripture:

* Receptive to the Gospel (Acts 16:14)
* Does not make a practice of sin (1 John 3:9)
* Genuine Christlike love for others (1 John 4:7)
* Overcomes the challenges of the world (1 John 5:4)
* Protection from Satan ( 1 John 5:18, 1 John 4:4)
* Manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)

Scripture emphasizes these as necessary results in the lives of those who are born again. If there is genuine regeneration in a person’s life, he or she ***will*** believe that Jesus is the Christ, ***will*** refrain from a pattern of continual sin, ***will*** love his neighbor, ***will*** overcome the temptations of the world, ***will*** be kept from ultimate degeneration by Satan, and ***will*** display the characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit. These passages show that it is impossible for a person to be regenerated and not become truly converted.