

The first stanza of a well-known gospel song goes like this:

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine;  
 Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!  
 Heir of salvation, purchase of God;  
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

The theological word that speaks of this ministry of the Holy Spirit is "regeneration." This word is used in the A.V. only twice; once in Matthew 19:28, where it speaks of all things being made new in the end time; and once in Titus 3:5, where it speaks of the initial application of salvation, when the Holy Spirit cleanses and makes new the believing sinner. The word is not even used in the NIV (Matthew 19:28 is translated "renewal" and Titus 3:5 is translated "rebirth.")

What does "regeneration" mean? For a working definition, let us adopt the following:

**Regeneration is the impartation, by the Holy Spirit,  
 of spiritual life to one who is spiritually dead**

Why is regeneration necessary? Because the Bible reveals fallen human beings as spiritually dead and morally depraved. These two aspects of our spiritual condition establish the necessity of regeneration.

In Psalm 51:5 David says: "Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me."

In Ephesians 2:1, 3 Paul says: "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins . . . Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath."

And in Colossians 2:13 Paul writes: "When you were dead in your sins . . . God made you alive with Christ."

Scripture teaches that all natural descendants of Adam in their natural state are spiritually dead, dead in trespasses and sins, sinners, bondslaves to sin, at enmity with God, rebels against the Law of God, suppressors of