

That this might not be attested in words only, the Lord also approved it by deed. At the moment of his resurrection he deemed many of the saints worthy of sharing in his resurrection and let them be seen in the city of Jerusalem (Matt. 27: 52-53). In this he has given a sure pledge that whatever he did or suffered in acquiring eternal salvation pertains to the believers of the Old Testament as much as to ourselves. Truly, as Peter testified, they were endowed with the same Spirit of faith whereby we are reborn into life (Acts 15:8).<sup>1</sup>

Suppose we reckon the multitude of those whom he gathers into the communion of his church from all peoples, men regenerated by his Spirit through the preaching of the gospel. Then we will say that in Ancient Israel there were very few--almost none--who embraced the Lord's covenant with their whole hearts and minds. Yet, reckoned by themselves without comparison, there were many.<sup>2</sup>

#### THE VIEW OF PURITAN WRITERS

The earlier Puritan writers, and those who later followed in that tradition, held clear and definite views concerning the reality of regeneration in the Old Testament.

John Owen's Discourse Concerning the Holy Spirit, published in 1674, was regarded by Abraham Kuyper as unsurpassed. In this work Owen states:

Both regeneration and the doctrine of it were under the Old Testament. All the elect of God in their several generations were regenerated by the Spirit of God. But in that enlargement of truth and grace under the gospel, which came by Jesus Christ, as more persons than of old were made partakers of it, so the nature of the work itself is far more clearly and distinctly revealed. . . .

Regeneration is the same work, for the kind of it, and wrought by the same power of the Spirit in all that are regenerate, or ever were, or shall be so, from the beginning to the end of the world. . . . The elect of God under the Old Testament were not regenerate one way, and those under the New Testament another.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 448-49.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 457.

<sup>3</sup>John Owen, Discourse Concerning the Holy Spirit, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publication, 1954), pp. 123-25.