

(when it is mentioned at all) is: Were Old Testament believers regenerate in the sense of the New Testament definition? That is, the New Testament is implicitly called upon to provide us with the normative concept of regeneration. This part of the question must now be made explicit. Thus we must ask plainly the question: Were Old Testament believers regenerate as New Testament believers are regenerate?

The Relationship between Depravity and Regeneration

Throughout the New Testament, regeneration is viewed as necessitated by the fact of man's moral and spiritual depravity and death. In I Corinthians 2:14 Paul states: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Ephesians 2:4,5 tell us: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ."

Thus C. I Scofield, in his note on John 3:3 states:

The necessity of the new birth grows out of the incapacity of the natural man to "see" or "enter into" the kingdom of God. However gifted, moral, or refined, the natural man is absolutely blind to spiritual truth, and impotent to enter the kingdom; for he can neither obey, understand, nor please God.¹

And, of course, the passage to which Dr. Scofield refers puts this necessity in strong terms:

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.
 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?
 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God
 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

(John 3:3-7)

¹The Scofield Reference Bible, p. 1117.