

When at the end of that year I transferred to another school, I carried these questions and doubts with me, and sometimes they surfaced.

At the second college, whenever I asked someone who I thought would know something about the subject (the meaning of regeneration), something like the following would take place. I would ask, "What is regeneration?" and the answer would come back, "It's the new birth." "But what is the new birth," I asked. "The new birth is being born again." "But what does it mean to be born again?" "It means being born from above, being born by the Spirit." "But what does being born from above involve? And what is it that is born?" "Why, it involves trusting in Christ; and you are the one who is born again. 'Ye must be born again!'"

If I dared ask any further questions, I would be told that the new birth is a mystery; and so, rather than continue asking for answers that I already knew, I stopped pestering people and began an earnest study of the Bible's teachings, attempting to get at the heart of the meaning of regeneration.

I discovered that the Bible presents the doctrine of regeneration under several aspects, but chiefly four: a new birth, a new life, a new creation, and a new nature.

Using these four aspects, let us consider a number of scriptures that refer to regeneration, and then attempt a definition for each aspect.

Scripture References to Regeneration

Aspect One: Regeneration as a New Birth

1. Titus 3:5 -- "Not by works in righteousness which we did, but according to His mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration." (διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας). The word translated regeneration (παλιγγενεσία) means "a being generated again," "a being born again." Notice that the last part of the verse reads, "and renewal of the Holy Spirit." (καὶ ἀνακαίνωσως πνεύματος ἁγίου). Thus we see the role of the Spirit of God in the new birth. Notice also that it is not the spirit of God who is the object of the renewal (He. needs no renewal!); rather it is He who renews. By parallel construction, it is not regeneration that is washed, but rather we who are washed by regeneration.

2. John 1:12-13 -- "But those, who received Him, He gave to them power to become children of God (τέκνα θεοῦ), to those believing in His name, who were begotten (ἐγεννήθησαν), not of bloods,, nor of. the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (ἐκ θεοῦ) Notice that those who receive and trust in Christ become born-ones of God and are begotten of God.

3. John 3:1-8 -- "There was a man of the Pharisees, whose name was Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This one came to Him at night and said to Him, 'Rabbi, we know that you have come as a teacher from God; for no one is able to do these signs which you are doing, except God is with him.' Jesus answered and said to him 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is begotten again (γεννηθῆ ἄνωθεν), he is not able to see the kingdom of God.' Nicodemus says to Him, 'How is a man able to be begotten (γεννηθῆναι), being old? He is not able to enter the womb of his mother a second time and be begotten (γεννηθῆναι), is he?' Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is