

BIBLE TRUTHS EXPLAINED

What the Bible Teaches About

REGENERATION

Revised Edition, 2026

GORDON LYONS

ESV Edition

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The series *Bible Truths Explained* may be downloaded, printed and used free of charge by individuals, groups, and institutions.

However, none of these doctrinal notes may be offered for sale or for commercial publication.

Bible Truths Explained: *Regeneration*
First published: 2005, Revised 2026

gordonlyons.org

Bible Truths Explained

Regeneration

Revised: 1987, 1999, 2005

First Published: 2005

Copyright © 2005, 2026 Gordon Lyons

All Rights Reserved

The entire text of this work, or extracts from it, may be quoted, copied, or reproduced elsewhere on condition that the author's original text remains unaltered (except for localized spellings) and the name of the original work, including the title, and the name of the author are acknowledged in a format similar to the following:

Reproduced [or Quoted] from
Bible Truths Explained: *Regeneration* (Revised Edition, 2026)
Copyright © 2005, 2026 Gordon Lyons
gordonlyons.org

Any quotations in these Works taken from other authors remain the property of those authors or their representatives, and may require the written consent of the respective copyright holders for republication. This does not apply to quotations from any author's works that are now in the public domain.

Permitted Charges and Payments

Unless otherwise stated, all Works produced by this author must remain free of charge, and must not be offered for sale or for commercial publication without the prior written consent of the author.

However, Organizations, Institutions, and Educational establishments, etc. are at liberty to recover from their members or students the costs of printing, duplicating, copying to electronic media, or otherwise reproducing the *NT Expository Notes* series or the *Bible Truths Explained* series of studies in order to provide individual copies to their members or students.

Translation Information

The entire unabridged text of any of this author's original Works may be translated and made available in other languages on condition that the essential meaning of the text is not altered and that the name of the original work(s) and the name of the author are acknowledged in a form similar to that shown below:

Translated from
Bible Truths Explained: *Regeneration* (Revised Edition, 2026)
Copyright © 2005, 2026 Gordon Lyons
gordonlyons.org

Providing that the above conditions are met, the full text of translated editions, or extracts from them, may be made available free of charge on the Internet, or elsewhere.

Any quotations in these Works taken from other authors remain the property of those authors or their representatives, and may require the written consent of the respective copyright holders for republication. This does not apply to quotations from any author's works that are now in the public domain.

Scripture quotations
are taken from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. Copyright © 2001 by
www.crosswaybibles.org
Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers.
Used by permission.
All rights reserved.

PRINCIPAL WORKS CONSULTED

Barnes, Alfred	<i>Notes on The Bible</i> , Electronic edition (public domain)
Bauer, Walter / revised and edited by Danker, Frederick William	A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, (Third Edition BDAG) Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000.
Bavinck, Herman	<i>Reformed Dogmatics</i> , Baker Academic, Logos Bible Software
Bavinck, Herman	<i>Reformed Ethics</i> , Baker Academic, Logos Bible Software
Beeke, Joel & Smalley, Paul M.	<i>Reformed Systematic Theology</i> , Crossway Books, Logos Bible Software
Berkhof, Louis	<i>Systematic Theology</i> , Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1939, 1941 reprint.
Boettner, Loraine	<i>Roman Catholicism</i> , Phillipsburg: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1962
Calvin, John	<i>Institutes</i> : [Beveridge Translation, 1800, Battles Translation Vols. 14, 1960] Rio, WI, USA: Logos Bible Software
Clarke, Adam	<i>Commentary on the New Testament</i> : Electronic edition (public domain)
Dabney, R. L.	<i>Systematic Theology</i> , [St. Louis: Presbyterian Publishing Company of St. Louis, 1871, second ed. 1878] Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust edition, 1985.
Gaebelein, Frank E & various contributing authors	<i>Various Volumes</i> , The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Frank E. Gaebelein, (General Editor): Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House.
Gill, John	<i>Exposition of the Entire Bible</i> , Electronic edition (public domain)
Grudem, Wayne A.	<i>Systematic Theology</i> , Logos Bible Software
Hodge, Charles	<i>Systematic Theology</i> , Vols. 1-3; Grand Rapids, Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977 reprint.

Hodge, Charles	<i>Princeton Sermons</i> , Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1879, 1979 reprint.
Jamieson, Fausset & Brown [JFB]	<i>Commentary on The Whole Bible</i> (Revised edition, 1961): Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House, 1991.
Jones, Dr. D. Martyn-Lloyd	<i>God The Holy Spirit: Great Doctrines of the Bible</i> , Vol. 2: copyright ©1997 by Elizabeth Catherford and Ann Desmond, Published by Crossway Books, a division of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois 60187, U.S.A. This edition published by arrangement with Good News Publishers. All Rights Reserved. Electronic edition: The Ephesians Four Group, P.O.Box 1505, Escondido, Ca 92033.
Keil, C.F & Delitzsch, F	<i>Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament</i> Vols. 1-10: Electronic Edition STEP Files Copyright © 2000, Findex.Com. All rights reserved. Parsons Church Group, A Division of Findex.com, Inc. Omaha, Nebraska.
Murray, John	<i>Redemption Accomplished and Applied</i> , Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955, undated reprint.
Poole, Matthew	<i>A Commentary on The Holy Bible</i> Vols. 1-3 (1685-1700): Edinburgh, Banner of Truth Trust, 1878, 2000 reprint.
Robertson, A.T.	<i>Robertson's Word Pictures</i> , Electronic edition (public domain)
Smeaton, George	<i>The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit</i> , Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1882, 1988 reprint.
Vaughan, C. R.	<i>The Gifts of the Holy Spirit</i> , Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1894, 1994 reprint.
Vincent, Marvin R.	<i>Vincent's Word Studies</i> , Electronic Edition STEP Files Copyright © 1998, Parsons Technology, Inc., all rights reserved.
WCF	<i>Westminster Confession of Faith</i> , Inverness: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1976 reprint.

Special Acknowledgement

I must acknowledge a genuine debt of gratitude to the work of Dr. Charles Hodge. The writings of this theologian from a previous generation have helped considerably in preparing this work. On a number of occasions—as will be seen when reading these studies—I have cited or alluded to Dr. Hodge's remarks in his three-volume *Systematic Theology*. These references have been acknowledged in the footnotes to the study text.

Regeneration

Table of Contents

IMPORTANT NOTICE.....	ii
COPYRIGHT NOTICES.....	iii
Permitted Charges and Payments	iii
Translation Information.....	iii
PRINCIPAL WORKS CONSULTED	v
Regeneration.....	vii
PART 1	1
Synopsis: Effectual Calling and Regeneration	1
Note 1: Nature of Effectual Calling	1
Scripture References (ESV) <i>Effectual Calling</i>	1
Note 2: The Holy Spirit Seals the Believer to God	2
Scripture References (ESV) <i>The Holy Spirit Seals the Believer to God</i>	2
Note 3: In Regeneration, the Sinner is Passive.....	3
Scripture References (ESV) <i>In Regeneration, the Sinner is Passive</i>	3
Note 4: The Unregenerate Sinner Remains in Satan’s Domain	4
Scripture References (ESV) <i>The Unregenerate Sinner Remains in Satan’s Domain</i>	4
Related Bible Truths.....	5
Part 1 Summary.....	6
PART 2	9
Doctrine of Regeneration: Outline of Regeneration	9
Different Names for Regeneration.....	10
The Necessity of Regeneration	10
Part 2 Summary.....	11
PART 3	14
Divergent Views of Regeneration	14
Baptism Cannot Effect Regeneration	15
Biblical Teaching of Regeneration.....	16
Part 3 Summary.....	18
PART 4	21
How Regeneration is Effected.....	21

Deliverance From Darkness to Light	21
The Effect of Preaching The Gospel	22
Difference Between Regeneration and Conversion	23
Part 4 Summary.....	25
PART 5	28
Sinners Commanded to Seek the Lord.....	28
Scripture References (ESV) <i>NT Illustrations of Water and The Spirit</i>	29
Scripture References (ESV) <i>OT Illustrations of Water and The Spirit</i>	30
Water of Life Free to All.....	31
Part 5 Summary.....	32
PART 6	35
Baptised By The Holy Spirit.....	35
One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism	37
Part 6 Summary.....	39
PART 7	42
God is the Author of Regeneration.....	42
Agency of The Holy Spirit in Regeneration.....	42
Scripture References (ESV) <i>OT Passages on Regeneration</i>	42
Scripture References (ESV) <i>NT Passages on Regeneration</i>	43
Part 7 Summary.....	45
PART 8	48
Examples of Regeneration	48
Scripture References (ESV) <i>Jesus and Nicodemus</i>	48
Scripture References (ESV) <i>Other NT Passages</i>	49
Scripture References (ESV) <i>Additional Scriptures Relating to the New Birth</i>	50
Part 8 Summary.....	52
Part 9 follows below.....	55
PART 9	56
God's Spirit Will Not Always Strive With Man.....	56
Consequences of Resisting the Outward Call.....	56
Above Warnings are Not Addressed to Genuine Believers	58
Part 9 Summary.....	59
PART 10	62
Born Again as Children of God.....	62
Scripture References (ESV) <i>Born Again as Children of God</i>	62
Only those Born Again by the Holy Spirit are God's Children.....	64
Part 10 Summary.....	65

PART 11	68
Evidences Confirming Regeneration	68
Good and Bad Fruit.....	68
Scripture References (ESV) <i>Good and Bad Fruit</i>	68
Living to Honour the Lord	70
Scripture References (ESV) <i>Living to Honour the Lord</i>	70
Part 11 Summary.....	72
PART 12	75
New Birth Evidenced by Love, Victory and Peace	75
Scripture References (ESV) <i>New Birth Evidenced by Love</i>	75
Victory in Union with Christ.....	76
Scripture References (ESV) <i>Victory in Union with Christ</i>	76
Peace Within	78
Scripture References (ESV) <i>Peace Within</i>	78
Part 12 Summary.....	80
PART 13	83
Clear Evidences of Regeneration	83
In the World, But Not Of the World.....	83
Taking up the Cross.....	83
Scripture References (ESV) <i>Taking up the Cross</i>	83
Warring Against the Sinful Nature	84
Scripture References (ESV) <i>Warring Against the Sinful Nature</i>	84
Perfection is the Prize	85
Scripture References (ESV) <i>Perfection is the Prize</i>	85
Part 13 Summary.....	87
PART 14	90
Evidences Denying Regeneration.....	90
No Regeneration Without Holiness	91
Holiness of Life	92
Part 14 Summary.....	94
Final Summary	97
Regeneration (The New Birth).....	97

PART 1

Synopsis: Effectual Calling and Regeneration

Because of the Fall, all humanity is dead (spiritually) in trespasses and sins and utterly alienated from God, their Creator. Effectual calling is a work of the Holy Spirit, who, in sovereign grace, irresistibly draws a person to Christ, illuminates their mind to understand the basic truths of the gospel message, and regenerates that person to newness of life. As an immediate and almost simultaneous consequence of the Spirit's convicting, convincing and converting operations, the sinner is enabled to apprehend fully his or her great spiritual need and danger, to repent of their sins, and to believe wholeheartedly on the Son of God as their personal Saviour and Lord. Regeneration is the actual and instantaneous birth of an entirely new spiritual life. A person who once was spiritually dead; in total darkness to spiritual truths, and alienated from God by sin, is made alive spiritually and is reconciled to God. The Lord Jesus delivers that person from the kingdom of darkness, and transfers him to the kingdom of light. The Lord releases this person from slavery to sin, to the freedom to live unto God in holiness of life. The Lord also delivers the believer from the fear of death, replacing it with the gift of eternal life and peace with God. As with effectual calling, regeneration or the new birth is a work of the Holy Spirit. Regeneration, repentance and faith are followed by justification, sanctification, and, ultimately, glorification.

Note 1: Nature of Effectual Calling

Effectual calling is that work of the Holy Spirit in a person's heart whereby the Spirit truly and properly convicts that person of his sin, and convinces him of his great need of redemption. The Spirit also makes him deeply aware of the penalty he must pay if he does not avail himself of the redemption freely offered him in Christ Jesus. Then, the Holy Spirit leads this now convicted, convinced and repentant sinner to embrace the salvation promised to him through faith in Christ. Effectual calling stands intimately related to the work of regeneration. However, whereas effectual calling may be a prolonged process, regeneration is an instantaneous act.

Scripture References (ESV) *Effectual Calling*

John 5:25

²⁵ "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. (See v.21; contrast vv.28-29)

Acts 2:37-39

³⁷ Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" ³⁸ And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." (See vv.14-36)

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14

¹³ But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits ¹ to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. ¹⁴ To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Note 2: The Holy Spirit Seals the Believer to God

As with every other aspect of a person's salvation, regeneration is entirely a gift of God's grace. God freely bestows the new birth on the undeserving sinner. He does this according to his sovereign purposes in election. Because of Christ's redemptive work, the believer becomes the purchased possession of God. To identify him permanently as belonging to God, each believer receives the seal of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit acts as the divine guarantor of the believer's final redemption.

Scripture References (ESV)*The Holy Spirit Seals the Believer to God*

2 Corinthians 1:21-22

²¹ And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, ²² and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

2 Corinthians 5:4-5

⁴ For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵ He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. (See vv.1-10)

Ephesians 1:13-14

¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (See vv.4-12)

Titus 3:4-7

⁴ But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our

¹ chose you as the firstfruits: [2 Thessalonians 2:13](#) Some manuscripts chose you from the beginning. (ESV footnote)

Saviour, ⁷ so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Note 3: In Regeneration, the Sinner is Passive

God commands all people everywhere to repent; and all mankind is deemed responsible to God and inexcusable if they fail to seek the Lord's mercy. However, although they can seek to know the ways of the Lord, yet—because of their spiritually dead and sinfully inclined natures—no-one anywhere can exercise saving faith in Christ unless God gives this kind of faith to that person. A person is responsible for seeking the Lord or turning toward God (and only his spiritually dead and sinful nature impedes him from doing so). However, because he is spiritually dead, that person cannot repent and believe unless effectually called and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Concerning regeneration or the new birth, therefore, a person is *entirely passive*. The sinner can do nothing to assist in his new birth. In the act of regeneration, the sinner is as helpless as a child during the process of natural birth.

Scripture References (ESV)

In Regeneration, the Sinner is Passive

Matthew 11:27

²⁷ All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. (See vv.25-26)

John 6:44

⁴⁴ No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. (See v.45)

John 6:65

⁶⁵ And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father." (See vv.64-66)

Ephesians 2:8-9

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (See vv.1-10)

James 1:16-18

¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. ¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. ¹⁸ Of his own will

he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. (See vv.19-25)

Note 4: The Unregenerate Sinner Remains in Satan's Domain

Regeneration is the only means by which a person can experience deliverance from Satan's kingdom or the kingdom of darkness, and be transferred into God's kingdom or the kingdom of light. Unless the Holy Spirit regenerates a person, he remains in Satan's domain, a child of the devil, and under the wrath and curse of God. Since he is a sinner by birth and by choice—and since he remains totally alienated from, and at enmity with, a holy and righteous God—this is his just desert. Only by the sovereign grace of God may he be delivered from this state and translated into the state of the children of God.

Scripture References (ESV)

The Unregenerate Sinner Remains in Satan's Domain

John 8:44

⁴⁴You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (See vv.37-47)

1 John 3:8

⁸Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

1 John 3:10

¹⁰By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practise righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

1 John 5:19

¹⁹We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. (See v.18)

Acts 26:17-18

¹⁷delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you ¹⁸to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.' (See vv.15-16)

Colossians 1:12-14

¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. ¹³ He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Related Bible Truths

Closely linked to the doctrine of regeneration are the doctrines of *predestination*, *faith*, *repentance*, and *justification*. All those whom God has given to the Son are drawn to him by the Holy Spirit in effectual calling. Those whom the Spirit effectually calls and renews spiritually, he enables to repent of their sins, and believe—*freely and willingly*—on the Lord Jesus Christ. In Christ, and by God's Spirit, they receive justification, adoption, and sanctification.²

Summary below

² See *Bible Truths Explained: Predestination; Faith; Repentance; Justification; Adoption; Sanctification*.

Part 1 Summary

BTE09 Summary — Regeneration (ESV Edition)

Part 1: Effectual Calling and Regeneration

Definition

Effectual Calling and Regeneration are sovereign works of the Holy Spirit whereby spiritually dead sinners are drawn to Christ, given new spiritual life, enabled to understand the gospel, and brought to repentance and faith. Effectual calling is the Spirit's work of convicting, convincing, and drawing a sinner to Christ, while regeneration is the instantaneous new birth that transforms a person from spiritual death to spiritual life.

Key Truths

1. **All humanity is spiritually dead because of the Fall** — sinners are alienated from God and unable to save themselves.
 2. **Effectual calling is the work of the Holy Spirit** — He convicts sinners of sin and draws them to Christ.
 3. **Effectual calling leads to repentance and faith** — those whom God calls respond to the gospel.
 4. **Regeneration is the new birth** — God imparts new spiritual life to a spiritually dead sinner.
 5. **Regeneration is instantaneous** — unlike the process of conviction, the new birth occurs in a moment.
 6. **The Holy Spirit illuminates the mind** — regenerated sinners begin to understand spiritual truth.
 7. **Regeneration transfers sinners from darkness to light** — believers are delivered from Satan's kingdom and brought into Christ's kingdom.
 8. **Repentance and faith follow regeneration** — the new birth enables sinners to repent and believe freely and willingly.
 9. **Salvation is entirely of grace** — regeneration is God's sovereign gift, not the result of human effort.
 10. **The sinner is passive in regeneration** — just as a child contributes nothing to physical birth, a sinner contributes nothing to spiritual birth.
-

11. **The Holy Spirit seals believers to God** — He guarantees the believer's final redemption.
 12. **Regeneration delivers from slavery to sin** — believers are freed to live for God in holiness.
 13. **The unregenerate remain under Satan's dominion** — they continue under spiritual darkness and God's wrath.
 14. **Regeneration begins the process of salvation** — repentance, faith, justification, sanctification, and glorification follow.
-

Biblical Foundations

Effectual Calling

1. **John 5:25** — the spiritually dead hear Christ's voice and live.
2. **Acts 2:37-39** — those convicted by the Spirit are called to repentance and receive the Holy Spirit.
3. **2 Thessalonians 2:13-14** — God calls His people through the gospel to salvation.

The Holy Spirit Seals the Believer

4. **2 Corinthians 1:21-22** — God seals believers and gives His Spirit as a guarantee.
5. **2 Corinthians 5:4-5** — the Spirit guarantees the believer's future inheritance.
6. **Ephesians 1:13-14** — believers are sealed by the Holy Spirit until final redemption.
7. **Titus 3:4-7** — salvation comes through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

The Sinner Is Passive in Regeneration

8. **Matthew 11:27** — spiritual knowledge comes through the Son's revelation.
9. **John 6:44** — no one comes to Christ unless drawn by the Father.
10. **John 6:65** — coming to Christ must be granted by God.
11. **Ephesians 2:8-9** — salvation and faith are gifts of God.
12. **James 1:16-18** — God brings believers forth by His own will through the Word of truth.

The Unregenerate Remain in Satan's Domain

13. **John 8:44** — unbelievers remain under the influence of the devil.
-

14. **1 John 3:8** — Christ came to destroy the works of the devil.
 15. **1 John 3:10** — Scripture distinguishes between God's children and the devil's children.
 16. **1 John 5:19** — the world lies under the power of the evil one.
 17. **Acts 26:17-18** — God turns people from darkness to light and from Satan's power to Himself.
 18. **Colossians 1:12-14** — believers are delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred into Christ's kingdom.
-

Practical Implications

1. **Give God all the glory for salvation** — regeneration is entirely His work.
 2. **Recognize your dependence upon the Holy Spirit** — spiritual life and understanding come from Him alone.
 3. **Trust God's power to save sinners** — no one is beyond the reach of His regenerating grace.
 4. **Find assurance in the Spirit's sealing work** — believers are secure in God's saving purpose.
 5. **Live as a citizen of Christ's kingdom** — believers have been transferred from darkness into light.
 6. **Pursue holiness and obedience** — regeneration produces a new way of life.
 7. **Proclaim the gospel faithfully** — God uses His Word as the means of effectual calling.
 8. **Pray for the conversion of others** — only God can open blind eyes and give spiritual life.
 9. **Take comfort in God's preserving grace** — the Spirit who regenerates also guarantees final redemption.
-

Summary Sentence

Effectual calling and regeneration are sovereign works of the Holy Spirit whereby spiritually dead sinners are drawn to Christ, given new spiritual life, enabled to repent and believe, transferred from Satan's kingdom into Christ's kingdom, sealed by the Spirit, and set upon the path that leads to justification, sanctification, and eternal glory.

PART 2

Doctrine of Regeneration: Outline of Regeneration

Before considering the doctrine of regeneration in more detail, we will first outline the principal elements of this doctrine:

1. Regeneration is wholly an act of God, and a demonstration of his omnipotence. It is the same kind of omnipotence as God exercised when, by his word of command, he created the universe; or when, by a like word of command, the Lord Jesus raised the dead to life. If it requires almighty power to create the universe or to raise the dead, so it requires the same almighty power to raise those who are spiritually dead. It is this divine and almighty power that God exerts in regeneration when—by his Holy Spirit—he raises a sinner from spiritual death, making him a new creation. (John 5:25; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 1:19-20)
2. By the Person and agency of the Holy Spirit, God regenerates or gives new birth to the (spiritually dead) soul. This new birth is wrought in the sinner by the almighty working of the Spirit of holiness. This is a divine and omnipotent act; therefore, it follows that the sinner himself can do absolutely nothing to assist in its production. Regeneration of the soul is exclusively the work of God. It is in no respect attributable to the desire or effort of fallen, sinful, and spiritually dead human beings. (John 3:5-8; Eph. 2:8-10; Col. 2:13)
3. Regeneration is not a change of mind or purpose engendered by the sinner himself. It is not a determination on the sinner's part to choose God or holiness, rather than the pleasures of sin. Fallen and unregenerate humanity is spiritually dead. Those who are spiritually dead can have no desire for the things of the Spirit, or for God. His soul must first be made alive. To regenerate is to make alive unto God, or to quicken from spiritual death to new spiritual life. (Eph. 2:1-6; 4:18-19; Titus 3:3-7)
4. Regeneration is the creating of a new heart or new inner life. This inner change or conversion must come from outside the person himself, and from God above. In other words, a person must be born again—born from above—in order to receive a new spiritual nature and have new holy desires created within his heart or mind. Those who are thus born from above are said to be born of God; i.e. they have been born spiritually into the kingdom and family of God. The kingdom of God comprises all the members of the true or invisible Church. (John 1:12-13; Rom. 8:14-17; 1 John 3:9-10)
5. Unless a person is born from above (regenerated), he remains in utter darkness to spiritual truths. He cannot understand them because these truths require spiritual discernment; i.e. they require the presence of the Holy Spirit to enlighten the mind and the understanding. It is the power of the Word and the Spirit that enables a person to see the truth and to repent of his sin. By that same powerful witness to the truth, the sinner is led to believe on the Son of God, and to follow holiness of life. (1 Cor. 1:18-25; 2:12-15; 2 Cor. 4:3-6)

Different Names for Regeneration

The Bible alludes to, or describes, regeneration under different names or terms—including the following:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. <i>The new birth.</i> (i.e. being born again or born from above) | John 1:13; 3:3,6-7
1 Pet. 1:3,23
1 John 3:9; 5:1,18 |
| 2. <i>A (spiritual) resurrection, or newness of life.</i> | Rom. 6:4-13
Eph. 2:4-6
Col. 2:12-13; 3:1-3 |
| 3. <i>A new creation.</i> | 2 Cor. 5:17
Gal. 6:15 |
| 4. <i>A new heart (or mind).</i> | Jer. 24:7; 31:33; 32:38-39
Ezek. 11:19-20; 36:25-27
Heb. 10:16 |

The Necessity of Regeneration

Just as natural birth results in entry into the natural and temporal realm (the kingdom of this world), so spiritual birth results in entry into the spiritual and eternal realm (the kingdom of God and the world or age to come). We cannot experience the physical world without having been *born into it **naturally***. Similarly, we cannot experience the spiritual world without having been *born into it **spiritually***. Except a person be born again—born spiritually from above—he or she cannot see the kingdom of God. (John 3:3,5,7)

Summary below

Part 2 Summary

BTE09 Summary — Regeneration (ESV Edition)

Part 2: Outline of Regeneration

Definition

Regeneration is the sovereign, almighty work of God whereby the Holy Spirit imparts new spiritual life to a sinner who is spiritually dead. Through the new birth, God creates a new heart, grants spiritual understanding, brings the sinner into His kingdom, and enables repentance, faith, and holy living. Regeneration is entirely God's work and is absolutely necessary for salvation.

Key Truths

1. **Regeneration is wholly God's work** — it is an act of divine omnipotence, not human effort.
 2. **The same power that created the universe produces regeneration** — spiritual life is created by God's almighty power.
 3. **The Holy Spirit is the agent of regeneration** — He imparts new life to the spiritually dead sinner.
 4. **The sinner contributes nothing to regeneration** — the new birth is entirely the work of God.
 5. **Regeneration is not self-improvement** — it is not a human decision to become better or more religious.
 6. **Spiritual life must precede spiritual response** — sinners must be made alive before they can genuinely repent and believe.
 7. **Regeneration creates a new heart** — God gives new desires, affections, and spiritual inclinations.
 8. **The new birth is a birth from above** — it originates with God and brings a person into His family.
 9. **Regenerated people become children of God** — they enter His kingdom and belong to His family.
 10. **Unregenerate people cannot understand spiritual truth** — spiritual realities require the illumination of the Holy Spirit.
-

11. **The Word and Spirit work together** — God's truth becomes effective through the Spirit's enlightening power.
 12. **Regeneration is described by several biblical images** — including the new birth, resurrection, new creation, and a new heart.
 13. **Regeneration is essential for entrance into God's kingdom** — without it, no one can see or experience spiritual life.
 14. **Spiritual birth parallels natural birth** — just as physical life requires natural birth, spiritual life requires regeneration.
-

Biblical Foundations

Regeneration as God's Omnipotent Work

1. **John 5:25** — the spiritually dead hear Christ's voice and live.
2. **2 Corinthians 5:17** — believers become a new creation in Christ.
3. **Ephesians 1:19-20** — God's resurrection power is at work in believers.

Regeneration by the Holy Spirit

4. **John 3:5-8** — entry into God's kingdom requires being born of the Spirit.
5. **Ephesians 2:8-10** — salvation is God's gift and work.
6. **Colossians 2:13** — God makes spiritually dead sinners alive with Christ.

Spiritual Death and New Life

7. **Ephesians 2:1-6** — God raises spiritually dead sinners to life.
8. **Ephesians 4:18-19** — unbelievers are darkened in understanding.
9. **Titus 3:3-7** — salvation comes through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Spirit.

New Birth and New Heart

10. **John 1:12-13** — believers are born of God.
 11. **Romans 8:14-17** — God's children are led by His Spirit.
 12. **1 John 3:9-10** — those born of God display a new nature.
 13. **Jeremiah 24:7; 31:33; 32:38-39** — God gives His people a new heart.
 14. **Ezekiel 11:19-20; 36:25-27** — God replaces the heart of stone and gives a heart of flesh.
-

15. **Hebrews 10:16** — God writes His laws upon the hearts of His people.

Spiritual Understanding

16. **1 Corinthians 1:18-25** — the gospel appears foolish to the unregenerate.

17. **1 Corinthians 2:12-15** — spiritual truths require spiritual discernment.

18. **2 Corinthians 4:3-6** — God shines light into hearts to reveal Christ.

Necessity of Regeneration

19. **John 3:3, 5, 7** — no one can see or enter God's kingdom without being born again.

Practical Implications

1. **Depend entirely on God's grace** — regeneration cannot be achieved through human effort.
 2. **Give God all the glory for salvation** — spiritual life originates with Him alone.
 3. **Pray for the Spirit's work in others** — only God can give new life to spiritually dead sinners.
 4. **Trust God's power to save** — no sinner is beyond His ability to regenerate.
 5. **Seek evidence of the new birth** — genuine regeneration produces new desires and affections.
 6. **Value the Word of God** — the Spirit uses God's truth to enlighten and transform.
 7. **Pursue holiness** — a new heart should result in a new way of life.
 8. **Find assurance in your identity as God's child** — those born of God belong to His family forever.
 9. **Recognize the necessity of regeneration** — no amount of religion or morality can replace the new birth.
-

Summary Sentence

Regeneration is the sovereign and almighty work of God whereby the Holy Spirit raises spiritually dead sinners to new life, gives them a new heart and spiritual understanding, brings them into God's family and kingdom, and enables them to repent, believe, and live in holiness through the power of the new birth.

PART 3

Divergent Views of Regeneration

Reformed Teaching of Regeneration

In accordance with the express teaching of the Bible, we maintain that a person can be regenerated only by being born again³—the new birth being closely associated with repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, to become a Christian, a person must be reborn or regenerated spiritually by God's Holy Spirit. We maintain also that this new birth occurs as a result of God's eternal and sovereign purposes in election, and of the Holy Spirit's operations in effectual calling. Effectual calling results in regeneration, which in turn result immediately in a person turning to Christ in heartfelt repentance and unreserved faith in God's one and only Son.

Roman Catholic Teaching of Regeneration

Members of the Roman Catholic Church, however, have a completely different understanding of how and when God's Spirit effects regeneration. They believe that a person's spiritual regeneration (or, as they term it, 'justification') occurs at or during (water) baptism. In view of the vast number of people who hold to this belief in *baptismal regeneration*, we will look briefly at the Roman Catholic Church's teaching on this subject. Then, we will move on to consider the true biblical teaching.

Roman Catholic View

The Effects of Baptism ⁴

The Catholic Church teaches that Baptism produces several distinct and permanent effects, all of which are described in the Catechism (CCC 1262–1274):

- **Forgiveness of original sin and all personal sins.** Baptism wipes the slate completely clean. Original sin — the sin inherited from Adam and Eve — is forgiven. Any personal sins committed before Baptism are also forgiven. The baptized person emerges from the water with no sin on their soul.
- **Infusion of sanctifying grace.** Baptism does not merely forgive sin — it fills the soul with sanctifying grace, the very life of God. The baptized person becomes a "partaker of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4), sharing in God's own life.
- **Incorporation into the Body of Christ.** The baptized person becomes a member of the Church — not merely a member of an organization, but a living cell in the Body of Christ. This is why the Church is called the Body of Christ: because all the baptized are genuinely united to him.

³ (*born*) *again*: Greek, ἀνωθεν **anōthen**. The Greek term *anōthen* can mean 'again', but the more usual meaning of *anōthen* in the Scriptures is 'from above'. (i.e. born from above or from God in heaven, working through the Holy Spirit).

⁴ The section entitled *The Effects of Baptism* is quoted from the online source, *The Guide Catholic. Catholic Baptism: What It Is, What It Does & Why It Matters*

- **The theological virtues.** Faith, hope, and charity are infused into the soul at Baptism, along with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These are not merely human virtues — they are supernatural gifts that orient the person toward God.
- **The indelible character.** Baptism imprints a permanent, indelible spiritual mark on the soul — a "character" that can never be removed. This is why Baptism can never be repeated. Even if a person falls away from the faith, the baptismal character remains. It is a permanent seal of belonging to Christ.

Summary Remarks Concerning the Roman Catholic View

According to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church—and certain other churches—an individual's regeneration is not dependent on his or her personal faith in Christ. Rather, according to this view, the Holy Spirit effects regeneration during that person's baptism in, by, or with water. Thus, by baptising infant children, they believe that the Holy Spirit has regenerated them, or infused righteousness into their souls. (In RC theology, they refer to this as (the first) justification—rather than regeneration.)

Those people who hold to this view of regeneration, invariably submit their infant children to baptism. They believe that—in so doing—the Holy Spirit will purify their children's souls, cleansing them from the guilt and pollution of original sin. They further believe that baptism results in the infusion of righteousness into the child's soul, thereby justifying that child and making him or her acceptable in the sight of God.

From this, it follows that they consider a baptised infant to have been *born again* (i.e. regenerated (or justified)); to have become a Christian, and to have been made a member of God's kingdom. They therefore do not accept that a person needs to profess personal faith in Christ. Again, although practising 'Confirmation', they do not necessarily accept that a person must be born again (born from above) at an age of understanding, by the Holy Spirit of God.

Baptism Cannot Effect Regeneration

It is the clear teaching of the Bible that there can be no regeneration or new birth without it being associated with repentance and faith. (With the sole exception of children who die before birth, in infancy, or adults who, because of some medical or health condition, are not capable of responding to the call of the gospel.) There can be no repentance of sin, however, when one is not consciously aware of sin. But, to be consciously aware of sin, a person must have reached an age of understanding, and must have been convicted of their sin by the Holy Spirit.

Regeneration or the new birth cannot be effected through or during baptism. Nor can righteousness be infused into a person's soul. The Holy Spirit regenerates a person whom he has effectually called to faith in Christ. Consequently, that person repents and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. Through that faith in Christ—a faith graciously given him by God—God *justifies* the believing sinner, or *declares him righteous* in his sight.

Baptism is Not a Saving Rite

Baptism with water is not a saving rite or sacrament. In and of itself, baptism does not convey any saving power or efficacy to the soul. Rather, it is a public testimony that the person receiving this ordinance has already been regenerated or born again from above. The believer has already been

washed or purified—but not by water. He has been washed by the Spirit and the Word of God, and he has been cleansed or purified in Christ’s atoning blood. (1 Cor. 6:11; Eph. 5:26; Titus 3:5-6; Heb. 9:12-22; 1 Pet. 1:2,22; 1 John 1:7)

Biblical Teaching of Regeneration

The Natural State of Man

Prior to their regeneration, men and women are abiding in a state of spiritual death. They are guilty of, and polluted by, sin—original, and actual sin. In virtue of their guilt and pollution, men and women are totally alienated from God, and are abiding under God’s wrath and curse.

Fallen humanity is totally depraved⁵ and utterly blind to the truths of God’s Word. Thus, the Scripture says:

1 Corinthians 2:14

¹⁴ The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. (See vv.9-16)

Again, God’s Word says:

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. ⁴ In their case the god of this world ⁶ has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (See vv.2-3)

The *natural* person—i.e. men or women without the Spirit of God—may or may not be gifted with considerable intelligence, capacities and abilities. Notwithstanding their intellectual prowess and abilities, however, he or she is incapable of comprehending the truths of God’s Word in a way that leads to their personal and eternal salvation. These truths are folly to them; and they remain so, unless God illuminates their souls by the Holy Spirit. Only then does the light of the glorious gospel of Christ penetrate their moral and spiritual darkness to shine upon their hearts.

⁵ *totally depraved*: This does **not** mean that every unregenerate person in the world has descended to the utmost depths of wickedness, sin or evil. It means that, because of their fallen, sinful nature, every unregenerate man or woman has the capacity or capability of sinning to this degree—although many individuals never actually descend to such depths of depravity. Nevertheless, their actual sins and sinful nature are still evil in the sight of God and worthy of his righteous wrath and judgment. Thus, *all* sinners—regardless of the extent or depth of their sin—will perish unless they repent and seek God’s abundant mercy and forgiveness.

⁶ *the god of this world (or age)*: That is, the devil or Satan.

In this regard, the Scripture says:

2 Corinthians 3:15-16

¹⁵ Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. ¹⁶ But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed.

2 Corinthians 4:6

⁶ For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness” {*Gen. 1:3*}, has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Only then—as the Holy Spirit enlightens a man’s mind to spiritual truths—is he able to see, to understand, and to believe the things that are of value to the soul.

But concerning those whose minds have been enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and whom God’s Spirit has regenerated and justified, the Scripture says:

2 Corinthians 3:18

¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. (See v.17)

Summary below

Part 3 Summary

BTE09 Summary — Regeneration (ESV Edition)

Part 3: Divergent Views of Regeneration

Definition

Regeneration is the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit whereby a spiritually dead sinner is born again (born from above), given new spiritual life, enabled to repent and believe in Jesus Christ, and brought into the kingdom of God. According to the teaching presented here, regeneration is not effected by water baptism but by the direct and supernatural work of God's Spirit through effectual calling.

Key Truths

1. **Regeneration is the new birth from above** — it is a spiritual rebirth performed by God.
2. **Regeneration is closely linked to effectual calling** — the Holy Spirit convicts, draws, and renews the sinner.
3. **Repentance and faith follow regeneration** — those who are born again immediately turn to Christ.
4. **Regeneration is part of God's sovereign saving purpose** — it flows from His eternal purposes in election.
5. **Regeneration is not produced by water baptism** — spiritual rebirth is the work of the Holy Spirit, not a religious rite.
6. **Baptism follows salvation rather than causes it** — it publicly testifies to an already accomplished work of grace.
7. **The unregenerate are spiritually dead** — they remain guilty, corrupted by sin, and alienated from God.
8. **The unregenerate cannot understand saving truth** — spiritual realities appear foolish apart from the Spirit's illumination.
9. **Satan blinds unbelieving minds** — spiritual blindness persists until God shines His light into the heart.

10. **The Holy Spirit removes the veil of unbelief** — regeneration brings spiritual understanding.
 11. **Regeneration enables genuine faith in Christ** — sinners come to Christ because God has first given them life.
 12. **Those who are regenerated are transformed progressively** — the Spirit continues His work of sanctification.
 13. **Mere participation in religious ordinances cannot save** — salvation depends on God's inward work.
 14. **Spiritual illumination accompanies regeneration** — believers come to see and understand the glory of Christ.
-

Biblical Foundations

Regeneration and the New Birth

1. **John 1:12-13** — believers are born of God.
2. **John 3:3, 6-7** — entrance into God's kingdom requires being born again.
3. **1 Peter 1:3, 23** — believers are born again through God's power and Word.
4. **1 John 3:9; 5:1, 18** — those born of God possess a new spiritual nature.

Regeneration as New Life

5. **Romans 6:4-13** — believers walk in newness of life.
6. **Ephesians 2:4-6** — God raises spiritually dead sinners with Christ.
7. **Colossians 2:12-13; 3:1-3** — believers are made alive and raised with Christ.

Regeneration as a New Creation

8. **2 Corinthians 5:17** — anyone in Christ is a new creation.
9. **Galatians 6:15** — what matters is a new creation.

Regeneration as a New Heart

10. **Jeremiah 24:7; 31:33; 32:38-39** — God gives His people a new heart.
 11. **Ezekiel 11:19-20; 36:25-27** — God replaces the heart of stone and gives a heart of flesh.
 12. **Hebrews 10:16** — God writes His law upon believers' hearts.
-

Humanity's Natural Condition

13. **1 Corinthians 2:14** — the natural person cannot understand spiritual things.
 14. **2 Corinthians 4:3-4** — Satan blinds the minds of unbelievers.
 15. **2 Corinthians 3:15-16** — the veil is removed when a person turns to the Lord.
 16. **2 Corinthians 4:6** — God shines spiritual light into believers' hearts.
 17. **2 Corinthians 3:18** — believers are transformed by the Spirit.
-

 Practical Implications

1. **Do not rely on religious rituals for salvation** — external ceremonies cannot produce the new birth.
 2. **Seek the inward work of the Holy Spirit** — regeneration is essential for true Christianity.
 3. **Recognize the seriousness of spiritual blindness** — human wisdom alone cannot save.
 4. **Trust God's power to transform lives** — He can bring life where there is spiritual death.
 5. **Give God all the glory for salvation** — regeneration originates entirely with Him.
 6. **Look for evidence of spiritual transformation** — genuine regeneration produces new desires and conduct.
 7. **Value the preaching of God's Word** — the Spirit uses truth to enlighten and save.
 8. **Pray for God to open blind eyes** — only He can remove spiritual darkness.
 9. **Live in dependence on the Spirit** — the One who regenerates also sanctifies.
-

 Summary Sentence

Regeneration is the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit whereby spiritually dead and blinded sinners are born again from above, enlightened to understand the gospel, enabled to repent and believe in Christ, and transformed into new creations who belong to the kingdom and family of God.

PART 4

How Regeneration is Effected

Creation of New Life

Regeneration is not an external change, nor is it a natural change. It is an internal and spiritual change, as to both its nature and its origin. It is not a change of purpose, nor of opinion, nor of feeling. Rather, it is the creation of a new spiritual life and principle.⁷

Regeneration is the creation of a new life. This new life begins when the Holy Spirit effectually calls a person to Christ in repentance and faith, and when that person confesses Christ as his or her Saviour and Lord.

Regarding a person who has experienced the new birth, God's Word says:

2 Corinthians 5:17

¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.⁸ The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Primarily, regeneration is a new birth. Without this new birth, it is impossible for anyone to enter the kingdom of God. However, everyone who experiences the new birth becomes a member of God's kingdom, a child of God, and a joint-heir with the Son of God.

Deliverance From Darkness to Light

A person's salvation—including his regeneration—is referred to as a 'deliverance from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light'. The Bible refers to it also as a 'deliverance from the power of Satan unto God', and as a 'crossing over from death to life'. Thus, concerning why the message of repentance and faith must be preached to people of all nations, the Scripture answers:

Acts 26:18

¹⁸to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.' (See vv.15-17)

Regarding those who have turned to God, the Bible says:

Colossians 1:12-14

¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. ¹³He has delivered us from the domain of

⁷ Based on C. Hodge: *Princeton Sermons* [Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1879, 1979 reprint], pp.136-137.

⁸ [2 Corinthians 5:17](#) Or *creature*. (ESV footnote)

darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

John 5:24

²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgement, but has passed from death to life. (See v.25)

1 John 3:13-14

¹³ Do not be surprised, brothers,⁹ that the world hates you. ¹⁴ We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. (See vv.10-18)

Those whom the Holy Spirit has regenerated, and who are presently being sanctified, have forever crossed over from death to life. They have passed from spiritual death to spiritual and eternal life. They have been made alive in Christ Jesus to live by the Spirit, and according to God's will and purpose for their lives.

The Effect of Preaching The Gospel

The External Call

Christ commanded his disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation—or to all humankind. This command is known as *the Great Commission*. At present, the Great Commission is being carried out by preachers, teachers, evangelists, missionaries, and many other Christian workers throughout the world. According to the command of Christ, they are endeavouring to proclaim his name to the whole human race.

Concerning this great commission, God's Word declares:

Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

⁹ *brothers*: [1 John 3:13](#) Or *brothers and sisters*. The plural Greek word *adelphoi* (translated "brothers") refers to siblings in a family. In New Testament usage, depending on the context, *adelphoi* may refer either to men or to both men and women who are siblings (brothers and sisters) in God's family, the church; also verses [14](#), [16](#) (ESV footnote)

Mark 16:15-16

¹⁵ And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. ¹⁶ Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

Luke 24:47

⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

This proclamation of the gospel to all mankind—together with the exhortation to repent and believe the message—is known as *the external call*. Multitudes hear the external call to faith and repentance, but only a relatively small number respond.

Effectual Calling

Those who respond to the external call of the gospel, and to whom God grants the gifts of repentance and faith, are said to have been *effectually called*. They have heard the external call to repentance; they have heeded this call, and they have turned to God in true repentance and genuine faith.

In their case, the Holy Spirit has made the external call to repentance effective or effectual in their lives. Those whom God's Spirit effectually calls, are regenerated and receive forgiveness of sins and life eternal through faith in Christ.

Effectual calling is a work of the Holy Spirit. Effectual calling results in spiritual regeneration, and this includes the ability which God gives to those who have been drawn to Christ to begin to understand the things of God. By nature, fallen man cannot comprehend spiritual things. They are foolishness to him. By grace, however, God removes the veil of darkness that has been covering their minds, so that they can see (or understand) spiritual truths, repent, and believe. (1 Cor. 2:14; 2 Cor. 3:16; 4:6)

Everyone whom the Holy Spirit effectually calls to faith in Christ is regenerated or born again.¹⁰

Difference Between Regeneration and Conversion

Although sometimes used interchangeably, regeneration and conversion are not identical terms. They refer to different aspects of a person's salvation, and we should not confuse or confound these aspects.

¹⁰ For further information regarding the external call and effectual calling, see *Bible Truths Explained: Repentance*.

We may express the distinction between the two terms as follows:

1. **Regeneration:** Regeneration = The New Birth.

In regeneration, the sinner—whom the Holy Spirit has drawn effectually to Christ—is entirely **passive**; i.e. there is absolutely nothing that the sinner can do to effect his new birth or to assist in its production. In this respect, spiritual birth and regeneration is analogous to natural birth.

2. **Conversion** Conversion = Repentance + Faith.

In conversion, the Holy Spirit—having fully convicted and convinced a sinner of his sin and great need of salvation, and of the forgiving love of God—enables that sinner to turn toward God. This the sinner does, *freely and willingly* repenting of his sins and believing on the Lord Jesus Christ for his salvation. In this sense, the sinner is said to be **active** in his conversion.

Salvation is wholly the work of God, and none of self. However, in regeneration a person is *passive*, while in conversion a person is *active*.

Summary below

Part 4 Summary

BTE09 Summary — Regeneration (ESV Edition)

Part 4: How Regeneration is Effected

Definition

Regeneration is the internal and supernatural work of the Holy Spirit whereby a spiritually dead sinner is given new spiritual life, becomes a new creation in Christ, and is transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God. Regeneration results from God's effectual call and leads immediately to repentance, faith, and conversion.

Key Truths

1. **Regeneration is an internal spiritual work** — it is not merely a change of behaviour, opinion, or feeling.
 2. **Regeneration creates new spiritual life** — the Holy Spirit imparts a new principle of life within the sinner.
 3. **Regenerated people become new creations** — God transforms them through the new birth.
 4. **The new birth is essential for entering God's kingdom** — without regeneration no one can belong to God's family.
 5. **Regeneration delivers sinners from darkness to light** — believers are rescued from spiritual blindness.
 6. **Regeneration transfers sinners from Satan's kingdom to Christ's kingdom** — believers now belong to God's Son.
 7. **Regeneration is a passage from death to life** — spiritual death is replaced with eternal spiritual life.
 8. **The gospel is to be proclaimed universally** — Christ's Great Commission extends to all nations.
 9. **The external call reaches many people** — all who hear the gospel are summoned to repent and believe.
 10. **Only some experience effectual calling** — the Holy Spirit makes the gospel effective in those whom God saves.
-

11. **Effectual calling produces regeneration** — God removes spiritual blindness and grants understanding.
 12. **Regenerated sinners are enabled to repent and believe** — the Spirit opens their eyes to spiritual truth.
 13. **Regeneration and conversion are distinct** — regeneration is God's act; conversion is the sinner's response.
 14. **The sinner is passive in regeneration** — new birth is entirely the work of God.
 15. **The sinner is active in conversion** — having been regenerated, the person freely repents and believes.
 16. **Salvation is wholly of God** — both regeneration and conversion result from divine grace.
-

Biblical Foundations

New Creation and New Life

1. **2 Corinthians 5:17** — anyone in Christ is a new creation.

Deliverance from Darkness to Light

2. **Acts 26:18** — God turns sinners from darkness to light and from Satan's power to Himself.
3. **Colossians 1:12-14** — believers are transferred from the domain of darkness into Christ's kingdom.
4. **John 5:24** — believers have passed from death to life.
5. **1 John 3:13-14** — love for fellow believers evidences that one has passed from death to life.

The External Call

6. **Matthew 28:18-20** — Christ commands His followers to disciple all nations.
7. **Mark 16:15-16** — the gospel is to be preached to all creation.
8. **Luke 24:47** — repentance and forgiveness are to be proclaimed to all nations.

Effectual Calling

9. **1 Corinthians 2:14** — the natural person cannot understand spiritual truths.
-

10. **2 Corinthians 3:16** — the veil is removed when one turns to the Lord.

11. **2 Corinthians 4:6** — God shines spiritual light into believers' hearts.

Practical Implications

1. **Recognize the necessity of the new birth** — external religion alone cannot bring salvation.
 2. **Give God the glory for salvation** — regeneration is entirely His work.
 3. **Proclaim the gospel faithfully** — God uses the external call to reach sinners.
 4. **Trust the Holy Spirit's power** — only He can make the gospel effective.
 5. **Look for evidence of new life** — genuine regeneration produces spiritual transformation.
 6. **Rejoice in your deliverance** — believers have been brought from darkness into God's kingdom.
 7. **Respond to God's call with repentance and faith** — conversion is the proper response to regeneration.
 8. **Live as a citizen of Christ's kingdom** — new life in Christ should produce holiness and obedience.
 9. **Find assurance in God's work** — those whom He effectually calls and regenerates belong to Him.
-

Summary Sentence

Regeneration is the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit whereby spiritually dead sinners are made new creations, delivered from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of Christ, and enabled to respond to God's effectual call through repentance and faith, resulting in conversion and eternal life.

PART 5

Sinners Commanded to Seek the Lord

God commands all mankind to repent of their sins, and to seek his mercy. Although men and women are dead (spiritually) in trespasses and sins, yet they are responsible for their sinful condition and are commanded to seek the Lord. But to what extent can fallen and spiritually dead mankind respond to this command?

All mankind hear the external call of the gospel. Even if they should plead ignorance of the gospel message, all mankind can see, or come to understand, the revelation of God's existence, power and glory in his natural creation. This revelation in nature, or the external call, makes all men and women fully aware of their responsibility and accountability toward God. It also places them under obligation to acknowledge God and to seek to discover his ways more fully—leaving them inexcusable if they refuse. (Rom. 1:19-20)

Supposing, then, that—in response to God's command to seek him, or in response to what he has understood of God in the natural creation—a sinner seeks to find God or to discover his mercy and forgiveness. In his fallen and spiritually dead condition, what can a sinner do to find out about God, or to discover his mercy?

Let us illustrate by example: A man who has been born blind earnestly desires to be able to see. He knows he is completely unable to heal himself. However, he learns that a person called the Lord Jesus Christ is able to heal him.

The blind man now has two choices:

1. He can remain where he is—hoping that the Lord Jesus will come to him.
(This represents disobedience to God's command to seek the Lord while he may be found).
2. He can make his way to where he knows the Lord Jesus is to be found.
(This represents obedience to God's command to seek him with all his heart and soul.)

It is the man's responsibility to choose the latter course. Let us assume that this is what this particular individual does. (In the passing, we must concede that most of sinful mankind do not follow this man's example, for they fail to actively seek the Lord.) This man, however, believes the reports that he has heard about the Lord Jesus Christ (the external call), so he determines to seek the Lord while he may be found. (Isa. 55:6)

The blind man—probably with the help of friends—has made his way to the Lord Jesus. He now stands before the Lord, by this time convinced of his very great need and believing that the Lord Jesus alone can fully meet his need (effectual calling).

There is, however, absolutely nothing that the man himself can do to assist in his physical healing (*or spiritual rebirth, which this example illustrates*). He is entirely in the Lord's hands. He believes the Lord can heal him; but, in and of itself, his faith will not actually restore his sight. This will depend entirely on Christ's willingness to heal him (although, of course, there is no question of the Lord failing to respond to a genuinely seeking person's cry for help).

By means of the Holy Spirit, this man has been drawn to Christ—firstly, in obedience to God’s command to seek him (the external call); and, secondly, by the more direct operation of the Holy Spirit in effectual calling. Having come to this point, there is now nothing more that this man can do. If he is to receive his sight, he must depend wholly on Christ to grant him this priceless gift. This represents the sinner whom the Holy Spirit has drawn to Christ and is about to regenerate.

In regard to his regeneration or new spiritual birth, the sinner cannot co-operate in any way. The new birth is the priceless gift of God. In his grace and mercy, God freely bestows this gift upon everyone whom the Holy Spirit effectually calls to Christ. However, no-one who comes to Christ in this manner will ever be refused healing of their soul or turned away without their need being fully met. All who thus come will be received; all will find the mercy of the Lord, and all will be forgiven and granted full spiritual healing together with the gift of eternal life. (John 4:13-14; 6:37; 7:37-38)

Living Water

As has been noted, regeneration or the new birth is a work of the Holy Spirit. The Word of God often refers to, or alludes to, this aspect of the Spirit’s work as *living water*. The Holy Spirit is the spring or source of life—in this case, abundant and eternal life. The Spirit of God is the only person who is able to quench a sinner’s deep inward and spiritual thirst, or the longing for righteousness, forgiveness of sins, and peace with God

Scripture References (ESV) *NT Illustrations of Water and The Spirit*

Regarding this living water or source of eternal life, and as the only true satisfaction for the deepest needs of the soul, Jesus said to the woman of Samaria:

John 4:10

¹⁰ Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink’, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” (See vv.4-9)

John 4:13-14

¹³ Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” (See vv.11-26)

Again, the Scripture says:

John 7:37-39

³⁷ On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” ³⁹ Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in

him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (Cf. v.38 with Isa. 12:3; 44:3)

All who believe on Christ have received the Holy Spirit; i.e. they have been born again or regenerated by the Spirit. In addition, the Holy Spirit indwells them, sanctifies them and seals them as belonging to God for all eternity. This is the gift of eternal life.

Because of its refreshing and renewing effects upon the soul—and therefore upon the whole person and personality—the effects of the Spirit's work in regeneration is sometimes described as *living water*: renewing, refreshing and invigorating the soul.

Scripture References (ESV)***OT Illustrations of Water and The Spirit***

This thought is not confined to the teaching of the New Testament. In the Old Testament, God says of the Spirit's work:

Isaiah 44:3

³ For I will pour water on the thirsty land,
and streams on the dry ground;
I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring,
and my blessing on your descendants.
(See vv.1-5)

Isaiah 55:1

¹“Come, everyone who thirsts,
come to the waters;
and he who has no money,
come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
without money and without price.
(See vv.2-7)

Concerning those of God's people who had turned away from the LORD, the Scripture says:

Jeremiah 2:13

¹³ for my people have committed two evils:
they have forsaken me,
the fountain of living waters,
and hewed out cisterns for themselves,
broken cisterns that can hold no water.
(See vv.4-19)

For those who return to the LORD with all their hearts, however, the Scripture declares:

Isaiah 12:3

³ With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.
(See vv.1-6; see also Isa. 11ff)

Or, as God's abundant salvation is expressed by the prophet Joel:

Joel 2:28

²⁸ "And it shall come to pass afterwards,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men shall see visions.

Joel 2:32

³² And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of
the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be
those who escape, as the LORD has said, and among the survivors shall be
those whom the LORD calls. (See vv.25-31)

Water of Life Free to All

Again, in the New Testament, the Lord Jesus offers the water of life freely to all who come:

Revelation 22:17

¹⁷ The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say,
"Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take
the water of life without price.

Summary below

Part 5 Summary

BTE09 Summary — Regeneration (ESV Edition)

Part 5: Sinners Commanded to Seek the Lord

Definition

Regeneration is the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit whereby a sinner who has heard God's call is given new spiritual life, enabling him to receive Christ and enter the kingdom of God. While sinners are commanded to seek the Lord and are responsible to respond to God's revelation, regeneration itself remains entirely God's gift. The Holy Spirit is the source of the "living water" that renews, satisfies, and gives eternal life to all who come to Christ.

Key Truths

1. **God commands all people to seek Him** — every person is responsible to acknowledge and pursue God.
 2. **Natural revelation leaves humanity without excuse** — creation reveals God's existence, power, and glory.
 3. **The external call reaches all people** — God summons sinners to seek His mercy.
 4. **Sinners cannot regenerate themselves** — spiritual rebirth is solely the work of God.
 5. **Seeking God does not cause regeneration** — regeneration remains an act of divine grace.
 6. **The sinner is dependent upon Christ for spiritual life** — just as a blind man cannot heal himself, a sinner cannot give himself new life.
 7. **The Holy Spirit draws sinners to Christ** — both through the external call and effectual calling.
 8. **Everyone effectually called by God is received by Christ** — no sincere seeker is turned away.
 9. **Regeneration is often pictured as living water** — the Holy Spirit refreshes, renews, and gives eternal life.
 10. **The Holy Spirit satisfies the deepest needs of the soul** — only He can quench spiritual thirst.
-

11. **Believers receive the indwelling Holy Spirit** — He regenerates, sanctifies, and seals them eternally.
 12. **Living water symbolizes eternal life** — regeneration brings ongoing spiritual vitality and blessing.
 13. **God's invitation is freely offered** — all who thirst are invited to come and receive life.
 14. **Salvation is entirely gracious** — the water of life is given "without price."
-

Biblical Foundations

Sinners Must Seek the Lord

1. **Romans 1:19-20** — creation reveals God and leaves humanity without excuse.
2. **Isaiah 55:6** — sinners are commanded to seek the Lord while He may be found.

Living Water and the Spirit

3. **John 4:10** — Christ offers living water as God's gift.
4. **John 4:13-14** — the water Christ gives becomes a spring of eternal life.
5. **John 6:37** — Christ never rejects those who come to Him.
6. **John 7:37-39** — rivers of living water refer to the Holy Spirit.

Old Testament Illustrations of Water and the Spirit

7. **Isaiah 44:3** — God promises to pour out His Spirit like water upon dry ground.
8. **Isaiah 55:1** — all who thirst are invited to come and receive freely.
9. **Jeremiah 2:13** — God is the fountain of living waters.
10. **Isaiah 12:3** — God's people draw water joyfully from the wells of salvation.
11. **Joel 2:28** — God promises to pour out His Spirit.
12. **Joel 2:32** — everyone who calls on the Lord will be saved.

Final Gospel Invitation

13. **Revelation 22:17** — all who thirst are invited to take the water of life freely.
-

 Practical Implications

1. **Seek the Lord diligently** — God commands sinners to pursue Him while the opportunity remains.
 2. **Respond to God's revelation** — creation and the gospel call people to seek Him.
 3. **Recognize your dependence on Christ** — only He can meet the deepest needs of the soul.
 4. **Do not trust your own ability to save yourself** — regeneration is entirely God's work.
 5. **Come to Christ with confidence** — He never rejects those who sincerely come to Him.
 6. **Rely on the Holy Spirit's power** — spiritual life and renewal come through Him alone.
 7. **Find satisfaction in God rather than the world** — only the living water of the Spirit truly satisfies.
 8. **Rejoice in the free gift of salvation** — eternal life is offered without price.
 9. **Live in the fullness of the Spirit's renewing work** — believers are continually refreshed and strengthened by Him.
-

 Summary Sentence

Although sinners are commanded to seek the Lord and are responsible to respond to His call, regeneration remains entirely the gracious work of the Holy Spirit, who draws sinners to Christ, gives them new spiritual life, satisfies their deepest spiritual thirst with the living water of eternal life, and freely grants salvation to all who come to Him.

PART 6

Baptised By The Holy Spirit

God pours out his Holy Spirit upon all his people—the same Spirit by whom he has effectually called them to faith in Christ.

All who believe on Christ are baptised by the Spirit into the body of Christ; i.e. the church. Thus, the Scripture says:

Mark 1:8

⁸“I [John the Baptist] have baptized you with water, but he [Jesus] will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” (See vv.1-15; cf. Matt. 3:11-12)

John 1:33-34

³³“I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ ³⁴And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.” (See vv.29-32)

Before ascending into heaven, the Lord Jesus said to his disciples:

Acts 1:5

⁵“for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” (See vv.1-8; see esp. v.8)

When the Lord’s followers had come together on the day of Pentecost ¹¹ the Scripture records:

Acts 2:2-4

²And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. (See vv.5-21,33; see also vv.37-39)

The Lord’s followers had gathered together on the day of Pentecost. While they were assembled, the Holy Spirit descended upon them and filled each one of them. Then, the Lord’s followers began speaking in other tongues.

We must remember that many of the Jewish people now assembled in Jerusalem had come there specially for the feast of Pentecost. These Jews had arrived at Jerusalem from many different countries

¹¹ *Pentecost*: The Feast of Weeks or the feast of the first fruits of wheat harvest.

abroad. Most did not speak the local languages of Aramaic or Greek. They knew only their own foreign languages. Thus, in order for the Lord's disciples to communicate the gospel to these Jews from abroad, they needed to speak to them in their own native languages.

Of course, few if any of the Lord's disciples would be fluent in these foreign languages. For this reason, the Holy Spirit bestowed upon them the gift of tongues: i.e. the gift of being able to speak in foreign languages that the followers of Jesus had never previously learned.

Thus, it is written:

Acts 2:5-12

⁵ Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷ And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?" ⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? ⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, ¹¹ both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." ¹² And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"

By this means, the foreign-speaking Jewish worshippers were able to hear the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ proclaimed to them in their own native languages. By the same means, many Gentiles who were also visiting Jerusalem would hear and understand the gospel in their own languages. Thus, both Jews and Gentiles from many different countries would hear the gospel—and, by God's grace, many would be saved and baptised into the body of Christ.

Concerning God's intention to include Gentiles in the body of Christ (the Church), Peter gives this testimony:

Acts 11:15-16

¹⁵ "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. ¹⁶ And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'" (See vv.1-14)

Acts 11:17-18

¹⁷ "If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?" ¹⁸ When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life."

Concerning the unity of the body of Christ, the apostle Paul says:

1 Corinthians 12:13

¹³For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. (See vv.1-31)

The apostle Paul uses similar language when he speaks of the redemption of God's people Israel and their deliverance from bondage in Egypt:

1 Corinthians 10:1-5

¹For I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, ²and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³and all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. ⁵Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

1 Corinthians 10:6

⁶Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. (See vv.7-14; cf. v.6 with v.11)

One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism

The Holy Spirit baptises a repentant sinner into the body of Christ at that person's regeneration or new birth.

When the Holy Spirit baptises a believing sinner into the body of Christ, he makes that person a partaker of all the benefits of the redemption secured by Christ. There is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism.

Thus, God's Word says:

Ephesians 4:4-6

⁴There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (See vv.1-3)

Ephesians 4:7-8

⁷But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸Therefore it says,

“When he ascended on high he led a host of captives,
and he gave gifts to men.” {*Psalms 68:18*}
(See Eph. 4:9-10; cf. v.8 with Col. 2:15)

Ephesians 4:11-13

¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds¹² and teachers,¹³ ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, (See vv.14-16; cf. Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:1-31; 14:1-40)

Ephesians 4:11-13 lists some of the gifts that the Holy Spirit bestows upon certain believers as he sees fit. These gifts are intended for the building up of the church in love. Thus, selected individuals receive gifts equipping them to become pastors or shepherds of God's flock. Some are equipped by God's Spirit to become teachers, evangelists, missionaries or other servants of God. These are just some of the gifts of the Spirit.

We distinguish between the *baptism* of the Spirit and the *gifts* of the Spirit:

- Baptism of the Holy Spirit is associated with the new birth (regeneration). It involves a repentant sinner's forgiveness and reconciliation with God and their entry into the kingdom and family of God and the body of Christ—the church.
- The gifts of the Spirit are bestowed upon those who are already within the fellowship of Christ's church. These spiritual gifts are bestowed at God's pleasure for the purpose of serving Christ and his church in a specific capacity, and to the glory of God the Father.¹⁴

Summary below

¹² shepherds: [Ephesians 4:11](#) Or *pastors*. (ESV footnote)

¹³ teachers: [Ephesians 4:11](#) Or *the shepherd-teachers*. (ESV footnote)

¹⁴ These concepts are discussed in detail elsewhere in this series. See under *Bible Truths Explained: God the Holy Spirit*; and, *The Work of The Holy Spirit*.

Part 6 Summary

BTE09 Summary — Regeneration (ESV Edition)

Part 6: Baptized by the Holy Spirit

Definition

Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the work of the Holy Spirit at regeneration whereby a repentant believer is united to Christ, incorporated into His body (the Church), forgiven and reconciled to God, and brought into the kingdom and family of God. This spiritual baptism accompanies the new birth and is distinct from both water baptism and the later distribution of spiritual gifts.

Key Truths

1. **Jesus is the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit** — spiritual baptism is His work through the Spirit.
 2. **All true believers are baptized by the Holy Spirit** — every regenerated person is united to Christ and His Church.
 3. **Spirit baptism is associated with regeneration** — it accompanies the new birth and entrance into God's family.
 4. **The Day of Pentecost marked the outpouring of the Spirit** — believers were filled with the Holy Spirit as Christ had promised.
 5. **The gift of tongues at Pentecost enabled gospel proclamation** — the disciples spoke real languages understood by people from many nations.
 6. **God intended salvation for both Jews and Gentiles** — the Spirit was poured out on believers from every people group.
 7. **The Holy Spirit unites all believers into one body** — distinctions of race, nationality, and social status do not divide Christ's Church.
 8. **Spirit baptism brings participation in Christ's redemption** — believers share the blessings secured by Christ's saving work.
 9. **There is one body, one Spirit, one faith, and one baptism** — all believers share a common salvation in Christ.
 10. **Water baptism does not save** — spiritual baptism is the work of the Holy Spirit, not a religious ceremony.
-

11. **The Holy Spirit indwells, sanctifies, and seals believers** — His presence guarantees their belonging to God.
 12. **Spiritual gifts differ from Spirit baptism** — gifts are special abilities given to believers for service within the Church.
 13. **Christ distributes gifts according to His will** — different believers receive different ministries and responsibilities.
 14. **The purpose of spiritual gifts is to build up the Church** — gifts are given for service, unity, and growth in Christ.
-

Biblical Foundations

Promise of Spirit Baptism

1. **Mark 1:8** — John the Baptist declared that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit.
2. **John 1:33-34** — Jesus was identified as the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.
3. **Acts 1:5** — Christ promised the coming baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Pentecost and the Outpouring of the Spirit

4. **Acts 2:2-4** — the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples at Pentecost.
5. **Acts 2:5-12** — people from many nations heard God's works in their own languages.

Inclusion of Jews and Gentiles

6. **Acts 11:15-18** — Gentile believers received the same Spirit as Jewish believers.

Unity in the Body of Christ

7. **1 Corinthians 12:13** — all believers are baptized by one Spirit into one body.
8. **1 Corinthians 10:1-6** — Israel's experience serves as a spiritual illustration and warning.

One Baptism and Spiritual Gifts

9. **Ephesians 4:4-6** — there is one body, one Spirit, one faith, and one baptism.
 10. **Ephesians 4:7-8** — Christ gives grace and gifts to His people.
 11. **Ephesians 4:11-13** — Christ gives various ministry gifts for building up His Church.
-

 Practical Implications

1. **Rejoice in your union with Christ** — every true believer belongs to Him through the Spirit.
 2. **Value the unity of the Church** — all believers share the same Spirit and salvation.
 3. **Distinguish Spirit baptism from water baptism** — regeneration and union with Christ are spiritual realities.
 4. **Recognize the inclusion of all believers** — God's people come from every nation, culture, and background.
 5. **Depend upon the Holy Spirit daily** — He indwells, sanctifies, and strengthens believers.
 6. **Use spiritual gifts faithfully** — gifts are given for serving Christ and His people.
 7. **Avoid pride or division** — all believers are members of one body.
 8. **Trust the Spirit's sealing work** — His presence guarantees God's saving purpose.
 9. **Participate actively in the Church** — believers are united together for mutual growth and ministry.
-

 Summary Sentence

At regeneration, the Holy Spirit baptizes believers into the body of Christ, uniting them to their Saviour and to one another, granting them the blessings of redemption, indwelling them permanently, and equipping them with spiritual gifts for the growth and unity of Christ's Church.

PART 7

God is the Author of Regeneration

God is the Author of the new birth. The power he employs to effect the new birth is not physical or natural but spiritual and divine. It is therefore impossible for a person to be born again if he has not personally experienced God's regenerating power in his life.

Agency of The Holy Spirit in Regeneration

The divine efficiency that God employs in causing the new birth is effected through the agency of the Holy Spirit. Although the Spirit of God may work when, where, and how he pleases, he generally works by the means of grace. In this case, the Spirit operates by applying the truths of God's Word to the sinner's soul.

The Spirit of God works within the heart of the unbeliever, revealing to him the truths of God's Word, and causing him to understand these truths. During this process, the Holy Spirit convicts that person of his sin. He convinces the sinner of his great need of salvation, and he regenerates him. Almost simultaneously, the now regenerated sinner turns in heartfelt repentance and faith toward God, thereby experiencing full justification in the sight of God and the forgiveness of all his sins.

Scripture References (ESV)

OT Passages on Regeneration

In the Old Testament, regeneration (or spiritual rebirth) is alluded to by the Prophets, including Ezekiel. In their immediate contexts, these passages refer to Israel's restoration to their own land following their captivity and exile. However, they are equally applicable to the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration.

Thus, God's Word says:

Ezekiel 11:19-20

¹⁹ And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, ²⁰ that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. (See vv.13-18)

Ezekiel 36:24

²⁴ I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. (See vv.16-23)

Ezekiel 36:25-27

²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. ²⁶ And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules [or *decrees*]. (See vv.28-31; cf. Jer. 24:6-7; 31:31-34; 32:36-41)

In a vision given to him by the LORD, Ezekiel describes the valley of dry bones (representing the spiritually dead nation of Israel). The prophet then speaks of the spiritual resurrection and restoration effected on these dead bones by the Holy Spirit of God.

To this end, the Scripture says:

Ezekiel 37:3

³ And he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." (See vv.1-4)

Ezekiel 37:5

⁵ Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath ¹⁵ to enter you, and you shall live. (See vv.6-8)

Ezekiel 37:9-10

⁹ Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath [or *spirit*]; prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live." ¹⁰ So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army. (See vv.11-14)

Scripture References (ESV)

NT Passages on Regeneration

In the New Testament, regeneration or the new birth is referred to in passages such as the following:

John 1:11-13

¹¹ He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. (See vv.6-18)

¹⁵ *breath*: [Ezekiel 37:5](#) Or *spirit*; also verses [6](#), [9](#), [10](#) (ESV footnote)

John 3:3-7

³ Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again [or *from above*] he cannot see the kingdom of God.” ⁴ Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” ⁵ Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’

Ephesians 5:25-26

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

Titus 3:5

⁵ he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,

1 Peter 1:3

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

1 Peter 1:23

²³ since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;

Summary below

Part 7 Summary

BTE09 Summary — Regeneration (ESV Edition)

Part 7: God is the Author of Regeneration

Definition

Regeneration is the sovereign work of God through the agency of the Holy Spirit whereby spiritually dead sinners are given new spiritual life, enabled to understand God's truth, and brought to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. The new birth is entirely God's work, accomplished by the Spirit through the application of God's Word to the heart.

Key Truths

1. **God is the author of regeneration** — the new birth originates entirely with Him.
 2. **Regeneration is a supernatural work** — the power involved is spiritual, divine, and omnipotent.
 3. **The Holy Spirit is the agent of regeneration** — He applies God's truth to the sinner's heart.
 4. **The Spirit ordinarily works through the Word of God** — Scripture is the means by which He reveals truth and convicts sinners.
 5. **The Holy Spirit convicts sinners of sin** — He exposes guilt and awakens awareness of spiritual need.
 6. **The Holy Spirit enables understanding of divine truth** — spiritual blindness is removed through His illumination.
 7. **Regeneration produces repentance and faith** — newly regenerated sinners immediately turn toward Christ.
 8. **Justification follows regeneration and faith** — believers receive forgiveness and acceptance with God.
 9. **Regeneration is pictured as receiving a new heart** — God removes spiritual hardness and gives spiritual life.
 10. **The new birth results in obedience** — regenerated people desire to walk in God's ways.
 11. **Regeneration is comparable to resurrection from the dead** — God brings spiritual life where there was spiritual death.
-

12. **Being born again is necessary for entering God's kingdom** — natural birth alone is insufficient.
 13. **The new birth is God's merciful gift** — it is not earned through works or human effort.
 14. **The regenerated believer receives a living hope** — spiritual rebirth brings the assurance of eternal life.
-

Biblical Foundations

Old Testament Pictures of Regeneration

1. **Ezekiel 11:19-20** — God gives His people a new heart and spirit.
2. **Ezekiel 36:24-27** — God cleanses His people, gives a new heart, and places His Spirit within them.
3. **Jeremiah 24:6-7; 31:31-34; 32:36-41** (referenced) — God promises inward renewal and covenant transformation.
4. **Ezekiel 37:3** — the vision of dry bones illustrates spiritual death.
5. **Ezekiel 37:5** — God causes life-giving breath to enter the dead.
6. **Ezekiel 37:9-10** — the Spirit brings life to the spiritually dead.

New Testament Teaching on Regeneration

7. **John 1:11-13** — believers are born of God, not by human will.
 8. **John 3:3-7** — no one can enter God's kingdom without being born again.
 9. **Ephesians 5:25-26** — Christ cleanses His people through the Word.
 10. **Titus 3:5** — salvation comes through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit.
 11. **1 Peter 1:3** — God causes believers to be born again to a living hope.
 12. **1 Peter 1:23** — believers are born again through the living and abiding Word of God.
-

Practical Implications

1. **Give God all the glory for salvation** — regeneration is entirely His work.
 2. **Value the ministry of God's Word** — the Spirit uses Scripture to bring spiritual life.
-

3. **Pray for the Holy Spirit's work in others** — only He can bring true conversion.
 4. **Recognize the necessity of the new birth** — moral reform alone cannot save.
 5. **Trust God's power to transform lives** — He can bring life to those spiritually dead.
 6. **Seek evidence of a new heart** — genuine regeneration produces new desires and obedience.
 7. **Respond to God's truth in faith** — the Spirit's work leads sinners to Christ.
 8. **Find comfort in God's promises** — regeneration results in forgiveness, hope, and eternal life.
 9. **Pursue holiness** — those born of God are called to walk in obedience to Him.
-

Summary Sentence

God alone is the author of regeneration, and through the Holy Spirit's application of His Word He gives new spiritual life to dead sinners, grants them a new heart, enables them to repent and believe in Christ, and transforms them into obedient children of God with the hope of eternal life.

PART 8

Examples of Regeneration

Jesus and Nicodemus

Scripture References (ESV)

Jesus and Nicodemus

In his conversation with Nicodemus, the Lord Jesus emphasises the absolute necessity of the new birth:

John 3:3

³ Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again¹⁶ he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (See vv.1-2)

John 3:4-5

⁴ Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?” ⁵ Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

John 3:6-7

⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.¹⁷ ⁷ Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’

John 3:8

⁸ The wind¹⁸ blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” (See vv.9-15)

John 3:16-18

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the

¹⁶ (born) again: [John 3:3](#) Or from above; the Greek is purposely ambiguous and can mean both *again* and *from above*; also verse [7](#). (ESV footnote)

¹⁷ spirit: [John 3:6](#) The same Greek word means both *wind* and *spirit*. (ESV footnote)

¹⁸ wind: [John 3:8](#) The same Greek word means both *wind* and *spirit*. (ESV footnote)

world might be saved through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. (See vv.19-21)

Other NT Passages

Scripture References (ESV)	Other NT Passages
----------------------------	-------------------

Titus 3:3-7

³ For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. ⁴ But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, ⁷ so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (See vv.1-2)

James 1:16-18

¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. ¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. ¹⁸ Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

1 Peter 1:3-5

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (See vv.2-12; see esp. v.12)

1 Peter 1:23

²³ since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; (See vv.13-25)

1 John 2:29

²⁹ If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practises righteousness has been born of him. (See vv.26-28)

1 John 3:9

⁹ No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. (See vv.7-16)

1 John 5:18-19

¹⁸ We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.

¹⁹ We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. (See vv.16-17; see also vv.1,4-5)

Additional Scriptures Relating to the New Birth

Scripture References (ESV)

Additional Scriptures Relating to the New Birth

Romans 6:3-4

³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. (See vv.1-14)

Ephesians 2:4-6

⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, (See vv.1-10)

Colossians 2:12-13

¹² having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. ¹³ And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, (See vv.10-17; see also Col. 3:1-3)

2 Corinthians 5:14-16

¹⁴ For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; ¹⁵ and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

¹⁶ From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. (See vv.10-13)

2 Corinthians 5:17

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (See vv.18-21)

Galatians 6:15

¹⁵ For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. (See vv.13-14)

Hebrews 10:14-18

¹⁴ For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

¹⁵ And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,

¹⁶ “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds” {*Jer. 31:33*},

¹⁷ then he adds,

“I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.” {*Jer. 31:34*}.

¹⁸ Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin. (See vv.19-25; cf. Heb. 8:7-13; Ezek. 36:25-27)

Summary below

Part 8 Summary

BTE09 Summary — Regeneration (ESV Edition)

Part 8: Examples of Regeneration

Definition

Regeneration is the new birth wrought by the Holy Spirit whereby spiritually dead sinners are given new life, enabled to believe in Christ, and brought into the kingdom of God. The Scriptures illustrate regeneration as being born again, made alive with Christ, becoming a new creation, and receiving a new heart that loves righteousness and obeys God.

Key Truths

1. **The new birth is absolutely necessary for salvation** — no one can see or enter the kingdom of God without being born again.
2. **Regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit** — spiritual life originates with God's Spirit, not human effort.
3. **Natural birth cannot produce spiritual life** — that which is born of the flesh remains flesh.
4. **The Spirit acts sovereignly in regeneration** — His work is mysterious yet powerful, like the wind.
5. **Faith in Christ is the evidence of new life** — all who truly believe receive eternal life.
6. **Regeneration is an act of God's mercy** — salvation is not earned by righteous deeds.
7. **The Holy Spirit renews and cleanses sinners** — regeneration includes spiritual washing and renewal.
8. **The Word of God is instrumental in regeneration** — God uses His truth to bring spiritual life.
9. **Regeneration produces a living hope** — believers look forward confidently to their eternal inheritance.
10. **Those born of God practice righteousness** — the new birth results in a changed pattern of life.

11. **Regenerated people do not continue comfortably in sin** — God's life within them works against persistent sinfulness.
 12. **Regeneration brings union with Christ** — believers share in His death, resurrection, and new life.
 13. **The new birth makes believers new creations** — old things pass away and a new life begins.
 14. **Regeneration includes inward transformation** — God's law is written upon the believer's heart.
 15. **Forgiveness accompanies the new birth** — sins are fully forgiven through Christ's sacrifice.
 16. **Regeneration begins a life of sanctification** — believers are progressively transformed into Christ's likeness.
-

Biblical Foundations

Jesus and Nicodemus

1. **John 3:3** — unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.
2. **John 3:4-5** — entrance into God's kingdom requires being born of water and the Spirit.
3. **John 3:6-7** — spiritual life can only be produced by the Spirit.
4. **John 3:8** — the Spirit works sovereignly like the wind.
5. **John 3:16-18** — those who believe in Christ receive eternal life and escape condemnation.

Other New Testament Passages

6. **Titus 3:3-7** — salvation comes through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit.
 7. **James 1:16-18** — God brings believers forth by the word of truth.
 8. **1 Peter 1:3-5** — believers are born again to a living hope and eternal inheritance.
 9. **1 Peter 1:23** — the new birth comes through the living and abiding Word of God.
 10. **1 John 2:29** — those born of God practice righteousness.
 11. **1 John 3:9** — God's seed abides in those born of Him.
-

12. **1 John 5:18-19** — those born of God are protected and distinguished from the world.

Additional Scriptures Relating to the New Birth

13. **Romans 6:3-4** — believers walk in newness of life through union with Christ.

14. **Ephesians 2:4-6** — God made spiritually dead sinners alive with Christ.

15. **Colossians 2:12-13** — believers are raised with Christ and forgiven.

16. **2 Corinthians 5:14-17** — those in Christ are new creations.

17. **Galatians 6:15** — what matters is the new creation.

18. **Hebrews 10:14-18** — God's law is written on believers' hearts and their sins are remembered no more.

Practical Implications

1. **Do not rely on religious background or morality** — only the new birth brings salvation.
2. **Examine whether spiritual fruit is present** — regenerated people display a transformed life.
3. **Trust wholly in Christ for eternal life** — faith in Him is inseparable from regeneration.
4. **Depend on the Holy Spirit** — He alone can give spiritual life and renewal.
5. **Value God's Word** — the Spirit uses Scripture to bring and sustain spiritual life.
6. **Pursue holiness and righteousness** — these are evidences of the new birth.
7. **Take comfort in God's preserving grace** — those born of God are guarded by His power.
8. **Live as a new creation** — old patterns of sin should increasingly give way to obedience.
9. **Rejoice in your eternal inheritance** — regeneration gives believers a living hope and secure future.

Summary Sentence

Regeneration is the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit whereby sinners are born again, made alive with Christ, cleansed and renewed by God's grace, united to Christ through faith, transformed into new creations, and given a living hope that results in righteousness, holiness, and eternal life.

Part 9 follows below

PART 9

God's Spirit Will Not Always Strive With Man

Regeneration is the invariable culmination of effectual calling. It is the granting of new birth and new life to every sinner whom the Holy Spirit draws to Christ, and who come to him repentant and believing.

This is wholly the work of God and it is in full accord with God's sovereignty, and with his purposes in election. It is also in full accord with man's free will and responsibility, since the Holy Spirit enables men and women to respond freely and willingly to the effectual call of God. However, although God graciously calls individuals to repentance by his Holy Spirit, he has warned that—for those who refuse to repent—his Spirit will not always strive with man.

Consequences of Resisting the Outward Call

A person cannot resist God's grace in effectual calling. However, he can resist God's grace in the outward or external call to repentance. It is, however, a fearful thing to resist and reject the external call of God. Those who persist in doing so will ultimately perish.

Concerning those who resist the Spirit of God, the Scripture says:

Genesis 6:1-3

¹ When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, ² the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. ³ Then the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not abide in ¹⁹ man for ever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years."

Deuteronomy 6:3-4

³ Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

⁴ "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.
(See vv.1-6; cf. Jos. 23:12-13)

Acts 7:51-53

⁵¹ "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. ⁵² Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who

¹⁹ *My Spirit shall not abide in: [Genesis 6:3](#) Or My Spirit shall not contend with.* (ESV footnote)

announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, ⁵³you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.” (See vv.1-50)

Hebrews 2:2-4

² For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, ³ how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, ⁴ while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will. (See v.1)

Hebrews 10:28-31

²⁸ Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. ²⁹ How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? (Cf. Ex. 24:1-8) ³⁰ For we know him who said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” {*Deut. 32:35*}. And again, “The Lord will judge his people.” {*Deut. 32:36; Psalm 135:14*}. ³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (See vv.26-27; cf. 1 Pet. 4:17-18)

Hebrews 12:18

¹⁸ For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest

Hebrews 12:22

²² But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering,

Hebrews 12:24

²⁴ and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. (See vv.14-23)

Hebrews 12:25

²⁵ See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. (See vv.26-28)

Hebrews 12:29

²⁹for our God is a consuming fire. {Deut. 4:24}.

Above Warnings are Not Addressed to Genuine Believers

God is not addressing genuine born again believers when he utters these solemn warnings shown above. Rather, he is addressing two other classes of people:

1. **Unbelievers:** Unsaved people who hear the external call to repentance but who repeatedly refuse to respond to it. They resist that call wilfully, persistently and defiantly—often over a prolonged period of time. They thereby harden their hearts against God and against his call to repentance. This is likely to lead them to final impenitence and God’s eternal judgment if they proceed along this path. It is to *unbelievers* such as these people that God addresses such solemn warnings of judgment.

(We must remember that unbelievers can resist the *external* call to repentance.)

2. **Professing ‘Christians’:** Others to whom these warnings may apply include *professing* ‘Christians’. These are people who claim to belong to Christ but to whom Christ will say, ‘*I never knew you. Depart from me...*’ These false so-called ‘Christians’ are often found among the true people of God. A number of them attain to places of leadership within the church—some to very high ecclesiastical office. These people, however, have never been born again. Nor have they ever received the indwelling Holy Spirit. They call themselves ‘Christians’ but they have never experienced regeneration (the new birth). Therefore, in God’s sight, they are still in their sins—unrepentant and unforgiven. They have tasted of the work of the Holy Spirit *externally* (in the external call and in common grace). But they have never experienced the work of the Holy Spirit *internally* (in effectual calling and the new birth).

It is to false professors such as these that God addresses these solemn warnings. The Lord God is not addressing any believer who is genuinely born again by the Spirit of God and who is endeavouring to live a life honouring to God. Genuine believers may stumble or backslide on occasions. But the Lord will willingly restore them whenever they confess their sins and repent. They can never fall away from God’s grace for the Lord Jesus has redeemed them and granted them eternal life. They can never perish. Christ has already paid the full penalty for all their sins—past, present and future. The Holy Spirit indwells them to sanctify them and prepare them for their glorification in the presence of the Father and his Son for all eternity. Though at times they may stumble, they will nevertheless persevere unto the end. For by the grace of God he will keep them from falling away, and he will carry them until the day that they meet with their Lord and Saviour in glory.

Summary below

Part 9 Summary

BTE09 Summary — Regeneration (ESV Edition)

Part 9: God's Spirit Will Not Always Strive With Man

Definition

Regeneration is the certain outcome of God's effectual calling, whereby the Holy Spirit grants new spiritual life to those whom He draws to Christ. While God's saving call cannot ultimately be resisted, many people resist the **external call** of the gospel. Scripture therefore warns of the serious consequences of repeatedly rejecting God's invitation to repentance and faith.

Key Truths

1. **Regeneration is the culmination of effectual calling** — all whom God effectually calls are brought to new spiritual life.
 2. **Salvation accords with both God's sovereignty and human responsibility** — God saves by grace while people remain accountable for their response to His commands.
 3. **The external call can be resisted** — sinners may reject God's warnings and invitations to repent.
 4. **The Holy Spirit will not strive indefinitely with the rebellious** — persistent resistance hardens the heart and invites judgment.
 5. **Rejecting the gospel is a serious matter** — neglecting God's salvation brings severe consequences.
 6. **Repeated resistance to God's call leads toward spiritual hardness** — continual refusal fosters unbelief and impenitence.
 7. **God warns sinners because judgment is real** — those who reject Christ remain exposed to divine wrath.
 8. **These warnings are primarily directed toward unbelievers** — especially those who repeatedly hear the gospel while remaining unrepentant.
 9. **Some profess faith without possessing spiritual life** — outward religious profession does not guarantee regeneration.
 10. **False professors may participate externally in religion** — yet never experience the inward transforming work of the Spirit.
-

11. **The difference between common grace and saving grace is crucial** — many experience the external influence of God's truth without regeneration.
 12. **Genuine believers cannot finally fall away** — Christ preserves those whom He has redeemed.
 13. **Believers may stumble but will be restored** — God's grace continues to sustain His children.
 14. **The Holy Spirit preserves believers unto glory** — those truly regenerated will persevere to the end.
-

Biblical Foundations

1. **Genesis 6:1-3** — God warned that His Spirit would not strive with humanity forever.
 2. **Deuteronomy 6:3-4** — God's people are called to hear and obey His Word.
 3. **Acts 7:51-53** — Stephen rebuked those who resisted the Holy Spirit.
 4. **Hebrews 2:2-4** — there is no escape for those who neglect so great a salvation.
 5. **Hebrews 10:28-31** — severe judgment awaits those who spurn God's gracious provision.
 6. **Hebrews 12:22-25** — believers are warned not to refuse Him who speaks from heaven.
 7. **Hebrews 12:29** — God is a consuming fire.
 8. **Deuteronomy 32:35-36** and **Psalms 135:14** (referenced) — God will judge righteously.
-

Practical Implications

1. **Respond promptly to God's call** — do not delay repentance when the gospel is heard.
 2. **Take spiritual warnings seriously** — God does not issue warnings lightly.
 3. **Do not presume upon God's patience** — continual rejection hardens the heart.
 4. **Examine yourself honestly** — distinguish between outward profession and genuine regeneration.
 5. **Seek the inward work of the Holy Spirit** — true Christianity requires the new birth.
 6. **Trust in Christ for salvation** — only He can save from judgment.
-

7. **Find assurance in God's preserving grace** — genuine believers are secure in Christ.
 8. **Confess and repent when you sin** — God's children are restored through repentance.
 9. **Persevere in faith and obedience** — the Spirit continues His work in all true believers.
-

 Summary Sentence

While God's effectual call unfailingly brings His elect to regeneration and salvation, those who repeatedly resist the external call of the gospel face the danger of hardened unbelief and judgment, whereas genuine believers are preserved by God's grace and will persevere to eternal glory through the indwelling Holy Spirit.

PART 10

Born Again as Children of God

Those whom the Spirit regenerates to newness of life, God justifies and adopts into his family as his own children. By his grace, God gives them all the rights, privileges and responsibilities of his children. The rights and privileges of God's children include full acceptance as sons and daughters of God. As co-heirs with God's one and only Son, they also include all the rights of inheritance that pertain to the children of God.

The responsibilities incumbent upon the children of God includes the obligation to live their whole lives for the sake of the one who loved them. They ought always to remember that he who loved them died to make them his own, so that—together with him—they might become the heirs of glory. Those who assume these responsibilities ought to do their utmost to live to the praise of God's glory; to honour their Father in heaven, and to serve his Son with all their heart and soul.²⁰

Scripture References (ESV)

Born Again as Children of God

Concerning these things, the Scripture says:

Romans 8:14-18

¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons ²¹ of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. (See vv.19-23)

Galatians 4:6-7

⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. (See Gal. 3:26-29; 4:1-5)

²⁰ See further on *Bible Truths Explained: Adoption*.

²¹ sons of God: Romans 8:14-18; The Greek is literally, *sons* (of God). However, depending on the context, this is understood to mean either *sons* (of God) (if the context requires it) or *sons and daughters* (of God) (where the context requires it—as here, in this verse. This is demonstrated in Romans 8:14-16 where the apostle Paul begins by saying *sons of God* in v.14 and then continues by saying *children of God* in v.16. (The Greek in v.14 is υἱός *huios*, son or child (of either gender). The Greek in v.16 is τέκνον *teknon*, child, son, or daughter.)

Ephesians 2:18-19

¹⁸ For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens,²² but you are fellow citizens with the saints²³ and members of the household of God, (See vv.11-22)

Ephesians 5:1-3

¹ Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

³ But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. (See vv.4-8)

Philippians 1:29-30

²⁹ For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, ³⁰ engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have. (See vv.27-28)

1 Peter 1:13-16

¹³ Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹⁴ As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, ¹⁵ but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” {Lev. 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7}. (See 1 Pet. 1:3-12; cf. Deut. 7:6)

1 John 5:1-2

¹ Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. ² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. (See vv.3-5; cf. John 14:15,21,23-24)

²² *aliens*: [Ephesians 2:19](#) Or *sojourners*. (ESV footnote)

²³ *saints*: [Ephesians 2:19](#); The Greek, ἅγιος **hagios**, means ‘*holy*’ ‘*consecrated*’ or ‘*sanctified*’ ones. In the present context, and in many places elsewhere in Scripture, these are the *holy, consecrated* or *sanctified* people of God. In other words, all genuinely born again believers, or all the children of God. In the Bible, ‘*saints*’ are not an elite class of Christians. ‘*Saints*’ are the redeemed people and children of God—members of the household and family of God.

Only those Born Again by the Holy Spirit are God's Children

From the above Scripture references and from many other places in the Bible, we can see that only those who have been born again or regenerated by the Holy Spirit can truly belong to God. These are his children by redemption and by adoption. And this is true for every single individual who has repented of their sins and believed on Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord.

All genuinely born again believers belong to the family and household of God. Their adoption places each child of God into the Father's kingdom and household. God not only adopts them. He also makes them heirs of his kingdom and heirs of glory.

Indeed, God makes every believer not only an heir to the inheritance but a joint heir with God's own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And since God has adopted them as his own sons and daughters he will never leave them nor forsake them. At times, God will discipline his children in love, but he will never disown or disinherit them. Every believer is and will remain a child of God for all the ages of eternity.

As God's Word says:

1 John 3:1-3

¹ See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ² Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. ³ And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

1 Peter 1:3-5

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Summary below

Part 10 Summary

BTE09 Summary — Regeneration (ESV Edition)

Part 10: Born Again as Children of God

Definition

Regeneration results in believers being adopted into God's family as His children. Those who are born again by the Holy Spirit are justified, accepted by God, made heirs of His kingdom, and granted all the privileges of sonship. As God's children, they are called to live holy lives, honour their heavenly Father, serve Christ faithfully, and look forward to their eternal inheritance.

Key Truths

1. **Regeneration leads to adoption** — those born again become members of God's family.
 2. **God justifies and accepts His children fully** — believers are received as sons and daughters through His grace.
 3. **The Holy Spirit assures believers of their adoption** — He bears witness that they belong to God.
 4. **Believers can approach God as Father** — they cry, "Abba, Father," through the Spirit of adoption.
 5. **God's children are heirs of His kingdom** — they inherit the blessings promised by God.
 6. **Believers are joint-heirs with Christ** — they share in the inheritance secured by God's Son.
 7. **Adoption brings both privileges and responsibilities** — God's children are called to live for His glory.
 8. **God's children must pursue holiness** — their conduct should reflect their Father's character.
 9. **Believers are no longer spiritual outsiders** — they are citizens of God's kingdom and members of His household.
 10. **Love for God and His people evidences the new birth** — regenerated believers demonstrate family likeness.
 11. **God's children may experience suffering** — sharing in Christ's sufferings precedes sharing fully in His glory.
 12. **God disciplines but never abandons His children** — adoption is permanent and secure.
 13. **The new birth guarantees an eternal inheritance** — believers possess a living hope that cannot perish.
-

14. **Regenerated believers remain God's children forever** — they can never be disowned or disinherited.
 15. **The hope of future glory promotes holiness** — believers seek purity as they await Christ's return.
-

Biblical Foundations

1. **Romans 8:14-18** — those led by the Spirit are God's children, heirs with Christ, and destined for glory.
 2. **Galatians 4:6-7** — believers receive the Spirit of adoption and become heirs through God.
 3. **Ephesians 2:18-19** — believers are members of God's household and fellow citizens with the saints.
 4. **Ephesians 5:1-3** — God's children are called to imitate Him and walk in holiness.
 5. **Philippians 1:29-30** — believers are granted both faith in Christ and participation in His sufferings.
 6. **1 Peter 1:13-16** — God's children must be holy because God is holy.
 7. **1 John 5:1-2** — those born of God love both the Father and His children.
 8. **1 John 3:1-3** — believers are God's children now and will one day be like Christ.
 9. **1 Peter 1:3-5** — the new birth grants a living hope and an imperishable inheritance.
 10. **John 14:15, 21, 23-24** (referenced) — love for Christ is expressed through obedience.
-

Practical Implications

1. **Rejoice in your adoption** — believers are fully accepted as God's children.
 2. **Approach God with confidence** — He is a loving Father to all who are born again.
 3. **Live worthy of your calling** — God's children should reflect His character.
 4. **Pursue holiness daily** — obedience is the natural fruit of regeneration.
 5. **Love fellow believers** — members of God's family are called to love one another.
 6. **Find comfort in your inheritance** — eternal glory awaits God's children.
 7. **Persevere through suffering** — present trials cannot compare with future glory.
 8. **Rest in God's faithfulness** — He will never abandon His redeemed children.
 9. **Set your hope on Christ's return** — the certainty of future glory encourages purity and perseverance.
-

■ Summary Sentence

Those whom the Holy Spirit regenerates are adopted into God's family as His beloved children, granted the full privileges of sonship and a glorious inheritance with Christ, and called to live holy, obedient, and loving lives while awaiting their eternal glorification in the presence of God.

PART 11

Evidences Confirming Regeneration

Whether a person has experienced spiritual regeneration (the new birth) or not, determines whether that person is God's child or not. A tree is known by its fruit; and a good tree must produce good fruit. Conversely, a bad tree—an unregenerate heart—can produce only bad fruit or no fruit at all.

The man or woman who has truly experienced the new birth will show the evidence of this by their daily conduct. This does not mean that those who have been born again will never commit sin. However, it *does* mean that sin will not dominate their lives; nor will they deliberately practise sin. Since, by the Spirit of holiness, their old sinful nature must be put to death, then sin must no longer rule over them. Instead, their lives will become more and more like Christ, as the Holy Spirit continues the ongoing work of sanctification: a work that must result in holiness of life.

Regeneration is also confirmed in a person's life by their love for God, for Christ, and for his people. This kind of love will manifest itself by its actions.

Again, there will be the desire and the power to believe and obey the Word of God. There will be the desire to put into practice the teachings of that Word, and to live daily in its truths. There will be the power to overcome sin: power granted by the indwelling Holy Spirit to provide victory. This power over sin may be immediate or gradual. However, we must not understand this to mean that we can achieve total or absolute victory over all sin in this life. Throughout this life, each child of God will find himself engaged in a constant spiritual warfare against sin and against the desires of his old sinful nature.

There will be joy of heart, and true peace with God.

Good and Bad Fruit

Scripture References (ESV)

Good and Bad Fruit

Concerning the significance of good or bad fruit—or the lack of fruit—in a person's life, the Scripture says:

Matthew 3:7-10

⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. ⁹ And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father', for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. ¹⁰ Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. (See vv.1-6)

Matthew 3:12

¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.” (See v.11)

Matthew 7:15-20

¹⁵ “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes, or figs from thorn bushes? ¹⁷ So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

Matthew 7:21-23

²¹ “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord’, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ ²³ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

Matthew 12:50

⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.” (See vv.46-49)

Matthew 25:34-35

³⁴ Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, (See vv.31-36)

Matthew 25:37

³⁷ Then the righteous ²⁴ will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? (See vv.38-39)

²⁴ *the righteous*: All those whom God has justified and declared righteous in his sight through their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ: that is, all genuinely born again believers.

Matthew 25:40

⁴⁰ And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers,²⁵ you did it to me.'

Matthew 25:41-42

⁴¹ "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, (See v.43)

Matthew 25:44-45

⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' ⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.'

Matthew 25:46

⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Living to Honour the Lord**Scripture References (ESV)*****Living to Honour the Lord***

As God's redeemed and holy children, we must never allow sin, or the desires of the sinful nature, to dominate our lives. Rather, as truly regenerated people, we should ensure that—by God's grace—our lives are producing the fruit of the Spirit. We should ensure also that godliness and holiness characterises our daily lives.

Thus, the Scripture says:

Romans 6:6-10

⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷ For one who has died has been set free from sin. ⁸ Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no

²⁵ *brothers*: [Matthew 25:40](#) Or *brothers and sisters*. (ESV footnote)

longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰ For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. (See vv.1-5)

Romans 6:11-14

¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

¹² Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. ¹³ Do not present your members ²⁶ to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. ¹⁴ For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. (See vv.15-23)

Romans 7:4

⁴ Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. (See vv.1-7)

Galatians 5:19-21

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, ²⁷ enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy, ²⁸ drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (See vv.16-18)

Galatians 5:22-24

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (See vv.25-26)

²⁶ *members*: [Romans 6:13](#); That is, the different parts of the body. Not only the physical parts, but also intended to include faculties of the mind (thoughts, ideas, imagination, etc.) ‘*Members*’ also includes speech and the need to control the tongue, what we say in words or how we say it (To this end, James says, ‘*the tongue is a restless evil...*’ (James 3:8))

²⁷ *sorcery*: [Galatians 5:20](#); Greek, φαρμακεία **pharmakeia**, *witchcraft* including magic and spells, and often involving drugs.

²⁸ [Galatians 5:21](#) Some manuscripts add *murder*. (ESV footnote)

Part 11 Summary

BTE09 Summary — Regeneration (ESV Edition)

Part 11: Evidences Confirming Regeneration

Definition

Evidences of Regeneration are the outward fruits and inward realities that demonstrate a person has been born again by the Holy Spirit. While regenerated believers are not sinless, they are progressively transformed through sanctification, producing spiritual fruit, loving God and His people, obeying God's Word, and pursuing holiness rather than remaining under the dominion of sin.

Key Truths

1. **Regeneration is evidenced by spiritual fruit** — a transformed life reveals the reality of the new birth.
 2. **A tree is known by its fruit** — genuine conversion is demonstrated by conduct, not merely profession.
 3. **Regenerated believers still struggle with sin** — perfection is not attained in this life.
 4. **Sin no longer dominates the believer's life** — the new birth breaks sin's ruling power.
 5. **The Holy Spirit produces ongoing sanctification** — believers increasingly resemble Christ.
 6. **Love for God evidences regeneration** — those born of God desire to honour Him.
 7. **Love for Christ's people evidences regeneration** — believers care for and serve fellow Christians.
 8. **Regenerated people desire to obey God's Word** — God's truth becomes both precious and authoritative.
 9. **The Holy Spirit provides power against sin** — believers are enabled to resist and overcome sinful patterns.
 10. **Christian growth may be gradual** — spiritual victory develops through a lifelong process of sanctification.
 11. **All believers remain engaged in spiritual warfare** — the old sinful nature continues to oppose holiness.
-

12. **Regeneration produces joy and peace with God** — reconciliation with God brings inward assurance and comfort.
 13. **Religious profession alone is insufficient** — many who claim Christ may never have been born again.
 14. **Good works do not cause salvation but reveal it** — fruit demonstrates the reality of regeneration.
 15. **The fruit of the Spirit contrasts with the works of the flesh** — transformed lives display godly character.
 16. **Holiness is the necessary outcome of regeneration** — those born of God increasingly live to honour the Lord.
-

Biblical Foundations

Good and Bad Fruit

1. **Matthew 3:7-10** — genuine repentance must produce fruit.
2. **Matthew 3:12** — God distinguishes between true and false followers.
3. **Matthew 7:15-20** — people are recognized by their fruits.
4. **Matthew 7:21-23** — not everyone who professes Christ truly belongs to Him.
5. **Matthew 12:50** — God's family consists of those who do His will.
6. **Matthew 25:34-40** — righteous lives demonstrate love through practical service.
7. **Matthew 25:41-46** — absence of spiritual fruit reveals an unchanged heart.

Living to Honour the Lord

8. **Romans 6:6-10** — believers have died to sin and live unto God.
 9. **Romans 6:11-14** — sin is no longer to reign in the believer's life.
 10. **Romans 7:4** — believers are called to bear fruit for God.
 11. **Galatians 5:19-21** — the works of the flesh characterize the unregenerate life.
 12. **Galatians 5:22-24** — the fruit of the Spirit characterizes those who belong to Christ.
-

 Practical Implications

1. **Examine your life for spiritual fruit** — conduct reveals the reality of regeneration.
 2. **Do not rely on profession alone** — genuine faith produces visible transformation.
 3. **Pursue holiness intentionally** — sanctification is evidence of spiritual life.
 4. **Resist the dominion of sin** — believers are no longer slaves to sinful desires.
 5. **Cultivate love for God and His people** — love is a key mark of the new birth.
 6. **Submit to God's Word daily** — obedience demonstrates genuine faith.
 7. **Depend upon the Holy Spirit** — victory over sin comes through His power.
 8. **Expect ongoing spiritual growth** — sanctification is progressive rather than instantaneous.
 9. **Take comfort in God's grace** — believers may struggle, but they are not abandoned.
 10. **Seek the fruit of the Spirit** — love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control should increasingly mark the Christian life.
-

 Summary Sentence

Regeneration is confirmed by the spiritual fruit it produces: a growing love for God and His people, increasing obedience to God's Word, victory over the ruling power of sin, the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit, and a life progressively transformed into the likeness of Christ through the ongoing work of sanctification.

PART 12

New Birth Evidenced by Love, Victory and Peace

Scripture References (ESV)

New Birth Evidenced by Love

That a person confirms his regeneration or new spiritual birth by such things as love for God, for Christ, and for his people, is demonstrated by such Scriptures as the following:

John 14:15

¹⁵ “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. (See vv.16-20)

John 14:21

²¹ Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.” (See v.22)

John 14:23-24

²³ Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. ²⁴ Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me. (See vv.25-31)

John 15:12-14

¹² “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you. (See vv.1-15)

John 15:16

¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. (See v.17)

James 2:14-17

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, “Go in

peace, be warmed and filled”, without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? ¹⁷ So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. (See vv.18-26; see esp. v.26; cf. Prov. 3:27-28; 19:17; 21:13)

1 John 3:16-18

¹⁶ By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. ¹⁷ But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? ¹⁸ Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. (See vv.10-24)

Victory in Union with Christ

Scripture References (ESV)

Victory in Union with Christ

When we abide in Christ, and walk by the Spirit, God gives us the power to subdue and to overcome sin in our lives. As a rule, however, we achieve this victory only by engaging in a constant spiritual warfare. This entails wholehearted trust in the Lord Jesus to give us the strength to persevere in our fight against sin and against the desires of our old sinful nature.

Thus, God's Word says:

John 15:3-6

³ Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. (See vv.1-8; cf. v.6 with Matt. 3:10; 7:19)

Romans 8:10-11

¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹ If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. (See vv.1-9)

Romans 8:12-13

¹² So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. (See vv.14-17)

Galatians 5:16-18

¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. (See vv.19-26; cf. v.17c with John 15:5c)

Ephesians 6:10-13

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. (See vv.14-18; cf. v.12 with John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11)

1 John 5:1

¹ Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. (See vv.2-3)

1 John 5:4-5

⁴ For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. ⁵ Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Revelation 3:19-21

¹⁹ Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. ²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. ²¹ The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. (See vv.14-22)

Peace Within**Scripture References (ESV)***Peace Within*

Regeneration is also confirmed by the possession of true and lasting peace and joy in the heart of the believer. Thus, the Scripture says:

Isaiah 12:1-3

You will say in that day:

“I will give thanks to you, O LORD,
for though you were angry with me,
your anger turned away,
that you might comfort me.

²“Behold, God is my salvation;
I will trust, and will not be afraid;
for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song,
and he has become my salvation.”

³With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.
(See vv.4-6; cf. v.3 with John 4:10-14; 7:37-39)

Isaiah 26:3

³You keep him in perfect peace
whose mind is stayed on you,
because he trusts in you.

John 14:26-27

²⁶But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. ²⁷Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. (See v.25)

Romans 5:1-2

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ²Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Philippians 4:6-7

⁶do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Summary below

Part 12 Summary

BTE09 Summary — Regeneration (ESV Edition)

Part 12: New Birth Evidenced by Love, Victory, and Peace

Definition

The New Birth is evidenced by the transforming work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life. Those who have been regenerated demonstrate their new spiritual life through love for God and His people, growing victory over sin through union with Christ, and a deep, abiding peace and joy that flows from reconciliation with God.

Key Truths

1. **Love is a primary evidence of regeneration** — those born of God love Christ, obey His commands, and love fellow believers.
 2. **Love expresses itself through action** — genuine Christian love is demonstrated in deeds, not merely words.
 3. **Obedience flows from love for Christ** — believers keep His commandments because they love Him.
 4. **Regenerated believers bear lasting fruit** — spiritual fruit confirms genuine union with Christ.
 5. **Faith without evidence is dead** — true faith produces works of love and compassion.
 6. **Believers gain victory through union with Christ** — spiritual strength comes from abiding in Him.
 7. **The Holy Spirit empowers believers to overcome sin** — victory is achieved through dependence on God's power.
 8. **The Christian life involves spiritual warfare** — believers continually battle sinful desires and spiritual opposition.
 9. **Those born of God overcome the world** — faith in Christ enables perseverance and spiritual victory.
 10. **Christ disciplines those He loves** — correction and repentance are signs of God's fatherly care.
-

11. **Regeneration produces peace with God** — justification removes hostility and brings reconciliation.
 12. **The Holy Spirit imparts inner peace** — Christ gives a peace that the world cannot provide.
 13. **Regeneration produces joy in salvation** — believers rejoice in God's grace and promised inheritance.
 14. **Trust in God brings stability and peace** — hearts fixed upon God experience His sustaining peace.
 15. **Prayer strengthens peace and assurance** — believers are encouraged to bring every concern to God.
-

Biblical Foundations

New Birth Evidenced by Love

1. **John 14:15** — love for Christ is demonstrated through obedience.
2. **John 14:21** — those who keep Christ's commands show that they love Him.
3. **John 14:23-24** — God's presence abides with those who love and obey Christ.
4. **John 15:12-14** — believers are commanded to love one another.
5. **John 15:16** — Christ chose His people to bear lasting fruit.
6. **James 2:14-17** — faith without works is dead.
7. **1 John 3:16-18** — genuine love expresses itself in action and sacrifice.

Victory in Union with Christ

8. **John 15:3-6** — believers must abide in Christ to bear fruit.
 9. **Romans 8:10-11** — the indwelling Spirit gives life.
 10. **Romans 8:12-13** — believers put sin to death through the Spirit.
 11. **Galatians 5:16-18** — walking by the Spirit overcomes the desires of the flesh.
 12. **Ephesians 6:10-13** — Christians must stand firm in spiritual warfare.
 13. **1 John 5:1** — everyone who believes in Christ has been born of God.
 14. **1 John 5:4-5** — those born of God overcome the world through faith.
-

15. **Revelation 3:19-21** — Christ calls His people to repentance, perseverance, and victory.

Peace Within

16. **Isaiah 12:1-3** — salvation brings joy and spiritual refreshment.

17. **Isaiah 26:3** — God gives perfect peace to those who trust Him.

18. **John 14:26-27** — Christ gives His peace through the Holy Spirit.

19. **Romans 5:1-2** — justification brings peace with God.

20. **Philippians 4:6-7** — God's peace guards believers who bring their concerns to Him in prayer.

Practical Implications

1. **Examine whether love marks your life** — genuine regeneration produces love for God and others.
 2. **Express love through practical actions** — serve, help, and care for fellow believers.
 3. **Abide continually in Christ** — spiritual fruit and victory come only through Him.
 4. **Depend on the Holy Spirit** — He empowers believers to resist sin and grow in holiness.
 5. **Expect spiritual conflict** — victory requires perseverance in the Christian life.
 6. **Fight sin actively** — believers are called to put sinful desires to death.
 7. **Trust Christ for victory** — overcoming the world comes through faith in Him.
 8. **Cultivate prayer and trust** — these strengthen peace and spiritual stability.
 9. **Rejoice in your salvation** — God's grace produces lasting joy.
 10. **Rest in God's peace** — believers can experience confidence and assurance even amid trials.
-

Summary Sentence

The new birth is evidenced by a life marked by love for God and His people, growing victory over sin through union with Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, and the abiding peace and joy that flow from reconciliation with God and confidence in His saving grace.

PART 13

Clear Evidences of Regeneration

Those Christians who determine to live—not for self—but for God's glory, give one of the clearest evidences of their regeneration. The further a person progresses in the Christian life, the more deeply conscious he becomes of his own utter unworthiness and sinfulness in the sight of a holy and righteous God. At the same time, the believer begins to appreciate more and more the value and necessity of the superabundant grace of God that saves him and keeps him.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, the believer determines to fight against temptation—or to flee from it. Similarly, by the aid of the Spirit, he makes it his aim to overcome besetting sin in his life, and to live his life only for God's honour and glory. The believer, however, also becomes increasingly aware that the fight against temptation and sin is a continual spiritual warfare. He learns that victory over sin comes only by abiding in Christ, and by walking in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Never in this life will the believer reach his ultimate goal of moral and spiritual perfection. However, he must determine resolutely to put to death the old sinful nature, and to pursue holiness of life: for without holiness, no-one will see the Lord.

In the World, But Not Of the World

Although the believer is *in* the world, he is not *of* the world. This world is not his home. He has a better and an abiding home prepared for him on high. While in this world, therefore, each believer resolves to separate himself from the *contamination* of the world (but not to isolate himself from the *people* of the world). He desires to dedicate his life wholly to God. He endeavours to glorify the name of God by every thought, word and deed, and by every attitude of heart and mind.

Taking up the Cross

Scripture References (ESV)

Taking up the Cross

Concerning the believer's determination to live for God, rather than for self, we should consider the following Scriptures:

Mark 8:34-37

³⁴ And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ³⁵ For whoever would save his life ²⁹ will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. ³⁶ For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? ³⁷ For what can a man give in return for his soul? (Cf. Matt. 16:24-26; Luke 9:23-25)

²⁹ *life*: Mark 8:34-37; Or *soul*. Greek, ψυχή **psychē**. In the Greek of this passage, the same word *psychē* is used for both *life* or *soul*, depending on the context.

Mark 8:38

³⁸ "For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." (Cf. Matt. 10:32-33; Luke 9:26; 12:8-9)

Romans 12:1-2

¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (See vv. 3-8)

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. (See vv.13-18; cf. 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 6:14 - 7:1)

Warring Against the Sinful Nature

Scripture References (ESV)

Warring Against the Sinful Nature

Concerning the growing believer's increasing awareness of sin, and increasingly greater dependence on the grace of God, the Scripture says:

Romans 7:18-20

¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. (See vv.5-17)

Romans 7:21-23

²¹ So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. ²² For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, ²³ but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. (Cf. Gal. 5:16-18; Jas. 4:1; 1 Pet. 2:11)

Romans 7:24-25

²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin. (Cf. v.24; with Rom. 6:6; 8:2)

Perfection is the Prize

Scripture References (ESV)

Perfection is the Prize

Although God requires the believer to pursue holiness of life, no child of God will attain perfection in this life. Thus, God's word says:

Philippians 3:12-14

¹² Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³ Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on towards the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (See vv.1-11)

Philippians 3:15-16

¹⁵ Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. ¹⁶ Only let us hold true to what we have attained. (See vv.17-21)

Concerning the believer's obligation to pursue holiness of life, God's Word says:

Matthew 5:48

⁴⁸ You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (See vv.43-47; cf. Luke 6:36; Col. 1:28; 1 Pet. 1:15-16)

Hebrews 12:14

¹⁴ Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. (See vv.15-16)

Perfection of character and conduct is not yet a present reality. This will only be realised when the Lord Jesus calls us into his immediate presence for all eternity. Then, he will glorify us, transform this

present mortal body into an eternal spiritual body and will present us faultless and blameless (perfect) before the throne of God with rejoicing. (Jude 24)

In the meantime, the apostle Paul gives us this reminder:

1 Corinthians 3:18

¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. (See vv.12-17)

Through the ongoing process of sanctification, the Holy Spirit of God has begun this transformation in every believer's life. This same Holy Spirit will most certainly bring it to completion in every believer's ultimate glorification.

Summary below

Part 13 Summary

BTE09 Summary — Regeneration (ESV Edition)

Part 13: Clear Evidences of Regeneration

Definition

Clear Evidences of Regeneration are the visible fruits seen in the life of a person who has been born again by the Holy Spirit. Regenerated believers increasingly live for God's glory rather than their own, wage war against sin, pursue holiness, depend upon God's grace, and persevere in spiritual growth while awaiting their final glorification.

Key Truths

1. **Living for God's glory is a clear evidence of regeneration** — the believer's life is increasingly centred on God rather than self.
2. **Growth in holiness deepens humility** — mature believers become more aware of both their sinfulness and God's grace.
3. **Regenerated believers fight against temptation** — they do not surrender willingly to sin but seek to overcome it.
4. **The Christian life involves continual spiritual warfare** — believers battle the sinful nature throughout their earthly lives.
5. **Victory over sin comes through Christ** — believers overcome temptation by abiding in Him and relying on the Spirit's power.
6. **Believers are in the world but not of it** — they live among the world without adopting its sinful values.
7. **Regeneration produces a desire for separation from worldly corruption** — believers seek purity while continuing to minister to others.
8. **Following Christ requires self-denial** — believers are called to take up their cross and follow Him.
9. **The believer belongs to God** — having been purchased by Christ, believers are no longer their own.

10. **The regenerated heart delights in God's law** — even while struggling against remaining sin.
 11. **Increasing awareness of sin is a mark of spiritual maturity** — believers see more clearly their need for grace.
 12. **Perfection is the goal but not the present reality** — complete holiness awaits glorification.
 13. **God commands believers to pursue holiness** — without holiness no one will see the Lord.
 14. **Sanctification is progressive** — believers are transformed gradually into Christ's likeness.
 15. **The Holy Spirit completes what He begins** — the work of transformation will culminate in glorification.
-

Biblical Foundations

Taking Up the Cross

1. **Mark 8:34-37** — believers are called to deny themselves and follow Christ.
2. **Mark 8:38** — Christ calls His people to confess Him boldly before the world.
3. **Romans 12:1-2** — believers are to offer themselves as living sacrifices and reject worldly conformity.
4. **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** — Christians belong to God and must glorify Him with their bodies.

Warring Against the Sinful Nature

5. **Romans 7:18-20** — believers continue to struggle with indwelling sin.
6. **Romans 7:21-23** — spiritual warfare exists between the new nature and remaining sin.
7. **Romans 7:24-25** — deliverance comes through Jesus Christ.
8. **Galatians 5:16-18** (referenced) — the flesh and Spirit oppose one another.
9. **James 4:1** and **1 Peter 2:11** (referenced) — believers battle sinful desires.

Perfection Is the Prize

10. **Philippians 3:12-14** — believers press on toward the goal of Christlikeness.
-

11. **Philippians 3:15-16** — spiritual maturity involves perseverance in the truth.
 12. **Matthew 5:48** — God calls His people to pursue perfection.
 13. **Hebrews 12:14** — holiness is essential for seeing the Lord.
 14. **2 Corinthians 3:18** — believers are transformed progressively into Christ's image by the Spirit.
 15. **Jude 24** (referenced) — Christ will ultimately present His people faultless before God.
-

Practical Implications

1. **Live for God's glory rather than personal gain** — regeneration redirects life's purpose.
 2. **Expect ongoing battles against sin** — spiritual warfare is normal for believers.
 3. **Depend continually on God's grace** — growth in holiness requires His power.
 4. **Take temptation seriously** — flee from situations that encourage sin.
 5. **Abide in Christ daily** — lasting victory comes through union with Him.
 6. **Refuse conformity to the world** — cultivate godly thinking and living.
 7. **Practice self-denial** — following Christ often requires personal sacrifice.
 8. **Pursue holiness intentionally** — spiritual maturity does not occur automatically.
 9. **Do not be discouraged by imperfection** — sanctification is progressive throughout life.
 10. **Look forward to glorification** — God's work of transformation will be completed in eternity.
-

Summary Sentence

The clearest evidence of regeneration is a life increasingly devoted to God's glory, marked by ongoing warfare against sin, growing dependence on divine grace, separation from worldly corruption, perseverance in holiness, and progressive transformation into the likeness of Christ through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.

PART 14

Evidences Denying Regeneration

What kind of evidences would indicate that a person has *not* been born again? Frequently, this can be very difficult to determine with certainty; but we list some of the more obvious possibilities below:

1. A person's refusal to believe the Word of God.
2. Their refusal to accept the teaching of God's Word, or to put that teaching into practice.
3. Their wilful rejection of the primary doctrines of the faith. This refers to the outright repudiation of particular doctrines that are essential to the faith. It does not apply to differences of opinion regarding the interpretation of non-essential matters.
4. An aversion to Christ, or to spiritual things.
5. Their deliberate neglect of the ordinances of the church (baptism and the Lord's Supper).
6. Their not associating regularly with God's people. This presupposes that there is no valid reason for their continued absence from church fellowship.
7. Their continuance in the deliberate practice of sin.

These are some to the evidences or signs that could indicate that a person has not been born again.

Not all of these signs need be present. A person may claim to be a Christian: that person may attend church services and activities regularly. However, regardless of their claim and of their church attendance, if some of the signs listed above are unmistakably evident in their life, the assumption must be that this person does not belong to Christ. If, however, he does not belong to Christ, he is yet in his sins.

This, however, is only an *assumption*. God alone knows a person's heart, and he alone knows their true spiritual condition. If we think a professing Christian may not be regenerated, the church pastor or elders must deal with this person not only in love and with great compassion, but also truthfully, and—if necessary—firmly. The leadership of the church must show that person what the Lord requires.

This process of instruction and correction from the Scriptures may require to be complemented by church discipline. In extreme cases, church discipline could result in excommunication from the church. However, unless the situation warrants it, excommunication need not necessarily be permanent. The apostle Paul envisages a person being excommunicated so that that person may be exposed to the sorrows of the world, to Satan, and deprived of church fellowship and the means of grace. (1 Cor. 5:1-13; see also Matt. 18:15-20)

However, when writing his second letter to the church at Corinth, the apostle Paul envisages a time when such a person may truly repent, forsake his sin and seek re-admission to the fellowship of believers. In such cases, the repentant believer should be restored to church fellowship. (See 2 Cor. 5:1-11)

Those, however, who do not ultimately repent have shown that they were never true believers. Their return to the world is a return to their own natural environment—and there they have chosen to remain. Consider the example of Demas who returned to the world after having served with the apostle Paul in his ministry. (2 Tim. 4:10) Although not excommunicated, Demas' departure demonstrates that—although present and serving in church ministry for a time—it is still possible to return to the world. This shows that not all who profess to belong to Christ do actually belong to Christ—even if they had been serving or ministering in his name.

Judas Iscariot is another classic example of an unregenerate person associating with Christ, serving in his name, and occupying a particular office and responsibility (treasurer). The Lord Jesus, of course, knew the true state and condition of Judas' heart. But the other disciples believed Judas was a genuine follower of the Lord until the point he betrayed the Lord. Then, Judas' truly unregenerate state became obvious.

No Regeneration Without Holiness

We cannot emphasise too strongly that there is no such thing as regeneration that does not result in holiness of life. Those who have been born again are born of God. If, however, they have been born of God, then God's seed is in them. They cannot continue in the deliberate practice of sin, for they are indwelt by the Spirit of holiness.

Regarding these things, God's Word says:

John 1:12-13

¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. (See vv.9-14)

Romans 8:9-10

⁹ You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. (See vv.1-13)

Romans 8:14

¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. (See vv.15-17)

1 Peter 1:14-16

¹⁴ As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, ¹⁵ but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” {*Lev. 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7*}. (See 1 Pet. 1:13)

1 Peter 1:23

²³ since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; (See vv.22-25)

1 John 3:9

⁹ No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. (See vv.1-10; cf. ch. 5:18)

Holiness of Life

It is well for us to remember these points:

1. Profession of faith in Christ is no guarantee of regeneration—unless it results in holiness of life.
2. Giving a testimony of conversion is no guarantee of regeneration—unless it results in holiness of life.
3. Regular attendance at church services is no guarantee of regeneration—unless it results in holiness of life.

The guarantee of regeneration is the fruit of holiness in the believer's life. Without this fruit, the branch is dead—and fit only for the burning.

John 15:4-8

⁴ [*Jesus said*] Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. (See vv.1-3)

John 15:16

¹⁶You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. (See vv.9-17)

Every one of us who are truly born again and are being sanctified by the work of the Holy Spirit should desire earnestly to honour the Lord by pursuing holiness of life. We will never be perfect in this life. However, it should be our aim to honour the One who loved us and saved us to belong to him and to serve him.

Summary below

Part 14 Summary

BTE09 Summary — Regeneration (ESV Edition)

Part 14: Evidences Denying Regeneration

Definition

Evidences Denying Regeneration are patterns of belief, conduct, and character that may indicate a person has not experienced the new birth. While only God knows the heart with certainty, Scripture teaches that genuine regeneration produces holiness, obedience, and spiritual fruit. Persistent unbelief, rejection of God's truth, and habitual sin may reveal the absence of saving grace.

Key Truths

1. **Not everyone who professes faith is regenerated** — outward claims do not guarantee inward spiritual life.
 2. **Persistent unbelief may indicate an unregenerate heart** — refusal to believe God's Word is a serious warning sign.
 3. **Rejecting Scripture's authority contradicts regeneration** — those born of God seek to receive and obey His truth.
 4. **Wilful denial of essential Christian doctrines may reveal spiritual emptiness** — saving faith embraces the truths of the gospel.
 5. **Aversion to Christ and spiritual things is inconsistent with the new birth** — regeneration produces love for God.
 6. **Neglect of Christ's ordinances may indicate spiritual indifference** — believers value obedience to Christ's commands.
 7. **Persistent absence from Christian fellowship is concerning** — God's children desire fellowship with His people.
 8. **Deliberate, ongoing practice of sin contradicts regeneration** — those born of God cannot comfortably remain under sin's dominion.
 9. **Only God knows the true condition of the heart** — outward observations should be made with humility and caution.
 10. **Church discipline has a restorative purpose** — correction aims to bring repentance and restoration.
-

11. **Some professing believers eventually reveal an unregenerate condition** — outward association with Christianity is not regeneration.
 12. **Examples such as Demas and Judas illustrate false profession** — involvement in ministry alone does not prove salvation.
 13. **True regeneration always produces holiness** — the indwelling Spirit transforms character and conduct.
 14. **The presence of the Holy Spirit distinguishes God's children** — those who belong to Christ are led by His Spirit.
 15. **Holiness is the fruit of the new birth** — regenerated people pursue obedience, even though imperfectly.
 16. **Spiritual fruit provides evidence of genuine discipleship** — branches abiding in Christ bear lasting fruit.
-

Biblical Foundations

No Regeneration Without Holiness

1. **John 1:12-13** — God's children are born of God, not by human effort.
2. **Romans 8:9-10** — those without the Spirit of Christ do not belong to Him.
3. **Romans 8:14** — those led by the Spirit are God's children.
4. **1 Peter 1:14-16** — believers are called to holiness because God is holy.
5. **1 Peter 1:23** — believers have been born again through God's living Word.
6. **1 John 3:9** — those born of God do not continue in habitual sin.

Fruit as Evidence of Regeneration

7. **John 15:4-8** — abiding in Christ produces fruit and proves true discipleship.
8. **John 15:16** — Christ appoints His people to bear lasting fruit.

Church Discipline and Restoration

9. **1 Corinthians 5:1-13** (referenced) — discipline may be necessary for persistent sin.
 10. **2 Corinthians 5:1-11** (referenced) — restoration is appropriate where genuine repentance occurs.
 11. **2 Timothy 4:10** — Demas forsook ministry for the world.
-

12. **Matthew 18:15-20** (referenced) — Christ provides principles for correction and restoration.
-

Practical Implications

1. **Examine yourself honestly** — profession of faith should be accompanied by spiritual fruit.
 2. **Receive God's Word with humility** — regenerated hearts desire to obey Scripture.
 3. **Avoid complacency** — religious activity alone is not proof of salvation.
 4. **Remain committed to Christian fellowship** — believers grow through life among God's people.
 5. **Take sin seriously** — deliberate persistence in sin is spiritually dangerous.
 6. **Welcome godly correction** — church discipline, when biblical, is intended for restoration.
 7. **Pursue holiness consistently** — holiness is the expected fruit of regeneration.
 8. **Abide in Christ daily** — spiritual fruit comes through ongoing dependence upon Him.
 9. **Show grace when evaluating others** — only God fully knows the heart.
 10. **Seek continual growth in sanctification** — God's children should increasingly reflect Christ's character.
-

Summary Sentence

While only God perfectly knows the heart, Scripture teaches that persistent unbelief, rejection of God's truth, neglect of spiritual obligations, and the deliberate practice of sin may indicate the absence of regeneration, whereas genuine new birth is evidenced by abiding in Christ, obedience to His Word, participation in His people, and a growing life of holiness produced by the Holy Spirit.

Final Summary of entire study follows below

Final Summary

Regeneration (The New Birth)

1. Purpose of the Doctrine

The doctrine of **regeneration** explains how spiritually dead sinners are made alive by God and enabled to respond to the gospel. It shows that the new birth is the foundation of all genuine conversion, faith, repentance, and Christian living.

2. Key Biblical Foundations

Jesus teaches that unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God (John 3:3–8). Scripture describes sinners as spiritually dead until God makes them alive with Christ (Eph. 2:5; Col. 2:13). The new birth is attributed to God’s sovereign initiative (John 1:13), accomplished by the Spirit, and brought about through the Word (1 Pet. 1:23; James 1:18). These passages establish regeneration as a divine, life-giving act that precedes and enables saving faith.

3. How the Parts Fit Together

The study begins by defining regeneration as the Spirit’s sovereign work of imparting new spiritual life. It then explains human inability, showing why the new birth is necessary for any sinner to respond to Christ. Further Parts explore the nature of the new heart — new desires, new affections, and a new direction — demonstrating that regeneration is transformative, not merely symbolic. The final sections show how regeneration produces repentance and faith, and how it initiates a lifelong walk in newness of life. Together these Parts form a coherent doctrinal flow: human deadness, divine initiative, spiritual renewal, and the resulting response to the gospel.

4. Doctrinal Conclusion

Regeneration is **the Spirit’s sovereign act of giving new life** to the sinner, creating a new nature that loves God and responds to Christ. It is instantaneous, monergistic, and irreversible. The new birth does not result from human effort, religious activity, or moral improvement; it is God’s creative work that enables repentance, faith, and every aspect of the Christian life. Because regeneration is God’s work, the believer’s confidence rests in His power, not human strength.

5. Practical Implications

This doctrine humbles the sinner and magnifies God’s grace. It strengthens evangelism, since only the Spirit can bring new life through the Word. It deepens assurance, because the life God gives cannot be lost. And it shapes discipleship by reminding believers that spiritual growth flows from the new nature God has implanted, empowered continually by the Holy Spirit.

END

