**NEW BIRTH AND REGENERATION**

1. While man is conscious of God by virtue of the fact that he is made in the image and glory of God and possesses a soul and conscience, these aspects of his nature do not enable him to live as God would wish. In order for that to happen God must change man. In Salvation God not only changes His attitude towards us (e.g. forgiveness) and alters our status (e.g. redemption) but He also adjusts our nature. The new nature is responsive to God. This does not mean that the old nature is eradicated but it now has a rival. The nature that has the upper hand is the one that the Christian cultivates the most. In addition of course to this new nature is the provision of the indwelling Spirit.
2. The new nature is not visible on x ray but ought to be visible in a change of attitude and interests. The new nature is provided at the moment of new birth. The most common way of describing the moment of regeneration is “being born again”. It is variously described as “second” birth, “new” birth and “being born from above”. Contrary to the teaching of the followers of Calvin, new birth does not precede salvation. According to their thinking we are “dead in trespasses and sins” and cannot obey the call of the gospel. Hence God has to regenerate us so that we may believe. If they are right this would have the unusual effect of creating people who are born again but not saved – which cannot be true. Peter and James both describe new birth coming though hearing the word of God. This indicates that new birth coincides with our acceptance of that word. Hence the new birth occurs by a work of God which coincides exactly with our belief of the truth.
3. There is some disagreement as to whether new birth has occurred in every dispensation. Some argue that the O.T. saints were born again by the Spirit when they trusted God. Others feel that the new birth through the Spirit as described in John ch 3 is a truth peculiar to the New Testament. Certainly the Lord’s words in John 3 speak of new birth as the way of entry into the “kingdom” which is not the same as heaven. Certainly this kingdom is not the kingdom in profession (as we have for example in Matthew 13) – that is all those who profess the rule of God in their lives. Since entry is by new birth it may be either that kingdom that began in the book of Genesis and stretches to the book of Revelation that composes all those who in truth own the authority of God. On the other hand it may refer to the Kingdom in manifestation, which is yet future. I tend to the latter view since without new birth no man shall” see” the kingdom which to my mind presupposes a future day.
4. The new birth gives us what the N.T. calls a “new” nature and marks the end of the “old” man. Although some passages speak of the putting on of the new man as a decisive “once for all” act which coincides with the putting off of the “old man”, there is also a practical aspect to this truth inasmuch as the “new man” requires to be cultivated and the old man (or flesh) needs to be “starved”. The old nature remains with us until the moment of our translation to heaven although judicially we are treated as new men in Christ Jesus.

**REGENERATION – KEY SCRIPTURES**

* **Is essential for entrance into the kingdom of God**

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. **John 3:3**

* **Is accomplished by the Spirit**

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

**John 3:5-6**

* **Is accomplished through the Word of God**

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

* **1Pet. 1:23**
* **Is designed to enable us to glorify God**

Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

**James 1:18**

* **Occurs at the moment of salvation**

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

**Tit 3:5**

* **Results in the creation of a new nature**

9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10 And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

**Col 3:9–10**

* **Coincides with the death of the old nature**

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. **Rom 6:6**

* **Requires to be nurtured**

Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy. **Eph 4:24 N.L.T.**

* **Is at “war” with the flesh, our old nature**

16 *This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. Gal. 5:15–17

* **Involves a decisive break with our old life**

Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. **2 Co 5:17**