

## Bible Doctrine I- TH-110

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### Course Information

#### 1. Course Description

A study of the persons of The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit and their unified teaching of the doctrines of the Bible.

## Survey of the Doctrines of the Bible

### VII-Doctrine of Salvation

#### Regeneration

What does it mean to be born again?

#### EXPLANATION AND SCRIPTURAL BASIS

We may define regeneration as follows: Regeneration is a secret act of God in which he imparts new spiritual life to us. This is sometimes called **“being born again”** (using language from [John 3:3–8](#)).

#### [John 3:3-8 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

<sup>4</sup> Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?”

<sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

<sup>6</sup> That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

<sup>7</sup> Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’

<sup>8</sup> “The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

#### A. Regeneration Is Totally a Work of God

In some of the elements of the application of redemption that we discuss previously, we play an active part (this is true, for example, of conversion, sanctification and perseverance).

But in the work of regeneration we play no active role at all. It is instead totally a work of God. We see this, for example, when John talks about those to whom Christ gave power to become children of God—they **“who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God”** ([John 1:13](#)).





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Here John specifies that children of God are those who are **“born . . . of God”** and our human will (**“the will of man”**) does not bring about this kind of birth.

The fact that we are passive in regeneration is also evident when Scripture refers to it as being **“born”** or being **“born again”** (cf. [James 1:18](#); [1 Peter 1:3](#); [John 3:3–8](#)).

[James 1:18 \(NASB\)](#)

**<sup>18</sup>In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.**

[1 Peter 1:3 \(NASB\)](#)

**<sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,**

We did not choose to be made physically alive and we did not choose to be born—it is something that happened to us; similarly, these analogies in Scripture suggest that we are entirely passive in regeneration.

This sovereign work of God in regeneration was also predicted in the prophecy of Ezekiel. Through him God promised a time in the future when he would give new spiritual life to his people:

**<sup>26</sup>“Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup>I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.”** ([Ezekiel 36:26–27 NASB](#))

Which member of the Trinity is the one who causes regeneration? When Jesus speaks of being **“born of the Spirit”** ([John 3:8](#)), he indicates that it is especially God the Holy Spirit who produces regeneration.

[John 3:8 \(NASB\)](#)

**<sup>8</sup>“The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is **born of the Spirit.**”**

But other verses also indicate the involvement of God the Father in regeneration:

Paul specifies that it is God who **“made us alive together with Christ”** ([Eph. 2:5](#); cf. [Col. 2:13](#)).

[Ephesians 2:5 \(NASB\)](#)

**<sup>5</sup>“Even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).”**

[Colossians 2:13 \(NASB\)](#)

**<sup>13</sup>When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions.**



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And James says that it is the “Father of lights” who gave us new birth: **17**“Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. **18**In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures”. ([James 1:17–18 NASB](#)).

Finally, Peter says that God “**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**” ([1 Peter 1:3 NASB](#)). We can conclude that both God the Father and God the Holy Spirit bring about regeneration.