

100 BIBLE LESSONS

These lessons were originally given at Manila, Philippines, in 1958 and 1959 by former missionary to China, Alban Douglas. Give these lessons to people you visit, youth groups, hospital patients, church visitors and new members. Use them in Sunday School, bus ministry, jail services, nursing homes, Christian schools, small discussion groups and many other places. God's Word will answer your questions and help solve your problems.

LESSON 2 – THE NEW BIRTH OR REGENERATION

INTRODUCTION

Conversion and regeneration are inseparable; conversion is the act of turning from sin to Christ; regeneration is being made a new creature by the Spirit's power. Regeneration or the new birth is the instrument that brings us into the family of God; into the kingdom of the Son of God. The only way to become a Christian is by being born again; born by the power of the Holy Spirit. The new birth is the door to salvation and consequently to heaven.

I. DEFINITION What is regeneration?

It means a rebirth or a re-creation – a new birth, a second birth, a new creation. Regeneration is the creation by the Holy Spirit of a new life in man called the "new creation," or the "new man."

Like the first birth it is an event and not a process, though from the first conviction of sin to regeneration may cover many days, weeks, months or even years. Yet, the actual birth takes place in a second, as one passes from darkness to light. The person has a second birthday and begins a new life.

II. NECESSITY OF REGENERATION

Who needs to be born again? Only the very good like Nicodemus? Only the very bad like the persecutor Paul? Is it a matter of opinion and choice? The Scriptures plainly teach that all need to be born again; the language of the Savior is imperative.

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

John 3:7, Ye must be born again.

There are no exceptions to this rule (outside of the Savior); neither sex, age, position or condition exempts anyone from the necessity of the new birth. There is no substitute for the new birth; to fail to be born again is to be lost.

Gal. 6:15, For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. To become a new creature is to be born again.

Jer. 13:23, *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil;* it is impossible without a re-birth.

Jer. 17:9, *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? Only God can give a new, clean pure heart; this is the new birth.*

The universal sinful condition of man demands a change, the new birth for salvation.

The holiness of God demands that men be born again. Heb. 12:14, *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.* Holiness is foreign to natural man; it can only be obtained through the new birth. To live the life of God we must have the nature of God – God’s own holy nature.

III. NATURE OF REGENERATION

1. It is not reformation. Reformation is the act of the old nature of turning from certain evils while regeneration is the supernatural act of God; it is a spiritual crisis; it is a revolution; it is a complete right-about-face.

2. Regeneration is a spiritual quickening, a new birth, a new creation. From creation everything has brought forth “after his kind” – sinners beget sinners. We cannot alter the old nature, or reform it or re-invigorate it but we need a new birth, the impartation of a different “kind” – God’s holy nature.

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

Eph. 2:1 - *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.* A change from death to life; this is not reformation – this is a spiritual resurrection.

We were born the first time physically and the second birth is a spiritual birth.

IV. THE AGENTS USED IN THE NEW BIRTH

1. The Word of God. James 1:18, *Of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth.*

1 Peter 1:23, *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.* One reason that so few people are born again today through modern preaching is that there isn’t enough of the Word of God in modern sermons.

Gal. 3:2, *Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?* It is faith generated by the hearing of the Word of God that saves a soul.

2. The Spirit of God – the Holy Spirit.

Jn. 3:5, *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

Jn. 3:6, *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.* Spiritual life is begotten by the Holy Spirit.

Jn. 3:8, *...so is every one that is born of the Spirit.* The ministry of the Holy Spirit is first to convict the sinner and then to convert him – to do the actual work of bringing him into the kingdom of God.

V. THE METHOD OF REGENERATION

1. The Divine side. Jn. 1:13, *Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* We were begotten by the will of God – Jas. 1:18. Regeneration is a creative act on the part of God – not reformation by man.

2. The human side. Jn. 1:12, *But as many as received him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.* The human part is to believe and receive Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior.

1 Cor. 4:15, *...for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.* The Gospel is the power of God (Rom. 1:16) that is capable of changing men's lives.

The author of regeneration is God; the channel of regeneration is Christ; the executive of regeneration is the Holy Spirit; the medium of regeneration is through receiving Christ by believing the Word of God, the Gospel.

VI. THE EVIDENCE OF REGENERATION

1. The one who is born again lives a righteous life.

1 Jn. 2:29, *If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.*

2. The born again one does not live a life of sin. 1 Jn. 3:9,10 - [9] *No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.* [10] *This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.* (NIV)

3. The born again one will fulfill the command to love. 1 Jn. 4:7 - *...and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.*

4. The born again one believes that Jesus is the Christ. 1 Jn. 5:1, *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.*

VII. THE RESULTS OF REGENERATION

The heart is changed; sin is hated; Christ is loved; the life is changed. New and holy desires spring up like a well of living water (Jn. 4:14). The new life overflows in love and good works to others.

Eph. 2:8-10 - *[8] For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: [9] Not of works, lest any man should boast. [10] For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

CONCLUSION

The new birth is a sovereign work of the Holy Spirit, for, *The wind blows wherever it pleases.* Jn. 3:8, NIV. The new birth is a secret work, for man, *you cannot tell*, but evidences will come later and manifest themselves in many ways to their fellowman. Pray that each one of us will manifest these evidences daily in our lives.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Define regeneration.
2. List 2 possible exceptions to the rule of John 3:3.
3. Explain 2 Cor. 5:17, in the light of John 3:3.
4. Give 4 Scriptures (two each) to show that there are two agents at work in regeneration.
5. From John 1:12-13, show the two sides of the new birth.
6. Give 5 evidences of a changed life.
7. Give 5 results of regeneration.
8. Why did Jesus use the symbol of wind to explain the new birth in John 3:8?
9. On a separate sheet of paper write a paragraph of 50-100 words on John 3:3. (To be handed in)