

New Birth

How Does God Regenerate Us?

1 PETER 1:18-25

One of the unsettling things about the new birth, which Jesus says we all must experience in order to see the kingdom of God (John 3:3), is **that we don't control it.**

We can't make it happen apart from a divine work of God. We can't make it happen any more than dead men decide to give themselves life.



The reason we need to be born again is that we are dead in our trespasses and sins. That's why we need new birth, and that's why we can't make it happen apart from the divine work of God.

We are blind to spiritual things in our natural state. Our minds are so darkened and we are **so rebellious at the root of our fallen human nature that apart from God's illuminating work we cannot see our need for a Savior.**

Scripture says, "For all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God." – Romans 3:23

All humanity is guilty of this. There is real evil in us. We were all spiritually hardened and dead.

Scripture confirms this when it says,

"There is none righteous, no, not one:
¹¹ There is none that understandeth,
 there is none that seeketh after God. ¹²
 They are all gone out of the way, they
 are together become unprofitable;

there is none that doeth good, no, not one." – Romans 1:10-12

Furthermore, our conscience bears witness to these facts, while our thoughts either accuse us of our sinful condition or our mind attempts to excuse us from our rebellious state. However, we are powerless to do anything about it.

Therefore, something outside of us has to happen in order for us to be rescued from this miserable state.

This is why Jesus said we must be born again (John 3:3). The Holy Spirit has to work a miracle in our hearts and give us spiritual life.

We were dead and we need to be made alive. We need ears that can hear the truth about ourselves. We need eyes that can see Christ. We need a mind and a heart that is able to perceive that His way is the only way of salvation.

We need hearts that are soft and receptive to the word of God. In short, we need a new life that is divinely given. We need to be born again.

SO HOW DOES GOD REGENERATE US?

The answer is given in at least three ways in our passage. First, 1 Peter 1:3 says that God caused us to be born again by Christ's resurrection from the dead

“hath begotten us again unto a lively hope
by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

Second, 1 Peter 1:23 says God caused us to be born again

“by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”

And third, in 1 Peter 1:18 it says that God redeemed, or ransomed us from the futile ways inherited from our forefathers.

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were **not redeemed with corruptible things**, . . . received by tradition from your fathers . . . But with the precious blood of Christ. – 1 Peter 1:18, 19

So we can see that Peter is writing to remind us of the eternal nature of our new life we now possess in Christ. This lesson will examine these points.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What three items does Peter identify as incorruptible (1 Peter 1:4, 18-19, 23)?

In all three of these divine works of God, there is a reference to “incorruption” or “imperishability.”

1. **To an inheritance incorruptible**, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away – 1 Peter 1:4. Our inheritance will never perish.
2. “Ye were **not redeemed with corruptible things** . . . But with the precious blood of Christ” – 1 Peter 1:18-19. The blood of Christ will never perish.
3. “Being born again, **not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible** by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” – 1 Peter 1:23. The Word of God will never perish.

2. Discuss our imperishable inheritance. What does this mean? How does this expand our understanding of the new life we received from Christ?

First, our new life in Christ involves an imperishable inheritance. So one of the points being made in this passage is that by the new birth, God intends us to have something more than just a new life. He intends us to have eternal life.

Verse 3: We are “born again to a living hope.” So the **emphasis falls on the hope** of our new life. We live—and will not die. We inherit an imperishable inheritance. That’s the emphasis of this passage. Our new life in the new birth is forever. We will never die.

3. Discuss the imperishable value of Christ’s blood - 1 Peter 1:18-19.

“ . . . know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; ¹⁹ But with the precious **blood of Christ**, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot”

The blood of Christ mentioned in verse 19 is the ransom price paid for our life, and ***this blood is contrasted with the less valuable silver and gold that might have been paid.*** The reason silver and gold are less valuable is that they will one day “perish.”

Verse 18: “we were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold.”

So again the point is that the new life that Jesus ransoms with his blood is not in danger of going back into captivity because the price he pays for our new life (our new birth) is not perishable. The blood of Christ is of infinite value, and therefore its value never runs out. It is an imperishable value.

That is how Christians are ransomed. That’s the price of the new life – Christ’s blood. Through faith in His blood, we are saved (“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood” - Romans 3:25; “Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him” - Romans 5:9). It is our faith in the work of God. It is us believing that Christ and His blood is a sufficient to satisfy God wrath for our sins. This ransom is the foundation for our new birth. And Jesus paid it for us.

4. What is the imperishable seed? - 1 Peter 1:23, 25.

Notice the same emphasis on imperishability in 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.”

Peter then, quotes Isaiah 40:6-8 in verses 24-25:

“The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: ⁷ The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. ⁸ The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: **but the word of our God shall stand for ever.**”

The point here is the same **as with the resurrection** (1 Peter 1:3) **and the ransom** (1 Peter 1:18-19). The seed that comes through the word of God is imperishable, and therefore the life that it generates and sustains is imperishable.

So now we have a summary view of Peter’s emphasis in the new birth. The emphasis is that we are born again unto a living hope. In other words, the life God creates in the new birth is eternal life, imperishable life. The new nature that comes into being in the new birth cannot die. It lasts forever. That is what Peter is emphasizing about the new birth. **What comes into being in the new birth will never die.**

5. How can the above information help us when we are suffering?

Peter is emphasizing these points because the overarching context of his letter is suffering. Don’t be daunted by your suffering. Even if they take your physical life, they cannot take away the life you have by the new birth. That is imperishable.

6. What does it mean when it says, “God ransomed us by the blood of Christ?” 1 Peter 1:18-19

The point here, in regard to the new birth, is that new eternal life is not possible for enslaved sinners without a ransom being paid.

- a. This text implies that we were all in bondage to ways of thinking and feeling and acting that would have destroyed us. In other places Scriptures declare that we were under the wrath of God who had handed us over to these futile ways (Romans 1:21, 24, 26, 28). Our slavery to these sinful ways would destroy us if we could not be ransomed from this slavery. God paid this ransom price by sending Christ to bear the wrath that was due us (Romans 8:3; Galatians 3:13).
- b. This is the foundation of our new birth. There had to be some objective, historical event in real time in order to rescue us from our eternal separation from God. Hence we see the life of Jesus Christ. In real time the Son of God came and bore our sins on a tree making it possible for us to have new life.

Mark 10:45, says “For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

- c. This is why the historical event of the incarnation happened. The Son of Man came “to give his life a ransom for many.” This had to happen and is the basis of any new birth. Since the new birth is the gift of eternal life, not just new life, the ransom price had to be imperishable—not like silver or gold. The blood of Christ is infinitely valuable and, therefore, can never lose its ransoming power. The life it obtains lasts forever. So the way God brings about the new birth is by paying a ransom for the eternal life it imparts.

7. What does it mean when it says we are regenerated . . . born again . . . "begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead?" - 1 Peter 1: 3-4.

We are “Born again . . . by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” So the second way that God brings about the new birth is by raising Jesus from the dead. This was an actual historic event. The new birth is something that happens in us when the Holy Spirit takes our dead hearts and unites us to Christ by faith so that his life becomes our life. The new birth happens, in conjunction with the incarnate Christ. This new life we get from the new birth is the life of Jesus.

Therefore, if Jesus did not rise from the dead, there is no new life to have. So the second way God brings about the new birth is to raise Jesus from the dead.

8. What does it mean when it says we are born again, not of incorruptible seed, but of incorruption, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever?" - 1 Peter 1:23. What is the necessity of the call mentioned in 1 Peter 1:15 "But as he which hath called you . . .?"

Peter also says in 1 Peter 1:25 that the seed “is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.” We know the gospel is to be preached to all people. But not all people respond to the gospel. So why do some believe while others do not? Why do some see and hear while others don’t? The answer is stated in many different ways in the New Testament. One is here in verse 23: Some are “born again . . . of incorruptible seed through the . . . gospel.” The gospel is to be preached to all.

Peter is telling us to live differently now because of something that happened to us in the past. Verse 15: “**as he which hath called you** is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.” This act of calling is necessary for us to be born again. He ransoms us with the blood of Christ. He raises Christ from the dead.

The Scripture also state that the Holy Spirit will “convict the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment” – John 16:8

But as Romans 1:18, 19-21 says,

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, **who hold the truth in unrighteousness**” In other words, men suppress the truth.

Therefore, men suppress the truth, they resist the convicting and the convincing work of the Holy. Furthermore, that which may be know of God is manifest in them . . .

“Because that which may be known of God is manifest **in them**; for God hath **shewed it unto them**. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; **so that they are without excuse:** ²¹ Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Spirit. John 3:19, says,

“Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”

In 1 Corinthians 1:22-24 it says,

“For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: ²³ But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; ²⁴ **But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.**”

All hear the gospel — Jews and Greeks. But some Jews and some Greeks stop seeing Christ as a stumbling block and as foolishness. Instead. they now see him as “the power of God and the wisdom of God.” So what happened?

“But unto them which are called, . . . Christ (*became*) the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”

Therefore, Scripture gives an appeal to respond to His voice three times in the book of Hebrews.

Heb. 3:8 - **“Harden not** your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness”

Heb. 3:15 – “While it is said, To day **if ye will hear his voice, harden not** your hearts, as in the provocation.”

Heb. 4:7 – “Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day **if ye will hear his voice, harden not** your hearts.”

In God’s Sovereign grace, in a literal historic event God has sent His Son to die for our sins and raised His from the grave that we might know His power. Again in God’s sovereign grace, in literal historic events He sends His Spirit to convict the world of sin, righteousness and Judgment. God creatively opened our eyes, to the power and the wisdom of God that is in Christ Jesus. For is says that which may be known of God is manifest in them; **for God hath shewed it unto them.**

But not all men respond.

9. How should we respond to this lesson?

God makes the light of the glory of His grace shine in hearts through the preaching of the gospel. If you are here today without Christ, “Harden not your heart” to His call.

You’ll know it when it happens. It is that tugging at your heart.

If you are a Christian then, know the glory of what has happened to you! Know what God has done for you and in you. Remember you were ransomed with the imperishable blood of Christ. You were raised with Christ from the dead to an eternally living hope. You were called from death to life.

Never forget that you were born again by and through the marvelous work of God. By God’s grace you received Christ and were saved.

Perhaps the next time you apply Romans 8:28 to a hardship in your life it will have new power because of what we have seen:

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, **to them who are the called** according to his purpose.”

If you have responded to the call you are born again—all things work for your good. All things.

And if you are not yet born again, hear the call! Hear God’s call in this gospel of Christ and believe. If you receive Christ for who he is, you will be saved.