

Fundamentals of Our Faith from the Beginning

Understanding Salvation (Part One): The Ordo Salutis & Regeneration

Regeneration is the sovereign work of God whereby the Holy Spirit changes our hearts (nature), and inclines us to repent and believe. In regeneration, God makes us new and applies to us every saving grace in Christ.

“The Ordo Salutis”: The biblically logical order/ application of salvation.

↓ **The eternal decree of God (predestination):** God determined that a certain people would be **united to Christ** and given to Him as His bride, whom He would purchase with His blood. (2 Timothy 1:9, Titus 1:2-3) ↘

Election (foreknowledge): God elected/chose us **in Christ** before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4-5, Romans 9:11-13, Matthew 22:14)

Outward Call (General Call): The gospel preached to all people, indiscriminately calling all people to faith in Christ (Mark 16:15, Titus 1:3)

Effectual Call (Inward Call): Occurs when the Holy Spirit, through the proclamation of the gospel, spiritually awakens the elect and enlivens them **in Christ**. This involves convicting us of our sin, enlightening our minds to the knowledge of Christ, inclining our wills to trust Him, and persuading/enabling/causing us to embrace Christ as He is offered to us in the gospel. (Ephesians 1:13, Romans 10:14-17, 2 Corinthians 4:3-6).

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Regeneration/ New Birth: Is what happens in the effectual call and is inseparable from the effectual call, which results in a change in nature (2 Corinthians 5:17), faith in Christ, and genuine repentance. (2 Corinthians 4:3-6)

Saving Faith: A gift passively received at the time of regeneration, worked in us by the Holy Spirit, whereby we come to trust God for the promises in the gospel: that forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness, and eternal salvation are freely given, merely of grace, and only for the sake of Christ's merits. (Ephesians 2:8-9, Phil 1:29)

Repentance: A saving grace given by God to sinners at the time of regeneration (along with /inseparable from genuine faith), whereby the Holy Spirit produces in us a desire to turn from sin and walk in obedient love because of God's mercy. (Acts 11:18, 2 Corinthians 7:10-11, 2 Peter 3:9).

Justification: Our declared righteousness before God, made possible by Christ's death and resurrection for us. Occurs at the time of regeneration, through the instrument of faith, as a product of our adoption and union with Christ, whereby His life, death, and resurrection benefit us on account of our union with Him. (Rom 3:26-28, 8:1, Gal 2:16)

Adoption: An act of God's grace, whereby we are, on account of our union with His Son, Christ Jesus, received into the family of God and granted the rights and privileges of the Sons of God. (John 1:12-13, Rom 8:15-17, 23-25, 1 John 3:1-2)

Sanctification (progressive sanctification): Also a gift and work of God's grace, whereby we are increasingly renewed after the image of our Creator in accordance with our union with Christ. It is our gradual, growing righteousness, made possible by the Spirit's initial regenerating and ongoing work in us. (1 Peter 1:1-2, Heb 10:14, 1 Pet 2:9-12, Phil 2:12-13)

Glorification: The work of God's free grace, whereby the elect are resurrected with glorified bodies, entirely sanctified, fully and forever free from all sin and its effects, and in unencumbered fellowship with God in a renewed, restored creation. This is the final stage of our salvation and the inevitable outcome of our union with Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:1-8, Philippians 3:30-31, Rev 21:4-5)

A summary text: Romans 8:28-30

Main Idea: Regeneration is a necessary aspect of salvation. Until one is regenerate, they are unable to come to Christ in faith, and are therefore unable to be justified or adopted as His child. We are dependent upon the Holy Spirit to accomplish this, and when he does it, it is proven by our genuine faith and repentance.

1. The need for regeneration (John 3:1-15):

- a. The “New Birth” is necessary for anyone to see the Kingdom of God. (John 3:3 & 3:5)
- b. Regeneration is a necessary washing/cleansing, without which we are unclean (John 3:5, Titus 3:5)
 - i. This was anticipated in the Old Testament (John 3:9-11, Ezekiel 36:25-27, Psalm 87:4-6)
 - ii. This is accomplished by the Holy Spirit (John 3:6-8, Titus 3:5)
- c. The nature of the problem is in our unregenerate nature (Romans 8:5-8)
 - i. The “flesh” is hostile to God and unable to submit to God (Rom 8:7-8, Romans 1)
 - ii. We are incapable of understanding apart from regeneration (1 Corinthians 2:14)
 - iii. We are incapable of faith apart from regeneration (Ephesians 2:1-9)
 - iv. No one comes to God unless they are drawn by the Spirit of God (John 6:44-45, 63-65)

2. The only solution (new birth) must come from God (John 3:3-4):

- a. Nobody causes themselves to be born (John 3:3, 1 Peter 1:3)
- b. In regeneration, God makes a new creation (2 Corinthians 4:3-6, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Romans)
- c. In regeneration, The Holy Spirit grants us understanding (1 Corinthians 2:10-13)
- d. In regeneration, the Holy Spirit convicts us of our own sin and condemnation, as well as the need for Christ’s righteousness (John 16:8-11)

3. The means used by God to accomplish regeneration (Romans 10:14-17):

- a. The Holy Spirit uses His inspired Word to regenerate His people (Rom 10:17)
- b. The elect are drawn to God when they hear and believe the gospel (Ephesians 1:13)
- c. An important note: The Spirit does not save people apart from His Word, and the Word does not save people apart from the Spirit.
- d. Not on account of any works or human will (John 1:13, Romans 9:16)

4. The evidence of regeneration (John 3:14-15):

- a. Looking to Christ as your only hope and cure (John 3:14-15, Numbers 21:5-9)
- b. Receiving and believing on Christ (John 1:12-13, 1 John 5:1)
- c. Making a practice of righteousness instead of sin (1 John 2:29, 3:9, 1 John 5:18)
- d. Loving one another and loving God (1 John 4:7)
- e. Persevering to the end (1 John 5:4, John 10:28)