

**The Glorious Gospel**  
**Part 4: Response**  
**Providence Baptist Church**  
**June 29, 2025**

**I. Review: God, Humanity, Christ**

- A. God
- B. Humanity
- C. Christ
- D. Response
  - 1. How does the salvation Christ accomplished become mine?
  - 2. Redemption *accomplished* (last lesson) and *applied* (this lesson)

**II. Regeneration: Toward a Definition**

- A. Wayne Grudem: "Regeneration is a secret act of God in which he imparts new spiritual life to us. This is sometimes called 'being born again'" (*Systematic Theology*, 699).
- B. J.I. Packer: "The concept [of regeneration] is of God renovating the heart, the core of a person's being, by implanting a new principle of desire, purpose, and action, a dispositional dynamic that finds expression in positive response to the gospel and its Christ. Jesus' phrase 'born of water and the Spirit' (John 3:5) harks back to Ezekiel 36:25-27, where God is pictured as symbolically cleansing persons from sin's pollution (by water) and bestowing a 'new heart' by putting his Spirit within them. Because this is so explicit, Jesus chides Nicodemus, 'Israel's teacher,' for not understanding how new birth happens (John 3:9-10). Jesus' point throughout is that there is no exercise of faith in himself as the supernatural Savior, no repentance, and no true discipleship apart from this new birth . . . . Regeneration is monergistic: that is, entirely the work of God the Holy Spirit. It raises the elect among the spiritually dead to new life in Christ (Eph. 2:1-10). Regeneration is a transition from spiritual death to spiritual life, and conscious, intentional, active faith in Christ is its immediate fruit, not its immediate cause" (*Concise Theology*, 157-58).
- C. Canons of Dort (1619)
  - 1. **(Section 3-4; Article 11): The Holy Spirit's Work in Conversion.** But when God accomplishes His good pleasure in the elect, or works in them true conversion, He not only causes the gospel to be externally preached to them, and powerfully illuminates their minds by His Holy Spirit, that they may rightly understand and discern the things of the Spirit of God; but by the efficacy of the same regenerating Spirit He pervades the inmost recesses of man; He opens the closed and softens the hardened heart, and circumcises that which was uncircumcised; infuses new qualities into the will, which, though heretofore dead, He quickens; from being evil, disobedient, and refractory, He renders it good, obedient, and pliable; actuates and strengthens it, that like a good tree, it may bring forth the fruits of good actions.
  - 2. **(Section 3-4; Article 12): Regeneration a Supernatural Work.** And this is that regeneration so highly extolled in Scripture, that renewal, new creation, resurrection from the dead, making alive, which God works in us without aid. But this is in no wise effected merely by the external preaching of the gospel, by

moral suasion, or such a mode of operation that, after God has performed His part, it still remains in the power of man to be regenerated or not, to be converted or to continue unconverted; but it is evidently a supernatural work, most powerful, and at the same time most delightful, astonishing, mysterious, and ineffable; not inferior in efficacy to creation or the resurrection from the dead, as the Scripture inspired by the Author of this work declares; so that all in whose heart God works in this marvelous manner are certainly, infallibly, and effectually regenerated, and do actually believe. Whereupon the will thus renewed is not only actuated and influenced by God, but in consequence of this influence becomes itself active. Wherefore also man himself is rightly said to believe and repent by virtue of that grace received.

3. **(Section 3-4; Article 13): The Incomprehensible Way of Regeneration.** The manner of this operation cannot be fully comprehended by believers in this life. Nevertheless, they are satisfied to know and experience that by this grace of God they are enabled to believe with the heart and to love their Savior.

### III. The Bible and Regeneration

#### A. Regeneration is a Work of God

1. **Ezekiel 36:26-27** “And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”
2. **John 1:12-13** “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, *who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*”
3. **John 3:3-8** Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is *born of the Spirit* is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”
4. **2 Corinthians 4:6** For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has *shone in our hearts* to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
5. **Ephesians 2:4-5** “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, *made us alive* together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.”
6. **Colossians 2:13** “And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, *God made alive* together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses.”
7. **James 1:18** “Of his own will *he brought us forth by the word of truth*, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.”
8. **1 Peter 1:3** “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, *he has caused us to be born again* to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

B. Regeneration Precedes Faith

1. It is the work of God in us that *enables* us to respond to Him in saving faith.
2. We are not born again because we trust Jesus; we trust Jesus because we are born again.
  - a. **John 3:3** Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he *cannot see* the kingdom of God.”
  - b. **John 6:44** “No one can come to me *unless* the Father who sent me draws him.”
  - c. **Acts 16:14** “One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord *opened her heart* to pay attention to what was said by Paul.”
  - d. **1 Corinthians 2:14** “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.”
3. Even as we see Scripture teach that regeneration precedes faith, they usually happen so close together that it looks as if they’re happening simultaneously.

IV. **Conversion: Toward a definition**

- A. “Conversion is our willing response to the gospel call, in which we sincerely repent of our sins and place our trust in Christ for salvation” (Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith*, 307).
- B. In this definition, what are the two essential elements of conversion?
  1. “The word conversion itself means ‘turning’—here it represents a spiritual turn, a turning *from sin to Christ*. The turning from sin is called *repentance*, and the turning to Christ is called *faith*” (Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, 307).
  2. Both elements (repentance and faith) are necessarily part of conversion. Neither one can occur without the other.
    - a. **Mark 1:15** “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; *repent and believe* in the gospel.”
    - b. **Acts 20:18-21** “You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of *repentance* toward God and of *faith* in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

V. **Faith**

- A. What is saving faith? How would you explain it to a family member or friend?
- B. The elements of saving faith
  1. Knowledge (knowledge alone not sufficient)
    - a. **Romans 10:14** How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And *how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?* And how are they to hear without someone preaching? (cf., **John 8:32** “... you will *know* the truth, and the truth will set you free.”)
    - b. **Romans 1:32** Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

- c. **James 2:19** You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! (cf., **Luke 4:33-34** And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, “Ha! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.”)
- 2. Trust
  - a. **John 3:16** “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever *believes in him* should not perish but have eternal life.”
  - b. **John 6:37** “All that the Father gives me will *come to me*, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.”
  - c. **John 7:37** On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him *come to me* and drink.”
  - d. **Matthew 11:28-30** “*Come to me*, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”
- C. **Martin Luther** on saving faith: “Faith is a living, bold trust in God’s grace, so certain of God’s favor that it would risk death a thousand times trusting in it. Such confidence and knowledge of God’s grace makes you happy, joyful, and bold in your relationship to God and all creatures” (from, “An Introduction to St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans”).
- D. **WSC, Q&A 86:** (Q) What is faith in Jesus Christ? (A) Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the gospel.

## VI. Repentance

- A. “Repentance is a heartfelt sorrow for sin, a renouncing of it, and a sincere commitment to forsake it and walk in obedience to Christ” (Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, 309).
- B. Repentance is not simply feeling bad about the consequences of our sinful choices:
  - 1. **2 Corinthians 7:9-10** “As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a *godly grief*, so that you suffered no loss through us. For *godly grief* produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas *worldly grief* produces death.”
  - 2. **Luke 15 and the Prodigal Son**
- C. **Martin Luther** and the life of repentance: [First of 95 Theses] “When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said ‘Repent,’ he intended that the entire life of believers should be repentance.”

## VII. Can I have Jesus as Savior, but not as Lord?

- A. Repentance and faith are two different aspects of the one event of conversion. They are two sides of the same coin.
- B. Because repentance and faith must come together it is nonsensical (according to the Bible) to talk of having saving faith without repentance for sin.
  - 1. **Romans 6:1-2** “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?”
  - 2. **Galatians 5:22-24** “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things

there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”

3. **Ephesians 2:10** “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”
4. **James 2:26** “For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.”

### Study Questions

1. What does it mean to be “regenerated” by God? What biblical passages are helpful in understanding this essential doctrine?
2. What are the two essential elements of “conversion”?
3. What is faith? (What are some important biblical passages that speak to this?)
4. What is repentance? (What are some important biblical passages that speak to this?)

### **Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy** (J. Hart, 1759)

Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,  
Weak and wounded, sick and sore,  
Jesus ready stands to save you,  
Full of pity, love, and pow’r.

#### REFRAIN

I will arise and go to Jesus;  
He will embrace me in His arms.  
In the arms of my dear Savior,  
Oh, there are ten thousand charms.

Come, ye thirsty; come and welcome,  
God’s free bounty glorify,  
True belief and true repentance,  
Every grace that brings you nigh.

Come, ye weary, heavy laden,  
Lost and ruined by the fall;  
If you tarry till you’re better,  
You will never come at all.

Lo! The incarnate God ascended  
Pleads the merit of His blood;  
Venture on Him, venture wholly;  
Let no other trust intrude.