

REGENERATION AND RENEWING

Regeneration and *born again* are not synonymous. In fact, *renewing*, *firstborn*, and *born after the Spirit*, as well, are all somewhat related, but each term has its own definition and doctrinal import. None of these terms should be confused with the others.

REGENERATION

Regeneration is used two (2) times in the NT: Matthew 19:28 and Titus 3:5. The first instance is related to Israel and is a general description of God's work upon the world and its creatures at large during *a period of time, the Millennial Kingdom*. The second instance is related to the body of Christ and is a *specific, eternal work of God in an individual*.

Renewing or renew is found six (6) times in the NT: Hebrews 6:6, Titus 3:5, Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 4:16, Ephesians 4:23, Colossians 3:10. The term *renew* is used with regard to Israel and the Church and is related to *regeneration*, but it is uniquely different in both cases. Due to the relationship of regenerate and renew, we can study both terms together and draw the contrasts. Terms associated with both the regeneration and renew are *restitution*, *restore*, and *times of refreshing*.

THE REGENERATION (In relation to Israel and the Millennial Kingdom)

In Matthew 19:28, *the regeneration* describes the specific, prophesied work of God in the Millennial Kingdom. The term embraces the entire scope of that 1000 year period and essentially defines the condition of Israel as a nation, along with the attendant blessings. It is closely associated with "times of refreshing" "restitution of all things" and "restore" as found in the book of Acts.

And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Matthew 19:28).

19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. (Acts 3:19-21).

Notice that there are *times* of refreshing and restitution, whereas *the regeneration* is singular. We believe that *within* the regeneration there will be various refreshings and restitutions.

When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? (Acts 1:6).

We notice that in each of the three phrases above, *time* is central. The question from the disciples, “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” is not answered by the Lord. He does not correct some misunderstanding of the future Kingdom by telling them Israel will not have a Kingdom. He does not tell them it is now a *spiritual* Kingdom as opposed to a *literal, material* Kingdom. Nothing in scripture ever says Israel is replaced by the Church. Instead, He tells them what *they are to do until that future time*. If the Church (body of Christ) supplanted Israel and now fulfills prophecy by appropriating the OT promises to Israel, the Lord Jesus Christ would be guilty of misrepresenting the facts related to a specific land, a specific nation—specific promises concerning the most prominent subject in the entire Bible, the Kingdom.

A BRIEF REVIEW

A brief review of what will occur after this present Church Age is in order. The Millennial Kingdom of 1000 years occurs immediately after the 7 years of Tribulation. This Tribulation that occurs *after the Church Age* and during the “Lord’s day” is known as “the time of Jacob’s trouble.”

7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.

8 For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him:

9 But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them. (Jeremiah 30:7-9).

The Millennial Kingdom is a time when there is “restitution” of all things (Acts 3:21) wherein Israel failed God. The state of Israel will be “restored” (Acts 1:6) by God to its former position of blessing above all nations. Restitution and refreshing will also be experienced worldwide. Mankind has certainly polluted not only the streams but politics as well. This condition of which the earth and its creatures will be delivered, not only spiritually, but physically from the bondage of the devil (who is chained in the bottomless pit for the period of 1000 years) is described as “the regeneration” (Matthew 19:28). It contains the “times of refreshing” (Acts 3:19) when Israel is “born again” and the Gentiles are blessed through Israel’s revival. All of these things occur at the Second Coming of Christ when He makes the New Covenant with Israel and blots out their sins.

SPECIFICITY OF REGENERATION

That the regeneration of Matthew 19:28 does not refer to a spiritual rebirth but to the *time* of the rebirth is clear from the facts that: (1) Christ is not “regenerated” during the millennium (or at any time) and (2) individual Israelites, living or resurrected, are not regenerated and (3) the attitudes and actions of many individuals in various nations are suppressed and controlled, but they are not individually regenerated during the

millennium (Revelation 20:7-9). (4) It does not refer to a re-creation of the heaven and earth because the millennial heaven and earth is destroyed by fire *after the millennium* in Revelation 21:1.

The regeneration (as used in Matthew 19) describes the *period of time* during which individual Israelites that compose the nation of Israel are “born again” as the people of God and restored to blessings; it is not the *regeneration of individuals*. “The regeneration” is a noun. It is a period of time marked off by “when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory” and the Twelve Apostles also “shall sit upon twelve thrones.” The Lord and His apostles *sit* (place of authority) *judging* (act of authority). “The regeneration” describes the time wherein the Son of Man and the Twelve Apostles are jointly engaged—sitting in authority and exercising that authority by judging; the regeneration of Matthew 19:28 is not what God does to, or within an individual.

And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Matthew 19:28).

Notice the punctuation. Those who followed Him during His earthly ministry will, in the future, sit upon thrones and judge. It is not “ye which have followed me in the regeneration,”. The comma is after **me**, and represents a gap of at least 2,000 years between **ye which have followed me**, and **in the regeneration**. The regeneration is not in existence when the Lord speaks these words, it is future.

The regeneration as used in Matthew 19 is the general description of Israel’s national restoration and the subjection of the earth and its creatures during a particular *future* time, **when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory**. During this time earth’s natural laws and its creatures are temporarily under unusual *subjection* rather than being *eternally changed*.

Confusion of this “regeneration” with “born again” and the regeneration of an individual in the Church age led some to teach that animals, flies, and mosquitoes are born again during the millennium! The regeneration in Matthew 19 essentially stresses *the time* when there will be an inception of a new state of things in contrast with the old state. The “washing of regeneration” in Titus 3:5 is completely different and describes not a time, but the *work of God within every believer* during the Church Age.

REGENERATION AND RENEWING (in relation to the Church)

Regeneration in Titus 3:5 does not refer to a future time involving things prophesied in the OT or taught in the Gospels; regeneration refers to a previous doctrinal mystery, revealed through the apostle Paul, of an eternal work done within an individual who is saved during this present age of grace.

5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Titus 3:5

λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας και ἀνακαινώσεως πνεύματος ἁγίου,
washing of regeneration and renewing Ghost of the Holy

This verse enables us to look at *regeneration* and *renewing* and make a comparison of the two terms. We put the Greek text here so that the student can see that in both Greek and English the words are different words. Regeneration is a combination of the adverb prefix *palin* and *genesis*. Renewing is a combination of the adverb *ana* and *kainos*. Both regeneration and renewing are works of the Holy Ghost but “washing” is the means of regeneration, while renewing is a result of regeneration and follows it.

The word λουτροῦ translated "washing" occurs in the New Testament only in Titus 3:5 and in Ephesians 5:26, where also it is translated "washing." The word is not baptism. Although most commentators want to translate or interpret the term as “baptism” there is absolutely no justification whatsoever to do so. In Ephesians 5:26 “the washing of water by the word” refers to the cleansing effect of the word of God.

We see that in both Greek and English the words, regeneration and renewing, are different. Therefore, the terms are not synonymous but they are related. The first section of the verse states that salvation, which is *by* regeneration and accompanied by renewing, is *not by works of righteousness which we have done*. These *works* are good works (since they are identified as *works of righteousness*) but these works are not involved in the regeneration and renewing.

Therefore, the *washing* can not be water baptism performed by a man, or participated in by a man because baptism is a righteous work. The context around Titus 3:5 confirms the inefficacy of works in salvation. In verse 3 we are described as *foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another*. In verse 4 salvation is ours because *after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared*. Salvation did not come because we did anything differently or better; salvation came because God did something after *that* (i.e., our wickedness)—*the kindness and love of God toward man appeared*.

3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:3-7).

We are *justified by his grace* and this work of God *was shed on us abundantly*. The work by God was not dependent upon our ability or limited by our disability; it more than met our need, for it was shed on us *abundantly*.

Therefore, re-genesis (regeneration), or the work of starting new life (birth) where previously something had died and was held in death, is primary, first, and foundational to all. Re-newing is a constant enabling within the new life. There can be no renewing without first having life or regeneration. We are never told to *regenerate* ourselves for it is impossible for us to participate in or bring about the effectual work of regeneration. How can death bring out of itself life?

We have already experienced an effectual and positional *renewal* of God in that according to Colossians 3:9-10 we **have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:** and while our outward man perishes **the inward man is renewed day by day.** (2 Corinthians 4:16). There are no conditions such as good works by the individual for this day by day renewal.

So, like other doctrines such as adoption and sanctification,¹ there are both standing and state, position and practice, effectual and potential, eternal and temporal, aspects in renewal. We do not participate in the *positional* renewing, because that is God's work. We do participate in the practical aspect of *renewing*, for although it is also a work, or enabling of the Holy Ghost, renewing has as its pre-requisite, regeneration, and renewing does not occur *practically* until we *put off* the old man's works and *put on* the works of the new man: **put off all these... Put on... And above all these things put on charity.** God has already given us a positional standing in the new man, Christ, but we are responsible to bring our practical state in line with our standing.

The new man is a work of God in that it is **after the image of him that created him:** but we are to appropriate this position and **put off** wicked *works* and **put on** good *works*. Whether we put on or put off the proper works does not change regeneration or renewing.

¹ Notice the *positional standing* of the Corinthian believers: *to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus*. But look at the *practical state* they are to work towards: *called to be saints*.

Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, **to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints,** with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: (1 Corinthians 1:2).

We *are* already sanctified but we are also to strive *to be* saints. In other words, we are to live out what has been worked in. We are already positionally and effectually sanctified in that we are out of Adam and in Christ but there is a matter of practically appropriating that work in our daily deeds. The Corinthians were not living as they should live but this lack of practical state did not affect their positional standing as saints. 10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. (1 Corinthians 1:10-11).

Our good works did not save us and our bad works did not prevent our salvation. Therefore, our good works will not save us nor will our bad works make us lost. *Standing* is one thing but *state* is another; *happy* is the man who knows the difference but the closer we bring our state into our standing the more we can *truly rejoice* in God's work for us and in us.

POSITION and PRACTICE (Standing and State)

16 For which cause *PRACTICE* we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man *POSITION* is renewed day by day. (2 Corinthians 4:16).

8 But now *PRACTICE* ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have *POSITION* put off the old man with his deeds;

10 And *POSITION* have put on the new man, which is *POSITION* renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

11 Where there *POSITION* is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

12 *PRACTICE* Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ *POSITION* forgave you, so also *PRACTICE* do ye.

14 And above all these things *PRACTICE* put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. (Colossians 3:8-14).

And *PRACTICE* be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the *PRACTICE* renewing of your mind, that ye may prove *PRACTICE* what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, *POSITION* will of God. (Romans 12:2).

21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught *POSITION* by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

22 That ye *PRACTICE* put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

23 And be *PRACTICE* renewed in the spirit of your mind;

24 And that ye *PRACTICE* put on the new man, which after God is *POSITION* created in righteousness and true holiness. (Ephesians 4:21-24).

RENEW (related to Israel)

4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,

6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. (Hebrews 6:4-6).

It is also *impossible* for a person to be sound in doctrine if he does not rightly divide the Bible. We divided *position* from *practice* in the above section. You can see in that

example how rightly dividing the Bible opens our understanding. Not only are we to divide state from standing in portions to us, we are also to discern what is written *to us* in the Bible and what is written *for us*. All of the Bible is *for* our benefit but that does not mean that all of its doctrines are *to* us. Just as the regeneration of Matthew 19 is a time related to Israel and regeneration of Titus 3:5 is a work of God in the Church, so renewing in 1 Corinthians, Romans, Ephesians, and Colossians is to the Church, but *this renew in Hebrews is to Israel*,² not to the Church. Confusion and cults both come from failure to rightly divide the word of truth.

Hebrews is written *to* Hebrews. Just because Hebrews is found in the New Testament is no reason to assume it is Church age doctrine. We might as well go to Revelation 20:1-2 and claim the devil is presently bound in the bottomless pit, or to Revelation 21:1-2 and pretend we are now on the new earth, or to Matthew 6:25-26 and unplug the refrigerator, quit our jobs, and forfeit all retirement funds. (Some have done this!) The subject of Hebrews 6:6 is *salvation of an Israelite during the early Acts period*. The passage has nothing to do with a child of God during this present age. The only question after Israel had rejected Christ was whether they would listen and obey the Holy Spirit through the 12 Apostles in Acts 1-7. They had been once enlightened, and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and the powers of the world to come. (The period during the early part of Acts with tongues, healing, raising the dead, etc.). They had the tremendous signs and wonders performed by the Twelve Apostles in the power of the Holy Ghost from Acts 1-7. The Kingdom was so near to them. If the nation had accepted the gospel of the kingdom, preached by the Twelve Apostles, the Lord would have returned and set up His Millennial Kingdom. They only needed to follow on and endure whatever tribulation they faced. When they fell away, there was no recourse for the nation. It was tantamount to crucifying the Son of God afresh. They are like the soil of Matthew 13, the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God. But if they refuse again to hear, then they are that which beareth thorns and briers...rejected, and...nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.

For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; (Hebrews 3:14).

To these *Hebrew brethren* there is the warning given to not depart from God. They are to **exhort one another daily**. We understand then that these are *Hebrews* who are to be made partakers of Christ **if we** (they) **hold the beginning of our** (their) **confidence stedfast unto the end**. These are not already **in Christ** as believers are during this

² For a detailed study on Hebrews, see [Some Better Thing: A Dispensational commentary on the Book of Hebrews](#) by the author.

present Church Age. They are exhorted to continue in good works in order to be partakers of Christ in the future rest, the Millennial Kingdom. This can not be a reference to our position or motive for practice during this present Church Age for we are already members of the Body of Christ. Look at what Paul says to members of the Body of Christ today:

For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. (Ephesians 5:30).

Therefore, this *renew* is to Hebrews in the early part of Acts (it is also applicable to Israel during the future Tribulation period *after* the Church Age is completed). It is associated with faith and works. To ignore this Hebrew distinction and apply the passage to the Church Age produces confusion, and is in direct conflict with the doctrine of regeneration and renewing as given by Paul in Romans, Corinthians, Ephesians, and Colossians.