

Bible Training Institute

To proactively accelerate the spiritual growth of Grace Bible Church for the purpose of knowing God more intimately and becoming more effective servants of God in the world

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Soteriology Part 5

The Doctrines of Regeneration and Perseverance

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Regeneration

Definition: "Regeneration is the act of God awakening spiritual life within us, bringing us from spiritual death to spiritual life."
(Grudem, 702)

Assumptions: humans are in need of a transformation because of spiritual deadness, total depravity, and inability to know God

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Historical Views

- Self-actualized regeneration (Pelagians and Liberals)
- Baptismal regeneration (Cath/Lutheran)
- Presumptive or Promissory regeneration (Covenant Reformed)
- Synergistic regeneration (Arminians)
- Work of God in response to faith (some Reformed Evangelicals)
- Work of God which enables saving faith (some Reformed Evangelicals)

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Regeneration in the OT

- Deut 30:6—note the present-tense element to this
- Jer 31:33—New Covenant promise
- Ezek 36:25-27—Future-tense
- DEBATE: OT saints regenerated?—Not in same sense as NT saints, but there is some sort of internal change (Ps 51)
 - KEY DIFFERENCE: Indwelling of HS

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Regeneration in the NT

- John 3:3—born again (Lit. “from above”)
 - New spiritual birth in contrast to physical
- John 3:5—“is born” is passive—something done to man, not by man
- Titus 3:5
- Water and Holy Spirit—Num 19:17-19; Isaiah 4:4; 32:15; 44:3; 55:1; Joel 2:28-29; Zech 13:1)
- John 1:13; 1 Peter 1:3, 23; Col 2:13; Ja 1:18

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Results of Regeneration

- a divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4)
- a new self (Eph. 4:24)
- a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17)
- a new mind (1 Cor. 2:16)
- a new heart (Rom. 5:5)
- a new will to obey God (Rom. 6:13)
- a circumcision of the heart (Col. 2:11)

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Debate

- Acknowledge the mysterious nature of regeneration (John 3:8)
- Simultaneous view—regeneration and faith
- Faith comes first view
- Regeneration comes first view
 - John 3:5; John 6:44; Acts 16:14
- IMPORTANT ISSUE: God starts the work

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Summary

- Not a tangible experience with five senses
- Supernatural occurrence
- Results in a divine nature
- Involves counteracting effects of sin
- Beginning of a lifetime of spiritual growth--sanctification

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Doctrine of Perseverance

HISTORICAL VIEWS:

- Salvation can be forfeited by mortal sin (Roman Catholics)
- ...can be lost by walking after the flesh (Many Arminians)
- Elect believers persevere and non-elect believers fall away (some Lutherans)
- God preserves true Christians so that they persevere to the end (Reformed)

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God's Initiative

- Ps 37:24
- Ps 37:28
- Jer 32:40
- John 3:15-16, 36; 5:24; 6:40, 47; 1 John 5:11-13)
- Eternal life must be eternal
- John 6:39-40
- John 10:27-29
- John 17:6-19
- Heb 7:24-25
- Rom 8:29-30
- Rom 8:35-39
- Phil 1:6
- 2 Cor 1:21
- 1 Cor 1:8
- Holy Spirit as guarantee—2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:14
- 1 Peter 1:3-5
- 1 John 5:18
- Jude 24

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Christian's Role

- Matt 10:22
- 1 Cor 10:12
- 1 Cor 16:13
- 2 Cor 1:24
- Phil 2:12-13
- 2 Tim 2:12-13
- 2 Tim 4:7
- Heb 10:36
- Rev 2:10

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“Backsliding” and Falling Away

- Backsliding—David, Solomon, Peter
- Falling away from the faith
 - REASON: Never truly converted—no regeneration
 - Judas (see John 6:70; 13:10-11)
 - 1 John 2:19
 - 2 John 9
 - 2 Peter 2
 - Apostate teachers (Jude 4, 8, 10-13, 16-19)

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Hebrews Warnings

Most debated: Heb 6:4-6

- VIEW ONE: True believers can fall away
- VIEW TWO: This is hypothetical apostasy
- VIEW THREE: Not truly saved—they know the truth but have not applied it to their lives

See also Heb 10:26-29

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