

Regeneration: Restoring for Inheritance

Of the two Greek word groups used to convey the concept of regeneration, the Greek word, “palingenesia,” is used only twice throughout the New Testament.

“Palingenesia” is a compound noun from “palin” (which means “again”) and “genesis” (which means “birth” or “origin”).

1. Carefully observe the passage that the apostle Paul pens to Titus who he is discipling. Paul describes Titus as “my true son in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior” (Tit 1:4). What does regeneration do? List as many reasons that you can observe.

But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration (**palingenesia**) and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Tit 3:4-7, NASB)

2. Carefully observe Matthew’s conversation between Peter and Jesus. The disciples just saw Jesus tell a rich young ruler the high cost of following Him. And Jesus said to His disciples, “Truly I say to you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” When the disciples heard this, they were very astonished and said, “Then who can be saved?” (Matt 19:23-25, NASB) What do you learn about regeneration?

Then Peter said to Him, “Behold, we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?” And Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration (**palingenesia**) when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name’s sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last; and the last, first. (Matt 19:27-30, NASB)

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Teacher Notes

Of the two Greek word groups used to convey the concept of regeneration, the Greek word, “palingenesia,” is used only twice throughout the New Testament.

“Palingenesia” is a compound noun from “palin” (which means “again”) and “genesis” (which means “birth” or “origin”).

Dispel the notion that looking up the Hebrew / Greek words of a passage is difficult by showing the student how easy it is to use an online tool. Encourage the student to use his phone:

1. Go to www.Blueletterbible.org.
2. Search “Titus 3.”
3. Find the verse that has the word “regeneration.” This is at verse 5.
4. Click “TOOLS” located in the left margin.
5. In the box that opens, find the word “regeneration” and click the number next to it “G3824.”

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Encourage the student with his observation of the text by asking questions. Here are some things he should see:

Washing (washing what?)

Renewing (renewing what?)

By the Holy Spirit (how? poured out?)

Makes Believers heirs (what is inherited?)

Eternal life

The apostle Paul here speaks of “regeneration” as the act of God through the renewing and restorative power of the Holy Spirit. Its context is reminiscent of the psalmist prayer, “create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me” (Ps 51:10). Paul envisions a “washing” of the heart and “installing” a new spirit within the Believer as God promised through the New Covenant.

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Ask the student: is Jesus speaking of His future when He is resurrected? How does this context affect what Jesus is saying about regeneration?

The process of regeneration includes the resurrection of a Believer.

Here is a good moment to teach the student how to think about salvation. Salvation can be understood as having three parts:

1. **Salvation from the penalty of sin.** This is "initial salvation" when one comes to faith.
2. **Salvation from the power of sin.** This is known as "sanctification" when one learns more about how to be holy as God is holy and strives to make one more like Jesus Christ.
3. **Salvation from the presence of sin.** This is know as "glorification" and occurs after death when a Believer is resurrected with a new sinless body.

In this passage, Jesus speaks of "regeneration" in the context of the renewal of the world in the end time (Rev 21:1-5); it appears that the process of regeneration is completed when the Believer is resurrected.

As the result of being "born of God," when the process of regeneration begins, the restoration of the "child of God" entitles the Believer to the birthright as inheritors of God's promise (Gal 4:1-7).

Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave, although he is owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father. So we too, when we were children, were held in bondage under the elementary principles of the world. But when the fullness of the time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons and daughters. Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying out, "Abba! Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God. (Gal 4:1-7, NASB)