

Chapter 6

The New Birth: The Doctrine of Regeneration

The author cautions the student not to deal lightly with this chapter. It is in the context of a complete understanding of regeneration, and upon this foundation, that the doctrines of the Holy Spirit and eternal security are completely understood. If this chapter is mastered, many of the doctrinal problems found in the succeeding chapters will be easily overcome.

John 3:4, 9 – Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?” ... “How can these things be?”

The study will begin with an in-depth look at the essential terms associated with the concept of regeneration. This will leave no doubt in the student’s mind as to the intent of biblical text when these terms are used.

Instructions: Complete the following chart in the order given.

1. Write the Greek word for the term in the space provided. The number of times this word occurs in the New Testament is provided for you, as well as the reference number for the Strong’s “Dictionary of the Greek New Testament” in the back of “Strong’s Concordance.”
2. Using a Greek New Testament reference work, record the definition of the word.
3. Write out the key thought of the selected passages.
4. Write a thesis statement based on the information about the word. The statement should be one sentence long, summarizing the spiritual truths concerning this word and salvation.

Term	Greek Word	Occurrence
Regeneration		2 times; 3824

Reference work and definition:

Selected passages:

Matthew 19:28

Titus 3:5

Thesis Statement:

Term	Greek Word	Occurrence
Born (Again); Born (of God)		97 times; 1080

Reference work and definition:

Selected passages:

John 1:13

John 3:3

John 3:7

1 Corinthians 4:15

Thesis statement:

Term	Greek Word	Occurrence
Sons (of God)		381 times; 5207

Reference work and definition:

Selected passages:

Romans 8:14

Romans 9:26

Galatians 3:26

Galatians 4:4

Galatians 4:6

1 Thessalonians 5:5

Thesis statement:

Term	Greek Word	Occurrence
Children		99 times; 5043

Reference work and definition:

Selected passages:

John 1:12

Romans 8:16

Romans 8:17

Romans 8:21

Philippians 2:15

1 John 3:1

1 John 3:2

Thesis statement:

Term	Greek Word	Occurrence
Heirs		15 times; 2818

Reference work and definition:

Selected passages:

Romans 4:13

Romans 4:14

Romans 8:17

Galatians 3:29

Galatians 4:7

Titus 3:7

Hebrews 6:17

Thesis statement:

Term	Greek Word	Occurrence
Father		418 times; 3962

Reference work and definition:

Selected passages:

Mathew 6:6

John 5:26

John 14:6

John 14:21

John 16:27

Romans 8:15

2 Corinthians 1:3

Ephesians 4:6

Thesis statement:

Term	Greek Word	Occurrence
Brother		346 times; 80
Sister		24 times; 79

Reference work and definition:

Selected passages:

Matthew 23:8

Mark 3:35

Luke 22:32

1 Timothy 5:1, 2

1 Timothy 6:2

Hebrews 2:11

Thesis statement:

In addition to these very central terms that deal directly with the subject, there are many passages which either infer the new birth, are synonymous to the new birth, or in some way shed light upon the subject. By filling in the chart below the student will gain additional insight into the concept of regeneration.

Verse	Key Word(s)	Insights into Regeneration
Ephesians 2:5		
Ephesians 2:10		
2 Corinthians 5:17		
1 John 5:12		

The economy of being born again – How God is able to bring about this new birth.

Once these essential terms are mastered, the first issue to which the student should turn his attention is the “how.” What is at work which causes us to be reborn? How does God accomplish this? It is in understanding the workings of God in regeneration that we fully grasp it as a doctrine and fully realize its implication on our life.

In completing the study below you will be able to identify the three spiritual principles by which God is able to cause us to be born again. In doing this section of study, first answer the questions concerning the passages, then fill in the appropriate principle.

Principle #1:	
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John 1:11-13

Who are the characters as presented in this passage?

To whom was this person going?

Why are they referred to as “His own?”

When He came to His own, He polarized them into two groups. What were these two groups?

Those who responded positively to Him are characterized by two actions. What are they?

How would you describe the difference between this state and the state described in the second question?

What does the statement, “born not of blood” mean?

What does the statement, “nor of the will of the flesh” mean?

What does the statement, “nor of the will of man” mean?

How, then, were we born?

1 Peter 1:3

How is God described?

What is the motivational factor here in God's action? What is at work in God's character which causes Him to act?

What does God do here?

Through what agent is this brought about?

Who ultimately is at work in this process bringing it about?

Principle #2:	
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Galatians 3:15-29

In verses 15 and 16 Paul makes it clear that he is not speaking of Abraham, but of another Greater "seed" – who is this, and what are the implications made here?

According to verses 17-19, how long was the law to be in effect?

Why would the coming of the "seed" do away with the law?

In verses 20-22, the law is unable to impart or give something. What is this crucial element that the law cannot give?

What is the promise spoken of in verse 22, and how does it relate to the "seed?"

In verses 23-29 we are clothed with Christ and justified by faith through Christ. In verse 29 what happens to us when this occurs, and how does it relate to the "seed?"

What, then, is the key to our regeneration? (See verse 10.)

What, then, is the way in which God effects our spiritual birth?

Titus 3:5

What are the two means by which God saves us?

How are they pictures of the new birth?

In the space provided write out a summary paragraph explaining the economy of the new birth – e.g., how God is able to bring it about.

The results of being born again – the benefits

We come to know God as our Father.

The author here agrees with J. I. Packer that one of the greatest truths concerning our relationship with God is His Fatherhood. Here I quote from an article that Dr. Packer wrote in Evangelical Magazine 7, page 19,f.

“You sum up the whole of New Testament teaching in a single phrase, if you speak of it as a revelation of the holy Creator. In the same way, you sum up the whole of New Testament religion if you describe it as the knowledge of God as one’s holy Father. If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God’s child, and having God as his Father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all. For everything that Christ taught, everything that makes the New Testament new, and better than the Old, everything that is distinctively Christian as opposed to merely Jewish, is summed up in the knowledge of the Fatherhood of God. ‘Father’ is the Christian name for God.”

As we consider this great truth of the new birth, and by far it’s most outstanding benefit that of the Fatherhood of God, the author urges you to stop often to praise God for all the benefits which will be listed in the study beyond this point as they all owe their existence to this one central truth.

Romans 8:12-17 is a beautiful picture of the work of God in our lives as Father. Read this passage and answer the questions below.

According to verses 12 and 13, what has the Spirit given us?

According to verses 14, 16 and 17, once we have acquired this life through the Spirit, what do we become?

The central theme around which the benefits revolve is found in verse 15.

In this passage, what have we received?

Having received this, what do we become?

Accordingly, how do we then address God?

The word ABBA(s) occurs three times in the Greek New Testament and is a term of intimacy used by children when addressing their father. It is of Syrian extraction rather than Hebrew, and was reserved for the family unit. Slaves were forbidden from using this word in regard to their master. How does this word reflect upon our relationship with God?

In 2 Corinthians 6:16-18 we learn, in fact, that this new and intimate relationship with God is the fulfillment of long-awaited prophecies.

From where is the quote in this passage taken?

To what new and special relationship does this passage look?

What words or phrases express the intimacy of this relationship?

What is the response of the believer to be to this relationship?

James 1:17, 18 goes on to develop this relationship.

To whom does this passage attribute all good things?

How is the Father characterized in verse 17?

In verse 18, what does God do?

In verse 18, how does He accomplish this?

Having done this, what are we characterized as?

Hebrews 2:9-15 stresses this very point as well.

In verse 10 God is at work; what is He seeking to do?

With whom does He begin this work?

In verse 11, of whom is the phrase “He who sanctifies” speaking?

In verse 11, of whom is the phrase “those who are sanctified” speaking?

What is the origin of these two?

What is the result of this on the part of the former to the latter?

In verses 12 and 13, what is the resulting relationship between men and their God?

In a short paragraph, summarize the work of God through Christ in Hebrews 2:9-15, emphasizing the Fatherhood of God and its benefits.

There are many other direct benefits of the Fatherhood of God. To best understand these, read the following verses and write out the key thought of each as it pertains to the benefits of the Fatherhood of God.

1 John 1:3

1 John 2:23, 24

1 John 3:1

In the space below, summarize the benefits of knowing God as Father.

In this Father-son relationship, we come into a relationship with God our Father as a son, as His child, with all the benefits of sonship. Read the following passages and give the key thought as it pertains to our establishment as God's children.

John 1:12

John 1:13

Romans 8:14

Romans 8:15

Romans 8:16

Romans 8:17

Romans 8:18

Romans 8:19

Galatians 4:4, 5

Galatians 4:6

Galatians 4:7

In paragraph form in the space below, summarize the teachings from the preceding questions on our right to be called a child of God.

With the role of sonship come the benefits. In the following section we will develop this theme as it directly pertains to sonship. First answer the questions pertaining to the passages, then return to fill in the blank, listing the benefit just studied.

Benefit #1:	
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Philippians 2:12-15

What is Paul's expectation of the Philippians in verses 12, 13 and 14?

In verse 15 Paul gives the rationale for his behavior due to our unique role and relationship to God. How does Paul describe this?

How are we contrasted with the rest of the world?

Children of God	Children of the World
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.

Do you feel personally qualified for this role? Explain in detail.

Hebrews 12:4-13

Title this passage:

In the space below compare and contrast our relationship with our Heavenly Father to our relationship with our earthly father.

Comparison – how they are the same:

Contrast – How they are different:

List a key thought from each of the following verses that illustrates God's commitment to our fulfilling our responsibilities as His children.

Hebrews 12:6

Hebrews 12:7

Hebrews 12:10

Hebrews 12:11

Paraphrase (write out in your own words) Hebrews 12:10, 11 in the space below.

In your own words summarize the truths concerning this particular benefit in the space below.

Benefit #2:	
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1 John 3:1, 2

How does verse 1 describe the Father's relationship with His children?

What does verse 2 go on to say about our relationship with God?

Paraphrase this passage in the space below.

In your own words summarize the truths concerning this particular benefit in the space below.

Romans 8:16, 17

What are we established as in verse 16?

If a child, then what else? What role does the child naturally fill according to verse 17?

How does Galatians 4:7 also bear this out as true?

Galatians 3:29

Paul stresses to the Galatians that if they belong to Christ, then they are automatically something else as well. What is this?

As Abraham's offspring, what role does the child naturally fill according to this verse?

On what does God base this? How do we know for sure this role is ours? According to what?

Titus 3:7

According to this verse, what does God's grace work in our lives?

Having been justified, what role does the child naturally fill according to this verse?

On what does God base this? How do we know for sure this role is ours? According to what?

Hebrews 6:17-20

According to verse 17, what is our title before God?

According to verse 18, of what have we laid hold?

Summarize this section by filling in the blanks in the sentence below.

God establishes our role as His _____ and bases this role upon the foundation of His _____ and _____.

According to Ephesians 3:6, we, as Gentiles, are not only members of the Body, but as heirs recipient of a great provision. What is this provision?

In reading the verses below the student will become aware of the copious benefits of the heir of God the Father. From each verse list the specific benefit of being the heir of God the Father.

Romans 8:17

Ephesians 1:3, 4, 11

Hebrews 11:7

James 2:5

1 Peter 3:7

In your own words summarize the truths concerning this particular benefit in the space below.

Mark 3:31-35

From the information given to you in verses 31 and 32, describe the scene in which Jesus finds Himself.

Who was seeking to see Jesus?

What was the purpose? (See Mark 3:21)

What is the rhetorical question Jesus asks in verse 33?

What is the answer He gives?

Hebrews 2:11-17

According to verse 11, who is the one who sanctifies?

Who are those who are sanctified?

Where are they both from?

As a result of this fact, what is their relationship with Jesus?

How is our relationship with Christ depicted in verses 13 and 14?

In verses 14-17, what is Christ's rationale in being made like us?

In being made like us, we are then His _____.

In your own words summarize the truths concerning this particular benefit in the space below.

Benefit #5:	
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1 John 3:1, 2, 13-17

In these passages we are called children and brethren. The Greek word for children is TEKNON (5043) and occurs 99 times in the New Testament. The Greek word for brethren is ADELPHOS (80) and occurs 346 times in the New Testament.

Using a dictionary, define each word.

Children:

Brethren:

Using a Greek reference work, define each word.

TEKNON:

ADELPHOS:

What do these passages infer about Christians' relationships with one another?

Romans 8:29

From this verse, what is God's plan for those who are saved in terms of their relationships with one another?

What word is used here to illustrate this?

In your own words summarize the truths concerning this particular benefit in the space below.

In this Father-son relationship we come to know both God and His love. Read the following verses and list the key thought of each as it pertains to knowing God and His love.

1 John 4:7

1 John 4:8

1 John 4:9

1 John 4:10

1 John 4:11

1 John 4:12

1 John 4:13

According to the previous passage, what is the benefit of knowing God and His love?

What impact will this have on our lives?

In this Father-son relationship we emerge as victors.

Paraphrase 1 John 5:14 and 18 in the space below.

Now write the portion of Scripture that establishes victory as a result of our Father-son relationship.

What form does this victory take?

Summary

Write out summary from page 9 of lecture notes.

Application

How will a better understanding of the doctrine of regeneration aid us in our worship of God?

How and why will a proper understanding of the doctrine of regeneration aid us in our relationships with one another?

How and why will a proper understanding of the doctrine of regeneration promote a better self image?

How would a lack of conviction in this area affect a disciple's walk with God? List below the five basic areas which would be affected by a lack of proper convictions in this area.

What extremes might a Christian drift into if he did not fully understand the doctrine of regeneration?

How would a proper understanding in this area aid in consistency in the basics?