

## **The Word of God in Regeneration**

### **James 1:18 (NKJV)**

18 Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

James has affirmed that the Lord is the source of goodness and that his goodness will never change or fail. If he had said nothing more, we could go our way with our hearts singing!

God's gift of spiritual life must be called his supreme gift because it rescues us from the supreme tragedy. But James has more to say! In verse 18, he calls our attention to the supreme act of God's goodness, namely, his granting spiritual life to his people. *Roger Ellsworth, Opening Up – James, (Ryelands Road, Leominster, England, HR6 8NZ: Day One, 2009), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 50.*

As we begin where we left off at the end of November in James we once again take up vers 18 of chapter 1.

The new birth is something of a great mystery.

John 3:2-12 (NKJV)

3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 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?" 5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit." 9 Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?"

The scriptures fill out all that we know about regeneration in the rest of the New Testament.

- I. It is a spiritual birth accomplished outside the sphere of human influence.
  - A. It is of God's own will.
  - B. The Spirit moves where He will.
  - C. John 1:11-13 (NKJV)
    1. 11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
- II. Today we want to observe that the Spirit uses the word of God to accomplish the new birth.
  - A. James 1:18 (NKJV)

1. 18 Of His own will He brought us forth by the **word of truth**, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

B. The word of truth.

1. 2 Corinthians 6:7 (NKJV)
  - a. 7 by the **word of truth**, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,
2. Colossians 1:5 (NKJV)
  - a. 5 because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the **word of the truth** of the gospel,
3. 1 Peter 1:23
  - a. having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the **word of God** which lives and abides forever,
4. 2 Timothy 2:15 (NKJV)
  - a. 15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the **word of truth**.
5. 1 Thessalonians 2:13 (NKJV)
  - a. 13 For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the **word of God** which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the **word of God**, which also effectively works in you who believe.
6. Colossians 1:5 (NKJV)
  - a. 5 because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the **word of the truth of the gospel**,
7. Ephesians 1:13 (NKJV)
  - a. 13 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the **word of truth, the gospel** of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,
8. 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14
  - a. 13 ¶ But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and **belief in the truth**, 14 to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

III. It is described as a cleansing a washing.

- A. Titus 3:5 (NKJV)
    - 1. 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the **washing of regeneration** and renewing of the Holy Spirit,
  - B. Ephesians 5:25-26 (NKJV)
    - 1. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 **that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,**
  - C. John 17:17
    - 1. "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.
- IV. It is likened to giving light to the soul.
- A. Psalm 119:130
    - 1. The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.
- V. That's why we send missionaries and preach the word.
- A. Romans 10:14-17 (NKJV)
    - 1. 14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!" 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?" 17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Hitherto, God's Word may have been read attentively, and much of its teaching intellectually apprehended; but because there was a "vail" upon the heart (2 Corinthians 3:15) and so no spiritual discernment (1 Corinthians 2:14), the reader was not inwardly affected thereby. But now the Spirit removes the vail, opens the heart to receive the Word (Acts 16:14), and powerfully applies to the mind and conscience some portion of it. The result is that, the one renewed is able to say "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see" (John 9:25). *AW Pink; Regeneration, p32*

The sinner is now enlightened in the knowledge of his own terrible condition. He may, before this, have received much scriptural instruction, subscribed to a sound creed, and believed intellectually in "the total depravity of man"; but now the solemn declarations of God's Word concerning the state of the fallen creature are brought home in piercing power to his own soul. No longer does he compare himself with his fellows, but measures himself by the rule of God. He now discovers that he is unclean, that his heart is "desperately wicked," and that he is

altogether unfit for the presence of the thrice holy God. He is powerfully convicted of his own awful sins, feels that they are more in number than the hairs of his head, and that they are high provocations against Heaven, which call for Divine judgment on him. He now realizes that there is “no soundness” (Isaiah 1:6) in him, and that all his best performances are only as “filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6), and that he is deserving of nought but the everlasting burnings. *AW Pink Regeneration p 32-33*

Luke 8:4-11 (NKJV)

4 And when a great multitude had gathered, and they had come to Him from every city, He spoke by a parable: 5 "A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. 6 Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. 7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. 8 But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold." When He had said these things He cried, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" 9 Then His disciples asked Him, saying, "What does this parable mean?" 10 And He said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that 'Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand.' 11 "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.