



The Sovereign Work of the Holy Spirit in Regeneration

In the eternal good pleasure of God, He predestined the elect (Rom 8:30; 9:23; Eph 1:4-5). God decreed their salvation before time, and in time He causes them to be born again of God, by His Spirit making them alive in Christ (Eph 2:5; Col 2:13; 1 Pet 1:3). This is the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration.

First, God causes the Gospel preacher to be sent (Rom 10:15), and this Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached in the power and with a demonstration of the Spirit (1 Cor 2:4). The Spirit of Christ fills the preacher and inspires him to proclaim Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor 2:2). If the preacher is not filled with the Spirit, he will preach psychology, philosophy, and man-centered theology in a topical sermon.

If the Spirit is at work, there will be a public reading of the Scriptures (1 Tim 4:13), and the sermon delivery by the preacher will explain the chosen passage (verse by verse) from the Bible. He will explicate the terms in their context, the theology found there in, and he will apply the original meaning to his listeners, so they might understand and live accordingly.

While the preacher preaches in the Spirit, those who have ears to hear will recognize the voice of Christ instructing them in the Gospel of grace. As the Word of Christ enters the ear of the hearer, externally, the Holy Spirit also begins His internal work in the one whose heart He enters (2 Cor 4:6). The Spirit says, "Let there be light," and there is light in the heart of His new creation. This is an irresistible work of God...just ask the first creation (Gen 1:3)!

Second, regeneration is the powerful, internal work of the Spirit in creating a new spiritual creature (2 Cor 5:17). The natural man is deaf and blind (1 Cor 2:14), with a heart of stone (Ezek 36:26). He is dead to God (Eph 2:1), and he has zero spiritual discernment without his receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Mk 1:8; Acts 2:38; 1 Cor 12:13), who then abides permanently in the soul of the elect, redeemed (Rom 8:9, 11; Heb 13:5).

The soul of man includes the mind, the heart, and the will. The Holy Spirit puts the Word of God into the mind of the regenerate man. He gives illumination to the things of God by giving the man the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16). It is the Spirit who searches the deep things of God (1 Cor 2:10, 12), and then reveals them to His chosen ones in accordance with His measure (as with faith - Rom 12:3).

The renewal of the futile mind transforms the thinking. With the mind of Christ, the new believer sets her mind on the things of the Spirit (Rom 8:6), on the things above (Col 3:2). Her eyes are on Jesus (Heb 12:2), who is authoring faith in the mind of the saint. She now has a mind that wants to know God. Her thoughts are of Christ and His kingdom. She now loves God with her mind (Mt 22:37). It is Christ's Spirit who opened her mind to understand the Scriptures (Lk 24:45).

One Spirit is granting one mind to Christ's one church, despite the diabolical deceptions of the devil and his demons in the name of Jesus. The Christian has her mind set to know the truth (Jn 8:32; 14:6).



The Holy Spirit's internal work is efficacious in the inner recesses of the heart of the elect child of God. The Spirit opens the heart of those chosen to hear and believe the Gospel (Acts 16:14). These remnant believers were appointed to eternal life before creation (Acts 13:48). The Word preached made them hear and believe (Rom 10:17).

Regeneration removes the heart of stone toward God and replaces it with a heart of flesh (Ezek 36:26). The heart for God is a miracle considering the natural man's rebellion, obduracy, incessant inclination to evil, and penchant for pride. The human heart, apart from Christ, is wicked above all else (Jer 17:9). Sin is the natural hardening agent, and the natural man is a slave to sin (Jn 8:34; Rom 6:6).

The heart transplant produces new affections. Hatred for God is transformed into love for God and Christ. The demonstration of God's love for His bride, the church (Eph 5:25), is publicly displayed at the cross by Jesus (Jn 15:13; Rom 5:8).

This love prevails, being irresistible, for God is love and Christ constrains His people with His love (2 Cor 5:14; 1 Jn 4:8). He loved us, that is, His beloved from every nation tribe and tongue (the world). The Spirit in us is the God of love, loving us from within, explained in His love letter to us (the Bible). We have love for God because He first loved us (1 Jn 4:19). We did not choose Him, He chose us (Jn 15:16; Eph 1:4).

The infusion of new qualities in our innermost parts includes the human will. It is not in the enslaved will of man to want, nor to work any aspect of transformation (Jn 1:13). When God puts His Spirit in us, He puts His will in us with Him. His will is for His people to be conformed into the image of Christ, who is the icon of God (Col 1:15). The end goal is for us to see Christ Jesus as He is (holy), so we become like Him in mind, heart, and will (1 Pet 1:16). His Spirit causes us to know His ways, His covenant, and to walk in His statutes (Ezek 36:27).

The transformation from regeneration is nothing short of amazing. We who were dead are now alive to God. Evil works have become good works, by Him who wills and works His good pleasure in us (Phil 2:13). From disobedience to His Law, we now walk by the Spirit of Christ (Gal 5:25), who causes us to walk in His statutes (Ezek 36:27). From a selfish will comes a new prayer, "Not my will, by your will be done."

Christian, know that He who began this good work in you will grow you and strengthen you by His grace (Phil 1:6). He will never leave you nor forsake you in this work begun at regeneration (Heb 13:5). He will complete it, even perfect it. Regeneration is all a sovereign work of God's Spirit, with no contribution from you. For this reason, we give thanks and honor Him who is still at work.

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