

# **Quickening or Regeneration and Conversion**

**(A Study by Lucien LeSage)**

## **A mystery:**

A birth, raising the dead, curing the blind and the deaf, the raising of Lazarus, healing lepers, etc. are all but part of a picture of this great salvation that we have in Jesus Christ.

They are merely earthly examples to explain a great spiritual mystery.

**This is but a feeble attempt to explain what part the Spirit has and what part the preached word has in our deliverance.**

## **Horse and cart but connected.**

What part is quickening and what part is conversion?

What comes first?

Why is it important?

Well, why is understanding election important?

God is a God of order and we must not get the cart in front of the horse.

**W. E. Best quote:**

W. E. Best in his book on Regeneration and Conversion said, "One of the greatest blunders, on the subject of the new birth, is to make it dependent on man's faith. Opposers of Biblical regeneration advocate that the new birth must, in some way, be the response of one who hears the gospel. Such verses as James 1:18 and I Peter 1:23 are used to prove their theory; but the exegesis of the two texts demands no such conclusion." He goes on to say, "immediate regeneration does not deny that the new birth, in which the new life becomes manifest, is secured by response to the gospel" and he then explains that James and Peter use a word that means to "bring forth." And we might add that the word that James used was actually translated "bringeth forth" in James 1:15. To bring forth involves more than quickening or "making alive".

**Before we get started let me say right away:**

There is NO salvation apart from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as savior. He must be the object of our faith. It is His work and His shed blood that we must be trusting in and not our own righteousness or religious activity.

The Gospel is "Good News" that Jesus came into this world to die for sinners and that he was buried and rose again from the dead after three days and sits at the right hand of God making intercession for His people.

No man or woman will ever be saved apart from hearing, in some form or another, the Gospel of Jesus Christ and believing on Jesus Christ for salvation.

In the context of calling on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation Paul said, "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?"

There is no salvation apart from the Gospel.

**BUT TO HEAR SPIRITUALLY ONE MUST HAVE A HEARING EAR.**

We also believe that everyone that has this God given faith will persevere because "he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).

**With that said:**

To be quickened and to be saved are not the same.

The one leads to the other. Salvation encompasses much more than quickening but it does include quickening.

Quickening is the very first thing that happens and enables all of the other things that happen in the heart and soul of the sinner that is saved.

Believing on Christ is something that the sinner does, but with quickening the sinner has no part in it. This we will show from the scriptures.

The Bible tells us that we are saved by grace through faith.

Jesus said, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

But nowhere will you find that we are quickened by faith.

When Jesus spoke of the new birth in John he used a Greek word that meant "born from above." As we shall show this is not at all the same word used by Peter and James where the preached word is in view, but we will get to that later.

Let me also add that there is no way that a person could be quickened and go on in unbelief. He or she would be like a fish

out of water. That person will seek for answers out of necessity. They will seek when before they never sought.

“There is none that seeketh after God” (Rom 3:11).

Yet the Bible says, “he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb 11:6).

**This brings us to our next point:**

There is a difference in the word that Christ speaks and the word that we preach to men. Jesus is the Word. He is the living Word of God. When he commanded the sea and the winds to be still they obeyed His voice and the men there marveled that even the winds and the sea obeyed Him.

“And God said, Let there be light: and there was light” (Gen 1:3).

When Jesus “cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth “ we read that “he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin.”

Lazarus may not have been able to walk on his own since he was bound hand and foot but he now had legs and arms that could function. He might not have seen too much with his face being bound with a napkin but he had eyes that could see.

As Brother Wilbur Johnson said, “Let him go he’s ready to operate now.”

My point is that when the Lord Jesus Christ calls the sinner and says "Live" that sinner is made alive.

### **So how are men quickened?:**

We know it's not by anything the sinner does.

The Master of theology said, "It is the **spirit that quickeneth**; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that **I speak** unto you, they are spirit [*a spiritual mind is needed to understand them*], and they are life." (John 6:63). Concerning the birth from above Jesus said, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." In John's gospel we are told that this birth which is from above is "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Quickening is a raising from the dead. It is a giving of life to the dead.

"For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will" (John 5:21). The Bible also tells us that Jesus is the quickening spirit as Paul says, "the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." When Jesus speaks concerning a particular sinner and says live the dead sinner is quickened by the Holy Spirit. Paul tells us in his letter to the Ephesians "and you hath he quickened, who were dead in

trespasses and sins" (Eph 2:1). Who is the "he" in this verse? It is God according to verse 4 and 5 of that same chapter.

### **Why do I seem to be splitting hairs?**

### **We are not splitting hairs but just getting it in the right order:**

Another question we might ask. Is our preaching the cause of quickening?

Does our preaching of the Gospel have power in itself to cause new life?

I have already stated that no man will be saved apart from hearing and believing the preached word, but is that preaching the cause of quickening?

I would contend that quickening is from the voice of the Living Word but not from the preaching of God's word by men. And, does the Holy Spirit even use the word that men preach as a means to quicken as some contend? Or is the word used by the Spirit to "bring forth" as the word in James indicates.

### **An earthly analogy that we can all understand:**

A man is totally blind.

He is in a cave that has no light.

If you turn on a light he sees nothing.

If you cure his blindness and no light is turned on he still sees nothing, but he now has the potential to see.

So while light cannot give the potential to see or cure blindness yet it is absolutely necessary for every aspect of sight.

The Gospel is the ONLY true light but it is only light to those that the Holy Spirit gives sight to via quickening.

**Another example:**

A man is totally deaf in a sound proof room that has no sound.

If you turn on a loud speaker and emit sound waves he hears nothing.

If you cure his ears of deafness and there is absolutely no sound he still hears nothing, but he now has the potential to hear.

So also, sound cannot cure deafness but it is required in every aspect of hearing.

As Jesus said, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear"  
(Matthew 11:15).

The Gospel is the only true sound that can save but it is only the true sound to those who have ears to hear.

It may seem that I am splitting hairs, but I contend none that the Lord himself did not split.

### **The Lord Jesus' Parable of the Sower:**

In this parable the Lord tells us exactly what it means so there is no doubt about its meaning.

*Luke 8:5 A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. 6 And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung 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 And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

Now we must ask. What is meant by the seed that the sower is sowing? And what is meant by the "good ground" which is the only one that produces any fruit?

Well the Lord tells us.

He says that the "seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11). But it is the word of God that is preached indiscriminately.

Now what is the "good ground"? I have said in the past that the good ground was plowed ground and that it was plowed up by

the Holy Spirit. While that may have a ring of truth to it let's see what the Lord said the good ground was, for he tells us.

"But that on the good ground are they, which in an **honest and good heart**, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience" Luke 8:15).

"They, which in an **honest and GOOD HEART...**"

Please notice that the seed did not make the ground good but fell on ground that was already good or was made good by something other than the seed that fell on it.

**Here is the great blunder of Gospel regeneration. If what Jesus says is true and I do not dare doubt it, then the Gospel only regenerates good people.**

But I thought Jesus said that "there is none good but one, that is, God" (Matthew 19:17).

And didn't Paul say that "there is none that doeth good"?

Well, that is absolutely correct.

Now notice in Matthew Jesus spoke of the heart being honest and good and yet Jeremiah says "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

Do we have a contradiction here?

No, a thousand times no!

**Hear these scriptures.**

Jeremiah 24:7 And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.

Jeremiah 32:39 And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them:

Ezekiel 11:19 And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:

Ezekiel 36:26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

Acts 16:14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: **whose heart the Lord opened, THAT SHE ATTENDED** unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

(Quickening or regeneration is the opening of the heart while conversion is the response of an opened heart to the word of God).

**BELIEVING IS A MATTER OF THE HEART AND NOT JUST THE MIND:**

Luke 24:25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of **HEART to believe** all that the prophets have spoken:

Acts 8:37 And Philip said, If thou **believest WITH all thine HEART**, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Romans 10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt **believe in thine HEART** that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For **WITH THE HEART** man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

**Back to the parable of the sower:**

In Matthew's account it is the **understanding** that is different.

READ Mat 13:3-9

See Explanation: Matt 13:18-23

The difference was the good ground hearer is he that "**understandeth**".

But,

Romans 3:11 There is **none that understandeth**, there is none that seeketh after God.

Luke 24:45 Then **opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,**

(The potential to understand must be given first. A spiritual mind is necessary first and that is given in regeneration or quickening.) The scriptures give understanding but they do not open it.

Spiritual understanding involves the heart as well. Jesus said, "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

1Cor 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; **that we might know** the things that are freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but

which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the **natural man receiveth not** the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

(Being quickened by the spirit of God is what enabled us to know.)

(Intelligent men without quickening have no clue.)

Notice in verse 14 of 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 2 that the **natural man receiveth not** the things of the Spirit of God. What are the things of God? His word is it not, which includes the Gospel? In Mark's account of the sower the good ground was he that received the word of God and brings forth fruit (Mark 4:20). So something happened to that hearer in that he was not a natural man anymore.

**IN THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER, THE SEED DID NOT MAKE THE GROUND GOOD BUT FELL ON GOOD GROUND.**

The ground was made good before the seed fell on it.

Paul said in his flesh dwelt no good thing (Romans 7:18).

**Concerning the seed:**

While it was not the seed that made the ground good it was the seed that caused the good ground to bring forth fruit. Without the seed there is no fruit. Without the Gospel there is no object for our faith.

In our passage the Lord also said: "He that **HATH EARS** to hear, let him hear." (Luke 8:8).

What is needed first, the hearing or the hearing ear?

A man needs a hearing ear before he can hear. This is true in the natural world and is true in the spiritual world as well or else Jesus would have never used it as an example.

One must be present before the other can take place. The potential to hear must be present in order to hear.

Where does the hearing ear come from?

Where does the seeing eye come from?

Proverbs 20:12 The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the LORD hath made even both of them.

Both physical and spiritual.

So what part does the seed or the word of God preached or read play in our salvation?

Our salvation does not stop at quickening or regeneration. There is a **deliverance** that takes place.

Brother Curtis Pugh told me of a statement that Brother Milburn Cockrell had related to him in order to better understand this. I think his statement hits the nail on the head.

Br Cockrell said that, "the Holy Spirit regenerates or quickens the spirit of man. The spirit of man - **when made alive** by regeneration is that which **can know and experience God**. The Word of God converts the soul of man. The soul of man is that by which man has self consciousness and is also aware of natural surroundings."

W. E. Best in his book on regeneration said, "To the spiritual mind, creation is the lattice work behind which God hides himself."

"My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the lattice" (Song of Solomon 2:9).

So where is the POWER of the Gospel?

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation" – but the verse does not stop there does it?

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation **to every one that believeth**; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

It is only the power of God to them that believeth. The potential to believe must be present before the Gospel can be believed. Then there is light for the seeing eye. Then it has power unto salvation. Then it has power to deliver.

**Compare:**

1Corinthians 1:17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. 18 For the preaching of the cross is to **them that perish foolishness**; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. ... 23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the **Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness**; 24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

The difference is not you or the preaching of the Gospel but the effectual call of God. The difference is the quickening power of the Holy Spirit. The difference is God.

"Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it..." (Psalm 127:1).

### **True Conversion as a Result of Regeneration**

Conversion begins immediately after quickening and that is what takes place in time, and surely in this experience that one writer called "Pilgrim's Progress", the word of God becomes involved. It must be involved in the deliverance of sinners.

Back to Brother Milburn Cockrell's Quote:

Br Cockrell said, "The Holy Spirit regenerates or quickens the spirit of man. The spirit of man - when made alive by regeneration is that which can know and experience God. **The Word of God converts the soul of man.** The soul of man is that by which man has self consciousness and is also aware of natural surroundings."

W. E. Best rightly says that quickening is not an experience but results in an experience. When a blind man sees he experiences sight only when light is involved not when he is healed.

We are not laboring to put a time gap in here but to make the order right.

"Regeneration is not in itself an experience; conversion is a series of Christian experiences.... A person knows nothing of the beginning of his existence. Conversion, however, is always an awareness of what is taking place; therefore, it is experimental. Repentance and faith are experiences known to the person born of God." (W. E. Best).

In John's gospel Nicodemus is presented with the truth of regeneration by the Holy Spirit. It is a sovereign act of God Almighty in the person of the Holy Spirit.

What follows regeneration is conversion. Conversion consists of a godly sorrow that worketh repentance toward salvation or trusting Jesus Christ as savior never to be repented of. So what follows the truth of the new birth from above or regeneration is the truth that the son of man who came down from heaven would be lifted up in like manner as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. In that event we see a picture of the sting of death which is sin and the lifting up of the substitute who was being made sin for all that looked to it.

Here we have the sting of conviction; a knowledge that it will lead to death and a looking to the **only** one who can redeem from that awful condition.

They didn't look to Moses. They didn't look to each other for help. They didn't even try and fight the serpents. They simply

looked to the fiery brazen serpent lifted up on a pole which was a picture of our suffering substitute being made sin for us and suffering the divine wrath of God for our sins in our place and yet not consumed by it.

All of this is the result of regeneration and not the cause.

Salvation is an experience. It is something we know experimentally.

But the Bible says that, "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" and also that "the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

**A few questions:**

Is "godly sorrow that worketh repentance" the product of a carnal mind?

Is it pleasing to God?

"Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." (Luke 15:10).

Oh, it is well pleasing to God.

Is "godly sorrow that worketh repentance", the product of the natural man that receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God?

But the complete verse is "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2Cor 7:10).

"Worketh" means to accomplish. So godly sorrow accomplishes repentance and that repentance "to" or "unto" or "towards" salvation.

Here we have conversion in action.

### **The example of the thief on the cross:**

1) He railed on Christ at first (He may have feared Rome but not God. "The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth" (Matthew 27:44). In this verse we see he was no different than the other thief. This has perplexed some and so they come up with the idea that there were more than two, because at least two (plural) railed on Christ and mocked him along with those around that scene. We contend that there were only two as the Bible plainly states in Matthew 27:38 and Mark 15:27. One on his left and one on his right.

2) But what happened?

Bam! Something certainly happened to this one thief.

I contend that what happened was immediate or instantaneous.

What follows is a manifestation of the instantaneous event that came within him but from without. It was from God the Holy Spirit.

The good ground is he that understandeth and has a good and honest heart and receives the word as Jesus tells us.

Proverbs 9:10 "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the holy is understanding."

Instead of joining the other thief he now tells him, "Dost not thou fear God seeing thou art in the same condemnation?" (Luk 23:40).

He was about to die and face God.

He now fears God, not Roman justice.

THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS MADE THE GROUND GOOD TO RECIEVE THE WORDS THAT AT FIRST HE MOCKED.

All that "he saved others", and "if thou be the Son of God", and "if he be the King of Israel", and "for he said, I am the Son of God" was suddenly truth to his heart .

The Lord has taken away the stony heart and given him a heart of flesh.

3) Now the godly sorrow is working repentance.

"For godly sorrow worketh repentance TO salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." (2Cor 7:10).

He now says, "And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds:" vs 41.

Justly before God who is to be feared, not simply the law of the land.

"It has been suggested that some may be sensible to the evil of sin with regard to themselves, but they do not recognize that their sin is against God. Damnation may scare them, but pollution does not. Hell may frighten them, but offending God does not" (W. E. Best).

The thief was convinced of sin, righteousness, and judgment as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit.

4) He now sees the righteousness of Christ and now believes all that had been said about him in a mocking way.

He says "but this man hath done nothing amiss". vs 41.

He now believes that Jesus is the Son of God, the King of Israel and the Lord of the kingdom.

5) He has no place to turn but the LORD Jesus Christ.

He is shut up to the mercy of God.

He's hanging on a tree with no way out.

"He saved others" he had heard. He needed saving.

He now seeks mercy from Christ.

This is a plea for mercy and not a demand or a right that he thought he had.

He says, "**Lord**, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." vs 42

It's a plea because if the Lord does not remember him, he is toast and doomed to eternal damnation.

He knows Jesus as Lord before he knows him as his personal savior.

6) Then he receives the assurance of salvation from the Lord's promise.

"And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." vs 43.

Now he knows Him experimentally as savior.

7) He now has rest in the promise of Christ. He is saved from his sins. He is safe. Death cannot separate him from the love that is

in Christ Jesus. He has Jesus' promise. Somewhere in there between his mocking of Christ and his question to the other thief when he asked "dost not thou fear God" he was quickened and then his soul was converted.

If "godly sorrow" comes before trusting and resting in Jesus Christ and is not the product of a carnal mind then what caused it? From what mind did it come?

It might be argued that it is the preparatory work of the Holy Spirit.

But, where was this work done?

In the heart.

### **Peter's message on the day of Pentecost:**

Acts 2:37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

Someone will say. See there the Holy Spirit used the preaching of the word to prick their heart which was regeneration.

Well, hold the phone.

The word did prick their hearts but why?

Acts 7:54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the

heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.

Here is another group that were cut to the heart by the preaching of the word.

The word of God is the sword of the Spirit but it cuts both ways.

Did Peter use a better message than Stephen? No, in fact they were very similar.

With one group the sword of the Spirit pricked their hearts and with the other group it cut their hearts.

Didn't Stephen say, "ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye."

The difference was in the ground of the heart that the word of truth fell on.

The first group had a **prickable** heart. **A heart of flesh.**

The second group had a **heart of stone.**

Regeneration made the difference on how that word was reacted on.

Regeneration took away the stony heart and gave a heart of flesh and then the word had power to prick rather than cut to anger.

With the second group the word had power to cut to anger but was not the power of God unto salvation.

The difference was in the ground which the Holy Spirit made good ahead of time if I can say that without causing a mess.

### **What about 1 Peter 1:23 and James 1:18**

Without explaining these verse in detail, Peter and James are dealing with a bringing forth and not initial quickening. A proper study of these Greek words is necessary to understand this.

#### **Curtis Pugh on these verses:**

The first verse for our consideration is as follows: **"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever,"** (1 Peter 1:23). Immediately someone says, "Why that verse teaches that regeneration is accomplished by the Word of God." If that is the meaning of this verse, then we have a contradiction in the Bible because Jesus said that regeneration is accomplished by the Holy Spirit. John 3:6, 7 says: **"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."** Jesus used the word "gennao" both times that we have the word "born" in these two verses. He speaks of the work of the Spirit in infusing life into a spiritually dead sinner. But Peter in his statement used a different word. He uses "anagennao" - a related word, but with an important difference

in meaning and in a different tense. Surely every Baptist knows what the prefix "ana" means. It has to do with redoing something such as baptism. Our anabaptist forefathers always denied that they re-baptized saying that they only baptized aright for the first time those who had been baptized by other sects. The tense is clear in the English for it says "being." It does not say "having been," (in the past), but present tense, "being" - an ongoing birthing. Jesus spoke of regeneration as a birth. Peter spoke of the Christian's ongoing conversion or sanctification. Jesus said regeneration is a work of the Holy Spirit. Peter said conversion is a work of the Word of God. It is important to remember that it is the spirit of man that is dead prior to regeneration. The spirit of man is that which if alive is capable of knowing God. His soul is very much alive for by a man's soul he is self conscious and conscious of his natural surroundings. A man's soul does not need life, his spirit does. A man's spirit does not need conversion, it needs regeneration. It is a man's soulish life - his life as a natural man - that needs conversion. And so, rightly understood, there is no conflict between the Lord Jesus and Peter. Regeneration is a work of the Spirit and conversion is a work of the Word in a regenerated individual. Regeneration is the cause of conversion for by it a dead sinner is made spiritually alive, is no more in the flesh and therefore can profit from the Word. Thus an unregenerate individual will not receive the Word nor can he know it in a spiritually profitable way. Paul taught that in 1 Corinthians 2: 12-14 which says: **"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might**

**know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."**

On to the second verse for consideration. This verse is James 1:18 which says: **"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."** On the surface this verse, while stating that the new birth rests solely upon the will of God does seem to say that He begat us with the Word of God. However two things must be considered. First of all, James uses a completely different word from either Christ or Peter. His word is "apokueo" and according to James Strong means primarily **"to bring forth."** The second noteworthy thing is that in the phrase "the word of truth" the word "the" is not there. Young's Literal Translation puts it "...He did beget us with a word of truth..." What did Christ say about regeneration? **"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live,"** (John 5:25). It was the voice of the Son of God that raised Lazarus from his grave. It is the voice of Christ that is the effectual call. The written and preached Word of God is merely the general call, both inviting and instructing lost men and women to believe and to come to Christ. Those are two things they cannot do as

spiritually dead sinners. Only upon Christ's effectual call have they life. Only upon His call will they come forth from their tombs. Only upon His effectual word - "a word of God" - can the impotent man stretch forth his withered arm. The general call and the effectual call are both seen in the Lord's words, "**For many are called, but few are chosen,**" (Matthew 24:14). "**Many**" hear the words of Scripture, but only a comparatively "**few are chosen**" and do therefore hear "a word of truth" - that is, "**hear the voice of the Son of God.**"

I would add that the word that James used in 1:18 was actually translated "bring forth" in verse 1:15.

"Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, **bringeth forth** death."

Where does lust come from?

Romans 1:24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

How is death brought forth?

Wouldn't this person have been dead spiritually from the beginning?

**A quote from Charles Spurgeon:**

## **THE WOMB OF CONVICTION (Spurgeon – Sermon #564)**

“You have profited in nothing by the flesh, but in all things by the Spirit of the living God. **Taking you from your first conviction and tracking you to the present moment, it has been God’s creating [quickenning, LL] and forming [conversion, LL].** In the **womb of conviction** he fashioned you, and he hath nurtured you until now. Let this be your comfort: if God could quicken you when you were absolutely dead, and if he has kept you until this moment, can he not revive you again? Can he not make that spark again become a flame? Have you fallen too low for him? Is his arm shortened that he cannot save? Is his ear heavy that he cannot hear? No; he that hath delivered thee aforetime will deliver thee yet again; therefore be thou of good comfort.”

*[Brackets added by LL]*

### **I would add:**

Creating is by the Holy Spirit quickening the dead sinner.

Forming or fashioning is by the Holy Spirit using the word of God in conversion.

This is what Peter is referring to which involves more than quickening.

It's a delivery!

## **What about Regeneration and the Responsibility of Man**

W. E. Best said, "Since regeneration is presented as the act of the sovereign God, it is never presented as a duty of the sinner. The demands of the gospel upon sinners are limited to the terms of repentance and faith." "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21).

Brother Wilbur Johnson when asked what man's responsibility was, said, "To believe every word that God has said. To love the Lord with all your heart and soul and mind and your neighbor as yourself, but it won't get you there." Jesus said that on those two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. And Paul said, "for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law."

No law can give life. There is nothing a spiritually dead sinner can do to give himself life.

**We are responsible to live as though we are spiritually alive because we were alive once in Adam, but we are not responsible to give ourselves life. Only God can give life. It was God that breathed into the first man the breath of life.**

Ye must be born again or from above.

**How do we know that we have been Regenerated or are mere professors?**

Are we trusting in the Lord Jesus with all of our being?

Is His work on the cross the object of our hope?

Have we believed in the heart as well as the mind? (Romans 10:9-10)

Have we been converted like the thief and seen our own sinfulness and lostness with no place to go but the righteousness of Christ?

Does God's Spirit witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God? (Romans 8:16).

Do we love the brethren? (1John 3:14).

You say, "Brother Lucien, Yes!"

Then God gave all that to you and it started with quickening your dead spirit and converting your soul by His grace.

Give Him the Glory!



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