

*Essentials of Christianity (pt 24)*  
*8/22/2010*

*Introduction* \_\_\_\_\_

Good morning saints of God!

*<sup>NAU</sup> Psalm 25:14 The secret of the LORD is for those who fear Him, And He will make them know His covenant.*

*<sup>NAU</sup> 1 John 5:13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.*

From these and numerous other verses, we understand that God wants his people to comprehend His plan of salvation. He does not want us to be in the dark about His marvelous work of **redemption!**

Thus, the scriptures are full of words, phrases, metaphors, concepts, and every conceivable way possible to communicate to us God's plan of salvation.

In our study on the **Essentials of Christianity**, we are now looking at the subject of **Salvation** . And there are various aspects of salvation; many components that reveal to us **the depth of God's saving work.**

Here are the components that we're reviewing, because these are the ones that are greatly emphasized in the scriptures.

Election/Predestination  
Atonement  
Grace  
Faith  
Regeneration

Justification  
Sanctification  
Adoption  
Propitiation  
Forgiveness  
Repentance  
The Believers Security  
Glorification

Let me remind those who have been with us through this study, and inform those who have not: that one of our stated goals for doing this survey on Christian essentials is to accomplish exactly what Paul the apostle prayed would be accomplished in the lives of the Ephesians.

*<sup>NAU</sup> Ephesians 3:18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,*

*<sup>19</sup> and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.*

So here we go...

## ***Regeneration***

Today we'll begin by talking about the subject of **Regeneration**. The place to begin is undoubtedly Titus 3. **Turn to Titus 3:1-7: read.**

*<sup>NAU</sup> Titus 3:1 Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed,*

*<sup>2</sup> to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.*

*<sup>3</sup> For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.*

<sup>4</sup> *But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared,*

<sup>5</sup> *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** and renewing by the Holy Spirit,*

<sup>6</sup> *whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,*

<sup>7</sup> *so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

There's an awful lot we could discuss about these verses. A few of the categories we've discussed already are contained in these few verses. For our purposes today, I want to draw your attention to the word "regeneration" in verse 5.

The "kindness and love of God toward man appeared (vs 4)," resulting in a pouring out of His Spirit upon our lives.

Our text uses the phrase "*washing of regeneration.*" The word for "regeneration" is used only *here*, and in **Matthew 19:28**

*<sup>NAU</sup> Matthew 19:28 And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

The most concise definition is *rebirth, the spiritual and moral renewal of an individual.*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Timothy & Barbara Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament ANLEX* (Copyright © 1995 Michael S. Bushell, 1994).

The way Jesus uses the word in Mat 19 refers to a re-birthed kingdom. Here it's referring to the renewal that takes place when a person becomes "born again."

There's an OT counterpart to Titus 3 that describes the process of regeneration in detail.

*<sup>NAU</sup> Ezekiel 36:26 "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.*

*<sup>27</sup> "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.*

So here are the things we need to understand about regeneration that the scriptures teach.

### **The Nature Of Regeneration**

It is of the utmost importance that we have a clear understanding of this vital doctrine. By regeneration we are admitted into the kingdom of God. There is no other way of becoming a Christian but by being born from above. The doctrine, then, is the door of entrance into Christian discipleship. He who does not enter here, does not enter at all.

*<sup>NAU</sup> John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

*Born again: from above, from top to bottom.<sup>2</sup>*

Regeneration is the impartation of a new and divine life; a new creation; the production of a new thing. It is not the old nature altered, reformed, or re-invigorated, but a new birth from above. This is the teaching of such passages as,<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Timothy & Barbara Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament ANLEX* (Copyright © 1995 Michael S. Bushell, 1994).

<sup>3</sup> William Evans, *The Great Doctrines Of The Bible* (Moody Press Chicago).

*<sup>NAU</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*

In regeneration we are made partakers of the divine nature.

**Turn to 2Peter 1:2-4: read**

*<sup>NAU</sup> 2 Peter 1:2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;*

*<sup>3</sup> seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.*

*<sup>4</sup> For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.*

Christ now lives in the believer (Gal. 2:20). God's seed now abides in him (1 John 3:9). So that henceforth the believer is possessed of two natures (Gal. 5:17).

*<sup>NAU</sup> Galatians 5:17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.*

Regeneration is not a natural forward step in man's development; it is a supernatural act of God. A danger lies in the tendency to make regeneration a natural phenomenon, an advanced step in the development of a human life. Our regeneration is a creative act on the part of God, not a reforming process on the part of man. It is not perpetuated by our continued cooperation with God.

And yet there is a human side to the work. John 1:12 -13 bring together these two thoughts—the divine and the human in regeneration:

*<sup>NAU</sup> John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,*

<sup>13</sup> *who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*

God begat us by “the word of truth” (James 1:18). We are “born again,” says Peter (1 Peter 1:23), “of incorruptible seed, by the word of God.” We are “begotten through the gospel” (1 Cor. 4:15). These scriptures teach us that regeneration takes place in the heart of man when he reads or hears the Word of God, or the Gospel message, or both, and, because of the Spirit working in the Word as well as in the heart of man, the man opens his heart and receives that message as the Word of life to his soul.

The truth is illuminated, as is also the mind, by the Spirit; the man yields to the truth, and is born again. Of course, even here, we must remember that it is the Lord who must open our hearts just as He opened the heart of Lydia (Acts 16:14). But the Word must be believed and received by man.<sup>4</sup>

Since regeneration is the work of God, it cannot be faked. Sometimes in the excitement of spiritual activity, people will respond to it, and seemingly have a conversion experience.

Under the impact of the preached word, consciences may be stirred. But a lack of separation from the old life, the absence of desire for the things of God, prove that **no regeneration took place.**

Deep emotional movement there may be, but absence of a changed life indicates there was not a birth by the Spirit.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> William Evans, *The Great Doctrines Of The Bible* (Moody Press Chicago).

<sup>5</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *All the Doctrines of the Bible: A Study and Analysis of Major Bible Doctrines* (Zondervan Publishing Company, 1966).

<sup>NAU</sup> Romans 8:9 *However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.*

<sup>NAU</sup> Luke 8:13 *"Those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away.*

<sup>NAU</sup> John 2:23 *Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing.*

<sup>24</sup> *But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men,*

## ***Justification & Sanctification***

Moving on, let's talk about **Justification & Sanctification**. Justification may well be the catalyst in this list that we are covering. A correct understanding of justification is *the key* determining factor in what divides the Christian doctrine of salvation from every other religious system of salvation in the world.

The question has been asked before, "how wide is the divide between the biblical doctrine of salvation and other systems of salvation?"

The doctrine of justification is to the doctrine of salvation what the Trinity is to the doctrine of God (theology).

To understand the subject of **justification and of sanctification**, one must understand that these are two facets of **righteousness**. One is God's response to man, the other is man's response to God.

Man cannot escape the need to be righteous in order to please God.

One writer notes:

Righteousness is the necessary basis of God's dealing with saint and sinner, the ground too, on which grace gloriously sways its sceptre, and the superstructure on which all Christian life, progress and service rest.<sup>6</sup>

The word righteousness comes from a root word that means "straightness." It refers to a state that conforms to an authoritative standard. Righteousness is a moral concept. God's character is the definition and source of all righteousness. Therefore, man's righteousness is defined in terms of God's.

The sacrificial system in the Old Testament and the cross of Jesus in the New Testament show man's need for righteousness. Sin is disobedience to the terms that define man's relationship with God and with other people.<sup>7</sup>

So, there is a need for mankind to be made righteous. Righteousness is required for a person to fellowship with God. Righteousness is necessary for a person to be deemed a "friend of God."

You could take a walk through a mall and interview people about their views of righteousness or goodness. I guarantee you that many, if not most, of the people you'd talk to, would have an opinion on righteousness-- **and their opinion would favor them.**

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<sup>6</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *All the Doctrines of the Bible: A Study and Analysis of Major Bible Doctrines* (Zondervan Publishing Company, 1966).

<sup>7</sup> Herbert Sr Lockyer, *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986).

Righteousness isn't a pressing matter for world, and even for many religious people. But it is for God.

And so, let's talk about to the two facets of righteousness:  
**Justification and sanctification.**

**Justification:** what's the biblical meaning of this? **Turn with me to Romans 3.**

Simplest definition: *The process by which sinful human beings are made acceptable to a holy God.*

It is a change in a man's relation or standing before God. It has to do with relations that have been disturbed by sin. It is a change from guilt and condemnation to acquittal and acceptance. Regeneration has to do with the change of the believer's nature; justification, with the change of his standing before God.

According to Deut. 25:1 it means to declare, or to cause to appear innocent or righteous; Rom. 4:2-8: to reckon righteous; Psa. 32:2: not to impute iniquity. One thing at least is clear from these verses, and that is, that to justify does not mean to make one righteous. Neither the Hebrew nor Greek words will bear such meaning.

To justify to declare righteous in a legal sense; to put a person in a right relation. It does not deal, at least not directly, with character or conduct; it is a question of relationship. Of course both character and conduct will be conditioned and controlled by this relationship. No real righteousness on the part of the person justified is to be asserted, but that person is declared to be righteous and is treated as such.

Let's look at it in our text.

**Romans 3:21-28; 4:18-25 read all.**

*<sup>NAU</sup> Romans 3:21 But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,*

<sup>22</sup> *even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;*

<sup>23</sup> *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*

<sup>24</sup> *being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;*

<sup>25</sup> *whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;*

<sup>26</sup> *for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

<sup>27</sup> *Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.*

<sup>28</sup> *For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.*

<sup>NAU</sup> *Romans 4:18 In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE."*

<sup>19</sup> *Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb;*

<sup>20</sup> *yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God,*

<sup>21</sup> *and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.*

<sup>22</sup> *Therefore IT WAS ALSO CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.*

<sup>23</sup> *Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him,*

<sup>24</sup> *but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead,*

<sup>25</sup> *He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.*

## Justification Consists of Two Elements

1. The forgiveness of sin, and the removal of its guilt and punishment.
2. The imputation of Christ's righteousness, and restoration to God's favor.

### **1. The forgiveness of sin, and the removal of its guilt and punishment.**

It is difficult for us to understand God's feeling towards sin. To us forgiveness seems easy, largely because we are indifferent towards sin. But to a holy God it is different. Even men sometimes find it hard to forgive when wronged. Nevertheless God gladly forgives.

In justification, then, all our sins are forgiven, and the guilt and punishment thereof removed. God sees the believer as without sin and guilt in Christ (Num. 23:21; Rom. 8:33, 34).

### **2. The imputation of Christ's righteousness, and restoration to God's favor.**

When we say that God imputes Christ's righteousness to us it means that God thinks of Christ's righteousness as belonging to us, or regards it as belonging to us. He "reckons" it to our account. We read, "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness" (Rom 4:3, quoting Gen 15:6).

Paul explains, "To one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness. So also David pronounces a blessing upon the man to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works" (Rom 4:6). In this way, Christ's righteousness became ours. Paul says that we are those who received "the free gift of righteousness" (Rom 5:17).

It is not our own righteousness but Christ's righteousness that is freely given to us. So Paul can say that God made Christ to be "our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1 Cor 1:30). And Paul says that his goal is to be found in Christ, "not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith" (Phil 3:9).

*Rom. 3:20—“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”*

“Therefore” implies that a judicial trial has taken place and a judgment pronounced. At the bar of God no man can be counted righteous in His sight because of his obedience to law. The burden of the Epistle to the Romans is to set forth this great truth. As a means of establishing right relations with God the law is totally insufficient. There is no salvation by character. What men need is salvation from character.

The reason why the law cannot justify is here stated: “For by the law is the knowledge of sin.” The law can open the sinner’s eyes to his sin, but it cannot remove it. Indeed, it was never intended to remove it, but to intensify it. The law simply defines sin, and makes it sinful, yea, exceedingly sinful, but it does not emancipate from it.

Gal. 3:10 gives us a further reason why justification cannot take place by obedience to the law. The law demands perfect and continual obedience: “Cursed is every one that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” No man can render a perfect and perpetual obedience, therefore justification by obedience to the law is impossible. The only thing the law can do is to stop the mouth of every man, and declare him guilty before God (Rom. 3:19, 20).

Gal. 2:16, and 3:10, Rom. 3:28, are very explicit in their denial of justification by law. It is a question of Moses or Christ, works or faith, law or promise, doing or believing, wages or a free gift.

**Wrap up!**