

Convent Avenue Baptist Church  
Wednesday Bible Study 3/24/10  
Pastor Jesse Williams

*The Articles of Faith; What we believe...*

**Article VII. Regeneration**

Psalm 51:10-12; Psalm 119:10-16; Jeremiah 24:6-7; Ezekiel 11:17-20  
John 3:1-8; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

What does it really mean when we say in the church that we have been “born again”? While it is clear that it is a term that Jesus used in his dialogue with Nicodemus, it is still often misunderstood within both the church and the world. The world has had a tendency to make fun of Christians who profess to be “born again believers”, but as we see from this article of faith; experiencing regeneration is a necessary part of experiencing true salvation. Regeneration refers to the process by which we are born again, and it is the work of God in us and on us through the Holy Spirit.

To be born again means that we have been “converted”, “changed”, “transformed” or “made new” by God. The point here is that when God saves us we cannot and should not be the same person with the same nature, same thoughts, same motivations and same actions as we were before God intervenes in our lives. When we are born again, God gives us a renewed heart and mind that in turn give us new actions, thoughts and deeds. When God saves us, He does not simply leave us in the same fallen sinful state that we are in before we meet God. Rather, God re-creates us in His image in order to repair the damage that was done to us by sin. This re-creation by God is not simply on the outside, it is an inner transformation that starts in the heart and the mind and then manifests itself in visible ways on the outside of us.

When you are truly born again, sin and unrighteousness will always bother you. When you are born again, there are certain things that you won’t do and won’t want to do because they are against God’s new nature that He has created in your life. When you are born again, you WANT to do what God wants you to do because your nature now desires to please God. If we are born again, we should truly show signs in our lives that God has indeed changed us. We will act differently, talk differently and treat people differently all because God has changed us. We should proudly and boldly tell the world that we are born again in both our words and deeds! God accomplishes this work in our lives through the Holy Spirit in three basic steps;

**1) We are convicted of our sins**

One of the functions of the Holy Spirit is to convict us of sin; that is to make us see our sins for what they are and acknowledge that we are guilty. In order to experience true conversion, we must acknowledge what is wrong with the current sinful state that we are in. You can’t be transformed from something in your life if you don’t feel that there is anything wrong with it and that there is no need to change. As painful as it is sometimes, the Holy Spirit convicts our hearts and minds in order to point out what needs to be changed in us.

## **2) We repent of our sins**

To repent means that we are sorrowful about the sin that God has pointed out in our lives and that we make the willful decision to change from that way of living. Repentance means not only that we regret our sins, but that we decide to change our mind, heart and attitude about them. Even though we don't have all the willpower within us to change ourselves, it is important that we come to the realization that we want to change because the sin that God has exposed to us is painful for us as well as God. We decide we don't want to live this way anymore. The Holy Spirit's intent is to make us face our sin so plainly that we will be moved to sorrow in our heart and a decision and desire to change from it.

## **3) We confess faith in Jesus Christ**

We don't have the ability or the authority to totally re-create ourselves, but Jesus does! The good news of the Gospel is that when we come face to face with our sins and repent of them, that God has provided the means for us to be born again and converted. That way is Jesus Christ and His sacrificial death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead. The Holy Spirit is constantly pointing us and guiding us toward Jesus Christ. When we embrace Jesus as our Lord and Savior by faith, we receive the blessing of being born again, re-created spiritually in the image of God and accepted into the family of God as His child. So the Bible talks about how we are "*new creations*" and how God has made us into transformed people of God. We are born again, saved, converted, changed and transformed. God gives us a new mind, a new heart and a new life. It is now our responsibility to live the life that we have been converted into.