

Regeneration

As we saw in our studies of “effectual calling,” regeneration is not the same event as God’s effectual call to the elect, but is rather *the consequence* of God’s gospel summons to His elect.¹ That is, God’s effectual call is the means by which He, in space and time, regenerates – grants new birth – to those He foreknew and predestined unto salvation in eternity past.

Bavinck’s lengthy introduction to his studies on calling and regeneration is helpful here:

The Triune God produces all things in creation and new creation by His Word and Spirit. All things thus speak to us of God. God’s call as law comes to all people in nature, in history, and in a variety of experiences. While insufficient unto salvation, this call upholds human existence in society and culture, despite the ubiquity of sin. Though the restricted call unto salvation comes through the word of the gospel, it may not be separated from nature and history. The Logos who became incarnate is the same as He by whom all things were made. Grace does not abolish human nature but restores it. Still, the special call of the gospel does not proceed from law and invite us to obedience, but it flows from grace and invites us to faith.

The call to faith must be universally preached; this is Christ’s command. The outcome must be left in God’s hands; we are simply to obey. The gospel is to be preached to human beings, not as elect or reprobate, but as sinners, all of whom need redemption...Since it is clear from history that the outcome of God’s call does not universally lead to faith, we acknowledge in humility the mystery of God’s will and recognize that God’s own glory is its final purpose, and believe that His Word never returns empty.

God is sovereign, and His grace is rich and varied. Following Augustine, Reformed theology distinguishes an external or revealed call from the savingly efficacious internal call of the Holy Spirit. This distinction honors the

¹ As John Frame says, “Regeneration is the first effect of effectual calling. And regeneration is the first item on the list [i.e. regeneration, conversion, and sanctification] that occurs inside of us.” From his *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Phillipsburg: P & R, 2013), 945.

universality of sin, the need to have the word of proclamation take root in a sinner's heart by a special work of God, and ascribes all of our salvation to God's mercy and activity. This change is so dramatic that it is properly called "rebirth" or "regeneration."

[Regarding this] the New Testament here builds on the Old Testament, where the whole people of Israel as well as individual persons are told that they need new hearts, a new birth only God can accomplish (Ps. 51:1-3). From the baptism of John through the preaching of Jesus and into the apostolic proclamation, the one consistent message is the need for *μετάνοια*,² for a radical turnabout, if one wishes to enter the kingdom of heaven. One must "be born from above" (John 3:6-8)...While there is a difference between the OT and NT in language and manner of presentation, the basic truth is the same. Whether rebirth is called "circumcision of the heart," the giving of a new heart and a new spirit, a drawing from the Father, or a birth from God, it is always in the strict sense a work of God by which a person is inwardly changed and renewed. This change is signified and sealed in baptism...

The purpose of regeneration is to make us spiritual people, those who live and walk by the Spirit. This life is a life of intimate communion with God in Christ. Though believers are made new creatures in Christ, this does not mean that their created nature is qualitatively transformed. Believers remain fully human, fully created image-bearers of God as in the beginning. As in creation itself, no new substance enters into the world with redemption; the creature is liberated from sin's futility and bondage. Sin is not of the essence of creation but its deformity; Christ is not a second Creator but creation's Redeemer. Salvation is the restoration of creation and the reformation of life. Redemption is not coercive; it delivers people from the compulsion and power of sin. The new life comes from God and is born in His love.³

² *Metanoia* is the Greek word for repentance.

³ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, vol. 4: Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation* (Grand Rapids, Baker: 2008), 29-33.

Regeneration is fundamentally required for our conversion, because the Scriptures clearly and unashamedly teach that apart from God’s vivifying grace, we are all spiritually dead:

- Eph. 2:1-5: “And you, being dead in your trespasses and in your sins, in which you formerly walked in accordance with this worldly age, that is, in accordance with the prince of the kingdom of the air – the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience – among whom we all formerly lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and we were children of wrath, just like the rest [of mankind]; but God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in those trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved.”⁴

As Frame rightly notes, this means that in and of ourselves, we have no innate ability to please God. [Thus, it is only] through the new birth that we gain a new desire and new ability to serve God.⁵ As John Piper reminds us, “Any spiritually good thing that we do is a *result* of the new birth, not a cause of the new birth.”⁶

- Just as conception and birth bring new *physical* life, we need someone outside of ourselves to bring about a new *spiritual* life.

Regeneration in the Old Testament

The most familiar references to regeneration are in the NT, but we can expect that since man’s need is the same in both Testaments, the OT teaches the same thing, from its own perspective.

- In fact, when Jesus teaches Nicodemus about the new birth in John 3, He expresses amazement that this “teacher of Israel” does not understand his need of it to enter the kingdom of God.

Indeed, the OT speaks of this new birth in many ways:

⁴ This is my own translation of the Greek text.

⁵ Frame, *ST*, 945.

⁶ John Piper, *Finally Alive* (Minneapolis: The Desiring God Foundation, 2009), 27.

Though God required His people to write the law on their hearts (Deut. 6:6; 11:18; 32:46), we are told that the heart – the core of man himself – is by nature “deceitful” and “incurably sick” (Jer. 17:9).

- Thus in redemption, God must change the heart.
 - In the OT, the picture that captures this change of heart is circumcision.⁷
 - ➔ In circumcision, the “old flesh” must be cut off before one can enter into covenant with God.⁸

As one reads the OT, we see that the law could never produce the kind of nation that God had desired or required Israel to be.⁹

- Exo. 19:5-6 – “Now therefore, **if** you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

The covenant Israel is “to keep” is summarily expressed in the Decalogue of the next chapter, and further unpacked in chapters 21-31.

Tragically, YHWH’s covenantal requirements for Israel are immediately broken and transgressed in chapter 32, when they fashion for themselves an idol in the form of a golden calf.

Why? Because Israel’s ‘heart’ is unable to keep YHWH’s covenant:

- “And now, Israel, what does the LORD require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments

⁷ The best readable, yet exegetically provable, book I’ve found on equating circumcision of the heart in the OT with the new birth in the NT is by James Hamilton, *God’s Indwelling Presence*.

⁸ Paul’s own theology of regeneration is indebted to this OT picture. For Paul, “flesh” is often another way for him to refer to the unregenerate, “natural” man who is dead in his sins and lives after his “fleshly” passions. This “old man” must first be “put off” if he is to belong to God. That is, our hearts – the factory that manufactures our fallen propensities and fleshly appetites – must be circumcised or made new before we can truly seek the Lord.

⁹ An excellent book that traces just how wicked Israel – apart from regenerating grace – really was, and of her need for a new covenant, is Paul Washer’s *The Gospel Call and True Conversion*. Here he really gets at the heart (pun intended) of God’s promise to Ezekiel of granting His people a new spirit/heart/inner man in the new covenant.

and statues of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good? Therefore, circumcise the foreskin of your heart,¹⁰ and be no longer stubborn.” (Deut. 10:12-16)

- It is clear that a new heart is required to keep God’s covenant.

As one reads the rest of the OT, things really don’t get better after this. In fact, things get worse and worse, to the point where the Israelites are actually worse idolaters than the pagans in the land.¹¹ God has no option but to cleanse the land by exiling Israel into Assyria and Babylon.¹²

Yet, God in His faithfulness nevertheless promised His people a time when He would restore them by granting them the circumcised hearts they needed to keep His covenantal requirements:

- “And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse,¹³ which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you, and return to the LORD your God, you and your children, and you obey His voice in all that I command you today, with all your heart and all your soul, then the LORD your God will restore all your fortunes and have compassion on you, and He will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. If your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will take you. And the LORD your God will bring you into the land that your fathers possessed, that you may possess it. And He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers. And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.” (Deut. 30:1-6)

¹⁰ It seems likely that Paul has this chapter in mind in 2 Cor. 3-4, where he is contrasting the tablets of stone (i.e. the law) of Deut. 10:1-11 with the tablets of flesh (i.e. a new heart) in Deut. 10:12-22.

¹¹ Interestingly, Jeremiah says why: Israel is just as uncircumcised in her heart than the other nations (see 9:27).

¹² The very things He promised would (not might) happen when (not if) the Israelites continued on in their unrepentant sin and idolatry. See especially Deuteronomy 28-29, 32; Joshua 23-24; 1 Kings 8, etc.

¹³ I.e. all the covenantal curses, most notably exile out of the Promised Land.

Since Israel could not circumcise their own hearts (cf. Jer. 4:4), YHWH Himself will have to do it:

- “The word of the LORD came to me: “Son of man, when the house of Israel lived in their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their deeds. Their ways before Me were like the uncleanness of a woman in her menstrual impurity. So I poured out My wrath upon them for the blood that they had shed in the land, for the idols with which they had defiled it. I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed through the countries. In accordance with their ways and their deeds I judged them. But when they came to the nations, wherever they came, they profaned My holy name, in that people said of them, ‘These are the people of the LORD, and yet they had to go out of His land.’ But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations to which they came.¹⁴ Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate My holiness before their eyes. I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you,¹⁵ and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes and be careful to obey My rules. You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be My people, and I will be your God. And I will

¹⁴ It is likely that Paul had this chapter in mind when he penned Romans 2.

¹⁵ As we will see shortly, it is likely that this is the passage Jesus is referring to in John 3. Many Christians think the “water” Jesus is referring to is baptism, but that is reading *into* the text, for an OT scribe like Nicodemus would not be thinking of baptism, but rather of God’s promises to cleanse His people with His life-giving water [i.e. Spirit] in the new age (cf. Eze. 47; Isa. 44:3).

deliver you from all your uncleannesses...Then you will remember your evil ways, and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves for your iniquities and your abominations. It is not for your sake that I will act, declares the Lord GOD; let that be known to you.” (Eze. 36:22-32)

Indeed, God’s “law” is incompatible with the old, natural, unregenerate heart. Thus, a new heart is the prerequisite of this law-writing ceremony that YHWH enacts for His people.

- Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put My law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts. **And I will be their God, and they shall be My people.** And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more.” (Jer. 31:31-34)

God’s intention for the Israelites was that they should be a regenerate people, inwardly righteous, circumcised of heart, the law written on their hearts.¹⁶

- But apart from the sovereign, regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, this was an impossibility.
 - This is why the “new heart” promise of Ezekiel 36 is followed by the miraculous resurrection of God’s people – the true Israel – by the Holy Spirit in Ezekiel 37.
 - ➔ The Spirit, taking YHWH’s proclaimed message through the prophet, brings life to the dead, lifeless people of God.

¹⁶ Frame, *ST*, 946.

Regeneration in the New Testament.

Unfortunately, God's intention for His people remained largely unfilled in the OT.

- What Israel needed was not more 'law,' but more 'Spirit', the very thing YHWH promised to pour out after the resurrection of the Messiah.¹⁷
 - Joel 2:28 – “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh...And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”

This is exactly what Paul teaches us in the book of Romans:

- “For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” (Rom. 8:3-4)
 - The reason we need to be made 'spiritual' is because by nature we are unable to obey God or His law: “For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin.” (Rom. 7:14)

Indeed, it is this new birth, this regeneration, that enables God's people – whether Jew or Gentile – to obey God, and thus be that kingdom of priests He intended us to be¹⁸:

- “For circumcision indeed is of value *if you obey the law*, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision. So, if a man who is uncircumcised *keeps the precepts of the law*, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? Then he is *physically* uncircumcised but *keeps the law* will condemn you who have circumcision but break the law. For no one is a Jew is merely one *outwardly*, nor is circumcision *outward and*

¹⁷ This is Paul's very argument in 2 Corinthians 3-4. The author of Hebrews also picks up on the “superiority” of the new covenant (compared with the outdated and fulfilled-by-Christ old covenant).

¹⁸ As the apostle Peter reminds us, only those whom God has caused to become born again (1 Pet. 1:3) have the ability to become God's “obedient children” (1:14), and thus his “holy priesthood” (2:5, 9-10).

physical. But a Jew is one *inwardly*, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.” (Rom. 2:25-29)

Because of the almost wholesale rejection of YHWH by the Jews, God justly “gave them up”¹⁹ to their spiritual blindness. And the worst thing about spiritual blindness is that we don’t realize we’re blind and desperately in need of sight.

This is why “the teacher” of Israel was unable to recognize²⁰ his desperate plight before God.

- Like most Jews in Jesus’ time, Nicodemus assumed that merely being a Jew “outwardly”, that is, by being circumcised and keeping aspects of the law, was sufficient as a requirement to being “in” God’s kingdom.

Though Jesus’ words were shocking to Nicodemus, they shouldn’t have been, as God had always said that the only hope for His people was a spiritual “rebirth” by the Holy Spirit.

The reason is simple:

- “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” (John 3:6)

This is why Jesus says in 3:3, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God,” and in 3:7, “Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’”

¹⁹ Though most people think the “passive judgment of God” [i.e. giving sinners over to their sinful inclinations] in Romans 1 applies only to Gentiles, this is most certainly a mistake. Of course Paul is directly referencing Gentiles here. But in the overall argument of chapters 1-3, and in the history of Israel, we see that the Jews, in their rejection of God, were “given a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day” (Rom. 11:8, quoting Isa. 29:10). They rejected YHWH in the OT; it is no surprise that they would do the same in the NT when YHWH “tabernacled” in the flesh in their midst (cf. John 1:11, 14). Indeed, as Isaiah says, they rejected Him even though they had “eyes” to see and “ears” to hear, and a “heart” to choose (Isa. 6:9). Spiritually speaking, the Jews had become like their idols: blind, deaf, dumb, and spiritually worthless (cf. Isa. 44:9, 18-20; Psa. 115:8; 135:18). Unfortunately, their “senses” were only “fleshly” and “natural.” What was needed was a spiritual regeneration to enable them to see, hear, and choose aright (cf. 1 Cor. 2:14).

²⁰ The ESV translates γινώσκω (*ginōskō*) as “understand” in 3:9.

As we have already asserted, Jesus reminds us that this heavenly birth²¹ comes about from the Spirit's cleansing power: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."²²

From Jesus' words, we learn that the Spirit's regeneration precedes our conversion.

- Before we "see the kingdom," and before we "enter the kingdom", Jesus says that we **must** (δεῖ, *dei*) be born again.

This comports with John's words elsewhere in his first epistle:

- "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God." (5:1)²³
 - Though the majority of evangelicals believe and preach that we are born again *when* we believe, the Bible actually teaches the opposite: we believe when we are monergistically²⁴ born again.

As we saw in effectual calling, this new birth is brought about when the Holy Spirit takes the gospel and produces new spiritual life in the sinner.

- 1 Pet. 1:23, 25b – "You have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God...and this word is the good news that was preached to you."
- James 1:18 (HSCB) – "Of [God's] own will He gave us a new birth by the message of truth so that we would be the firstfruits of all His creatures."

²¹ John loves to use double meanings throughout his gospel. Here, ἀνωθεν (*anōthen*) means both "again" and "from above."

²² Regarding "water," Frame rightly notes, "the OT was replete with the use of water as a redemptive symbol, especially of purification from sin and defilement (Exo. 30:18-21; Psa. 51:2f.; Isa. 1:16; Jer. 33:8; Eze. 36:25; Zec. 13:1)...God frequently used water to teach His people their need for cleansing, and the new birth is a definitive cleansing from sin." From his *ST*, 947.

²³ There is a very important technical argument that explains the chronological order of regeneration followed by faith [rather than faith followed by regeneration]. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the apostle uses a perfect tense for the verb "has been born again" and a present tense for the participle "believes." Simply put, the perfect tense refers to an action in the past with on-going results. Thus, being born again precedes believing.

²⁴ This is another technical term. "Monergism" comes from two Greek words: "mono" ("one") and "ergos" ("working"). It simply means that God alone effects our regeneration, apart from our 'working' or cooperation. Just as we don't help our parent to conceive us naturally, neither do we help God conceive us supernaturally.

Jesus' teaching from John 3 also shows us that though we cannot perceive visibly the act of regeneration, we certainly can perceive the results of regeneration:

- “The wind²⁵ blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. It is the same (οὐτως) with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” (John 3:8)
 - Though we can't see the wind per se, we know when it's windy outside.

Like the OT, the NT teaches that faith, good works (“love in action”), and increasingly holiness and obedience are the effects of regeneration:

- “If you know that [God] is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who makes a habit of practicing²⁶ righteousness has been born²⁷ of Him.” (1 John 2:29)
- “No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he is born of God.” (1 John 3:9)
- “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.” (1 John 4:7)

In fact, the whole letter of 1 John is an excellent “gauge” with regards to what one who has been born again ought to look like.

As Frame says, “When people's lives are changed from disobedience to obedience to God, we can know, though not infallibly, that the Spirit has been at work, giving new birth.”²⁸

Paul on Regeneration

²⁵ Like Ezekiel, John uses the same word (πνεῦμα, *pneuma*) for “wind” and “Spirit” here. In the OT, the word is רִיחַ (*ruakh*).

²⁶ This is my own translation of the present participle “practicing”. It is similar to the ESV's translation of the present participle “sinning” in 3:9.

²⁷ Again, this is another perfect participle. See footnote 22.

²⁸ Frame, *ST*, 949.

Like the rest of the biblical writers, Paul recognizes that sin has made us totally unable to please God through our works (Rom. 3:10-18; 6:23; 8:8). Only God's grace in Christ is able to produce faith and good works in us (Eph. 2:8-10).

Like Jesus, and like the apostle John, Paul emphasizes God's total sovereignty in regenerating His elect people.

- Just as God brought about the original creation through His powerful word, so also the “new creation.”

- 2 Cor. 4:4-6

→ Frame: “Before creation, there was nothing. Nothing can't produce anything. [It is the] same with resurrection. Before resurrection, there is death. Death can't produce life. Only God can. So in the new birth we are passive.”²⁹

Since regeneration enables us to “see” the kingdom of God and to stop repressing the truth that He has revealed, it comes before our faith, bringing it about.

- Eph. 2:8-9 – “For by grace you were³⁰ saved through faith. And this³¹ is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”
- Tit. 3:4-6 – “But when the goodness and lovingkindness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of good works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Here, I am translating this perfect periphrastic as a past tense to highlight the monergistic activity of God in our conversion. The perfect tense can be [rightly] translated “have been saved” (so ESV), which also hints at the ongoing activity of God to “save” – that is sanctify us – by grace through faith.

³¹ Many Arminians [rightly] note that the pronoun “this” (τοῦτο, *touto*) is neuter, while “faith” is a feminine noun (πίστις, *pistis*). Thus, they argue, the “this” cannot be referring to faith (that is, the demonstrative pronoun must ‘match’ its antecedent noun). Thus, as their argument goes, faith cannot be a gift of God. This is half right: the neuter article has to refer to something, and it is clear that it is the entire “salvation-by-grace-through-faith” event. *This*, says Paul, is God's gift to us (who, are according to 2:1 and 5 are “dead”). Of course, “faith” is an important part of this gift, so we have no problem agreeing with the Reformers, and more importantly (!) other passages of Scripture, that saving faith and repentance are alien, not natural, to fallen sinners, and thus must be a gift of God. For a more lengthy treatment of this, see Peter O'Brien's excellent commentary on Ephesians in the Pillar series.

regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior.”

What then, is it that ‘demarcates’ God’s people? According to Paul’s argument in Galatians, it is not outward marks like circumcision or Sabbath keeping, but rather the inward ‘mark’ of the new creation, which is a [S]piritually circumcised heart.

As with the teaching of Jesus in John 3, and the John’s teaching in his first epistle, Paul teaches that this “new creation” (Gal. 6:16; cf. 2 Cor. 5:21) brought about by the Holy Spirit has visible “fruit”³²:

- “Now the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” (Gal. 5:22-24)
- The “present evil age” (Gal. 1:4), characterized and dominated by “the flesh,” has been overcome in the true/spiritual Israel (6:16) by Christ’s resurrection.
- ➔ That is, those whom the Spirit unites to Christ by faith³³ (see Romans 6) likewise share in this victory, which is evidenced by the Spirit’s presence in them who enables them to fulfill the law of Christ, that is, the intent of the law, namely love (Gal. 6:2; cf. 5:1, 6, 13-14).

Application

In *Finally Alive*, Piper gives us ten biblical explanations of our condition apart from the new birth and why it is so necessary.³⁴ Apart from the new birth:

1. We are dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1-2).

³² It is important to note that the noun Paul uses is singular: “fruit.” Since Paul elsewhere makes a big deal about not mixing up a singular with a plural (see Gal. 3:16), neither should we. Love as produced by the Spirit through faith (Gal. 5:5-6) is the fruit/evidence of the new creation. And this fruit – love – looks like the remaining nouns Paul enumerates (i.e. joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control).

³³ Piper says, “So we have life by being connected with the Son of God who is our life, and we have that life by the work of the Spirit...In the new birth, the Holy Spirit supernaturally gives us new spiritual life by connecting us with Jesus Christ through faith.” In *Finally Alive*, 37.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 48-59.

2. We are by nature children of wrath (Eph. 2:3)
3. We love darkness and hate the light (John 3:19-20)
4. Our hearts are hard like stone (Eze. 36:26; Eph. 4:18)
5. We are unable to submit to God or please God (Rom. 8:7-8)
6. We are unable to accept the gospel (Eph. 4:18; 1 Cor. 2:14)
7. We are unable to come to Christ or embrace Him as Lord (John 6:44; 1 Cor. 12:3)
8. We are slaves to sin (Rom. 6:17)
9. We are slaves to Satan (Eph. 2:1-2; 2 Tim. 2:24-26)
10. No good thing dwells in us (Rom. 7:18)

Moreover, without saving faith³⁵:

1. We won't have saving faith, but only unbelief (John 1:11-13; 1 John 5:1; Eph. 2:8-9; Phil. 1:29; 1 Tim. 1:14; 2 Tim. 1:3).
2. We won't have justification, but only condemnation (Rom. 8:1; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 2:17; Phil. 3:9)
3. We won't be the children of God, but children of the devil (1 John 3:9-10).
4. We won't bear the fruit of love by the Holy Spirit but only the fruit of death (Rom. 6:20-21; 7:4-6; 15:16; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:10; Gal. 5:6; 2 Thes. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:2; 1 John 3:14).
5. We won't have eternal joy in fellowship with God, but only eternal misery with the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41; John 3:3; Rom. 6:23; Rev. 2:11; 20:15).

Oh, how we need to cry out to God for a fresh outpouring of His Spirit upon our children, our churches, and our land!! Oh that we would be very careful to make

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 60-62.

sure we are not grieving or quenching or sinning against the Holy Spirit, who alone can bring revival and regeneration to us and those around us:

- “But now hear, O Jacob My servant, Israel whom I have chosen! Thus says the LORD who made you, who formed you from the womb and will help you: Fear not, O Jacob My servant, Jeshurun whom I have chosen. For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out My Spirit upon your offspring, and My blessing upon your descendants. They shall spring up among the grass like willows by flowing streams. This one will say, ‘I am the LORD’s,’ another will cone on the name of Jacob, and another will write on his hand, ‘The LORD’s,’ and name himself by the name of Israel.” (Isa. 44:1-5)
- “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit³⁶ of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on Me, on Him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over Him, as one weeps over a firstborn...On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.” (Zech. 12:10; 13:1)
- “I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs. And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; of if he asks for an egg, will given him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to you children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?” (Luke 11:8-13)

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³⁶ In light of redemptive history, I am translating this as a definite noun (i.e. “the Spirit” instead of “a spirit”).

