

## Scriptures and Doctrine :: Regeneration: From Mercy or Works?

### Regeneration: From Mercy or Works?, on: 2007/7/20 16:48

(This was on a previous short thread with a confusing title. This has been much expanded, re-titled for clarification, and edited to a large extent. ) Enjoy...

1. Do the scriptures teach that all natural men are unwilling (before regeneration) to repent, believe, and receive the gospel?
2. Do the Scriptures teach that all natural men are unable (before regeneration) to repent, believe, and receive the gospel?
3. If man is unable and unwilling, Who then can be saved?
  - I. First, the doctrine of "You Are Unprofitable"(see Romans 3:12)
    - A. Natural Man Is Unwilling

First, let's have a quick look at some scriptures in Romans 3. Paul is peaking of everyone in this passage. He's not speaking of some of the bad ones or a specific group of the wicked. He is clearly speaking of you. ( and your children, your dad, your mom, your sister, your brother, your relatives, your pastor, your friends, your enemies, all and everyone in their natural unregenerate state)

Romans 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

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

Romans 3:12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Now, it must be clarified why I made bold the specific words above. If you follow the context and flow of the passage, Paul is still speaking of everyone and no one is omitted as he continues into verse 13. Let's read it.

Romans 3:13 Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:

One Might Say

"Men just have to put their faith in Jesus, everyone has the freewill to bring forth faith." And to that statement I will quote what God says, "For there is no faithfulness in their mouth..." (Psa 5:9) God says, "They only consult to cast him down from his excellency: they delight in lies: they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Selah." (Psa 62:4

Romans 3:14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:

Romans 3:15 Their feet are swift to shed blood:

Romans 3:16 Destruction and misery are in their ways:

Romans 3:17 And the way of peace have they not known:

Romans 3:18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

You may want to refer back to this passage in Romans 3, if you begin to think that some unregenerate-natural men are willing to come to the light and do truth.

John 3:19-21 "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

This passage clearly says...

"everyone that doeth evil hateth the light..."(By nature, all of us do evil and therefore we also hate the light... see Romans 3)

"neither cometh to the light..." (This is connected with the previous statement. This is all of us by nature... see Romans 3)

Now, who then comes to the light?

"he that doeth truth cometh to the light..." (By nature, none of us do truth... see Romans 3)

How is it that some will come to the light and others will not and some will do truth and others will not?

The scriptures clearly state...

God must first give repentance, if someone is going to be willing to acknowledge the truth.

2Timothy 2:25 "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

God is the truth and no one seeks Him.

Romans 3:4 "...yea, let God be true, but every man a liar..."

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

Doing truth and coming to the light, is to seek God and it also pleases God. No natural man is willing to come to or do the truth. This is because he is unwilling. As our Lord has said previously, "...every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."

John 3:32-33 "And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true."

Let's consider what it says... "No man receiveth his testimony." In the very next verse it says... "He that hath received his testimony..."

We have already established the reason why no man receiveth his testimony. Next, we we will see that natural man is unable to receive our Lord's testimony. Then finally, we will see what God must first give to the person "that hath received his testimony."

...to cause him to be able and willing to receive the testimony of Jesus Christ our Lord.

## B. Natural Man Is Unable

Romans 8:7-8, "Because 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."

Please notice the phrase "...neither indeed can be." This clearly speaks of the inability in the mind of natural men. So, the next time you hear a preacher say, "Come to Jesus and get born again like us. All you have to do is change your mind and morals."

...This directs the sinner to the wrong source of hope. His mind is hopeless and he does not want his deeds to be reproved, God is his enemy, he hates the nature of God (Magnified in the Law). Therefore, he cannot be subject to the law of God and he cannot please God. The sinner must be directed to the mercy of God (revealed through the preaching of Jesus Christ Crucified) for true saving hope. His carnal mind cannot please God.

2Timothy 3:7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

It doesn't matter how much he reads his bible (Though he should and must) ...or how hard he tries to be a christian, He

must be born again. Again I say, he must be born again. As we read in 2 Timothy, God must first give repentance, if someone is going to be willing to acknowledge the truth.

John 8:43 "Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word."

"Cannot" is a word of inability to hear God's word. (such as through reading, meditating, memorizing, and hearing from gospel preachers) He should and must read, meditate, memorize, and hear the gospel. However, only God's sheep hear His voice. The natural man cannot hear God's voice.

Joh 10:26-27 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

Do you ever wonder why some people don't believe the gospel? It's because they are not His sheep. Some of us want to make this verse say, "But ye are not my sheep, because ye believe not." That's not what it says. (though that is true in a sense) It is not what is being said in this verse. It says, "Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep."

1 Cor. 2:14 "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."

"Receiveth not" speaks of unwillingness (see John 3:19-21) and "Neither can he know them" speaks of inability to know the things of the Spirit of God. (Such as the Gospel and Grace of God)

Matthew 7:18, "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit."

"Neither can" speaks of inability to bring forth good fruit. (Such as repentance, faith, coming to the light, doing truth, humbly confessing sin, forsaking sin... etc.

...And Yes, repentance is in relation to bearing good fruit. see Matthew 3:8 and Luke 3:8)

John 3:3, "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

"He cannot" speaks of inability to see the kingdom of God. (He has no vision from Faith (2Co 4:18, Heb 11:27), no vision from Hope (Heb 11:1; 11:13, 1Jn 3:2-3), no vision from Love (1Co 2:9-10, 1Pe 1:8, 3Jn 1:11), and he will perish without vision (Pro 29:18) ...except this man be born again.

John 5:43-44 I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?

"Ye receive me not" speaks of unwillingness and "How can ye believe" speaks of inability which is in relation to their unwillingness. Notice that Jesus clarifies the reason why they are unwilling and unable to believe and receive Him. Because they "seek not the honor that cometh from God only."

You may say, "Well... Jesus was just speaking them. I'm not like those proud rebels that he was talking to. Other smart Christians and I have exercised our free-wills and choice to believe and receive because we sought the honor that came from God only (so we could be born-again)." I must teach you my dear brothers and sisters, "No you didn't." God says, "There is none that seeketh after God." (Rom 3:11) Therefore, since none seek God and it can also be said that all natural men "seek not the honor that cometh from God only." I'm only asking the same question God is asking... "How can you believe?" The implication is very clear... You can't because of what you seek not.

It must be understood, that God commands us to repent and believe. We must believe if we are going to be saved. (Mark 1:15, Acts 17:30, Romans 3:22; 10:9)

But, It also must be understood that a repentant and believing heart is a Gift from God. He doesn't give it to everyone. (also all would be saved) And no one merited or did anything to cause God to give this gift. (Else mercy is become debt that God is obligated to give because of something you did. Mercy is no longer mercy if that be so. ...And God is no longer the Author of salvation. He becomes the co-author, if you believe that.)

Behold, the scriptures declare...

1. You believe the gospel, because it was given to you. "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;" (Php 1:29)

2. You repented unto life, because it was granted unto you. "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." (Acts 11:18)

3. Repentance and Forgiveness of sins are a gift. It's the gift of life. Repentance and forgiveness are given together. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." (Acts 5:31)

4. Not everyone is given repentance.

"In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;" (2Timothy 2:25)

The Analytical-Literal Translation reads this verse as...

"in gentleness instructing the ones opposing, perhaps God shall grant to them repentance to a full knowledge of the truth," (2 Timothy 2:25)

The Amplified Bible reads this verse as...

"He must correct his opponents with courtesy and gentleness, in the hope that God may grant that they will repent and come to know the Truth," (2Timothy 2:25)

5. Repentance is worked by a godly fruit (godly Sorrow) and a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." (2Corinthians 7:10)

6. Faith is a work. Faith works.

"Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;" (1Th 1:3) "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." (Galatians 5:6) "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." (Jas 2:17)

7. Faith is a gift that works and it was graciously given to you. You're not saved by some faith that you had in you (prior to regeneration). You're not saved by some work that you had in you (prior to regeneration). Faith is not of yourself. It is a gift of God. Beware, lest you boast. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph 2:8-9)

## II. Second, the doctrine of "I must bring them"

In this doctrine we will see that the Elect are mercifully and graciously Enabled. They are made Willing to repent and believe by the regeneration from God's will. (also known as the new birth)

John 10:16 "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."

Joh 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Some may ask, "How does someone believe, if they are unwilling and unable to?"

1John 5:1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

Some say that you have to believe and then you will be born again (after you repent and believe). According to this verse, whosoever believeth... is born of God. There is no such thing as a whosoever believer that is not born of God. (even for a split second. If it was possible, this verse would not be true in some cases.)

This makes it clear... that you cannot believe, if you are not born of God. (even for a split second) The scripture makes it clear that you are born of God, if you are at this moment believing. So, to say that believing or repentance must be done first as a way to cause God to regenerate you, contradicts this scripture.

This does not destroy man's responsibility to repent and believe. Men are to repent and believe the gospel. God commands all men everywhere to repent. They are to confess and forsake their sin. God's word makes it clear that those who do this shall have mercy and be saved. But, if you say that repentance and belief are the cause of regeneration (the new birth), rather than the fruit of it... You are preaching a works gospel that gives room for men to glory and boast in their so called free-will-ability to bring down the mercy of God upon them. This is called decisionism evangelism. This is similar with Catholic evangelism. (and other cults) This decisionism gospel is no gospel at all! It makes God out to be some kind of Santa Claus who gives good gifts based on whether you are naughty or nice. (rather than from His sovereign free grace and mercy)

Decisionism is the religion of today's false convert christianity. It leaves room for false converts to say things like...

1. "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican." (Lk 18:11)
2. "...Because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me." (Jer 2:35)
3. "Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou." (Isa 65:5)
4. "I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me." (Job 33:9)

The heart that God delights in, is in every way different.

1. "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." (Lk 5:12)
2. "God be merciful to me a sinner." (Lk 18:13)
3. "I said, LORD, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee." (Psa 41:4)
4. "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions." (Psa 51:1)

The new birth is an act of God's mercy that no man can cause or merit.

John 5:21 "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will."

Ezekiel 36:26-27 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 a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

Notice the words in the last verse of this passage in Ezekiel. You have the words walk, keep and do. Prior to these words, you have the word Cause.

Now prior to the word Cause, you have the words I Will repeated numerous times.

It was His will. It wasn't from your will. He caused it. You didn't cause it. We love Him, because He first loved us. Praise Him for His mercy. Come, Let us run to His throne of Grace and wash His feet with our tears! Praise Him for His mercy!

Psalms 110:3 Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

Romans 9:16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.

John 6:37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

John 6:65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

John 17:9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

God bless you! -Abraham

**Re: Regeneration: From Mercy or Works? - posted by Christinyou (), on: 2007/7/20 22:59**

Holy Spirit revelation, Amen

Oh, that we may know Him more, that is He that is in us. Born of God, the perfect Seed of the Father, That we might live and allow Christ to live through us, that the works will be greater even than He has already done.

Colossians 1:26-28 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

By the Faith of the Son of God, Amen.

Galatians 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Colossians 3:1-3 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

In Christ: Phillip