

AS LORD, JESUS IS THE LIFE

Job 12:10; Ge 2:7; Dt 20:30; Ps 36:9; Pr 8:35; Jn 1:4, 13; Jn 3:16; Jn 5:26; Jn 14:6;
Acts 17:28; I Jn 1:2; I Jn 5:11-12; Col 1:15-17

I. LIFE'S EVER-FASCINATING MYSTERY

- A. Self-evident difference between living & dead, animate & inanimate (instantaneous coming-to-be & ceasing-to-be) (N.B. *anima* means “soul” in Latin)
- B. Observations re cellular activity, plants & animal life (organization; metabolism; homeostasis; growth; reproduction; response; development), leads to wonder
- C. Life's Origin defies empiricism's glib declarations (disguised as explanations!)
 1. J. Scott Turner, in *Purpose & Desire: What Makes Something 'Alive' and Why Modern Darwinism Has Failed to Explain It*, notes need to embrace a *vitalistic* perspective
 2. Dean Overman, in *A Case Against Accident and Self-Organization*, shows “random abiogenesis” is mathematically impossible—odds of accidentally producing a simple bacterium: $10^{40,000}$ (and there are only 10^{80} atoms in the universe!)
 3. Douglas Axe, in *Undeniable: How Biology Confirms Our Intuition that Life is Designed*, argues that a non-material Logos pervades organic world

II. SCRIPTURE'S CONSTANT MESSAGE

- A. God is a “Living” God—“the father has life in himself” (Jn 5:26); an eternal aspect of, power within, God Himself
- B. As the Great “I AM” (Ex 3:14), He gives be-ing, *IS-ness* (*esse/being*) to all that is; He gives Life to all that is—“In his hand is the life of every living thing” (Job 12:10); He created “every living creature that moves” (Ge 1:21); He breathed into Adam “the breath of life, and; and man became a living being” (Ge 2:7).

III. AS LORD, JESUS IS THE LIFE—“in him was life” (Jn 1:4); “For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself” (Jn 5:26)

- A. *Bios*: physical life—consubstantial with Father, the LORD Jesus lives; the “first-born of all creation” in whom “all things were created, in heaven and earth,” who “is before all things, and in whom all things hold together” (Col 1:15-17)
 1. Biology (Bio-*Logos*) means not merely study of life but discerning *Logos* of Life
 2. “Life gave rise to matter” (John Piper)
 3. Important corollary: sanctity of life
- B. *Zoe*: spiritual life (cf. C.S. Lewis re *animated* tin soldiers) via Regeneration, New Birth
 1. Predicated on death to self (cf. Ro 7)—baptism (Ro 6:4) prescribes dying before rising again
 2. Here & Now, initial step/phase of redemption
 - a. Born Again (Jn 3:3)—cf. Chuck Colson's *Born Again*, fulfilling promise to Nicodemus
 - b. From Above (Jn 1:13)—“not of blood . . . or the will of man but of God”
 - c. Affording life abundant—“I am come that they might have life, and might have it abundantly” (Jn 10:10); “I am the way, the truth and the life” (Jn 14:6)
 3. Differing *ordo salutis* schematics significantly divide Church
 - a. Significant difference between *monergism* & *synergism*
 - b. Significant differences between steps leading from sin to salvation:
 1. Catholic: 1) Actual/Prevenient Grace; 2) Conversion/Faith; 3) Contrition; 4) Baptism; 5) Regeneration/Justification/Sanctification/Penance; 6) Glorification
 2. Calvinist: 1) Election; 2) Predestination; 3) Calling; 4) Regeneration; 5) Faith; 6) Repentance; 7) Justification; 8) Sanctification; 9) Perseverance; 10) Glorification
 3. Arminian: 1) Calling; 2) Prevenient Grace; 3) Faith; 4) Repentance; 5) Regeneration; 6) Justification; 7) Perseverance; 8) Glorification
 4. Most essential: Eternal Life promised through faith in Resurrected LORD (Jn 3:16; I Jn 5:11-12)
 - a. Immediately, upon death, Paradise for faithful (Jesus to thief: “this day you shall be with me”)
 - b. Simultaneous with Christ's Second Coming, bodily resurrection
 - c. Ultimate “New Heaven & New Earth” fulfilling God's original Design

H. Orton Wiley re Regeneration, in *Christian Theology*, v. 2

*The vocation or call is God's offer of salvation to all men through Christ. This is the gracious beginning of salvation. (#6007)

*Those who hear the proclamation and accept the call are known in the Scriptures as the elect. (#6055)

*Synergism, or the co-operation of divine grace and the human will, is another basic truth of the Arminian system. The Scriptures represent the Spirit as working through and with man's concurrence. (#6387)

*In opposition to Augustinianism which holds that man has no power to co-operate with God until after regeneration, Arminianism maintains that through the prevenient grace of the Spirit, unconditionally bestowed upon all men, the power and responsibility of free agency exist from the first dawn of the moral life. (#6318)

*Repentance leads immediately to saving faith, which is at once the condition and the instrument of justification. Faith therefore forms the connecting link between prevenient grace and the initial state of salvation. (#6438)

*Calvinism, as indicated, holds that man is regenerated by absolute decree, and then turns to God; Arminianism holds that through grace, preveniently bestowed, man turns to God and is then regenerated. Thus conversion in its truest scriptural meaning, is the pivotal point, wherein through grace, the soul turns from sin, and to Christ, in order to regeneration. (#6724)

*Hence two kinds of faith were distinguished—the *fides informis*, or an intellectual assent to the articles of faith; and *fides formata charitate* which manifests itself in love and virtue. (#6895)

*Christian sonship, involving as it does, both regeneration and adoption, is vitally related to Christian righteousness. (#7138)

*The term regeneration is derived from the Greek word *palingenesia* . . . which is compounded of “again” and “to be,” so that the word means literally “to be again.” (#7165)

*Theologians and biblical commentators have generally applied the terms to the moral change set forth in the Scriptures as “born again” (John 3:3, 5, 7; I Peter 1:23); “born of God” (John 1:13; I John 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18); “born of the Spirit” (John 3: 5, 6); “quickened” (Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 2:13); and “passed from death unto life” (John 5:24; I John 3:14). In the conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus uses the words which means literally, “to be born from above.” (#7169)

*Mr. Wesley defines regeneration as “that great change which God works in the soul when He brings it into life; when He raises it from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. It is the change wrought in the whole soul by the Almighty Spirit of God, when it is created anew in Christ Jesus; when it is renewed after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness” (“Sermon on the New Birth”). (#7228)

*We prefer the following simple definition, “Regeneration is the communication of life by the Spirit, to a soul dead in trespasses and sins.” (#7238)

*As early as the middle of the second century, it may be said that baptismal regeneration had become prevalent in the teachings of the church. Furthermore, baptism was regarded as securing the “remission of sins” and, therefore, regeneration was not only confused with adoption, but with justification and sanctification as well. Thus according to the Nicene Creed, there is “one baptism for the remission of sins,” and this was interpreted as being unto pardon, regeneration and sanctification. (#7387)

*The doctrine of regeneration as held by Arminian theologians may be summarized under two general heads as follows: (1) It is a work wrought in the souls of men by the efficient operation of the Holy Ghost. (2) The Holy Spirit exerts His regenerating power only on certain conditions, that is, on the conditions of repentance and faith. (#7465)

*Arminianism maintains that there are conditions which must precede this operation of the Spirit, such as repentance and faith, but these only bring the soul to God. It then becomes passive, as clay in the hands of the potter, while the Holy Spirit by His omnipotent power breathes new life into the soul dead in trespasses and sins. It is through this infusion of life that the moral and spiritual nature of the soul is changed. (#7482)