

Regeneration II
Rev. George M. Schwab, Ph.D.
May 25, 2020

1 Peter 1:3

(NA 28th ed.)

Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ
τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
ὁ κατὰ τὸ πολὺ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος
ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς
εἰς ἐλπίδα ζῶσαν
δι' ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
ἐκ νεκρῶν

(HCSB)

Praise the God and Father
of our Lord Jesus Christ.
According to His great mercy,
He has given us a **new birth**
into a **living** hope
through the **resurrection** of Jesus Christ
from the dead

Most of this is familiar, isn't it? You may see "Eulogy" in *eulogetos*. In a previous essay, I wrote about the two times "regeneration" appears in the Bible. Check it out [here](#). It uses a different word there. But here, instead of *palin+genesia* = again+come-into-existence = regeneration, we have the verb *ana+gennao* = again+generate = be born again. Line 6: we are born again *through Jesus' resurrection*.

Another previous essay gave a simple chart of the Reformed *Ordo Salutis*. Take a look [here](#). In Presbytery's ordination exams, whenever the *Ordo* is asked about, the examiners are always keen to be on the lookout as to whether the candidate dutifully puts Regeneration before saving Faith. That is a non-negotiable Reformed distinctive.

But what precedes Regeneration? In the *Ordo* you will see Election. God from all eternity elects us for salvation, and pre-destines us to receive all of the graces that follow. Amen!

In “Sanctification” I had mentioned how our union with Christ makes Regeneration possible, but that fact deserves further treatment. Look at our verse. What makes Regeneration happen—what gives us new birth to a living hope—is the resurrection of Jesus. It is not just that Jesus’ resurrection gives us something to believe in. It is more than that. In a sense, when we come to saving faith, we *experience* his resurrection. Although we are not consciously aware of it at the time (and we need someone like an EPC Biblicist to post a devotional to tell us about it), it is the resurrection of Jesus that provides the spiritual power to enliven our inner selves, so that we are moved to comprehend the gospel in a believing way. “Even when we were dead in our trespasses, God made us alive together with Christ” (Eph 2:5). Together with *Christ’s resurrection*, he made us alive. *Together* with Christ’s resurrection, he made us alive. Together with Christ’s resurrection, he *made us alive*.

When we believed, we were moved by the living Christ within us. And this inner dynamic is still going on. “Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father” just as “we too might walk in newness of life” (Rom 6:4). We walk in resurrection power, today.

Our new birth is of a piece with his resurrection. And all sorts of changes are permanently welded to us because of this. For example, having been resurrected, death no longer has dominion over Jesus (Rom 6:9). Paul argues from this that we also should consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ (v10 – 11). This is your reality, your spiritual condition—having been united to the resurrected Christ.

You are justified by faith alone. But did you know that you are also progressively sanctified by faith alone? Sanctification is a lifelong process whereby you continuously analyze your own motives to find out what you are believing contrary to the gospel. You then turn from that to embrace whatever truth about God you had neglected. You can do this because in your innermost being, the principle of Christ's resurrection supplies you with fresh spiritual life that enables the sanctifying process—the renewal of your thinking—to succeed.

1 Peter goes on to give lots of examples of how this works out. Here is one: your old pre-Christian crowd is now surprised that you don't participate with them in all of those parties you used to revel in (4:4), and so they (in Greek) "blaspheme" you. Haha, this was written to the first-generation church. Most of you reading this probably were raised in Christian homes and never were big partiers. But are there activities that you used to do, and now don't, because of Jesus? I'm sure you can list some. These are examples of how the irresistible and formative influence of Christ's resurrection is working in you.

When anxious, our regenerated spirits can move us to remember that God is sovereign. When depressed, our enlivened hearts are able to hold on to his great promises. When offended over a personal slight, our contemplation of Jesus's resurrection assures us that God will vindicate us. When facing sickness or loss, our renewed souls may find comfort that God is present with us.

Something to think about, until we also are resurrected.