



Semantics

Of, relating to, or arising from the different meanings of words... (dictionary.com)

Introduction

The words *saved*, *converted*, *regenerated*, and *born-again* are frequently used interchangeably by Christians, with the assumption that they all represent the same thing. However *salvation* is not the same as *conversion*; *conversion* is not the same as *regeneration*; and neither *conversion* nor *regeneration* represent the entirety of the *salvation* process. Rather they represent varied yet distinct operations and degrees within that process.

This misapplication of terms also applies to *God's Spirit*, the *Holy Spirit*, and the *Spirit of Christ*—which are also not entirely synonymous. Consequently the majority of Christians attribute everything God does supernaturally to the *Holy Spirit*. While this is indeed true in the *broadest* sense—yet it is not entirely correct in the most *precise* sense; for these various terms also represent specific functions and ministries that are all under the grand umbrella of the Spirit of God.

This series on *Semantics* will take a closer look at these commonly used words and phrases. As will become evident, *conversion* is only the beginning of *salvation*; and *salvation*, when it reaches its ultimate end, results in the full and complete restoration of fallen man.¹ For in the *salvation* of a soul, the Almighty God always has a finished product in view.²

Conversion

“To cause to adopt a different religion, political doctrine, opinion, etc. (dictionary.com)”

The soul that neither knows God nor appreciates God, and is even hostile toward God—but then comes to truly love, honor, and obey God—that soul is now *converted* to God.³ He stops living the life he once knew, and begins to live as God wants him to live.⁴ Therefore simply stated, *conversion* is a *change of heart* and a *change of mind*. *Conversion* is something *you do*.⁵ It means *you* have changed your mind about God, Jesus Christ—and even yourself.⁶ You acknowledge that your own sinfulness is the true reason for your agony and misfortune;⁷ and you no longer want to live your life as before. You realize you cannot possibly change your miserable circumstances—without help from God.⁸ And by faith you humbly and gratefully surrender to the mercy of God that is in Christ Jesus.⁹ This is *conversion*! Therefore to be truly converted is to change your mind about God, and then by your own change of heart, you willingly begin to live your life under this new faith.¹⁰

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Salvation

“*The act of saving or protecting from harm, destruction...The state of being saved...*” (dictionary.com)

As with conversion, salvation is not a singular event: though it is often viewed in that way. Salvation is both a *deliverance* and a *continuing process*.¹¹ At conversion we are saved from the penalty of our sins.¹² But once saved we must continue to *advance* in the process, so that we may be saved from our enemies, from the world, and (especially) from our own fleshly and worldly desires.¹³ For all this is not immediately accomplished the moment the soul manifests repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁴ This is the great mission of the Spirit of the Resurrected Christ.¹⁵ Therefore God must send the Spirit of His Son *into man’s spirit*, in order to *regenerate* man’s spirit,¹⁶ and to work out this ultimate, supreme, and complete salvation.

Regeneration

“*To re-create, reconstitute, or make over, especially in a better form or condition.*” (dictionary.com)

Again, God’s ultimate design for the Christian is not merely conversion (which is only the *beginning* of salvation), or deliverance from Hell (as judgment for sins). His intention is nothing less than the total and complete restoration and return of everything that was lost in the Garden of Eden.¹⁷ Conversion can never accomplish this great feat, though it is a good and necessary beginning. Even though the mind and heart has truly turned to God, yet man’s spirit remains quite dead in trespasses and sin.¹⁸ Therefore man’s *spirit* must be brought back to life again.¹⁹ This is what it means to be *regenerated*.²⁰ And while conversion is what *we do*, regeneration is what *God does*.

At regeneration the Lord *breathes* His Spirit into your spirit,²¹ and *quickens* it back to life. It is the *regenerated* spirit of your soul that cooperates with the newly received *Promise of the Father*,²² with the goal of leading you back into Paradise.²³ Regeneration is the reception of the *Spirit of the risen Christ*, who works to destroy the sin principle within you. At conversion your sins are forgiven. Through regeneration your sin principle is being destroyed. Regeneration alone can restore the spirit, soul, and body to its pre-fallen state.²⁴

How to use these terms

- ♦ Upon true *conversion* (which is, *repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ*),²⁵ the soul is *saved*, and now enters into the *salvation process*.
- ♦ In that process, the saved soul must seek to be *regenerated*. He must ask, seek, and knock²⁶ to receive the *Promise of the Father*,²⁷ which is given to the obedient.²⁸
- ♦ Once *regenerated* (at the reception of the *Promise of the Father*), the soul’s *spirit* is now *born again*, by and through the *birth* of the Spirit of the Resurrected Christ *within*.
- ♦ The *regenerated* (born-again) Christian must now proceed forward to *sanctification* (being set apart),²⁹ and holiness—without which no one shall see God.³⁰
- ♦ When the *Spirit of Christ* (as the *Promise of the Father*) completes His work, the finished product will be a fully restored spirit, soul, and body³¹—which is the finished *New Man*.³²

To be *converted* is to be *saved*. To be saved is to *enter into* the *salvation process*. In that process we seek *regeneration*, through obedience and faith, asking for the *Promise of the Father*.³³ Through this regeneration (which is the *Spirit of the Resurrected Christ*), and by His continuous workings as an indwelling life and breath, the curse of Adam is being reversed³⁴—and we are *being* remade into the New Man. Therefore, the true Christian *is saved*, *is being saved*, and will ultimately be *fully saved*.

Continued in *Semantics Part 2 – Conversion*

NOTES & SCRIPTURES

Scriptures are from the King James Bible

1 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1Th 5:23)

Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. (Act 3:21)

2 For in the image of God made he man. (Gen 9:6)

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: (Php 1:6)

3 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. (Isa 6:10)

4 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. (Luk 1:16)

I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart. (Psa 40:8)

Shewing...that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. (Act 26:20)

5 This is not to suggest that God is not actively involved in conversion, for: There is none that understandeth, none that seeketh after God (Rom 3:11). God reveals truth; man is free to receive or reject that truth. God does not impose conversion on anyone.

6 Can two walk together except they be agreed? (Amo 3:3)

I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. (Job 42:5-6)

7 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight. (Psa 51:4)

8 But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God. (Psa 40:17)

9 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (Mat 11:28)

10 But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby. (Eze 33:19)

11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. (Rom 13:11)

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. (Php 2:12)

12 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. (Rom 5:9)

13 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? (1Co 3:3)

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. (Rom 8:7)

14 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. (Act 20:21)

But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. (Mat 9:13)

15 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: (Col 1:27)

16 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; (Eph 2:1)

17 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. (Rev 21:5)

Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. (Act 3:21)

18 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; (Eph 2:1)

Some will argue that the converted are no longer dead in trespasses and sins. But there is a great difference between justification "imputed" and justification "imparted;" which will be examined in the coming studies on *Conversion* and *Regeneration*.

19 For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? (Rom 11:15)

20 Strong's Greek Dictionary, #G3824: (spiritual) *rebirth* (the state or the act), that is, (figuratively) spiritual *renovation*; specifically Messianic *restoration*.

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21 And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: (Joh 20:22)

The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life. (Job 33:4)

22 And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me. (Act 1:4)

23 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. (Rev 2:7)

24 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Mat 19:28)

25 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. (Act 20:21)

The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel. (Mar 1:15)

26 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: (Mat 7:7)

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it. (Mat 13:45-46)

27 And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me. (Act 1:4)

28 How much more shall *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? (Luk 11:13)

And we are his witnesses of these things; and *so is* also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him. (Act 5:32)

29 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: (1Co 1:30)

God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: (2Th 2:13)

30 Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: (Heb 12:14)

And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Mat 19:28)

31 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1Th 5:23)

32 Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (Eph 4:24)

Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (2Co 5:17)

And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Mat 19:28)

33 How much more shall *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? (Luk 11:13)

34 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. (Rom 5:17)

Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life. (Rom 5:18)

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. (Rom 5:19)

That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom 5:21)