

The Gospel of John 3

John 2:23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast *day*, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. **2:24** But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all *men*, **2:25** And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

Many believed Jesus was probably the Messiah when they saw His miracles, but not with faith and trust that commits everything to the Savior.

John 3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

Nicodemus is named three times by John cf.

John 7:50-51 Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) **7:51** Doth our law judge *any* man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?

John 19:39-40 And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound *weight*. **19:40** Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

There is an allusion to him in the Jewish Talmud he was a Pharisee of the powerful self-righteous sect which stressed their Jewish birth and ceremonial observances of ritualistic purity laws. He was a ruler of the Sanhedrim. They were a congress of seventy Jews who held chief authority in Israel. Nicodemus was a prominent doctor of the law.

John 3:2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

He probably chose the night to escape the observation of other Pharisees. The radical act of Jesus cleansing the temple and driving out the money changers had excited the wrath of the Priest who derived wealth from this desecration of the Temple. The holy teaching and miracles of Jesus had deeply moved Nicodemus and the other Pharisee rulers for more information.

Nicodemus intends to question Jesus about the coming kingdom of God which was being proclaimed by both John the Baptist and Jesus.

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.

Verily, verily gives emphasis to a solemn weighty teaching to follow. It occurs 24 times in John. The term translated “born again” can be rendered “born anew”. This great doctrine is fundamental in the Gospel of regeneration, a new birth or being made a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Nicodemus like all Jews Supposed all who were born children of Abraham would be the new citizens, of the soon coming Kingdom of God. John had rejected this idea and denounced the Jews claim of special privileges.

Matthew 3:9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

Nicodemus seems to have his breath taken away to learn the Jews, the rulers, the Pharisees, the priests and the Levites were not exceptions and stood on the same ground as the despised Gentiles.

Our life begins with our birth, the new life must begin with a new birth. No one can be a new creature in Christ unless he is “born again or born anew”. The teaching that man can bury his old sinful life and begin a new one with the freshness of youthful hope is foreshadowed in the Old Testament cf:

Isaiah 1:18-20 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. 1:19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: 1:20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*.

Jeremiah 31:33 But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Romans 6:8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. **12:2** And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

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

John 3:4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

Nicodemus' question indicates his surprise and skepticism. The Jews admitted Gentile proselytes and spoke of them as being born again. This Jewish doctrine of nationalization should have given him an understanding of Jesus' words.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Jesus does not answer the question but proceeds to an explicate statement. One cannot enter by being born of water alone or spirit alone. We today are to understand these words of Christ as Christ expected Nicodemus to understand Him. The Jewish proselyte as a sign that he had put off his old faith was baptized upon entering the Jewish faith. John the Baptist baptized both Jew and gentile as a sign of repentance from past sins. In this new Kingdom of God, one must be born of water and of the spirit cf:

Act 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Titus 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Romans 6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Our fleshly bodies are born of our human parents and like them we are carnal and sinful. The inward man is the spirit that is renewed by the Holy Spirit this is the subject of the new birth of the Spirit.

John 3:7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

The necessity and reasonableness of the new birth can be understood in that no one born a citizen of England can become a citizen of the United States without complying with our Naturalization Laws. The Kingdom of God has Naturalization Laws, there is no another way to enter but to be born of the water and the Spirit.

John 3:8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

No verse in the New Testament has caused more controversy than this verse. Most supposed learned men say: "As the wind moves mysteriously so does the spirit and it breaths on whom it will."

This Calvinistic view is incorrect and is caused by the bad translation of one word, sanctioned not by the Greek but Calvinist Theology. Note one Greek word "pneuma" in this verse is translated both "wind" and "spirit". Nowhere else in the New Testament is this word translated as wind, but it is always translated spirit. The Greek word "anemos" is usually translated wind. It is a violation of all laws of understanding that the same word should have such a radical change of meaning in the same sentence. All we have to do is translate "pneuma" here as it is done in the later part of the verse and everywhere else in the New Testament as "Spirit" and we can understand it.

So it is by hearing the voice of the Spirit is everyone born by the Spirit. The meaning is faith comes when we hear and believe the word of God. Cf:

Romans 10:17 So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

II Peter 1:21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.

He who receives by faith the communication of the Spirit from the word of God is born of the Spirit.

I Peter 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

John 6:63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they are spirit, and they are life.*

John 3:9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

Nicodemus' skeptical attitude is gone and now he is a humble enquirer.

John 3:10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

The question implies that Nicodemus is one of the doctors of the law. They made arrogant claims of superior knowledge, but Christ shows their ignorance of the fundamental principles of the soon coming Kingdom.

John 3:11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

The “we” in this verse is Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The “ye” is Nicodemus and all the Jews who failed to place faith and trust in Jesus.

John 3:12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you *of heavenly things?*

If Nicodemus could not understand and believe being born again how could he receive testimony of the heavenly Kingdom of God and eternal glory. Christ now declares He is not just a man sent from God like John the Baptist.

John 3:13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven.

No man has gone to heaven and returned to bear witness of heavenly things. The only witness is the Son of Man, who came down and was still in heaven because He is Divine and in constant communication with heaven. He existed before He appeared on Earth. Heaven was His true abode and while on earth His spirit was in communication with Heaven.

John 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: cf: Numbers 21:4-9

During their Exodus, Israel sinned through unbelief they were bit by fiery serpents and died. God commanded Moses to raise up a pole with a brazen serpent, and those who looked upon it in faith were spared.

Christ declares the Son of Man will be lifted up on the cross cf:

John 8:28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am *he*, and *that* I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

John 12:32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me.

John 3:15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

John 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.

God is love. God's Love is not limited but universal to all the world and every creature.

John 3:17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

Luke 19:10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

There is condemnation, but condemnation is because nonbelief.

John 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Mark 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

The unbeliever condemns his own self.

John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

The grounds of men's condemnation is that Christ is the true light and life.

John 3:20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

The evildoer shuns the light because it exposes him. Beasts of pray, thieves burglars and evildoers love the night because it hides their evil deeds. The fact that men love sin accounts for their non-belief.

John 3:21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

Truth is not an abstract idea, it must be lived this is the meaning of "doeth".

Matthew 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

John 3:22 After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.

Jesus leaves Jerusalem. This is the first time the Bible says Christ administered Baptism.

This baptism could not have been the Christian baptism, that was instituted after the resurrection, but this like John's baptism and was preparatory.

Christian baptism could not exist until the Son of God had risen from the dead, and the Holy Spirit was given. The Christian formula for baptism recognizes the authority of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Cf:

Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

John 3:23 And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.

This explains that much water was essential to baptism in New Testament times, and can only be reconciled with immersion and dipping, not pouring or sprinkling.

John 3:24 For John was not yet cast into prison.

Now comes the last words of the great forerunner in John:

John 3:25 Then there arose a question between *some* of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.

They probably spoke because of the great number of people who now turned to Christ.

John 3:26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all *men* come to him.

John's disciples full of jealousy for the reputation of their master, come to the Baptist with their complaint. They did this even though they had heard John's witness that Jesus was "the Lamb of God".

John 3:27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

John 3:28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.

John's popularity is waning and another is coming to take his place.

**Each will fulfill his own mission. John cites his own words that he is not the Christ, only the Messenger sent before the King and Messiah.
The superiority of Jesus was only what the Baptist himself had predicted.**

John 3:29 He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

**This expressive figure is often used in the New Testament. The Church is espoused to Christ and is the bride, Christ is the bridegroom.
John rejoices in the anticipation of the bride groom being united with the bride. John feels his own work is done.**

John 3:30 He must increase, but I *must* decrease.

Just as the light of the moon fades out before the rising of the sun.

John 3:31 He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.

It is generally supposed that these are the words of the apostle John, not John the Baptist.

The one who cometh from above is: Christ above every teacher, prophet, apostle and John the Baptist.

John 3:32 And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.

Christ has no need for instruction for he knows personally of what he testifies and teaches.

The world in the Apostle John's time, most say late in the first century still rejected Christ, here and there were Christians, but mankind refused to receive His testimony.

John 3:33 He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.

Those who have received His testimony demonstrated their conviction that God is true. To attach a seal to a document is to confirm it.

John 3:34 For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure *unto him*.

**The Father spoke in Christ, and Jesus had the fullness of the spirit.
No man ever spake as he spake.**

John 3:35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

And in Him dwelt the fullness of the God head bodily.

John 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Eternal life and death turn on a question of faith and trust in Christ, because:

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

**Because we cannot live the life that pleases God while unbelievers.
It is not faith alone that gives life, but faith made perfect by obedience cf:**

James 2:22-24 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? 2:23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. 2:24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

Sources:

KJV, e-Sword, B. W. Johnson's Commentary on John & Clark's Commentary