

The Gospel of John: Born Again

John 3:1-13

Nicodemus (v. 1-2)

- Jesus is approached by Nicodemus
 - Pharisee: One of 3 sects of Jews who accepted and earnestly sought to follow the whole of the Old Testament
 - Jesus has more direct contact with them because of their similarities
 - Member of the Sanhedrin: The Jewish ruling council that oversaw religious affairs
- His arrival at night reflects:
 - The secretive nature of his visit
 - His spiritually dark/blind state (v. 9-10)
- He seeks out Jesus believing that He is sent from God based on the evidence of the signs that Jesus has been performing
 - Nicodemus' statement implies a question: "Who are you?"

The Need for Rebirth (v. 3-8)

- Jesus responds to Nicodemus' implied question by asserting that to have the ability to assess any heavenly truth, one must be born ἄνωθεν
 - ἄνωθεν (*anōthen*): Again/from above
 - This is a deliberate play on words
- Nicodemus understands it to mean a second physical birth
- Jesus clarifies that this new birth must be through the work of the Holy Spirit
 - The reference to water and Spirit is likely an allusion to Ezek. 36:25-27, which promises God's cleansing work and giving of the Spirit in the Messianic age
- Spirit/wind are the same word in Greek (*pneuma*)
 - Those born of the Spirit (as Jesus is) do not act as the world presupposes

The Question Answered (v. 9-13)

- Nicodemus does not understand, so Jesus corrects him
 - Pharisees taught that being obedient to the Law and "the tradition of the elders" (Mk 7:3-5) was what secured one's place in the kingdom of God
 - But the true requirement is new birth from above, which Jesus freely offers
- Jesus explains that He knows these things with certainty because of who He is and where He came from
 - He is the heaven-sent Son of Man (1:51; Dan 7:13-14)
 - The not *just* the Jewish Messiah
 - The King of the *whole earth*
 - The giver of the Spirit of God

So What?

- We need a new birth through the Holy Spirit to be part of God's eternal kingdom
 - Jesus alone offers that to us
- Have we been born again from above?

Meditation Verse: John 3:3

Next Week's Scripture: John 3:14-21