

Sovereign Salvation 2019-01-13

John 3:1-8

Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

In encounter with Nicodemus recorded in 3:1-21 Jesus reveals basic foundations of Gospel.

- Nicodemus was the cream of Israel politically, educationally, socially...plus very religious.
 - Wrongly believes birth as Jew (Christian family) assures see Kingdom of God (saved).

In first sentence Jesus sweeps away this false belief and reveals that being reborn from above is sovereign act of God not man. Matthew 3:9; Romans 9:6-8, John 3:1-3, 1:12-13

- *again*= "repetition" or "from above/top/beginning"...here probably both.
 - Must be reborn from above (from God) to enter Kingdom of God...saved.
- God is source of new birth just like He is for physical birth. We did nothing.
 - Like conception this new birth occurs at a moment in time.
- According to Jesus, God's grace precedes even faith (also God's gift). Ephesians 2:8-9
 - 1st reborn from above THEN "see"/respond to spiritual truth.

Nicodemus response proves he is still spiritually blind and lost in spite of years of religious study and devotion. John 3:4, 4:14-15, 1 Corinthians 2:14

- Like woman at well, Nicodemus confused. Understands Jesus talking about a 2nd birth but mistakenly takes literally to mean 2nd physical birth...only kind he knew.
 - Any other kind birth beyond his thinking. Same today outside church

Jesus had explained source new birth (God) and now explains how takes place. John 3:5

- We had advantage of history/Word, now at disadvantage... Must study with original readers/culture in mind otherwise misunderstand...like Nicodemus.

"Water" not John the Baptist or Christian baptism (before instituted) and not required for salvation.

- Baptism sign already taken place, this verse dealing with way new birth comes.
- Also not referring to natural birth (no cultural/script connection)

Greek construction points to 1 birth, not 2. Water and Spirit refer to single spiritual birth.

- “No one can enter Kingdom of God unless he is born of water, even Holy Spirit.”
 - “Water and Spirit” linked in Old Testament to outpouring of Holy Spirit.
Isaiah 44:3, 55:1, Ezekial 36:25-27

Jesus then reaffirms; being reborn from above is sovereign act of God not man. John 3:6-8

- Play on words: Greek word pneuma = wind, breath, spirit (referring to Holy Spirit).
 - Like wind, Holy Spirit unseen and man not control/determine origin/destination.
 - Picture of sovereign, incomprehensible, mysterious will/work of Holy Spirit.

That work not behavior modification (paint pump with bad water) but transformation by grace that overcomes rebellion/resistance of man’s will.

- Like produce like: new birth from God creates new spiritual nature in us.
 - Flesh nature remains and struggles against new nature. Romans 7, 1 John 1:8

See effects as our will/lives move because wind of Holy Spirit blowing.....We do not move 1st.

- Delight to obey God from heart. repentance, faith, fruit of Holy Spirit, choose right over wrong. Progressively grow in holiness, Romans 8:6-8, 6:17-18, 1 John 2:29, 3:9 & 14, 4:7, 5:1, 4 & 18, Galatians 5:22-23
 - Not sinless life, but life that sins less. Hebrews 12:14

Nicodemus asked perhaps most important question anyone can ask: How can we be born again?

- It’s sovereign, irresistible transforming grace that overcomes rebellion/resistance of our wills. John 3:3, 6:44, Ephesians 2:8–9, Romans 10:9
 - Being reborn from above is sovereign act of God but that doesn’t exclude Holy Spirit enabled human response of repentance and faith....Gospel.