

John 3.1-10: A Brand New Beginning...

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Introduction

Invictus

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

In our humanistic optimism we often think we can solve all life's problems, yet we can't even choose when we get born or when we die.

John 3.1-10

¹Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.
²This 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."
³ Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

John 3.1-10

⁴Nicodemus 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?"

⁵Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

⁷Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

John 3.1-10

⁸The 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."

⁹Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?"

¹⁰Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things?"

Overview

1. Who 'must' be born again? (John 3.7)
2. Where does the concept come from? (John 3.10)
3. What is being 'born again' then? (John 3.3-6)
4. How do you know if you've been born again? (John 3.8)

Misunderstanding

John often uses misunderstanding as an opportunity for Jesus to explain Himself.

- ἄνωθεν can mean 'again, anew, or from above'
- John 3.31: He who comes from above (ἄνωθεν) is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all.

John 3.2-5

² Nicodemus... said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God..."

³ Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born ἄνωθεν he cannot see the kingdom of God."

⁴ 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?"

⁵ Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (cf. 1.12-13)

Who must be born again?

⁷ Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

- This is not a mere suggestion.
- But sometimes we think only some 'must' be born again.
- We think you get normal Christians who aren't born again and serious Christians who are born again.

Nicodemus' qualifications

- He was a Pharisee: religious and moral.
- He was a ruler: successful.
- He was a seeker: though, by night.
- He recognized Jesus as a godly teacher: The 'trilemma' (Jesus as liar, lunatic, or Lord).
- He recognized the supernatural in Jesus. "Recognizing the supernatural in Jesus is not enough to enter the Kingdom, you need to experience the supernatural in yourself." – John Piper

Who must be born again?

- ⁷Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'
- In the verse above, the first 'you' is singular and the second is plural.
 - 'You-all must be born again!'

Where does the concept come from?

- Born of 'water and the Spirit' is an allusion to Ezek 36.25-27.
- 'The wind blows where it wishes...' is an allusion to Ezek 37.7-10, 14.
- That's why Jesus expects him as a 'teacher of Israel' (3.10), who taught from the OT, to know about this.

What is being born again then?

- Not just an addition or adjustment: 'born' implies a brand new beginning.
- It is like receiving a new heart with God's Law written on it (Ezek 36.25-27).
- It is like a resurrection from the dead (Ezek 37.7-10, 14).
- It is like waking up from the Matrix: 'unless one is born again he cannot see the Kingdom.' (John 3.3).

Waking up from the Matrix



How do you know if you've been born again?

John 3.8: 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."

- You can't see the wind, but you can see the effects of the wind!

How do you know if you've been born again?

If the leaves aren't rustling, the wind isn't blowing: gifts (1 Cor 12.7) & fruit (Gal 5.22)



How do you know if you've been born again?

There's no such thing as a quiet reception of the Spirit (Gal 3.1-3):

¹O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified.

²Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? ³Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

conclusion

- Nicodemus was open to actually listened to Jesus (John 7.43-52)
- Nicodemus eventually became a disciple of Jesus (John 19.38-42)
- How will you respond?
