

John 3

Part 3

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

1. Jesus quickly explained that what was born of "the flesh is flesh."
 - a. The flesh or body of a person comes from flesh and is immersed in water as a part of the new birth.
 - b. This is part of the new birth, that is, the body emerging from the waters of baptism.
2. He stressed "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (Eccles. 12:7; Zech. 12:1; Acts 7:59; Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 5:5; Gal. 6:18; 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 12:9, 23).

Ecc 12:7 then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.

Zech 12:1 The burden of the word of the LORD concerning Israel. {Thus} declares the LORD who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him,

Acts 7:59 They went on stoning Stephen as he called on {the Lord} and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

Rom 8:16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,

1 Cor 5:5 {I have decided} to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Gal 6:18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

1 Thess 5:23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Heb 12:9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?

Heb 12:23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of {the} righteous made perfect,

- a. The statement clearly reveals that the word "Spirit" in verse 5 refers to the Holy Spirit.
- b. The Holy Spirit, through His word, works on the "spirit," the heart, the thinking part of man and changes man. (1 Cor. 2:11).

1 Cor 2:11 For who among men knows the {thoughts} of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the {thoughts} of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.

- c. The change leads one to believe, repent, confess, be immersed [born of water], live a life of trusting obedience.
- d. The body of the believer experiences a birth out of water, and the "spirit" of the believer is changed by the Holy

Spirit.

- e. This is not two births, but one birth involving body and spirit.

John 3:7 "Do not be amazed [surprised] that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

1. Jesus informed Nicodemus that he should not “be amazed” that “You must be born again [from above].
 - a. Nicodemus understood Jesus to mean one must experience a second physical birth. (Jn. 3:4).
 - b. Jesus taught one must experience a spiritual birth of “water and Spirit.” (Jn. 3:5).
2. Jesus used the word “dei” [day] meaning “must.”
 - a. The pronoun “you” is plural in the original Greek showing Jesus was requiring the new birth for all who wish to be saved - not just Nicodemus.
 - b. It is essential for all who wish to be saved to experience the new birth.
 - c. Again Jesus used the word “anothen” [**ah** noh then] meaning “again, from above.”

John 3:8 "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

1. The word “pneuma” [**pnoo** mah] translated “wind” occurs 384 times in the New Testament.
 - a. This word is translated “spirit” and “Spirit” in John 3:5-6.
 - b. In fact all but two times in the New Testament it is translated “spirit.” It is translated “wind” in John 3:8 and Hebrews 1:7 by many translators.
 - c. The fact this word can be translated in two different ways has led to some confusion as to its meaning in this context.
 - d. The word “pneuma” [**pnoo** mah] can be translated either “wind” or “spirit” just as the Hebrew word “ruach” [**roo** akh] can be translated depending on the context.
 - e. See Heb. “ruach” - Gen. 1:2; 8:1.

Gen 1:2 The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the **Spirit** of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

Gen 8:1 But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark; and God caused a **wind** to pass over the earth, and the water subsided.

2. Some believe “pneuma” [**pnoo** mah] should have its usual meaning of “spirit” here.
 - a. It is said man cannot predict the movements of the Spirit because the Spirit breathes where He wills.
 - b. Just as man cannot comprehend the Spirit neither can he comprehend him that is born of the Spirit.
 - c. This interpretation has difficulties when one considers the affirmation that one cannot comprehend the Spirit or

him who is born of the Spirit.

- 1) How then can he be said to hear “the voice” of the Spirit?
- 2) “Sound” is from “phone” [foh **nah**] meaning “sound, voice.”
- 3) Jesus is certainly not saying that one cannot understand God’s word - “the voice” [the sound] of the Holy Spirit.
 - d. This has led many to understand “pneuma” [**pnoo** mah] in the sense of “wind.”
 - e. The translation of “wind” is supported by the fact that “pneo” [**pneh** oh] translated “blow or breathe” has the meaning of the blowing of the wind in its other occurrences in the New Testament. (Matt. 7:25,27; Lk. 12:55; Jn. 6:18; Acts 27:40; Rev. 7:1).
3. The word certainly seems to have the meaning of “wind” in this context.
 - a. The invisible wind blows and we hear its sound but we do not know its origin or destination.
 - b. The “Spirit” works invisibly on the hearts of men through His word [the gospel].
 - c. We know His invisible work on the heart of man by the changes that occur when a person obeys the gospel.
4. “Everyone who is born of the Spirit” has experienced this invisible working of the Holy Spirit in his heart through the word of God.
 - a. The word of God is very powerful and can cause a person to be born again spiritually.
 - b. The Holy Spirit can turn even the most hardened hearts of men from darkness to light.
 - c. Some were “dead” in sin, but were made alive spiritually by the words of the Holy Spirit. (Col. 2:12,13).

Col 2:12 having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

Col 2:13 When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,

- d. They had been delivered from the kingdom of darkness. (Col. 1:13).
- e. Peter gave this description of those who had experienced the new birth. (1 Pet. 2:9). See 1 Pet. 1:23.

1 Pet 2:9 But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR {God's} OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

Nicodemus Still Does Not Understand

John 3:9 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can these things be?"

1. Nicodemus still did not understand how all of this could occur.
2. None of us can fully understand how the Spirit can change a person, but the wise accept the Holy Spirit can change those who will receive His words into their hearts.

3. It had been prophesied in the Old Testament that the Holy Spirit would do this “in the last days.” (Joel 2:28, 29).

Joel 2:28 "It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions.

Joel 2:29 "Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

a. Peter quoted these verses on the first Pentecost following Christ’s resurrection. (Acts 2:17-21).

b. These words began to be fulfilled on Pentecost when the apostles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

4. This promise had been made. (Ezek. 36:26).

Ezek 36:26 "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

John 3:10 Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?"

1. Nicodemus and others like him claimed to be “the teacher of Israel.”

a. Note Jesus said “the teacher,” not “a teacher.”

b. Nicodemus did not claim to be the only teacher of Israel.

c. He and the other Pharisees claimed to be the teachers of Israel, and they above all others knew the things of God.

2. Nicodemus and others made this claim of being teachers of Israel, but were very deficient in their understanding of what the Old Testament taught about the Messiah, His teachings, the work of the Holy Spirit, etc.

3. Jesus called these teachers “blind guides” (Matt. 15:14).

John 3:11 "Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony.

1. Jesus used the word “truly, truly” a third time in His conversation with Nicodemus. (Jn. 3:3, 5).

2. The “we” is not defined, but includes Jesus, the apostles, and all who were speaking God’s word.

3. The word “you” is used in the plural both times in this verse.

4. Jesus was not merely saying Nicodemus was the only one not accepting the testimony of those speaking God’s word.

John 3:12 "If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?"

1. Jesus again reverts back to the first personal singular pronoun “I” rather than the plural “we.”

2. The “earthly things” seem to refer to what He has just taught about the necessity of the new birth for entering the kingdom of God. The new birth is something that occurs in this world.

3. “Heavenly things” is not defined, but likely included what Jesus was about to proclaim concerning Himself and His kingdom.

- a. Jesus would later speak of His incarnation and His ascension into heaven.
- b. Jesus would declare men would be saved by His crucifixion.
- c. Jesus is affirming His preexistence and His Deity.

John 3:13 "No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man.

1. Jesus affirmed “no one has ascended into heaven.”
2. Jesus had been in heaven with His Father and one day would ascend to be with Him again.
3. Since Jesus had been in heaven and would return, He was fully qualified to speak about heavenly things.
4. This statement “no one has ascended into heaven” indicates the righteous are not yet in heaven.
 - a. It is not until the coming of Christ that believers will enter heaven. (Jn. 14:1-3; Matt, 25:46; 1 Thess. 4:16-18).
 - b. Men will not enter into heaven until after the resurrection. (Jn. 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15).
 - c. The resurrection will be on “the last day.” (Jn. 6:39, 40, 44).
 - 1) In this context Jesus was stressing the resurrection of the righteous on “the last day.”
 - 2) The wicked will be raised at the same time. (Jn. 5:28-29; Acts 24:15).
 - 3) The Bible teaches the righteous and the wicked will be judged at the same time. (Matt. 25:31-46; 2 Cor. 5:10; Matt. 13:29, 30).
 - d. At that time believers will be raised with new glorious bodies adapted for heaven. (1 Cor. 15:49-58).
 - e. They will then ascend to be with the Lord “forevermore.” (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

1 Thess 4:13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.

1 Thess 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

1 Thess 4:15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

1 Thess 4:16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of {the} archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

1 Thess 4:17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

1 Thess 4:18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

5. The spirits of the righteous now go to Abraham’s bosom (Paradise) at death. (Lk. 16:19-31).
 - a. One day they will be reunited with the old, physical body that shall be raised from the dead, but will be instantly changed into an immortal, incorruptible body.
 - b. These bodies will be like the body of Jesus. (Phil. 3:20, 21; 1 Jn. 3:2).

Phil 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;
Phil 3:21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

1 John 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

6. We are learning through New Testament revelation that Enoch and Elijah did not go to the heaven of heavens where God abides.
 - a. Enoch, based on the words of Jesus in John 3:13, must have gone to Abraham's bosom, Paradise where Lazarus and the thief on the cross abide.
 - b. The same is true of Elijah.
 - 1) When he was taken up into heaven, it is not talking about the heaven where the birds fly, or the heaven where the planets and stars abide nor the heaven of heavens where God abides. (Jn. 3:13).
 - 2) Elijah is now in Abraham's bosom also known as Paradise or "the third heaven." (2 Cor. 12:2-4).

2 Cor 12:2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago--whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows--such a man was caught up to the third heaven.

2 Cor 12:3 And I know how such a man--whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows--

2 Cor 12:4 was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.

6. The words "who is heaven," found in some translations, are not in the oldest Greek manuscripts.
 - a. Many conservative scholars do not believe these words are genuine.
 - b. If they are genuine, it would seem this was a comment John added when he penned this gospel many years after the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Jesus into heaven.

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