

THE NEW BIRTH
jkroberts_us@yahoo.com
www.pacolethillsbaptist.org
May 24, 2020

John 3:1-21

1. When Paul met with the elders of the church at Ephesus for the last time, he stated among other things, "I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable." Acts 20:20
 2. In other words Paul declared the whole counsel of God.
 3. Many people prefer not to hear the whole counsel of God; preferring to focus on something other than the whole truth.
 4. This was true of the Jews in the Old Testament, and it will become increasingly true as we approach the end of the Church Age.
 - a. Isaiah 30:9-11
For this is a rebellious people, false sons, sons who refuse to listen to the instruction of the Lord; 10 who say to the seers, "You must not see visions"; and to the prophets, "You must not prophesy to us what is right, speak to us pleasant (smooth) words, prophesy illusions. 11 "Get out of the way, turn aside from the path, let us hear no more about the Holy One of Israel."
 - b. 2 Timothy 4:1-5
I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: 2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, 4 and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. 5 But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.
 5. One of the ways people turn their ears and eyes away from the truth is to focus on proof-texts while ignoring the context.
 6. John 3:16 is often lifted out of its context and interpreted in a way that ignores the troubling implications of the entire passage in which it is found.
 7. The last time we visited this passage we did so under three headings.
 - a. The necessity of the new birth. "You must be born again."
 - b. The means of the new birth. "You must be born again from above."
 - c. The results of the new birth. A new life, a new standing before God, and a new ability to live life as God wants it to be lived.
 8. Before leaving this passage I want to focus on three verses that we need to understand—verses 6, 8, and 14.
 9. They deal with what we might call mysteries—things that are true but not fully understandable or explainable.
 10. We encounter mysteries in both the natural and spiritual realms.
 - a. For instance try to explain the gravitational forces of our world, solar system, and universe.
 - b. Or, try to fully explain the love, mercy and grace of God towards sinful mankind.
- I. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 6**
- A. Those who have not been born again live in the realm of the flesh and have no part in the realm of the Spirit—the Kingdom of God.
 - B. Try as they might they cannot fully grasp or comprehend the things of the Spirit of God.

1. 1 Corinthians 2:14

But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

2. Man is capable of great things, but coming to know God in and through the flesh and fleshly wisdom is not one of those things. 1 Corinthians 1:20-21

Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

C. Those who put their confidence in the flesh can only understand what the flesh is capable of understanding.

D. Those who have been born again from above (having been taught by God) understand that this fleshly realm is just temporary, and consequently they focus on that which is eternal.

1. A Puritan writer named Matthew Mead wrote, "O take heed that you are not found overvaluing other things and undervaluing your soul. Shall your flesh be loved, and your soul slighted? Will you clothe and pamper your body and yet take no care of your soul? This is as if a man should feed his dog and starve his child. O let not a tottering, perishing carcass have all your time and care, as if the life and salvation of your soul were not worth the while."

2. Jesus put it this way, "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" Mark 8:36-37

II. We are totally dependent upon the power of God manifested in the person of the Holy Spirit. 8

A. Jesus said, "Apart from Me you can do nothing." John 15:5

1. Jesus declared, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you." Acts 1:8

2. Paul wrote, "And do not get drunk with (be under the influence of) wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with (directed and empowered by) the Spirit." Ephesians 5:18

B. Jesus taught two great truths here.

1. Like the wind the Holy Spirit is sovereign.

2. Only the Holy Spirit can take us where God wants us to go.

Illustration: Sometime around 1974 I was attending an evangelism conference at the First Baptist Church, Huntsville, AL. A black preacher named Manual Scott was one of the keynote speakers. At the time he was the pastor of a large church in Los Angeles and a greatly used man of God. His message focused on John 3:8. I still remember the power of the moment when he declared, "When I was a poor, little black boy, living on a tenant farm in Texas, I never dreamed that one day I would stand before three thousand white faces, in the First Baptist Church of Huntsville, AL, preaching the Word of God. But I got caught up by the Wind!"

C. Understanding this truth:

1. Will cause us to renounce self and self-effort.

2. Will cause us to rely totally upon the Holy Spirit.

3. Will cause us to be constantly in prayer.

4. Will cause us to believe and obey the Word of God.

III. Jesus must be lifted up. 14-15.

A. On the cross. Acts 2:22-23

Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know — 23 this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.

B. From the grave. Acts 2:24

But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.

C. To the right hand of God the Father. Acts 2:32-36

This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. 33 Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. 34 For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: "THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, 35 UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET." 36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ — this Jesus whom you crucified.

D. Before men in the power of the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:6-8

So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; 8 but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

APPLICATION

1. Being born again from above changes everything. 2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

2. One of the new things is that there is a new dynamic, a new power, at work in our lives, the person of the Holy Spirit.

NOTE: If He has His way He will enable us to mortify the deeds of the body, He will lead us, He will empower our walk and our talk, and He will make His presence known through the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit.

3. Every true child of God has the potential to lift up the Lord Jesus Christ by the life they live and the words they speak.