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# THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

*John 3:1-16*  
*Lesson #11*  
*New Birth*  
*09/27/2015*



“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever **believes** in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

## The Gospel of John

### New Birth 3:1-21

Revelation to the world of sinners	Revelation to individuals	Revelation to multitudes	Rejection by the Jewish leaders	Ministry to the disciples	Ministry to the world of sinners
1-2	3-5	6-8	9-12	13-17	18-21
Signs				Sermons	Sacrifice
Public ministry Galilee & Judea About 3 1/2 years				Private ministry	Paschal ministry
				Jerusalem	
				Only a few days	

*John 3*

“<sup>1</sup> Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; <sup>2</sup> this man came to Him by night, and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” <sup>4</sup> Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?” <sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup> That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup> Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’”

Charles Spurgeon

The Scripture does not say, “You must be **improved**,” but, “You must be **born again**.”



Christianity is unique in that it celebrates death as a doorway to life.

The Gospel is not about social reform or moral evolution but about death and resurrection.

<sup>8</sup> 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.”

### *Paraphrase*

“The wind can’t be seen or predicted but we can see the effect of it. This is how the Spirit works in a person’s life. The changes the Spirit makes cannot be explained by culture, chemistry, or circumstances.”

While much of the Christian’s life can be explained by sociology, psychology, and culture

there is a spiritual element that is beyond the purview of science.

<sup>9</sup> Nicodemus answered and said to Him, “How can these things be?” <sup>10</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not understand these things? <sup>11</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen; and you do not receive our witness. <sup>12</sup> If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things? <sup>13</sup> And no one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven, even the Son of Man. <sup>14</sup> And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; <sup>15</sup> that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life.”

### *Paraphrase*

“<sup>10</sup> Nicodemus, as a teacher you should understand this stuff. <sup>11</sup> You say you respect my authority. <sup>12</sup> But when we call you to familiar earthly ceremonial expressions like baptism, you don’t respond. How can I expect you to understand the deeper things? <sup>13</sup> I have come from heaven with some deep truths to share. <sup>14</sup> Let me try again. Do you remember how Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness and all who looked at it were saved from God’s judgment. Well I will one day be lifted up with the same effect. <sup>15</sup> All who look to me in faith will live.”

“<sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

### *Two questions*

- 1. Which comes first, “new birth” or faith?**
- 2. Were O.T. saints “born again”?**



**View #1 “New birth” brings faith.**



**Spiritual new birth is a gift from God that brings faith.**

**View #2 Faith brings “New birth”.**



**The Spirit comes in response to faith.**

**The key is the coming of the Spirit.**

**View #1 New Birth is the same in both O.T and N.T.**



**Faith is impossible without the Spirit, so if there is faith, there must also be the Spirit's indwelling.**

**View #2 New Birth is unique to the N.T.**



**The Spirit is promised in the O.T. but does not indwell believers until Pentecost in the N.T.**

**The key is the coming of the Spirit.**

**Two of the most helpful tools  
in understanding  
the Scriptures are:**

**Recognizing the difference  
between the spiritual worlds  
of the Old & New Covenants**

**Respecting the dramatic  
change made by the Cross,  
Resurrection, & Pentecost.**

“5 Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’”

**Paraphrase vs.5**

“Unless you are “born again” - cleansed, by the washing of John’s baptism of repentance, and possess God’s Spirit you can’t see or enter the Kingdom”.

**Ezekiel 36:24-27**

“For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. Then **I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean**; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 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. **I will put My Spirit within you** and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.”

**Titus 3**

“5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the **washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit**, 6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,”



*Jeremiah 31 (quoted in Heb.10:12-22)*

"<sup>31</sup> Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make **a new covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, <sup>32</sup> not like the covenant I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt," . . . <sup>33</sup> "I will **put My law within them** and on their heart I will write it;" . . . <sup>34</sup> "for I will **forgive their iniquity**, and their sin I will remember no more."

- The prophets spoke of a day where new birth of the spirit and forgiveness would accompany a new covenant.
- This was a **PROMISE** for a **FUTURE** generation.

**View #1 "New birth" brings faith.**

Regeneration  
"new birth"  
"indwelling Spirit"



Conversion  
"saving faith"  
"repentance"

*Ephesians 2:4-5*

"But **God** . . . even when we were dead in our transgressions, **made us alive** together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)."

**If we are "dead" in our sins, how can we believe without first being "regenerated"?**

**But look at Rom.6:2** "How shall we who have died to sin still live in it?"

**View #1 "New birth" brings faith.**

Regeneration  
"new birth"  
"indwelling Spirit"



Conversion  
"saving faith"  
"repentance"

*1 Peter 1*

"<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy **has caused us to be born again** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

**This suggests that New Birth is God's work in spiritual awakening but it does not say when.**

**View #2 Faith brings "New birth".**

Regeneration  
"new birth"  
"indwelling Spirit"



Conversion  
"saving faith"  
"repentance"

*Acts 2:38*

**"Repent**, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins; **and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**"

**Repentance and faith BRING regeneration and the indwelling Spirit.**

**View #2 Faith brings "New birth".**

Regeneration  
"new birth"  
"indwelling Spirit"



Conversion  
"saving faith"  
"repentance"

*Galatians 3:2*

"This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by **hearing with faith?**"

*Romans 10:17*

"So **faith comes from hearing**, and hearing by the word of Christ."

*John 7*

"<sup>37</sup> Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. <sup>38</sup> He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.'"

<sup>39</sup> **But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.**"

- Jesus made it clear that the promised Spirit that would come to those who BELIEVED, would do so **AFTER** he left (was glorified).
- This is consistent with what we read in Acts 2 and 1 Peter 1.



### *Acts 2*

“<sup>33</sup> 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. . . . <sup>38</sup> And Peter said to them, “**Repent**, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; **and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit**. <sup>39</sup> For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself.””

- The O.T. promise was the gift of the Spirit, which would be given freely and received by repentance and faith at and after Pentecost.
- This would take place after Christ’s ascension.

### *1 Peter 1*

“<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy has caused us to be **born again** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. . . . <sup>10</sup> As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, <sup>11</sup> **seeking to know what person or time** the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating . . . <sup>12</sup> **It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you**, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven – things into which angels long to look.”

### *Acts 11:15, 17*

“<sup>15</sup> And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as He did upon us **at the beginning**. . . . <sup>17</sup> Therefore if God gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also **after believing** in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God’s way?”

- The Baptism with the Spirit is a “new thing” that had its beginning at Pentecost.
- The Gentiles are now given access to the promise of the Jewish Fathers in that they can through repentance and faith receive the indwelling Spirit along with the Jews.

## *The point of the New Birth*

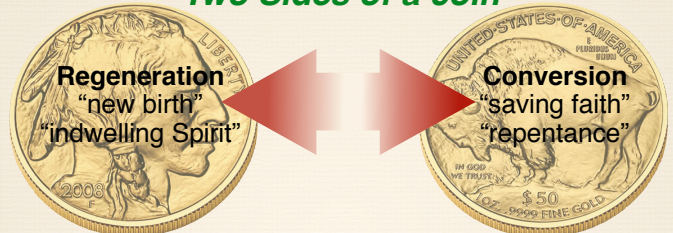
The indwelling Spirit was promised in the O.T., delivered at Pentecost, and received by faith in the N.T.

resulting in Regeneration, New Birth, Forgiveness of sins, Participation in the Kingdom, & Eternal Life.

### *What is “New Birth”, who has it, and when did they get it?*

- No one enters the Kingdom of God without “cleansing” and “new birth”. Jn.3:3
- It is uniquely linked to the indwelling Holy Spirit. Jn.7:37-39
- It did not exist until after Pentecost. Acts 2:33, Jn.14:26
- The O.T. prophets saw “new birth” as a future promise. Jer.31, Ezek.36-37.
- This was experienced at Pentecost, which was referred to as “the beginning”. Acts 11:15
- It was not experienced by O.T. believers. 1 Pet.1:11-12
- John the Baptist was the greatest of O.T. saints but the least in the Kingdom were greater because of this gift. Matt.11:11
- O.T. saints could be “filled” (or anointed) with the Spirit but it was only for specific ministry and a limited time.

### *Two Sides of a coin*



**Our response to the Gospel is a synergism between:**

“God’s image” in us,  
the work of the “Spirit” on us,  
the “circumstances” of life,  
and our “free volition”.



### Salvation before and after Pentecost?

Salvation before Pentecost	Salvation after Pentecost
By grace through faith in Messiah	By grace through faith in Jesus
Expressed through faithfulness to the (Old) Covenant	Expressed through faithfulness to the (New) Covenant
Unto justification and eternal life	Unto justification and eternal life
<b>Not</b> “finished forgiveness”, “new birth”, “regeneration”, “perm. indwelling Spirit” <b>until resurrected with Christ.</b>	<b>Complete</b> “finished forgiveness”, “new birth”, “regeneration”, “perm. indwelling Spirit” <b>upon belief in this life.</b>

### Ephesians 4:8

“Therefore it says, “WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN.””

***When Jesus rose from the grave, he led with him the souls of O.T. saints, granting them the Gospel promises.***

## Don't forget

1. The Gospel is the good news of salvation by grace through faith.
2. Salvation is a gift, faith is the reception of the gift not the result of it.
3. We stand in a very privileged place in God's unfolding drama of redemption.

The path to spirituality is not the evolution or reformation of the flesh but its death & the new birth of the Spirit.

New birth is a gift that accompanies saving faith.