

Born of Water & Spirit

John Chapter 3

Puritan Reformed Church - Pastor David Reece

Lord's Day October 15th, Anno Domini 2023

Scripture Reading - Genesis 6

Acceptable Sacrifice of Praise - Ps 87, 67

- 1) **Erecting & Entering the Tabernacle** - God with us, The Logos Tabernacling Among Men & Faith in Christ as the Doorway of Entry into the Tabernacle **(1:1-28)**
 - a) Prologue - 1:1-18
 - b) Prelude to Jesus' public ministry (1:19-51)
 - i) The Testimony of John the Baptist Pointing to Jesus (1:19-28)
- 2) **The Brazen Altar for Sacrifices** (Exodus 27:1-8) - Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world - Christ our Substitute **(1:29-51)**
 - i) John the Baptist's public witness concerning Jesus (1:29-34)
 - ii) Jesus gains his first disciples (1:35-42)
 - iii) Jesus gains two more disciples, Philip and Nathanael (1:43-51)
- 3) **The Brazen Laver of Water** - Cleansing & Spiritual Renewal by Christ **(John 2-3)**
 - a) **Sign 1:** Turning Water in ceremonial cleansing pots into Wine (John 2:1-11)
 - i) Jesus clears the temple (2:12-17)
 - ii) Jesus replaces the temple (2:18-22)
 - iii) Inadequate faith (2:23-25)
 - iv) Jesus and Nicodemus (3:1-21)
 - v) John the Baptist's continuing witness concerning Jesus (3:22-36)

Purpose Statement - John 20:30-31 - "30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."

TEXT OF JOHN

III. The Brazen Laver of Water - Cleansing & Spiritual Renewal by Christ (John 2-3)

a) Sign 1: Turning Water in ceremonial cleansing pots into Wine (John 2:1-11)

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iv) Jesus and Nicodemus (3:1-21)

3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 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.”

- 1) A teacher come from God - attested to by signs.
 - a) Tests of a true prophet
 - i) **Necessary** - Testimony of being a prophet
 - ii) **Necessary** - Non-Contradiction with prior revelation, ZERO statements claiming to be from God that contradict prior revelation.
 - iii) **Necessary** - True predictions, ZERO false predictions
 - iv) **Optional** - Signs to draw attention to him
 - v) **Optional** - Signs to draw attention to his teaching
- 2) “No one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.”
 - a) Should we use Signs and Wonders as the ultimate authority?
 - b) Truth is:
 - i) **Propositional** - Truth is the meaning of declarative sentences.
 - ii) **Rational** - Truth coheres with the laws of logic.
 - iii) **Knowable** - Truth is known by God & can be revealed to men.
 - iv) **Universal** - Truth is the same for everyone, everywhere, at all times.
 - v) **Unchanging** - Truth does not change.
 - c) Empiricism - Knowledge Comes through Sense Experience
 - i) Experience is **not propositional, not truth claims**, it is interpreted into truth claims.
 - ii) Sense Experience contradicts itself and is thus **not a rationally coherent source**.
 - iii) Deriving Universal claims from Experience relies upon invalid Reasoning from fallible Sense Experience and experience is thus **not certain as knowledge** nor the source of knowledge.
 - iv) Experience is Relativistic / Subjective as a source & **not Universal / Objective**. Experience is **Changing**.
 - d) Some Supernatural signs can be performed by demons and the occult.

3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again [OR born from above], he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

- 3) **Unconditional Election & Reprobation** - God knows who will believe because He chooses who is going to believe.
 - a) **Reprobation** - God chose who He would condemn before they were born. God Predestined sin and unrepentant unbelief in the reprobate in order to show His justice. God justly condemns all of those whom He created to display His just wrath.
 - b) **Election** - God chose who He would forgive before they were born. God Predestined sin and also repentant belief in the elect in order to show His just mercy. God justly and mercifully forgives all those whom He created to display His Mercy / Grace.
- 4) **Born Again / Born from Above**
 - a) **Spiritual death - Original Sin** (Guilt, Nature, Transgression) & **Total Depravity** (Corrupt in all parts, No bastion of goodness, Only Evil proceeds from our fallen nature, Constant Transgression of the Law, No Good able to be performed until regeneration)
 - i) Removal of unbelief is Removal of spiritual deadness
- 5) **Redemption Accomplished & Applied**
 - a) **Accomplished**
 - i) **Limited Atonement** - Christ pays for all of the sins of all of the elect and none of the sins of anyone else.
 - b) **Applied**
 - i) **Irresistible Grace** - Effectual Calling - Regeneration
 - (1) Grace is the demerited favor of God.
 - (2) Favor is an attitude of desiring the wellbeing of the object.
 - (3) God fulfills all of His desires.
 - (4) If God wants to obtain the good of a man He is going to do it. No one can hold back His hand or prevent Him from doing it.
 - ii) **Perseverance of the Saints** - Sanctification - Preservation
 - (1) Faith is everlasting life.
 - (2) Everlasting life is not temporary life.
 - (3) Christ came to not only give life (definite sanctification) but to give it abundantly by degrees over time (progressive sanctification)
 - iii) **External Calling** - Preaching / Reading of Word

- iv) Internal Calling - Illuminating work of Holy Spirit
 - (1) Effectual Calling - Internal - prevails & causes belief in Gospel
- v) Regeneration - the Effectual Call gives Faith to the person
 - (1) Being given faith is being given Spiritual life
 - (2) Faith - the effect of effectual calling - when a person is regenerated the person is given faith.
 - (3) Regeneration is the giving of Faith. Faith is the gift received.
 - (4) There is no state of being regenerated and having no faith.
 - (5) To be regenerated is to have faith.

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, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter 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.’ 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

- 6) How Can a man be born when he is old? Can He enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?
 - a) Literalism - Failing to understand figures of speech and representations that are made clear in the context
 - b) Physical vs Spiritual - How this relates to Sacraments
 - c) Sign vs Reality
- 7) Jesus’s Answer
 - a) Born of Water - This is talking about the effect of the New Birth to Cleanse. This is the power of the Spirit to Cleanse.
 - b) Born of Spirit - This is talking about the origin of the new birth. From the Spirit.
 - c) Both the origin and the effect are necessary to SEE the Kingdom of God
 - i) Seeing the Kingdom (the visible church)
 - d) Both the origin and the effect are necessary to ENTER the Kingdom of God
 - i) ENTERING the Kingdom (the Invisible Church represented by the visible church - the sign being used to represent the reality)

- e) Born of Flesh - Natural Birth is of the nature of man in procreation and comes from natural providential rule of God according to kind.
 - i) Origin of the Human Soul - Traducianism vs Creationism
- f) Born of Spirit - the New Birth is Spiritual life and comes from the Spirit as a supernatural work to overcome fallen nature.
 - i) Origin of Faith - A Small Fraction of the Historical Debate:
 - (1) Pelagianism vs Augustinianism
 - (a) Clement of Rome (200's), Vigilantius, Celtic Church, Some Donatists, Athanasius, Augustine, Ambrose (300's-400's)
 - (2) Semi-Pelagianism vs Augustinianism
 - (a) The council of Orange (southern France - 500's)
 - (3) Rome & the Dominican Order vs The Vaudois (600's-1200's) / Albigenses / Waldenses (1200's)
 - (a) Northern Italy, Southern France, Northern Spain
 - (4) Rome vs Wycliffe - 1300's
 - (5) Holy Roman Empire & the Conciliarists vs Hus - 1400's
 - (6) Erasmus vs Luther - 1500's
 - (7) Pignus vs Calvin - 1500's
 - (8) Remonstrants / Arminians vs Reformed - 1600's
- 8) The Wind / Spirit - Pun of sign and reality
- 9) Blowing - effectually working
- 10) The Sound - the effects of the work
- 11) Origin - the secret decree / counsel of God
- 12) Destination - where man knows not but God knows where
 - a) We do not know who will be converted when
 - b) God knows who will be converted when

9 Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?"

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

- 13) It was not fitting for a man to fill a church office and fail to understand the Doctrines of Grace even at this early point in Redemptive History
- 14) TULIP - Total Depravity, Unconditional Election & Reprobation, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, Perseverance of the Saints

11 Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. 12 If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

15) Speaking the knowledge / Testifying to what has been seen

- a) Knowing what was told - more basic to less basic - more familiar to less familiar - easier to see to harder to see - earthly to heavenly

16) You do not receive - but you cannot see unless you receive the testimony

17) I have told you things about earth and you do not believe it. How will you believe me if I tell you things about heaven?

- a) Earthly Things - things about the current order of Earth - Things about the rule that exists of the God of this world

- i) Preaching the Law to make known

- (1) Original Sin

- (2) Total Depravity

- (3) The need for Effectual Calling, Regeneration / New Birth is about the Earthly condition

- b) Heavenly things - things about the new heavens and new earth - things about the rule that exists of the God of Heaven who is invading this world to liberate it.

- i) The benefits of Regeneration is about the Heavenly condition

- ii) The Rule of Christ from Heaven in the Earth in the Old Covenant National Community & the New Covenant International Community - the Catholic / Universal Church

- iii) The Covenant of Grace, the Mediator, His work, the benefits

13 No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.

18) He came from Heaven to come to bear witness about Heavenly things and to die to save those who are earthly minded and to make them heavenly minded.

19) Christ Descending/Ascending language - Descending from heaven in order to come to earth at incarnation - not descending to hell at death in order to rise to heaven. Christ did not go to hell after He died. He did not pull people out of Hell after He died. The elect were already in Abraham's bosom. Jesus went to Paradise Hades (not torment Hades) with the thief on the cross that very day.

Clement of Rome

1st Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians - Chapter 32 -

https://ccel.org/ccel/clement_rome/first_epistle_to_the_corinthians/anf01.ii.ii.xxxii.html

All these, therefore, were highly honored, and made great, not for their own sake, or for their own works, or for the righteousness which they wrought, but through the operation of His will. And we, too, being called by His will in Christ Jesus, are not justified by ourselves, nor by our own wisdom, or understanding, or godliness, or works which we have wrought in holiness of heart; but by that faith through which, from the beginning, Almighty God has justified all men; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.