

John 3

Regeneration *not* Rehabilitation

I. The New Birth: Regeneration not Rehabilitation

1 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.

- **Nicodemus:** Religious sect called Pharisees
 1. Believed in supernatural
 2. Believed in angels
 3. Believed in life after death
 4. Would eventually crucify Jesus
- **Ruler of the Jews:** Prominent among his people

2 This man came to **Jesus by night...**

- **Came by night:** Stealth
 1. Fear of man
 2. Courage

2b... and [Nicodemus] said to [Jesus], "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."

- Blah blah blah...

Nick, do you really want to do business with Me tonight?

3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, **I say to you**, unless one is **born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**"

Undiluted Truth

If you were to die right now you would not see the Kingdom of God

- **I say to you Nicodemus:**
 1. Pharisee
 2. Ruler
 3. **Well respected...**and on his way to hell unless something changes

Whatever Jesus means by Born-Again...

Unless it happens in your life...you are not going to Heaven

- **Unless one is born-again:** Every person ever born must be born again
- **Born again:** Nicodemus is confused...

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.

- **What do you mean by Born-again?**
- **Second Birth: Both real events...**
 1. **Water:** Born Physically and exemplified by breaking of water
 2. **Spirit:** Born Spiritually exemplified by new relationship with God

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

- Do not marvel at what I said but ...**grasp this truth for yourself**

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."

He undergoes a mysterious change, he becomes a new man, he enters into a new life which others cannot comprehend; though they hear the sound of it, they cannot tell where this man's new life comes, or where it is going. He has become a spiritual person, not [understood by] natural men.

- **"You must be born-again"**

1 Peter 1:23 [We have] been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, 24 because "All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, 25 But the word of the Lord endures forever." Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

- **First Birth:** Will fade like a flower of the grass/Decay
- **Second Birth:** Will last forever and is Eternal/Incorruptible

Second Birth begins when the seed of Word begins to grow and take root when we believe

Ephesians 1:13 In [Jesus] you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise

Regeneration *not* Rehabilitation

- **Born again:** Born of God's Spirit after believing the Gospel [coming up]

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?"

- Teacher of Israel but not born again?
- Teacher of Sunday School but not born again?
- Pastor but not born again?

- In a Christian family but not born again

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

- **Tough words!** True Words. Saving Words.

...we are so gentle and quiet, we do not use strong language about other people's opinions; but *let men go to hell out of charity to them.* [Spurgeon]

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?

- **We** speak of **Our** witness: Trinity; Father, Son and Holy Spirit [Note caps]

I tried explaining it simply by using earthly examples like child-birth and wind blowing
How will you understand something spiritual...**but let's give it a try...**

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

- **No one has ascended to Heaven:**

1. I know about the things of heaven
2. I came down from heaven
3. PS. I also made heaven

I have absolute authority to speak of the things of heaven and how to get there

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in Him **should not perish but have eternal life.**

I must be lifted up as the serpent in the OT was lifted up for men to be saved

Numbers 21:4 [Read] ... the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. 5 And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." 6 **So the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people**, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died. 7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. 8 Then the Lord said to Moses, "**Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.**" 9 So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

- People dying because of sin
- God provides a remedy
- Make a bronze snake and put it on end of pole

- Lift up the pole and anyone that gazes at the serpent will live

Snake: Picture of Jesus taking the sin of world upon Himself on the cross

2 Corinthians 5:21 [God the Father] made Him who knew no sin **to be sin for us**, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

- Jesus took our sin on the cross...to be sin...**to be sin for us**

Galatians 3:13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"[h]),

Ugliness of the snake/ugliness of all our sin He took/felt/experienced for us

- People only had to look at the lifted up snake and live physically
- We only have to look at the lifted up Christ who took our sin to live eternally

... To "look" and "believe" were synonymous terms. "Looking" on the Old Testament serpent is identical with "believing" on the New Testament Christ. That is, the looking and the believing are the same thing. [We] understand that while Israel looked with their external eyes, believing is done with the heart. [We can] conclude that faith is the *gaze of a soul upon a saving God*... Now, if faith is the gaze of the heart at God, and if this gaze is but the raising of the inward eyes to meet the all-seeing eyes of God, then it follows that it is one of the easiest things possible to do. It would be like God to make the most vital thing easy and place it within the range of possibility for the weakest and poorest of us. [Tozer]

What must I do to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Easy for us but not for Him who became sin for us.
Crucified on a cross and rose again!**

- Why would Jesus take our sin onto/into His own pure body?

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

- Not nails but love that held Jesus to the cross
- God the Father gave His Son who willingly died for us...

...that **whoever** believes in Him will never perish but have everlasting life

- **Whoever:** Not every whoever?

1 Corinthians 6:9 [Read] Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. **11 And such were some of you.** But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

- Every whoever who gazes at the cross

17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

- Why did Jesus come the 1st time?

Not to condemn but to save those already condemned

18 "He who believes in [Jesus] is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned **already**, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

- **Jesus is the litmus test**

1. Reject Him as stay condemned here and throughout eternity in hell
2. Believe in Him and be saved here and for all eternity in heaven

Jesus to Nicodemus: As you watch you will see people reject My Salvation...why?

19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

- **This is the condemnation;** i.e. This is why people will choose condemnation

1. Light has come into the world exposing the darkness of humanity
2. Humans love evil and do not want their evil deeds exposed
3. Humans hate the light because it will expose of who they really are

Jesus will not turn you away because of who you really are...no matter how dark

John 6:37 ... the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

- **Whosoever...**

1 Timothy 2:4 [God] desires all men to be saved/come to the knowledge of the truth.

21 But he who **does the truth** comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

John 1:9 [Jesus is] the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

- **Choice for every human:**

1. **Reject the truth:** Disregard the light given leading to damnation
2. **Do the truth:** Respond to the light given leading to our Savior Jesus

SUMMARY The New Birth: Regeneration not Rehabilitation. You must be Born-Again

II. John Decreases as Jesus Increases

22 After these things...

- **After these things...**

1. Wedding

2. Cleansing
3. Birth #2 of Nicodemus

22b...Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized. 23 Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized. 24 For John had not yet been thrown into prison.

- **Jesus and disciples move south to Judea**
- **Baptisms of repentance continuing...**
 1. John is Baptizing baptized disciples and pointed to Jesus
 2. Jesus and disciples also baptized disciples

Did Jesus baptize? Best commentary on Scripture is Scripture

John 4:2 ...Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples

- John had not yet caused enough trouble to be “thrown” into prison

25 Then there arose a dispute between some of John’s disciples and the Jews about purification. 26 And they came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified—behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!”

- Dispute about purification: Who has the final Word?
- People to John...

You began this revival...now everyone is going to Jesus!

What are you going to do about it?

27 John answered and said, “A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. 28 You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ,’ but, ‘I have been sent before Him.’ 29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.

- I’m only here to introduce the Groom and to enjoy the wedding
- My job is done...

30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

- **Jesus is the preeminent One above all things**
- John continues...

31 He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all.

- He who comes from Heaven is greater than anyone on earth

John 3:13 [To Nicodemus] No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.

1 Corinthians 15:47 The first man [Adam] was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. 48 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, **we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.**

- Jesus the heavenly man came from heaven

32 And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. 33 He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true.

- Jesus teaches about what He has seen and heard while in Heaven
- If you believe what Jesus teaches you "certify God is true" set your seal of approval

That God fulfilled His promise to send a Savior to this wicked world

34 For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure.

- Jesus was sent by God
- Jesus speaks the Words of God
- Jesus is fully motivated by the Spirit of Truth without limit

Everything Jesus says and does is 100% **right**/100% **good**/100% **true**

If I argue with Jesus...I simply try to figure out where I went wrong. [NJC]

35 The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand.

- **Father/Son Relationship**

1. Love
2. Inheritance

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36 He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

- **Before Adam**
 1. No one had sinned
 2. No one had said no to God
 3. No one had ever disobeyed the Almighty before Adam
- **After Adam**
 1. Sin permeated the universe
 2. All humanity was born into condemnation

3. God's wrath abided on every man...unless God had a plan
 - **Second Adam** sent by the Father came to pay for man's sin

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

SUMMARY John Decreases as Jesus Increases