

The New Birth

John 3:1-8

"Theme: Renewal

Aim: To show that God gives opportunities to be renewed, not just once in the new birth, but daily.

1. I don't know about you, but I love getting new stuff. I heard one time about a guy who was so rich that he wore only new clothes. Each day was a new outfit. When they were worn once, he gave them away.
2. I also remember when I was about 7 years old, this would have been 1957, I was at my friend's house down the street playing. My mother sent for me and told me to clean up, my older brother was coming home and we were going for a ride in his new car. It was a green 1950 Buick! Note the use of the word new.
3. Jesus' encounters with individuals shows the value of one. In this lesson we want to look at Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus.

I. John 3:1-8.

A. Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews. A member of the Sanhedrin.

1. He appears two other times in the text: when he gives advice about Jesus, John 7:46-52, and when he came, with Joseph of Arimathea, to prepare the body of Jesus for burial, John 19:38-42.
2. Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born again.
3. Nicodemus thought Jesus was proposing an impossibility, you cannot enter your mother's womb and be born a second time. So whatever Jesus was here talking about it has nothing to do with the natural birth.
4. It is as Jesus emphasizes a spiritual birth, but it has a natural element... water.

B. What does Jesus mean by that?

1. Many have assigned to the water a role associated with the physical birth. But hasn't Jesus ruled that out?
2. The imaginations of man have run wild with things the water is or is not.
3. Lets just let it be water and see if the Bible has any other teaching that might relate?

II. One of the things we find in John's gospel is John and Jesus baptizing folks in water, John 3:22-4:1.

A. We also find Jesus commanding the disciples to go into all the world and baptize folks, Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16.

1. This they did and folks were baptized, Acts 2:36-38, 8:30-39, 16:25-34, 22:12-16.
2. In explaining the meaning and role of baptism, Paul writes Romans 6:1-7, 16-18, Galatians 3:26-29. Compare Titus 3:3-5.
3. It is in baptism that we put on the new man in Christ, by which we are born again into the family of God.

B. The idea of renewal is one of Paul's favorite themes.

1. Understand we can't be brand new, i.e. physically reborn everyday. But we can be new in God's sight every day!
2. Ephesians 4:20-32, Colossians 3:1-11 (see Colossians 2:11-14).
3. Compare this to: 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:4, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Romans 12:1-2.

III. What does it all mean? Renewal, a new life, a new start with God is always available through Jesus Christ.

A. Remember that Paul said to the Corinthian Christians that they could/should be renewed daily!

1. We are all sinners, 1 John 1:8.
2. For the Christian, renewal begins with daily forgiveness. Note the context of the admission of sinfulness, 1 John 1:1-10.
3. For the Christian, forgiveness is preceded by repentance and prayer.
4. Example: Simon the sorcerer, Acts 8:9-13, 17-24.
5. But it doesn't stop there. Prayer, study, fellowship, worship is all a part of the daily renewal of the inward man.

B. For the one who is not a Christian, obedience to the gospel which culminates in the new birth (baptism) provides forgiveness, an entrance to the family of God, the fellowship of the redeemed, the Lord's church.

1. Such is the pattern throughout the book of Acts as we have seen.
2. No man has the right to offer salvation on less than the Bible does, and no man has the right to require more for salvation than the Bible does.
3. So in answer to the question "What must I do to be saved..." If you believe as Peter's listeners did on the day of Pentecost, we give the same answer Peter did, "repent and be baptized for the remission of sins..." Acts 2:38.

1. I am glad our Heavenly Father is so gracious and merciful to be willing to give us the opportunity for a new beginning. The story of the Prodigal Son proves that.

2. Do you need to begin life anew?

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