

Born from Above – New Creation

Thomas Robinson, *How the Gospel Works* 8, November 17, 2019

John 3:1-21 Translation TR Jesus and Nicodemus

¹ Now there was a Pharisee named **Nicodemus**, a leader of the Jews. ² He came to **Jesus** at night and said to him, "Rabbi, we recognize that you've come as **a teacher from God**; for no one can do these signs that you're doing unless God's with him."

³ Jesus responded to him, "I'm telling you, in all seriousness, unless a person is **born from above**, they're not able to **see God's rule as king**."

⁴ Nicodemus says to him, "How can a person be **born** after growing old? They can't go back into their mother's womb and be born, can they?"

⁵ Jesus responded, "Seriously, I'm telling you, unless one is **born from water and Spirit**, they're not able to enter the realm where God rules as king." ⁶ What's born from the flesh is flesh, and **what's born from the Spirit is spirit**. ⁷ Don't be astonished that I said to you, 'You must all be **born from above**.' ⁸ The **spirit** that we call **wind** blows where it chooses, and you hear its sound, but you don't know where it's coming from or where it's going. Just so is everyone who is **born from the Spirit**."

⁹ Nicodemus said to him, "How can such things happen?"

¹⁰ Jesus answered him, "Are you Israel's teacher, and you don't know these things!? ¹¹ I'm telling you, seriously, we talk about **what we know** and testify about **what we've seen**; and you're not receiving our testimony. ¹² If I told you things on earth and you're not believing, how are you going to believe if I tell you the things of God's realm?"

¹³ No one's gone up into God's realm except the one who came from there, the **Son of Man**. ¹⁴ And just as Moses raised up the snake in the wilderness [Numbers 21:8-9], in the same way it's necessary for that Son of Man to **be raised up**, ¹⁵ that everyone who **believes** in him may have **life of the age to come**. ¹⁶ For that's how much **God loved the world** (*kosmos*), **that he gave his unique Son**, in order that everyone who directs their **trust toward him** may **not perish** but may have **life of the age to come**. ¹⁷ For God didn't send that Son into the world in order to judge the world, but in order that the **world may be saved through him**. ¹⁸ One who directs their trust toward him isn't judged; but one who doesn't trust has already been judged, because they haven't trusted **the person of that unique Son of God**.

¹⁹ And this how the judgment happens: the **light** has come into the world, and people loved the **darkness** rather than the **light** because their actions were evil. ²⁰ For all who do worthless things hate that light and aren't coming to the light, so that their actions may not be exposed. ²¹ But one who's **doing what is true** comes to that light, so that their actions may be clearly seen that they've been done in God."

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 Translation TR

¹⁷ If anyone is in the Anointed King (*Christos*) – **New Creation!** The ancient things passed away; look, **new things** have come to be. ¹⁸ But all these things are from the God who reconciled us to himself through the Anointed King and who gave to us the ministry of that **reconciliation**.

¹⁹ This means that in the Anointed King, **God was reconciling a world** (*kosmos*) **to himself** by not counting their trespasses against them. Then he placed in us the message of that reconciliation. ²⁰ On behalf of the Anointed King, therefore, we come as ambassadors, as God

makes his appeal through us. We're imploring on the Anointed King's behalf: **Be reconciled to God!** ²¹ God made the one who didn't know sin, to be sin on our behalf, in order that we ourselves may manifest God's faithful righteousness embodied in him.

Romans 6:3-11 Crucified with Jesus in order to Live New Life

³ Don't you know that all of us who've been baptized into Anointed King Jesus were plunged into his death? ⁴ We then were buried with him through baptism into death, in order that, just as the Anointed King was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too might walk in a newness of life.

⁵ For if we've been planted with him in a death like his, we'll certainly share in a resurrection like his, ⁶ since we know that our old humanity was crucified with him in order that the body belonging to sin might be rendered powerless, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷ For one who's died has been declared free from all charges of sin.

⁸ Now if we have died with the Anointed King, we believe that we'll also live with him, ⁹ since we know that the Anointed King, raised from the dead, will never die again. Death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰ For that death he died, he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. ¹¹ So you also must understand yourselves to be dead to sin and alive to God in Anointed King Jesus.

Titus 3:4-7 A Washing of Rebirth with the Holy Spirit

⁴ When God our Savior's kindness and love appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not by works of righteousness that we did, but based on his own mercy, through a washing of rebirth and a renewing of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us abundantly through Anointed King Jesus, our Savior, ⁷ so that, since we've been justified by his grace, we may become heirs based on confident hope of life of the age to come.

Born from Above – New Creation – Really?

The New Testament language about the impact of the Good News is strikingly radical. New birth. New Creation. No Jew/Greek; slave/free; male/female. Crucified with Christ. What does it mean? Paul tells the struggling Corinthians about New Creation as a fact. Jesus' words to Nicodemus about being "born again" evolved into an Evangelical cliché that talks more of a method of conversion or testimony or even politics. What is Jesus' challenge really about?

Nicodemus is a leading teacher, positive toward Jesus. Jesus confronts him with the "kingdom of God" that's breaking in. The teacher must start over: birth from above. So must all. Nicodemus struggles to understand. Water and Spirit: Spirit-Wind/Breath, blowing but unseen. The Good News of God's reign is a new, challenging reality. You have to learn from the only one who truly embodies it: Son of Man/Son of God. Lifted up in death. Giving life that extends beyond death. This is God's reality bursting into new clarity – embodied. God's love for the cosmos, his kingdom is here. Can I see it? It's light. Do I really want it?

New Perception, New Self, New Life

The radical reality of that Good News was experienced by Paul. Changed from the inside out, but not given an easy life. We still live in the death of Jesus while also being called into his life. We hurt because we're fractured from God and each other, but God's reconciliation has already happened in Jesus: God & Human, yoking sin to sinless wholeness; alienation to reconciliation. God did the whole thing. Now he invites, woos, appeals in love. Take the gift.

What God as Creator has done becomes a new lens through which we see reality. We've lived in distortion and deception. God enacts His reality in Jesus. He offers it as a gift uniting us. We know our brokenness. We die with him and gain true life now – resurrection life – Spirit!