

Lesson 4

Born of The Spirit

John 3:1-36

1. Why do you think Jesus talked immediately to Nicodemus about being “born from above”, (vs. 3) before saying anything else to him?

3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above."

2. What two ideas about birth are Jesus and Nicodemus thinking of?

3. Compare John 3:6 with Rom. 8:8-9 and 7:18. Explain what you think Jesus means by the word “flesh”.

John 3:6

6 What is born of flesh is flesh and what is born of spirit is spirit.

Romans 8:8-9

8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But you are not in the flesh; on the contrary, you are in the spirit, if only the Spirit of God dwells in you. Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

Romans 7:18

18 For I know that good does not dwell in me, that is, in my flesh. The willing is ready at hand, but doing the good is not.

4. In verse 8, the Greek word *pneuma* is used to mean “spirit”, “breath”, and “wind”. The breath of a person represents life. God’s Spirit is His breath (Gen. 2:7) and is like the wind. In your own words explain Jesus’ answer to Nicodemus in 3:8.

John 3:8

8 The wind ⁴ blows where it wills, and you can hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Gen. 2:7

7 ² the LORD God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being.

5. What does Jesus claim about Himself in verses 13-15? CCC #423

John 3:13-15

13 No one has gone up to heaven except the one who has come down from heaven, the Son of Man.

14 And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

15 so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life."

423 We believe and confess that Jesus of Nazareth, born a Jew of a daughter of Israel at Bethlehem at the time of King Herod the Great and the emperor Caesar Augustus, a carpenter by trade, who died crucified in Jerusalem under the procurator Pontius Pilate during the reign of the Emperor Tiberius, is the eternal Son of God made man. He 'came from God', 'descended from heaven', and 'came in the flesh'. For 'the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father and from his fullness have we all received, grace upon grace.'

6. Who do you think Jesus includes when He uses "we" instead of "I" in vs. 11-12?

11 Amen, amen, I say to you, we speak of what we know and we testify to what we have seen, but you people do not accept our testimony.

12 If I tell you about earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things?

7. Read Numbers 21:4-9. How does this passage illustrate what Jesus has come to do?

Numbers 21:4-9

4 From Mount Hor they set out on the Red Sea road, to by-pass the land of Edom. But with their patience worn out by the journey,

5 the people complained against God and Moses, "Why have you brought us up from Egypt to die in this desert, where there is no food or water? We are disgusted with this wretched food!"

6 In punishment the LORD sent among the people saraph serpents, which bit the people so that many of them died.

7 Then the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned in complaining against the LORD and you. Pray the LORD to take the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people,

8 and the LORD said to Moses, "Make a saraph and mount it on a pole, and if anyone who has been bitten looks at it, he will recover."

9 Moses accordingly made a bronze serpent and mounted it on a pole, and whenever anyone who had been bitten by a serpent looked at the bronze serpent, he recovered.

8. A. From verses 16-18, what stands out to you about God?

16 For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.

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

18 Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

B. About what He wants to do? CCC #679

679 Christ is Lord of eternal life. Full right to pass definitive judgment on the works and hearts of men belongs to him as redeemer of the world. He "acquired" this right by his cross. The Father has given "all judgment to the Son". Yet the Son did not come to judge, but to save and to give the life he has in himself. By rejecting grace in this life, one already judges oneself, receives according to one's works, and can even condemn oneself for all eternity by rejecting the Spirit of love.

9. Is it possible to live by the truth through one's own moral effort? Consider verses 3 and 21 carefully.

John 3:3

3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born ³ from above."

John 3:21

21 But whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God.

10. In 3:30 John the Baptist says, "He must become greater; I must become less". According to 3:22-26, why was this necessary?

John 3:30

30 He must increase; I must decrease."

John 3:22-26

22 After this, Jesus and his disciples went into the region of Judea, where he spent some time with them baptizing.

23 John was also baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was an abundance of water there, and people came to be baptized,

24 for John had not yet been imprisoned.

25 Now a dispute arose between the disciples of John and a Jew about ceremonial washings.

26 So they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, the one who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you testified, here he is baptizing and everyone is coming to him."

11. Many people like everything to be proven. What proof do you find in this chapter for your hope of eternal life?