

News & Announcements

PRAYER REQUESTS

David Sims and family will be leaving our congregation on June 7th to move to Montgomery, Alabama.

Placed Membership: Chris & Santha Adams has placed membership with our congregation. Their address is: 405 Tamerack Avenue, Las Vegas, NV 89106, telephone: (702) 648-1426. Please welcome them to our family.

John Simo fell at home and was in the hospital. It was learned that he now has kidney problems. Keep John in your prayers for a quick recovery.

Keep the following on your prayer list who are either shut-in, unable to worship with us, or have on going health concerns,

Daryion and Janette Banks, Clara Beth Barker's daughter, Marsha; Dorothy and Firman Barton, Vaughn, Keith Barton, Ramona Barton, Mary and Bob Cress, Beverly Dempsey, Delois Jenkins, Rachel Kidwell, Beth Nebeker, Bobbye Pounders, Ignacio Reyes, John Simo, Fernando Vizcarra, Jr., & Lewis Wells.

"Paul Walker, Bill Walker's son, has begun leading Bible studies at the state correctional facility in Florence, Arizona. Please pray for his efforts."

TRAVELING MEMBERS

The Brickell family and Sarah Hollister will be traveling to California on Saturday, May 28th and returning Sunday, May 29th. Keep them in your prayers for a safe travel and return.

Sarah Brickell will be traveling to California on Thursday, June 2nd and returning on Saturday, June 4th.

Brenda Mendoza is in Mexico visiting family. Keep Brenda in your prayers for a safe return.

MILITARY MEMBERS

Michael Barnes and David Sims are stationed at Nellis Air Force Base.

WORD OF FAITH

Weekly bulletin of the Vegas Drive Church of Christ

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Sunday Bible Class: 9 AM • Sunday Worship: 10 AM & 6 PM • Wednesday Bible Class: 7 PM

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IS JOHN 3:5 ALL WET?

Many passages in the New Testament plainly demonstrate the necessity of water baptism is for (in order to obtain) the remission of sins. We use verses like Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38 frequently in our preaching because they are so simple to understand. Yet, there are other verses which teach the same thing and we sometimes shy away from using them. I am afraid John 3:5 falls into this last category.

In John 3:5 Jesus told Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." There is one birth under discussion in this passage and it consists of two parts: water and Spirit. Maybe it is the word "Spirit" that scares some people off.

Several years ago, in my first debate with a Baptist preacher, I used this passage as one of my affirmative arguments. My opponent, Gerald Smith of Lexington, Kentucky, tried to "drain" the water out of this verse by claiming "water" and "Spirit" referred to the same element. He said, "I think the simplest and most accurate rendering would be 'Except a man be born of water' and take the word 'kai' (and) to mean 'even,' so it would read, 'Except a man be born of water, even the Spirit.' And that puts the Spirit in apposition with water, meaning the same thing."

"And" Or "Even"?

Smith's argument was not entirely new. John Calvin taught the same thing. The Greek word "*kai*" (and, dp) is a conjunction and is sometimes translated "even." For example, in Luke 10:17 we read, "Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name." But is this the way it should be translated in John 3:5? I checked 18 different translations of John 3:5 and could not find anyone who rendered this verse as "water *even* Spirit." Many of these translations were produced by Baptists and used in their colleges.

The Analytical Greek New Testament was published in 1981 by Baker Book House. It was compiled by **Timothy and Barbara Friberg**. To explain it simply, they put the Greek text of our New Testament into a computer and asked it to do a grammatical analysis. The entire Greek text was then printed out and a "grammatical tag" was placed under each word to show what part of speech it was. Not only were nouns, verbs and prepositions indicated, but also case, gender, person and number. The tag under the word "*kai*" in John 3:5 shows it to be a connective conjunction, not an adverb as some Baptist preachers wish, and should therefore be translated as "and."

Voice Of Scholarship

I believe it is profitable to note the comments of several prominent Greek scholars regarding the proper translation of John 3:5. Many of these men served on the translation committees of the Bibles we use today. Though I do not like the way some of these men expressed themselves, they all point out the two elements of the new birth: water and Spirit.

Henry Alford:"There can be no doubt, on any honest interpretation of the words, that 'born of water' refers to the token or outward sign of baptism 'born of spirit' to the thing signified, or inward grace of the Holy Spirit. All attempts to get rid of these two plain facts have sprung from doctrinal prejudices, by which the views of expositors have been warped. Such we have in Calvin." (*Alford's Greek Testament*, Vol. 1, p. 714).

W. Robertson Nicoll: "To remove as far as possible the difficulty of Nicodemus as to the *how* (how, dp) of the new birth our Lord declares that the two great factors in it are 'water' and 'spirit.'" (*Expositors Greek Testament*, Vol. I, p. 713).

Marvin R. Vincent: "The exposition of this much controverted passage does not fall within the scope of this work. We may observe, **1.** That Jesus here lays down the preliminary conditions of entrance into His kingdom, expanding and explaining His statement in ver. 3. **2.** That this condition is here stated as complete, including two distinct factors, water and the Spirit. **3.** That the former of these two factors is not to be merged in the latter; that the spiritual element is not to exclude or obliterate the external and ritual element. We are not to understand with Calvin, the Holy Spirit as the purifying water in the spiritual sense: 'water which is the Spirit.' **4.** That water points definitely to the rite of baptism, and with a twofold reference to the past and to the future." (*Word Studies In The New Testament*, Vol. 2, p. 91).

B. F. Westcott: "It can, then, scarcely be questioned that as Nicodemus heard the words, water carried with it a reference to John's baptism, which was a divinely appointed rite (i.33), gathering up into itself and investing with a new importance all the lustral baptisms of the Jews." (*The Gospel According To John*, p. 50).

A. T. Robertson: "We are puzzled by the placing of 'water' here before 'Spirit' as a necessity to entering the Kingdom of God. But Nicodemus was troubled about 'Spirit.' He was thinking only of the physical birth. On the whole it is probable that by 'water' Jesus refers to baptism. John the Baptist preached repentance and practiced the baptism of those who confessed their sins." (*Minor Characters In The New Testament*, p. 6).

H. A. W. Meyer: "water, inasmuch as the man is baptized therewith (1 John v. 7, 8; Eph. v. 26) for the forgiveness of sins (Acts ii. 33, xxii.16; 2 Cor. vi. 11), and spirit, inasmuch as the Holy Ghost is given to the person baptized in order to his spiritual renewal and sanctification" (*Critical And Exegetical Hand-Book To The Gospel Of John*, p. 123).

What Is The "Spirit"?

What role does the Spirit have in the new birth? God used the agency of the Holy Spirit to reveal His Word unto man. "Prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). Paul goes into great detail in 1 Corinthians 2:7-13 to explain how the Spirit revealed the message of God unto the apostles.

When Jesus commands us to be "born of water and of the Spirit," He has reference to the waters of baptism joined with our obedience to the Spirit revealed word. This passage is much easier to understand in the light of a few other passages. Please note the chart

below. I do not know who drew this chart originally, but I have used it in several debates with Baptist preachers.

Some Parallels

Ephesians 5:26 says Christ died for the church "that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." Here the "washing of water" has reference to baptism. The phrase "by the word" has to refer to the word revealed by the Spirit.

In Titus 3:5 we find that salvation is "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

Another parallel is found in 1 Corinthians 12:13, "for by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body." Both water (baptism) and Spirit are found here. In John 3:5 they are said to be necessary to "enter the kingdom of God." Paul told the Corinthians these same elements would put us into the "one body." This body is the church (Col. 1:18).

John 3:5	1 Cor. 12:13	Eph. 5:26	Titus 3:5
born of water	baptized	washing of water	washing of regeneration
born of Spirit	by one Spirit	by the word	renewing of the Holy Ghost
enter into the kingdom of God	into one body	sanctify and cleanse	saved

James sums up the whole discussion in James 1:18 by reminding us that "of His own will begat he us with the word of truth."

Since being "born of water and of the Spirit" is required before we can enter the kingdom of God, it would behoove us to make certain we have obeyed this command of the Lord. By: David Padfield

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

- HEAR the gospel Rom. 10:17
- BELIEVE the gospel John 3:16
- REPENT of your sins Luke 13:3
- CONFESS Christ Matt. 10:32
- Be BAPTIZED Acts 2:38
- Live FAITHFULLY Rev. 2:10

If you are visiting today, we appreciate your presence and hope to get to know you better. Please fill out a visitor's card so we can have a record of your attendance, and if there is any way we can serve your spiritual needs, please bring this to our attention. www.vegasdrivechurchofchrist.com