

Exposition: John 3:5,6

The Holy Spirit inspired the Scriptures, and He has a specific intent for these verses and passages. Man must do DUE DILIGENCE in the EXPOSITION of the TEXT as the Holy Spirit illuminates the text. God has also given man Pastors, Teachers to assist in this effort (Eph 4:11-12).

Bible students must stop at passages which are not clear and study the text. II Timothy 2:15. (APPROVED unto God, to be diligent)

John 3:5-6

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and (of) the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Most commentators will list four commonly held views on these two verses.

1. **Christian Water Baptism** (Baptismal regeneration, or justification for infant baptism)
 - a. What would "Nicodemus" know about Christian Water Baptism? Nothing!
 - b. The Bible is clear: baptism is not a requirement for salvation. It is an ordinance to be obeyed AFTER salvation. Acts 2:41; Acts 8:12,37, Acts 10:47,48; Acts 16:33, etc. Baptism signifies our death WITH CHRIST (Romans 6:2).
2. **John the Baptist Baptism (repentance ministry)**. This baptism was in the OT ECONOMY. A person who submitted to John's "B" and then later received the NEW BIRTH after the HOLY SPIRIT was fully come (after "Pentecost" John 7:39) would have to be baptized again (Acts 19:5), this time as a full BELIEVERS BAPTISM. Even the baptisms of Jesus and the Apostles (John 4:2) were just indicators of fuller future event. Would Jesus make John's "Baptism" rite part of the NEW BIRTH? **NO!!!**
3. **Natural Birth (the WATER of natural birth)**, and Spiritual birth. Two births in view.
 - a. The seeming parallelism between v.5 & v.6 leads some to this conclusion. (Warren Wiersbe)
 - b. Water is never used as a symbolic reference to child birth in the Bible.

- c. Ancient literature did not describe it this way ever in any writing.
4. **Water and Spirit comprise one conceptual unit** of the Holy Spirit's work in regeneration. (It is also a Hendiadys, a literary figure of speech).
- a. The water-spirit concept expands the "born again" term in verse 3. It gives more detail that Nicodemus did not have before.
 - b. Water is often used in the OT as an emblem of spiritual cleansing. (figuratively)
 - c. Numbers 19:17-19 (running water); Is. 4:4 (washed); Is. 55:1 (thirsty-waters); Joel 2:28-29 (poured); Zech 13:1 (fountain).
 - d. Is.32:15 (Spirit poured out), Is 44:3 (Pour water. Pour my spirit upon thy seed.)
 - e. Ezekiel 11:19. Put my spirit in you. (no mention of water)
 - f. Ezekiel 36:24ff (sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean. What is this water? The other verses tell us. **It is the HS.** (Titus 3:5 – washing of regeneration.)
 - g. While the prophets envisioned these principles to be affecting ISRAEL as a NATION, it applies equally to individuals. Individual regeneration is presupposed. It will demand the NEW BIRTH of each person to get access to the K. of God.
 - h. Without this spiritual cleansing of the soul by the Holy Spirit (Tit.3:5) through the Word of God (Eph.5:26), no one can enter the K.of God.
 - i. "Of Water and the Spirit" parallels "born again" in verse 3. Only ONE Birth is in view.
 - j. The water-Spirit is ONE conceptual unit that causes regeneration. The preposition "of" governs both water and spirit and thus form ONE UNIT.
5. **Verse 6 is a re-emphasis that human effort cannot accomplish** this new birth. It is all of God. See John 3:8. **MONERGISM**. Not synergism.