

John 1:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Analysis

This verse explains the origin of spiritual birth, using three negatives: 'not of blood' (biological inheritance), 'nor of the will of the flesh' (human effort), 'nor of the will of man' (another person's decision). Divine birth originates solely 'of God' (ek theou). The Greek 'haima' (bloods, plural) may reference both parents—no human lineage produces spiritual children. Salvation is monergistic—entirely God's work. Regeneration precedes and enables faith, not vice versa. This demolishes all human pride in salvation.

Historical Context

This verse directly challenged Jewish confidence in Abrahamic descent. Being born Jewish didn't guarantee God's family membership. Nicodemus, a teacher of Israel, would struggle with this concept (John 3). The early church confronted similar issues regarding circumcision and Torah observance. This verse establishes that entrance into God's family requires supernatural birth, not natural descent or religious ritual.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does divine birth 'of God' challenge notions of earning salvation through religious heritage or effort?
2. What does this teach about the relationship between human decision and divine regeneration in salvation?

Interlinear Text

οἱ	οὐκ	ἐκ	αἱμάτων	οὐδὲ	ἐκ	θελήματος	σαρκὸς
Which	not	of	blood	nor	of	the will	of the flesh
G3739	G3756	G1537	G129	G3761	G1537	G2307	G4561
οὐδὲ	ἐκ	θελήματος	ἀνδρὸς	ἀλλ'	ἐκ	θεοῦ	ἐγεννήθησαν
nor	of	the will	of man	but	of	God	were born
G3761	G1537	G2307	G435	G235	G1537	G2316	G1080

Additional Cross-References

James 1:18 (Parallel theme): Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

1 John 3:9 (References God): Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

1 Peter 1:23 (References God): Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

1 Peter 1:3 (References God): Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

1 John 5:4 (References God): For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

Titus 3:5 (Parallel theme): 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;

1 John 4:7 (References God): Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

Philippians 2:13 (References God): For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

1 Corinthians 3:6 (References God): I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

1 John 5:1 (References God): Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.