

John 3:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Christ explains the necessity of being 'born of water and of the Spirit' for entering God's kingdom. 'Water' likely refers to natural birth (amniotic fluid) or baptism as outward sign; 'Spirit' is the essential element—divine regeneration. The copulative 'and' suggests two distinct births: natural and spiritual. Without spiritual rebirth, mere physical existence or religious ritual is insufficient. This verse establishes salvation as God's work, not human achievement.

Historical Context

Nicodemus, a Pharisee, would know Ezekiel 36:25-27's prophecy of cleansing water and a new Spirit. Jesus connects Old Testament promises to present reality. Proselyte baptism was known in Judaism, but Jesus demands something deeper—spiritual transformation.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. Can you identify a time when you were 'born of the Spirit' and received new spiritual life?
2. How does understanding regeneration as God's work impact your assurance of salvation?

Interlinear Text

ἀπεκρίθη	ὁ	Ἰησοῦς	ἀμὲν	ἀμὲν	λέγω	σοι	ἐὰν	μή
answered	G3588	Jesus	Verily	Verily	I say	unto thee	G1437	G3361
G611		G2424	G281	G281	G3004	G4671		
τις	γεννηθῇ	ἐξ	ὑδατος	καὶ	πνεύματος	οὐ	δύναται	
a man	be born	of	water	and	of the Spirit	he cannot	G1410	
G5100	G1080	G1537	G5204	G2532	G4151	G3756		
εἰσελθεῖν	εἰς	τὴν	βασιλείαν	τοῦ	θεοῦ			
enter	into	G3588	the kingdom	G3588	of God			
G1525	G1519		G932		G2316			

Additional Cross-References

Acts 2:38 (Spirit): Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Ephesians 5:26 (Parallel theme): That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

1 Peter 3:21 (References Jesus): The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

1 Corinthians 6:11 (Spirit): And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Matthew 3:11 (Spirit): I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

Mark 16:16 (Parallel theme): He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

John 3:3 (Kingdom): Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

John 1:13 (References God): Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

1 John 5:1 (References Jesus): 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.

1 Corinthians 2:12 (Spirit): Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.