

John 3:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Analysis

Jesus uses wind as an analogy for the Spirit's work: 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.' The same Greek word 'pneuma' means both wind and spirit. The analogy emphasizes sovereign unpredictability—we experience the Spirit's effects without controlling or fully understanding His movements. Regeneration is real but mysterious.

Historical Context

Wind imagery for God's Spirit appears in the Old Testament (Ezekiel 37:9, Genesis 1:2). Jesus teaches that the Spirit works sovereignly—not according to human expectation or manipulation. Effects are observable (changed lives) even when the mechanism remains mysterious. This humbles human pretension to control spiritual realities.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the wind analogy humble human attempts to control or predict God's work?
2. What 'effects' of the Spirit's work have you observed in your own life or others'?

Interlinear Text

τὸ	πνεύματος	ὅπου	θέλει	πνεῖ	καὶ	τὴν	φωνήν
G3588	The wind	where	it listeth	bloweth	and	G3588	the sound
	G4151	G3699	G2309	G4154	G2532		G5456
αὐτοῦ	ἀκούεις	ἀλλ'	οὐκ	οἶδας	πόθεν	ἔρχεται	καὶ
thereof	thou hearest	but	not	canst	whence	it cometh	and
G846	G191	G235	G3756	G1492	G4159	G2064	G2532
ποῦ	ὑπάγει·	οὕτως	ἐστὶν	πᾶς	ὁ	γεγεννημένος	ἐκ
whither	it goeth	so	is	every one	G3588	that is born	of
G4226	G5217	G3779	G2076	G3956		G1080	G1537
τοῦ	πνεύματος						
G3588	The wind						
	G4151						

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 2:11 (Spirit): For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

Acts 2:2 (Parallel theme): And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

Ezekiel 37:9 (Parallel theme): Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

1 John 2:29 (Parallel theme): If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

Acts 4:31 (Spirit): And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

1 Corinthians 12:11 (Spirit): But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

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

Psalms 107:25 (Parallel theme): For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof.

Psalms 107:29 (Parallel theme): He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.