



## Sermon Notes from 26 May

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### Behold the New Creation! (*John 3:1-16*)

by Pastor GL Wong

2 Co. 5:17 – To be a Christian is to be born again. Those who come to Christ experience more than a paradigm shift; they have an identity shift. They have become new creation through new birth.

#### 4 Truths about the New Birth (Jn. 3:1-16)

##### **1) The Need for New Birth (vv1-3)**

Everyone needs to be born again. Nicodemus was a Pharisee; he was a member of an ancient Jewish sect that emphasizes strict observance to traditional and written laws. He kept to high standards of morality. He was also a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin (a counsel that possesses political, religious and judicial authority), appointed to judge and adjudicate claims and disputes among the Jews. According to Jesus, even someone who is highly capable, outwardly moral and religious like Nicodemus needs to be born again. Your morality or religion will not save you; the only hope for you is to be born again!

##### **2) The Means to New Birth (vv4-8)**

Nicodemus could not grasp the spiritual metaphor of being born again. Nobody can actively choose to be born. It is neither a law to keep nor a commandment to follow. You cannot choose to be born again! New birth is essentially a result of God's sovereign grace. The movement of the Spirit, much like the wind, is unpredictable (v8). Like the wind, new birth is the mysterious sovereign operation of the Spirit of God. It is not subjected to human manipulation or control. To be born again is purely what God did to you and conversion is your response to being born again.

Jn. 1:12-13 – Salvation does not begin with you, it begins with God! New birth is a result of God's sovereign grace and the

fruit of His amazing love. Your identity in Christ is received, not achieved!

##### **3) The Effects of New Birth (vv3-8)**

Just as you can hear the sound of wind, you can also perceive the effects of new birth (v8):

New sensibilities (v3): you start to see with increasing clarity the kingdom of God. God saves sinners who sow in prayer. Keep praying!

Spiritual transformation and renewal (vv5-6): you are cleansed (born of water) by forgiveness from God and begin to walk in repentance and faith by the power of the Spirit (Eze. 36:25-27).

vv9-13 – What is needed in salvation is new birth! It is only new birth that brings about the effects of godliness. Walk in repentance and faith!

##### **4) The Sacrifice for New Birth (vv14-16)**

What Jesus did on the cross was the sacrifice that brought new birth. The expression 'lifted up' (v14) referred to Jesus' death on the cross, resurrection, and exaltation to heaven. Just as looking at the bronze serpent lifted up brought physical restoration for the Jews under Moses, looking at Jesus lifted up brings spiritual restoration for us. Look at Jesus—the One who sacrificed Himself for you, conquered death and ascended to glory—in faith and live! Jesus often uses the word 'hour' to refer to His death (Jn. 2:4). Similarly, He uses it to refer to a woman's labour (Jn. 16:21). On the cross, Jesus was identifying with a woman in labour, giving new birth. No matter the cost, He will not abort! He will endure for the joy of seeing you born and have life forever!

Turn away from everything else and look at Christ! Fix your eyes on Him and live truly together with Him!