

# "Not, Nor, Nor, But!"

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[ 0 : 00 ] It's good to be here this evening.

For months we've been studying the topic of salvation God's way.! Tonight marks the seventh lesson in that series, specifically on the new birth, which is part of the salvation God's way study. And I hope we've all come to an understanding of the importance of the new birth. In fact, it's absolutely essential. Without the new birth, we cannot see the kingdom of God, much less enter in and dwell with Christ for eternity.

Regeneration, another word for the new birth, is an absolute necessity. To say the least, the new birth is comprehensive.

Everyone who would belong to Christ must experience the new birth. Being born again or born from above introduces us to the most far-reaching, the most radical change in our life that anyone can possibly experience.

[ 1 : 23 ] I mean, it is far beyond praying the right prayer or saying the right words or having right thoughts. We go from being citizens of this planet to citizens of heaven.

Our citizenship is in the heavenlies. That's a radical change. Regeneration in every aspect is the life of God in the soul of a man.

Rebirth is possessing Christ and Him possessing us. Now, thus far, we have seen the new birth is necessary, supernatural, scriptural, instantaneous, comprehensive, and cleansing.

We did cleansing last week. Some of you weren't here. We have handouts, and I guess it's on the computer to listen to. We taped it. So, tonight, we're going to examine the fact that being born again is a sovereign birth.

It's a sovereign birth. The greatest we can have in our mind to describe the second birth is to think about our first birth.

[ 2 : 44 ] We did not contribute to any part of our first birth. As we have asked before, I ask again, what did any of us have to do with being born physically?

In honesty, if honesty rules today, we have to say, well, nothing. We had nothing to do with it. I had absolutely no input concerning my first birth.

I did not discuss it with my parents. I didn't even discuss it with God. Back some 71 years ago, when my mother discovered she was pregnant, she was 34 years old.

That was old based on some of the standards today. I had one sibling, a sister, who was 17 years older than me at the time. If I had asked if I could be born, I'm wondering if my parents might have said no.

So, I had no input at all. Neither did I have any input on my second birth. It was completely autonomous. It was a sovereign work of God.

[ 4 : 02 ] It required nothing from me. Now, some might argue at this point, but we did have to have faith, didn't we? The fact is that faith is a result of the new birth.

It's a result of it and not the cause of it. In that regard, regeneration precedes faith. That's why Jesus started out and said, you must be born again.

The actual experience of the new birth is different for each one of us.

But the foundation of the new birth is the same for all of us. God the Father marked us out for rebirth and sent the Holy Spirit into our life to accomplish the task.

In that regard, it is a sovereign birth. One of the great pastors and Bible commentaries of our day, unfortunately, is now the late Dr. James Montgomery Boyce.

[ 5 : 12 ] He went to be with the Lord in 2000. I listened to his sermons every Sunday morning on the radio. I could pick them up between 8.30 and 9 a.m. After listening to him, I'm then able to climb even higher heights and listen to Brother Mike.

So here's a quote from Dr. Boyce. What did you have to do with your birth? Did you say, I would like to be born a boy and be born to Mr. and Mrs. Smith?

They seemed like a nice couple. Did you say, I'd like to be a girl, 5 feet 6 inches tall and have blonde hair? Of course you didn't. You had absolutely nothing to do with it.

Instead, your father met your mother and between them, they produced you and you only realized what had happened afterward. It is obvious, therefore, that when God uses the image, He does so to show that He alone is responsible for your salvation and that you believe only because He first created the life within you to do it.

Many verses support this truth by showing that the basis of our sonship lies in God's electing love. And then Dr. Boyce gives a few verses and there's many, many.

[ 6 : 35 ] 1 John 3, 1, how great is the love that the Father has lavished on us that we should be called the children of God.

Ephesians 1, 5, God has predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ. James 1, 18, He chose to give us birth through the word of truth.

So we see in all of these passages, and there are many more, that the rebirth is the sovereign work of Almighty God. Which brings us to our passage tonight, the focal passage we're going to mention here tonight is John 3, 8.

The wind blows where it wills. And you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes.

So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit. Jesus is teaching here by employing a metaphor concerning the wind.

[ 7 : 44 ] Now, living in Oklahoma, we might be considered experts on the wind. Even this evening when I got here at 4 o'clock. Driving back from Texas Saturday, I fought a crosswind of some 30 plus miles an hour from Fort Worth to my farm, which is, of course, just a handful of miles from the Kansas State line.

And it was a very strong crosswind. The Lord uses this terminology to describe the born-again experience.

I find something very unique and exquisite about this. The Greek word for wind and the Greek word for spirit is one and the same.

It is the word pneuma, which means spirit or wind. And it can also mean breath. What the wind is in nature is what the Holy Spirit is in our new birth.

So, what are the parallels in the use of wind to describe the new birth? And remember, we had a previous metaphor we already studied, and that was water. Now we go to wind, both W's.

[ 9 : 04 ] Water, wind. I am grateful to be able to borrow these from Dr. Lawson. I will return them when I'm through, but I will shamelessly make them my own until that time.

First of all, think of the wind. And we're in Oklahoma. It'll be tornado season in about 45 days. First of all, the wind is independent. It's independent.

The passage quotes Jesus as saying that the wind blows where it wishes. You would think that the wind has a mind of its own.

The wind does not blow where and when we wish it to do so. We have no control over the wind. If we had control over the wind, we could prevent a lot of tornadoes and hurricanes.

Wind can knock down one house, leave another without a scratch. Happened to my father when he was three years old, living in Colgate, Oklahoma. Tornado count came down their street, knocked down every house on their side.

[ 10 : 12 ] He and five, there were five Holland boys and his mom, and it lifted over their house, and then knocked down the rest of them. They'd lose a shingle. It was just amazing.

In 1980, we had a tornado come through Bartlesville. Diane wasn't home at the time. I was the FBI agent here, and my boys were with me at home. They were little at that time.

So I placed them in a bathtub. I covered them with a mattress. And although for the first time and only time in our married life, Diane got upset at me, but I went outside to watch the funnel because I've always been fascinated by tornadoes.

I heard about that later. I still hear about it. While I'm watching, my neighbor's shed was picked up and deposited on my fence.

It just went straight up and straight back down on my fence, and the shed was full of gardening items, lawnmowers that weighed, I'm sure, hundreds of pounds. In my yard, just a very few feet

away from the shed, was a plastic Frisbee weighing ounces.

[ 11 : 28 ] It was undisturbed. It never moved. I remember watching that thing and it was just there. And it never moved. The wind moved and struck what it wanted to that day.

It is the same with the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God moves upon one heart and passes over another heart. That may be troubling to some of us.

It may be troubling to all of us. I would just remind you, if it troubles you, let me just remind you that we're all part of labor. We're in the labor force.

And if it does bother you, you can take it up with management in heaven someday. But just don't take it up with the labor guys. This is true even within families.

Diane and I were talking just a couple days ago on our trip back from Texas, actually last Saturday, when we, in our conversation, extended outward to encompass aunts and uncles and cousins and nieces and nephews, the majority of our family is unsaved.

[ 12 : 39 ] Hers and mine. It's sad, but it's true. In fact, she lost a, I guess he would be a cousin by marriage. He's been under my preaching in Texas three times, two funerals and one Sunday where he was drugged there by his wife.

But he had no interest in the things of the gospel. And he passed. He's gone. We pray for the lost. We try to witness to them. But the wind of the Holy Spirit blows where, and may I say when, it wants to. And the Spirit blows according to the sovereign plan of God.

And let me say that plan is good and holy because God is good and holy and God always does what is right.

He always does what is right. Will not the judge of the universe do right? Yeah, he will. The great Bible teacher A.W. Pink wrote, the wind is altogether beyond man's control.

[ 13 : 54 ] Never has the wind consulted with a man or woman to find out what their pleasure is. The wind blows where it wishes, when it wishes, as it wishes.

And it blows on whom it wishes. So we have seen it is a sovereign birth based upon the independent autonomous will of the Holy Spirit.

But the wind is also irresistible. Whether natural wind or the wind of the Spirit. When the wind blows in the fullness of its powers, it can sweep away everything and anything in its past.

If you've ever seen the aftermath, as I have, of an F5 tornado, you know it takes everything. I've been in several communities that experience an F5.

It leaves the foundation. You drive through 10, and there's foundations. Concrete. Debris is gone. Remember the discount thing near Stroud?

[ 15 : 05 ] When it got hit on the Moore tornado? It was all out in that pasture. People were out there looking for they were getting cheap sales, you know, picking that stuff up.

Even straight winds can blow trains off the tracks. It's powerful. It's powerful. When the Spirit blows with sovereign power on a human heart, the Spirit breaks down everything standing in the way of salvation.

He breaks down our prejudices. He removes our resistance to the gospel. I was 30 years old when I got saved. I came kicking and screaming. He subdues our arrogant, proud will.

He leaves us with no excuses by which to resist Him. Some of those excuses we may have used for years to keep from coming to Christ are swept out of our hearts.

There's a divine cleaning. He rids us of unbelief and at the same time activates our will to conform to His will. Dr. John Owen, the great Puritan preacher of the 17th century.

[ 16 : 23 ] He lived on earth from 1616 to 1683 and now lives in heaven. He wrote in his book The Holy Spirit of God. I read it.

It's a wonderful book. I had to read the abridged version. I couldn't understand Dr. Owen in the original but I read the abridged and it was a good abridgment. And plus the abridgment was 140 pages and the original was I think 690.

And he wrote 16 volume set on God. Here's what he wrote. When the Holy Spirit intends to regenerate a person, He removes all obstacles.

He overcomes all resistance. He overcomes all opposition. He infallibly produces the results in Him. The psalmist said He makes us willing in the day of His power.

Now we need to come to grips with just how powerful the Holy Spirit is. He is both independent and He's irresistible.

[ 17 : 31 ] He and the wind are also invisible. The Holy Spirit is invisible. We cannot see the wind and we cannot see the Holy Spirit.

it. But we feel the effect of the wind. We can see the powerful results of the wind. Come up to my farm. I've got 115 acres.

I've got about 750 trees down from a tornado back in about 2005. Knocked down huge oak trees. If you can get the wood to your fireplace back there, you're welcome to it.

But it's going to be hard. I'll just promise you. So we see the powerful results of the wind. And so it is with the Spirit of God. When the Holy Spirit is at work in the life and heart of a person that is living in unbelief, we can see the impact of God's Spirit as it brings about change in that person's life.

We see people get saved, they cry out, and that has to be from God. It has to be from God. I think we had a high and holy moment in our church yesterday when Joe Daniels came forward, confessed Christ as his Lord in his life.

[ 18 : 45 ] There are people in this church that prayed for Joe for decades. At some point, the Holy Spirit moved upon him. I remember the true story of a man who witnessed to his best friend and neighbor for 50 years with no effect.

No effect. the man appeared hardened to it all. His pastor asked this Christian guy, this believer one day, he says, why haven't you ever given up on that guy?

You've been witnessing him for 50 years. He gave a great response. He said, if God, let me, I want to get this right.

I think I missed a word here. But his pastor asked, why don't you give up? He responded by saying that God would not have me pray for him and witness him for 50 years if he didn't intend to save him.

What a great response. He believed that. That was his confession to the Lord. I know you're going to save him. I don't know when, I don't know how. well, the man died, the Christian, and his unbelieving neighbor got saved at the funeral.

[ 20 : 03 ] Isn't that a great story? It's a true story. The wind blew when and where it wanted. And when the wind blows, people are swept into the kingdom of God.

Usually it's one and then one and then maybe 3,000. They back in Acts. But it's still individuals being saved even though there was a mass of them.

And when we see that, whether one or 3,000, we must conclude God is at work here. It is also inscrutable.

have you realized all four of those are eyes? I mean, that's first year seminary right there. And unfortunately they weren't original with me. The wind is independent, irresistible, invisible, and inscrutable.

The wind is mysterious. It defies human explanation. We can't explain it. We don't know where it starts.

[ 21 : 09 ] We don't know where it ends. We know it blows. Go outside. It's blowing right now. We can't predict where the Spirit of God is going to move next.

It might even be where we least expect it. It happened to me with one of my officers. And I said, I'm not going to witness to him. He's never going to get saved.

And then I noticed, well, he quit smoking, he quit cursing. I said, what happened to you? He said, I came to Jesus. I didn't witness to him. I refused. I thought I'd be casting pearls before swine.

He's a staunch believer. He was in Willard's Church up in Copan. one of my retired captain, or lieutenant. It's independent, irresistible, invisible, and inscrutable.

I once heard Billy Graham say, I was at the Kansas City Festival of Evangelism in 1980, I was there with Mike Stark, and he said, in every major crusade I have ever preached, at least one pastor got saved.

[ 22 : 14 ] that's just mind boggling. How many believers in the first century would have believed that Saul of Tarsus was a candidate for salvation?

I wonder how many of those guys were praying for his soul. If any, the murderer of Stephen in many respects, did they believe he would ever be saved?

was he even a candidate for salvation? In fact, he was the great persecutor of the church. When he was regenerated, he was on a road to Damascus, Syria, to arrest Christians, haul them back to Jerusalem, reminding them to face certain death.

Others, probably a lifetime of imprisonment. Richard Wurmbrand, the founder of Voice of the Martyrs, he's with the Lord, I knew Richard. There was a group in Europe with VOM and Richard was among them.

It was after the fall of communism and he spotted someone he knew. It was like on a big plaza and he saw this guy and he knew it. So Richard left them behind and he went over there.

[ 23 : 32 ] He separated from the group. He walked over to the man, spoke to him. They shook hands warmly. They warmly embraced, talked for several minutes.

When they concluded, they warmly embraced again and Richard returned to his VOM colleagues. And all of them were silently witnessing this from a respectable distance.

When he got back, one of them said, Richard, is that someone you served with in prison? He said, no. He said, no. That was the man in prison who beat me every day.

He was my chief persecutor. Now, I put a word in here, and I meant to look it up in the dictionary, but if I'm wrong, tell me later. Richard said, we had a symbiotic relationship.

They had something in common. He beat me every day, and every day I prayed for his salvation. So we were a perfect match. He beat me, I prayed for him.

[ 24 : 37 ] And he told him he was praying for him. And that was depicted in the movie we saw. This went on for years. And one day, of course, Richard was in solitary confinement almost 14 years.

He one day went for his beating, and the guy whispered, said, we're going to pretend today. He said, I've been saved.

I've been saved. And when they found out he had been saved, the authorities, he served many years in prison himself. the wind blew on that prison guard.

And that happened in the book of Acts, didn't it? It happened in Acts. But in Romania, the wind blew, and that prison guard was saved.

No one knows when the wind of the Holy Spirit is going to blow. The movement of the Holy Spirit and regeneration is inexplicable. It is incomprehensible.

[ 25 : 39 ] It is unfathomable. We have no idea where the Holy Spirit will descend next and blow the wind of rebirth onto a person. And may I say, and I don't have this in my notes, neither are we going to manipulate the Holy Spirit or trick the Holy Spirit.

There's a church up north. It's a huge church. One of the biggest churches in America. I wouldn't say this out of context except I heard the pastor talking about this with my own ears.

Not in person but on TV. He said, we have a program at our church where we can trick men into being saved. That was his words he used.

Well, that kind of perked my interest. He said, we have a luncheon every Tuesday at our church. And we put on quite a feed and we invite all the downtown businessmen to come for a free lunch and we really put it on.

We get them full and they get tired and lethargic and almost it's like nap time and then we talk them into the sinner's prayer and they go out saved.

[ 26 : 52 ] Didn't even realize they're going to get saved. Okay. There's a great passage in the book of Ecclesiastes. I think in 40 years of teaching this is the first time I've quoted something out of Ecclesiastes.

But these are inspired words and actually I looked at all kind of versions. I'm going to do this out of the Amplified Bible Classic edition Ecclesiastes 11.5.

Well the Bible should be addictive for us. As you know not what is the way of the wind or how the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a pregnant woman even so you know not the work of God who makes all things.

Wow. Great passage. First time I ever heard that passage when I was studying for this lesson. God alone knows when he will move on a soul.

Listen to the Apostle Paul in Romans chapter 11 verses 33-34 and you're familiar with this. Oh the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God.

[ 28 : 03 ] How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable and unfathomable his ways for who has known the mind of the Lord or who has been his counselor.

I love the book of Job there toward the end when God says where were you when I did all of this. I read that and I just Pastor Willard I think is it sin to laugh when you read those?

Where were you when I laid the foundation of the universe? It's amazing. God here poses a rhetorical question. He says who can know the mind of the Lord?

And the answer is no one. No one until we have the mind of Christ. We know some of it. his ways are past finding out.

This is another quote from A.W. Pink. The wind blows. I'm glad Reverend Pink told us that. The wind blows. That is a fact. You hear the sound of it.

[ 29 : 12 ] That is the evidence that it's blowing. But you know not where it blows. That is the mystery. And of course what Reverend Pink is doing is drawing analogy with the new birth.

The one born again knows that he has a new life and he enjoys the evidences of it. But how the Holy Spirit operates upon the soul, subdues the will, and creates new life within us belongs to the deep things of God.

And I always remember with sadness when A.W. Pink, he wrote books. He wrote articles. He wrote pamphlets. No one liked him. No one was interested in him. And now we can't get enough of him. And he died and his deathbed confession was I totally failed God. I'm a total failure. And now all his stuff is being reprinted. He's an amazing guy.

If you don't have any of his work, get a hold of him. God in John's gospel, chapter 1, we have an amazing passage of scripture.

[ 30 : 24 ] And sadly, I think it is often overlooked or intentionally ignored. I've got a gentleman that I know quite well that would not read this in his Sunday school class, not in this church and other church.

And speaking of the first chapter of John, verses 12 and 13, verse 12 is the effect and verse 13 is the cause. Usually we have the cause and effect. Here we have the effect and the cause.

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, now listen to this, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Several months ago I told Pastor Mike he needed to do a sermon someday entitled Not Nor Nor But. Wouldn't that be a great and if you don't do it I'm going to sometime.

That's what that passage is all about. Not nor nor but. I always love it when God injects a but because you know something really good is coming. Usually it says but God or but now.

[ 31 : 45 ] In this passage verse 12 is the fruit. Verse 13 is the root. The effect of verse 12 is that people receive Christ into their lives and join the family of God.

People believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and commit their lives to Him. How is it that someone does not receive Christ?

How were we brought to the place where we believed upon the Lord Jesus Christ and were saved? Well, verse 13 talks about those who were born.

This is not a reference to physical birth. This is spiritual birth. This verse gives to us the clear and unequivocal answer to that question as to how we are spiritually born.

The inspired word tells us that it is of God. Very plainly, it is of God, but of God. These verses give us three negatives and then one positive as to how we are born again.

[ 33 : 00 ] First of all, it says it's not of blood. your rebirth was not of blood. It did not happen the same way our physical birth did. We don't become Christians because our parents were Christian.

They may have some influence on us, but we're not Christians because our parents were Christian.

And mark this truth down, guys. God has a lot of children, but He does not have one grandchild.

You see what I mean by that? He has many children, men and women, boys and girls, no grandchildren. He then says it's not by the will of the flesh.

This is a reference to our own efforts. It is not through our efforts to be good or work at being religious or humble. We never hit that target.

We never hit that And that was a good shot when I had my eyesight. We never hit that target. We can't be good enough that would force God's hand to save us.

[ 34 : 11 ] I remember them talking about this billionaire one time was close to being saved and they were all saying, just think what he can do for the kingdom of God. God owns the cattle on a thousand hills.

He didn't need that guy's money. God already owns it all. many believe that they can force God's hand, but the message to them is that the heart is deceitful above all things.

Getting ourselves saved by our own initiative is perhaps the greatest deceit of all. It is also nor of the will of man.

So we got a not nor nor nor of the will of man. Let me tell you what that means. It means nor of the will of man. It's precisely what it means.

Our will prior to rebirth is dead in trespasses and sins. That's the nature we inherited from Adam and Eve in Genesis chapter 3.

[ 35 : 19 ] That's our nature. Our will was totally in bondage to sin. Now I fully believe we have freedom of the will.

We have the freedom to choose the sin we're going to commit. What's the particular sin we're going to commit today? Unbelievers have that freedom to do that. So how are we born again?

It is totally of God which means it is by the will of God. It is sovereign. It is absolutely sovereign.

It is by the sovereign merciful will of a gracious God who saves us. And God has told us this. He's told us this many times.

Old and New Testament. One of my favorite is Romans 9 15 to 16. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.

[ 36 : 22 ] and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it depends not on human will or exertion but on God who has mercy.

I have got close friends that will never quote that passage. They don't read it. Their church doesn't teach it. They don't like that passage.

They don't like it. When I read that passage and I hope when you read it, it should drive us to our knees and there give God all the glory for His amazing grace in our regeneration.

And indeed it is amazing and it's very humbling to know that it's all of God and none of me. Thank you.