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# The Sovereign Spirit



The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit. John 3.8

## **We have more to learn**

Nicodemus was someone you could imagine would almost go straight to heaven. He was a member of the Jewish ruling Council- so a man of influence. He was a Pharisee and despite the bad publicity it meant he had a passion for God and for a spirituality which demonstrated itself in obedience to God's word. He was a Teacher, Jesus calls him "Israel's Teacher" v10 which implies he was also a leading theologian, so a man of considerable understanding and intellect. Yet as he engages in conversation with Jesus he discovers there is so much to learn. He was to discover there was a lot more to Jesus than had yet been discovered John 1.26. There was also much to learn about God and how it was possible to receive His life.

How important it is to recognize that we too continue our life's journey of exploration of God which will take us into eternity and beyond. There is more that God has for each of us.

Leading up to Pentecost we are exploring some of John's teaching about the ministry of the Holy Spirit, today we focus on the Sovereign Spirit.

## **Speaking from Experience**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God John1.1.

Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. <sup>33</sup>I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' <sup>34</sup>I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God." John 1.32-34

Jesus was able to speak to Nicodemus about the Spirit because he knew the Spirit, The Father the Son and the Spirit as God and as persons of the Trinity are one, even before creation. When Jesus began his public ministry, he was identified at his baptism by the Holy Spirit resting upon him and remaining with him. So Jesus is well able to speak of the Spirit. He describes the Spirit as being like the wind

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## **1. The Sovereign Spirit enables the Supernatural**

Nicodemus came to meet Jesus because of the miraculous signs that Jesus was giving. (The turning of water into wine and cleansing the Temple are two of them – see John 2). It was with the anointing of the Holy Spirit that this had been possible.

Jesus speaks about the importance of being born of the water and the Spirit, this can be a reference of human birth and spiritual birth but more probably refers to being baptized in water and the Spirit. It is a supernatural event; it requires the Spirit's activity to be able to see the Kingdom of God and to be born into this kingdom. When Jesus speaks of being born from above or being born again it is only the Sovereign Spirit who is able to make this possible. This in turn is due to the great love of the father and the Son which result in Jesus being lifted up on the cross in order to save a lost world. It is the Sovereign Spirit who is able to bring this home to us and make this real.

## **2. The Sovereign Spirit is like the Wind**

- Invisible - just like the wind the Sovereign Spirit cannot be seen, but can be heard, and experienced and its effects made visible. ( see Acts 2.1-4)
- The Sovereign Spirit like the wind cannot be controlled but can be channeled.

Nicodemus should have known of those passages within the O.T. which spoke of the Spirit particularly Genesis 1.2, and Ezekiel 36.25-26. These verses speak of the Spirit at work in creation and in the new creation within a person whereby forgiveness, a new heart and a new heart would be given.

We are unable to dictate to God the Sovereign Spirit what to do. Yet we can channel the Holy Spirit in the light of how God's word instructs us. This will be a journey that unravels with John's Gospel. Paul later will speak of the importance of having the Holy Spirit living within us and not quenching (1 Thes 5.19) or grieving the Spirit (Eph 4.30), instead Paul will command us to be being filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5.18).

The Sovereign Spirit is at work in this world and wants to work in your life and mine, we too need a personal Pentecost, like Nicodemus our eyes, hearts and our spirits need to be opened afresh and pray Gracious Sovereign Spirit come fill our lives.

## For Small Groups

Leading up to Pentecost we are going to be looking at the Ministry of the Holy Spirit as described in John's Gospel. Here we think about The Sovereign Spirit as described in John 3.8

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These words come in the context of Jesus speaking to Nicodemus so please read John 3.1-17.

Questions to help explore

1. Why did Nicodemus come to Jesus?

What caused you to want to know more about Jesus and how about others known to you?

2. On what basis does Jesus teach about the Holy Spirit? (John 1.1-5, 26, 29-34)

3. Why does Jesus liken the Holy Spirit to the wind?

4. Does the Holy Spirit have to be invited into our lives or the world to be active?

5. Can we control the Holy Spirit's activity in our lives? (1 Thes 5.19, Ephesians 4.30, 5.18).

6. Does John 3.1-17 illustrate that God is Father Son and Holy Spirit?