

The Water From Above

*An open letter to Deep Made Simple and its viewers, on Born Again Doesn't
Mean What You Think*

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Dear teacher — and dear fellow watcher

This letter answers the video [Born Again Doesn't Mean What You Think — The Greek Word Jesus Actually Used](#) from the channel **Deep Made Simple**. It is written to two readers at once: to the teacher behind the channel, and to you who watched — an open letter is always read over the writer's shoulder, and this one is meant to be. Every quotation from the video is word-for-word, and every Scripture is quoted in full from the World English Bible.

Dear teacher — and dear fellow watcher,

The verdict first: I checked this video against the Greek text, against John's own usage of the word, against the rabbinic background it invokes — and against a whole book that walked this same night conversation with Nicodemus years before your video did. **It holds, at every point I could test.** The two meanings of *anōthen*, the three Johannine passages where it plainly means "from above," Nicodemus' name and office and night-time, the proselyte-as-newborn tradition, the bronze serpent, the arc of Nicodemus from the dark to the daylight of the burial — all verified. What follows is not correction. It is the other half of the treasure — including the one verse from that night your video did not have room to quote, and it happens to be the verse everything else in your telling was walking toward.

The two doors — and the grammar that locks one of them

This is the story of one Greek word with two meanings, a teacher who grabbed the wrong one, and what changes when you finally hear both.

— *Deep Made Simple*, **Born Again Doesn't Mean What You Think**

Confirmed — and John's usage seals it exactly as you argued:

John 3:31, WEB · He who comes from above is above all. He who is from the Earth belongs to the Earth, and speaks of the Earth. He who comes from heaven is above all.

Same word — *anōthen* — and no one hears "again"; likewise Pilate's authority given him "from above" (*John 19:11*) and the tunic woven "from the top" (*John 19:23*). But here is a treasure you reached for without naming: your best line — "*nobody births themselves*" — is not only good theology. **It is written into the grammar of the sentence.** The verb in "unless one is born *anōthen*" is *gennēthē* — aorist **passive**: something done *to* the subject, never by him. And when Jesus describes the Spirit-born person in verse 8, the verb shifts to *gegennēmenos* — the Greek **perfect**: born once, and *remaining* born, a completed act whose result abides. I verified both forms against the morphological text. The voice of the verb preaches your whole video: the birth is received, and it holds. And John had already ruled out every other door in his prologue, before Nicodemus ever knocked:

John 1:12-13, WEB · But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become God's children, to those who believe in his name: who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Not of blood — no lineage, which was Nicodemus' first credential. Not of the will of the flesh, nor of man — no effort, no ladder. Of God. The prologue and the night conversation are one teaching.

The newborn convert came up out of water — the verse the video walked toward

When a person from outside Israel chose to join God's people, the rabbis sometimes spoke of that convert as being like a newborn child, starting life over with a clean slate.

— *Deep Made Simple*, **Born Again Doesn't Mean What You Think**

Exactly right — and this is where the great gift sits on the table. That convert was not reckoned newborn by deciding to be. He was reckoned newborn **when he came up out of the water** — the *mikveh*, the immersion pool of proselyte conversion. The rebirth your video correctly names had an address, and the address was water. Which is why the verse from that night which the video did not quote says precisely what it says:

John 3:5, WEB · Jesus answered, "Most assuredly I tell you, unless one is born of water and spirit, he can't enter into the Kingdom of God!"

Water *and* Spirit — Jesus completing the picture Nicodemus already knew, and aiming it at the ultimate insider: the teacher of Israel must come through the proselyte's water like any stranger. And now the detail that crowns your own thesis. A kosher mikveh could not be filled by hand: it required **undrawn water** — rain, spring, living water that arrived of itself, never carried in a vessel. The purest form was rainwater — *water from heaven*. Even the pool preached the sermon: **the water of the new birth had to come from above**. *Anōthen* was in the plumbing before it was in the vocabulary. And when Jesus pressed him — "*Are you the teacher of Israel, and don't understand these things?*" (*John 3:10*) — there was a scripture the teacher was expected to know, where water and Spirit already stood side by side in God's promise of the new heart:

Ezekiel 36:25-27, WEB · I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my ordinances, and do them.

Clean water, new heart, His Spirit within — Ezekiel had preached Nicodemus' night six centuries early. And the Old Testament had even staged it once, on a Gentile: Naaman the Syrian went down into the Jordan and "*his flesh came again like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean*" (*Second Kings 5:14*) — the foreigner under the water, up as a newborn. The whole type is unfolded in [Naaman](#). None of this diminishes one sentence of your teaching — the birth is from above, received not achieved. It completes it: the same Lord who said "from above" said "of water and Spirit" in the same breath, and the newborn convert has always come up out of the pool. He that believes — your "look and live" — and is baptized (*Mark 16:16*): the look of faith and the proselyte's water were never rivals. My own walk through this night conversation — the mikveh background, the credentials that bought me nothing at the threshold, the water I finally entered as an adult — is the spine of [Born Again](#).

Heaven descended the ladder

Heaven didn't wait for us to ascend the ladder. Heaven descended the ladder to us.

— *Deep Made Simple*, **Born Again Doesn't Mean What You Think**

That is the serpent-pole in one line (*John 3:14-15*), and Peter supplies the seed the birth comes from:

First Peter 1:23, WEB · having been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which lives and remains forever.

Incorruptible seed — which is why the perfect tense holds: what is born of that seed *remains* born. Your Nicodemus ending — the cautious man carrying his hundred pounds of spices into the daylight — is the perfect proof-of-life you called it: the wind's path traced by where the grass bent.

To you who watched

If you are the tired ladder-climber this video spoke to — hear both halves. The birth is from above: you cannot climb to it, earn it, or manufacture it; you receive it the way a dying Israelite received healing, by looking at the One lifted up. And the birth has water: the same night that said "from above" said "of water and Spirit," and from Naaman to the proselytes to the three thousand at Pentecost, the newborn have come up out of the pool. Believe — and be baptized on that belief, faith's own wedding day. If the water half is new to you, it is walked through verse by verse in [Believe and Be Baptized](#). The Father is not auditioning you. He is offering you a birth.

With respect for careful teaching — twice now, and I hope for many more,

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How this was made

This is the author's own work. It was composed with [junifye](#) and an AI assistant, drawing its Scripture and original-language work (Greek, Hebrew, cross-references) from [Darash](#) (Hebrew *darash*, “to seek, inquire, study”), a tool and reference work for the Bible in its original languages.

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