The word *listeth* is found only 2 times in the KJV Bible (*listed* is a grammatical variation that found 2 other times).

The Scriptural sense of this word wherever it is used, means a *desire*, or a *will*, or a *decree*. Perhaps the most well known verse which uses this word is John 3:8; “*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*”.

Our blessed Lord Jesus was speaking to Nicodemus, the godly, seeking Pharisee. Nicodemus did not understand how a person could be born again. He rightly reasoned that a second natural birth was impossible for any soul. But, he did not understand what the Lord Jesus was teaching him.

The Lord was telling Nicodemus that the only way to be able to partake of the kingdom of God was not by being religious such as the Pharisees were. No matter how hard they tried, the upright, exceedingly righteous life of a Pharisee was still not enough to satisfy Holy God’s glory, and thus gain entrance into His kingdom.

If anyone wanted that, they had to be *born again* or *born anew*. This could only be accomplished by the Spirit of God, Whom the Lord Jesus likened here to the *wind*. The Spirit, just like the wind, would work (*blow*) wherever it *desired* or *decreed*. And where the Spirit did work in a soul, that soul was *born again*.

The important thing is to realize that it is not through our efforts and works that we can gain God’s favor and blessing. It must be through the work of the Holy Spirit, according to His desire and will.

In James 3:4 we read; “*Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth*”. This simply means that in Biblical times, large cargo ships moved on the seas by sail and were dependent on the wind to move them.

But though the ship might be very large, it had a very small device at the stern (back) which was under the water. The *governor* who was the man that steered the boat in the direction he wished to go, would turn the ships steering device which moved the rudder. This small piece of equipment would turn a huge ship on the sea. The huge ship moved according to the desire of the *governor* by means of the rudder.