

## **You Must Be Born Again (*Part 3*)**

*John 3:6-8*

**Thought for the Day.** Every human being is spiritually dead, incapable of relationship and fellowship with God, until he or she is spiritually born again from above by the miraculous working of the Spirit of God in our hearts and minds.

In Jesus' first in-depth teaching recorded in the Gospels, He explains to Nicodemus, a learned Pharisee who was trusting in his own righteousness and good works to earn himself a place in heaven, that he is not qualified to enter the kingdom of God. In order to participate in the kingdom of God, Nicodemus, you and I, must be born again from above by the Spirit of God. In John 3:1-21, Jesus explains why this is necessary and what we must do to be spiritually born again.

**1 Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.**

**2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him."**

### **What was the purpose of the signs / miracles that Jesus performed?**

1. To bless and meet the needs of the recipients – Many of the signs were a manifestation and demonstration of the love and compassion of the Lord.
2. To establish Jesus' identity as the Messiah, the Son of God – Jesus was God in human flesh, sent by God the Father to deliver us from our sins.
3. To demonstrate His power and authority over His creation – both physical & spiritual.
4. To produce saving faith in those who witnessed them, including us – John 20:29-31.

**3 Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."**

- What must we do to be saved and live forever in heaven? We cannot enter heaven on the basis of human effort. We must be born again, born from above.

**4 Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"**

**5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."**

- Jesus pointed Nicodemus beyond the physical realities and impossibilities to the spiritual reality and necessity of being spiritually born again.
- Nicodemus, like all of us, needed to be spiritually cleansed of his sins, and spiritually reborn by the Holy Spirit. Without this spiritual washing of the soul, a cleansing that can only be accomplished by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, no one can enter God's kingdom. Our spirit has been saved (justification); our soul is being saved (sanctification); and our body will be saved (glorification)!

**6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.**

- Human beings (the flesh) can only produce more human beings, born in their own image and likeness. (Genesis 1:1, 26-27; chpt. 3; 5:1-4)

- Because of the Fall (Gen. 3), the image of God in man was twisted, distorted and destroyed.
- Fallen, sinful, human beings—flesh—can only produce more flesh—fallen, sinful, human beings who can no longer accurately reflect the image—the character and nature—of God.
- The Greek word, *sarx* (“flesh”) is translated 23 times in the *NIV* as “sinful nature.”
- Human beings produce human beings—body, soul, and spirit.
  - When human beings with fallen sinful natures give birth, they reproduce human beings with fallen sinful natures.
  - The body and soul (i.e., mind, heart, and will; the personality) are alive, but the spirit is dead.
  - Our spirit, that part of our being that enables us to connect and have relationship with God, is dead due to sin. (Eph. 2:1-5; 4:17-19; 1 John 3:14; 5:24; Col. 2:13)
- That which is born of the flesh is flesh “...means that children born of human parents are born in sin and are hopeless and helpless as far as saving themselves is concerned... A spiritual birth takes place when a person trusts in the Lord Jesus. When a person is born again through the Spirit, he receives a new nature, and is made fit for the kingdom of God.” (*William MacDonald, p. 1433*)
- “Only God, the divine Spirit, can give the believer spiritual life. At the same time God puts his Spirit into us, we are given a new regenerated human spirit. It is God's Spirit, not our effort, that makes us children of God (1:12). Jesus' description corrects human hopes that we might somehow inherit goodness from parents, or earn it by good behavior, church background, or correct associations. At some point we must be able to answer the question: Have I been born of the Spirit? (*The Life Application Commentary Series*)

### **7 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again [from above].'**

- Don't be amazed that salvation is not based on human effort; don't marvel that you cannot earn your way into heaven by good works!
- “Nicodemus... must realize that one **must be born again** and understand the complete inability of human nature to remedy its own fallen condition. He must realize that in order to be a subject of God's kingdom, a man must be holy, pure, and spiritual.” (*MacDonald, p. 1433*)

### **8 The wind blows where it wishes, 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.**

- “The new birth is very much like **the wind**. First of all, it takes place according to the will of God. It is not a power which man holds in his own control. Secondly, the new birth is invisible. You cannot see it taking place, but you can see the results of it in a person's life. When a man has been saved, a change comes over him. The evil things which he formerly loved, he now hates. The things of God which he formerly despised, these things are now the very things which he loves. Just as no one can fully understand the wind, so the new birth is a miraculous work of the Spirit of God which man is not able to comprehend fully. Moreover, the new birth, like **the wind**, is unpredictable. It is not possible to state just when and **where** it will take place. (*MacDonald, p. 1433*)
- Have you been born again by the Spirit of God?