

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

What Does it Mean to be Born Again? John 3:1-15

Inquiring Minds Want to Know

John 3:1-2 (KJV) 1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him

- Jesus is approached by a man named Nicodemus
- He was a Pharisee and ruler of the Jews
- Nicodemus came to Jesus *by night*
- Nicodemus was searching and he believed Jesus had some answers
- Nicodemus wanted to know for himself more about Jesus
- He has heard about the miracles and ministry of Jesus
- Nicodemus said of Jesus *we know* you are a teacher who comes from God
- Nicodemus knows no one can do these teach and the miracles Jesus is performing *unless* God is with them
- Nicodemus was looking at Jesus like the unchurched looks at us, unchurched people look at how God is operating in our lives and it creates desire to know more about us and the Jesus we represent
- We may not be performing miracles like Jesus, but the world does see the *miracle* of a changed life
- One can tell Nicodemus is searching for truth
- Nicodemus was religious, wealthy, educated, and politically connected, yet there was something lacking in his life
- Nicodemus came to Jesus to talk about how the darkness of life could be changed to light

You Must be Born Again

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

- Nicodemus had just paid Jesus a great compliment, but Jesus gave him a very direct reply, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"
- Instead of Jesus being flattered by Nicodemus' compliment, He tells him he must be born again
- To be born again means a person must be:
 1. *Born completely and fully*; there is a complete and full change
 2. *Born all over again*; in the sense of a second time
 3. *Born from above*; from God
- Without being born again, a person cannot *see, enter* or *experience* the Kingdom of God

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- Being born again is not a “physical: birth, it’s a *spiritual* birth

What Being Born Again is Not

- Many people equate being born again with a lot of things, but if there is not spiritual rebirth, you are *not* born again
- *Accepting portions of scripture as “true” does not make you born again*
 - Many people who are spiritually lost know and believe a lot about the Bible
- *Making some external changes does not make you born again*
 - Improving your behavior, coming to church or stopping smoking are good things, but because you’re doing them does equal being born again
- *Good moral conduct does not make you born again*
 - Being a good person is not equal to being a Christian
- *Doing good deeds will not make you born again*
 - It is a good thing to be nice, helpful, kind; even generous, but works do not save us
- *Doing religious things does not make you born again*
 - We all know “churchy”, hyper spiritual people, but their actions do not mean they have a relationship with God

Spiritual Birth

4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 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.

- Nicodemus was confused, he asked Jesus, “How can a man be born when he is old?”
- Nicodemus didn’t realize Jesus was speaking *spiritually*
- Jesus explained to Nicodemus what *born again* means
 - It is being born of water and of the Spirit
- Being born again is required if a person expects to enter the Kingdom of God
 - Jesus repeats without being born again, we can’t enter the Kingdom of God

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- Being born again is *spiritual*, not physical
 - To enter God's Kingdom, we must be born physically and supernaturally
- Being born again is a must
 - Jesus is telling us being born again is an absolute
- Being born again is a spiritual birth
- The Spirit of God works like the wind; we don't know how the wind works, but we can see the effects
- It's the same with the Spirit of God, we may not know how He works, but we can see the effect of His working in the lives of believers
- We can't see it happening, but we can see the results
 - Being born again is the work of the Spirit, not the work of the flesh

How Can this Be?

9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? 11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. 12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? 13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

- Nicodemus was religious and well-educated, but he did not know about spiritual things
- Jesus suggests that since Nicodemus was this outstanding teacher, he should have known about being born of the Spirit
- Jesus said to Nicodemus, *I've told you what I know and what I've seen, and you still won't believe Me*
- A person can be very knowledgeable about the Bible still reject spiritual truths
- Jesus said, *If I have told you about earthly things and you don't believe, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things?*
- Jesus was saying if Nicodemus couldn't grasp earthly things that were plainly taught in the Scriptures, how could he grasp heavenly things?
- Jesus said, no one has gone to heaven and returned, But the Son of Man has come down from heaven
- Only Jesus can reveal deep heavenly truths because Jesus has descended from heaven

Jesus and the Brazen Serpent

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14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

- Jesus explained that the serpent was a picture of the Messiah and His work
 1. *We must see Jesus' death on the Cross*
 - The children of Israel had begun to murmur and grumble about the trials of the wilderness, wishing they had never left Egypt.
 - God disciplined them by sending fiery serpents to plague them.
 - God met the people's need by telling Moses to make a bronze image of a serpent and to hold it up upon a pole in the midst of the people.
 - The person who looked upon the *lifted up* serpent was healed.
 - Jesus Christ destroyed the works of the devil by being *lifted up*
Hebrews 2:14 (NLT2) ¹⁴ Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death.
 - By looking upon the *defeated evil* (the serpent), Israel was healed.
 - Today we are healed by *looking upon* the Son of Man (Jesus Christ) who has been lifted up upon the cross
 2. *We must place our belief in Jesus*
 - The person who believes in the Son of Man being lifted up...
 - **will not perish John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**
 - *but will have eternal life*
 - If an Israelite believed God's message (the good news of healing), he looked upon the lifted-up serpent, and he was healed.
 - Our salvation happens when we look up to Jesus, believing he will save us