

YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN

John 3:1-18

(John 3:1-18), "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. {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. {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. {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. {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. {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. {17} For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. {18} He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."



"The story is told of **A MAN** who glanced at the obituary column in his local newspaper. To his surprise he saw his own name, indicating that he had just died. At first he laughed about it. But soon the telephone began to ring. Stunned friends and acquaintances called to inquire and to offer their sympathy. Finally, in irritation, he called the newspaper editor and angrily reported that even though he had been reported dead in the obituary column, he was very much alive. The editor was apologetic and embarrassed. Then in a flash of inspiration he said, 'Do not worry, sir, I will make it all right, for tomorrow I will put your name in the birth column.'" (Billy Graham, The Holy Spirit, p. 211).

- S WOULDNT IT BE **WONDERFUL** if life was as simple as that editor made it out to be?
- S IN THE **SPIRITUAL REALM** BEING *BORN AGAIN* IS A POSSIBILITY. Not only is it a possibility, it is **A REQUIREMENT. LISTEN TO JESUS: (V. 3)**, "... Except a man be **BORN AGAIN**, he cannot see the kingdom of God."
(V. 7), "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be **BORN AGAIN**."
- S **SOME YEARS AGO** THE SUBJECT OF "**BORN AGAIN**" TOOK **CENTER STAGE**. The testimony of TWO PROMINENT FIGURES brought the matter to center stage.

(1) ON JUNE 3, 1974, **CHARLES COLSON** pled guilty to charges related to the WATERGATE BREAK IN. He was eventually tried, convicted and imprisoned. Because of his work with President Nixon, his life was a matter of intense **public scrutiny**. God used all his difficulties to bring him to the experience Jesus called being *BORN AGAIN*. He wrote a wonderful book published in 1976 titled *BORN AGAIN* that tells about his salvation experience. (The book is well worth the time it takes to read.)

(2) **JIMMY CARTER** was elected the 39TH PRESIDENT of the United States in November of 1976. The press made a big deal out of the fact that Jimmy Carter had been *born again*.

S THE **TWO WORDS** "BORN AGAIN" ARE USED IN **TWO VERSES** IN JOHN CHAPTER 3:

- 1) **(V. 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."
- 2) **(V. 7)**, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be **BORN AGAIN**."

S THE STORY ABOUT THE *SECOND BIRTH* **REVOLVES AROUND** A MAN NAMED **NICODEMUS**. The Scripture reveals several interesting facts about Nicodemus.

#1. HIS NAME IS RECORDED IN THREE SEPARATE PLACES IN THE BIBLE

- 1) **JOHN 3 TELLS OF NICODEMUS' ENCOUNTER** with Jesus. Their visit took place **AT NIGHT**. The fact that Nicodemus came by night was so significant that it is mentioned twice in the Book of John.
 - **(John 3:2)**, "The same came to Jesus **BY NIGHT**. . ."
 - **(John 19:39)**, "And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus **BY NIGHT**, . . ."

WE ARE NOT TOLD WHY NICODEMUS CAME AT NIGHT.

- PERHAPS NICODEMUS' **WORK SCHEDULE** made a daytime visit impossible.
 - MAYBE Nicodemus wanted to use **THE COVER OF NIGHT** to conceal his interest in Jesus. He might not have wanted his visit with Jesus to become a matter of public knowledge.
 - POSSIBLY Nicodemus just wanted him to be **BY HIMSELF**.
- 2) **JOHN 7 RECORDS NICODEMUS' DEFENSE OF JESUS** BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN.
(John 7:51), "Does our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?"
 - 3) **JOHN 19 REVEALS THAT NICODEMUS HELPED WITH JESUS' BURIAL**. He helped Joseph of Aramathea bury Jesus (V. 39).

#2. HE WAS RICH

(John 19:39), “. . . Nicodemus, . . . brought a mixture of **MYRRH AND ALOES**, about an **HUNDRED POUND WEIGHT**."

- S Such spices were extremely expensive. Only a wealthy man could have **AFFORDED** 100 lbs. of myrrh and aloes for burial.
- S **TWO TRADITIONS** regarding Nicodemus are indicative of his wealth. (Realize that tradition is not the same as Scripture.)
 - 1). One tradition suggests Nicodemus was **one of the three wealthiest** men in Jerusalem.
 - 2). Another tradition indicates that Nicodemus designed the **waterworks system** for the city of Jerusalem.

#3. HE WAS RESPECTABLE

(V. 1), “. . . **A RULER OF THE JEWS**:"

- S To be "A ruler of the Jews" meant Nicodemus was a member of the Jewish **SANHEDRIN**. The Sanhedrin was Israel's highest national governing body. It consisted of seventy members, and the high priest. To be a member of the Sanhedrin would have been **similar** to being **A U.S. SENATOR** in our day.
- S Nicodemus was **A RESPECTABLE CITIZEN** in Israel.

#4. HE WAS VERY RELIGIOUS

(V. 1), "There was A MAN OF THE **PHARISEES**, . . . "

(V. 10), "Jesus answered and said unto him, 'Art thou **A MASTER** {teacher} **OF ISRAEL**, and knowest not these things?'"

- S **PHARISEES** were members of A STRICT RELIGIOUS PARTY that took great pride in keeping every detail of the O.T. Law.
- S Jesus called Nicodemus a "**TEACHER OF ISRAEL**" indicating he was **A BIBLE SCHOLAR**. He knew the O.T. well enough to teach it to others.

#5. HE WAS CONGENIAL

- S NICODEMUS PAID JESUS A GREAT **COMPLIMENT**
(V. 2), “. . . **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."
- S In essence Nicodemus was saying, "Jesus, You are **SOMEBODY SPECIAL**."

THAT WAS **NICODEMUS' RESPONSE** TO JESUS. IT IS IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER **JESUS' RESPONSE** TO NICODEMUS.

**JESUS RESPONDED TO THAT
POLITE,
RICH,
RESPECTABLE,
RELIGIOUS MAN WITH THE MOST ASTONISHING WORDS:**

(V. 3), “. . . Verily, verily I say unto **YOU**, Except a man be born

again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

S JESUS WAS SAYING TO NICODEMUS, **"EVEN YOU, NICODEMUS, MUST BE *BORN AGAIN*."** EVEN THOUGH **YOU ARE RELIGIOUS, RICH** and **RESPECTABLE**, none of those things provide you with eternal life.

S Jesus wasn't speaking to the multitudes that night WHEN HE SAID, "I SAY UNTO **YOU**," He used the **SECOND PERSON SINGULAR PRONOUN**. He was speaking to Nicodemus alone. **IN LIKE MANNER**, the message of the *second birth* is addressed to each one of us individually and personally.

S DO YOU RECALL POST OFFICE POSTERS OF **UNCLE SAM** pointing his finger with a caption that read, **"I WANT YOU!"**? The message of the *second birth* is Jesus pointing His finger at each of us individually, saying, **"I WANT YOU!"**

S NICODEMUS **MIGHT WELL REPRESENT** A LARGE SEGMENT OF PRESENT DAY SOCIETY. IN FACT, **NICODEMUS MAY WELL REPRESENT YOU:**

#1. **RELIGIOUS?**

#2. **RESPECTABLE?**

#3. **RICH?**

#4. **CONGENIAL?**

S THINK OF IT THIS WAY—**IF RICH, RESPECTABLE, RELIGIOUS NICODEMUS** had to be *born again* in order to go to heaven, **THEN WE ALL MUST** be *born again* in order to get to heaven. **IF HUMAN ACHIEVEMENT** was the way to make it to heaven, then Nicodemus would have qualified. But just as Nicodemus did not qualify by virtue of his good works, neither do we. **"YOU" MUST ALL BE BORN AGAIN.**

LET'S JOURNEY BACK IN TIME and join Jesus and Nicodemus that night as they met alone to discuss matters related to eternal destiny. As we make this journey, may we each answer the question, **"HAVE I BEEN BORN AGAIN?"**

(2 Cor 13:5), **"EXAMINE YOURSELVES**, whether ye be in the faith; **PROVE YOUR OWN SELVES**. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"

CONSIDER THREE THINGS:

I. THE **NECESSITY** OF THE *NEW BIRTH*

II. THE **MYSTERY** OF THE *NEW BIRTH*

III. THE **MEANS** OF THE *NEW BIRTH*

I. THE NECESSITY OF THE NEW BIRTH

(V. 3), "... **EXCEPT** a man be BORN AGAIN, **HE CANNOT** see the kingdom of God."

(V. 7), "Marvel not that I said unto thee, **YOU MUST** be BORN AGAIN."

S THE WORD **"MUST"** SPEAKS OF **NECESSITY**. Human beings

must eat **food**, or they will starve to death. People *must* drink **water**, or they will dehydrate. Individuals *must* breathe **air**, or they will suffocate. IN LIKE MANNER, every one of us *must* be **born again**, or we will never see the kingdom of God. Jesus didn't use the word, "**perhaps**," or "**maybe**," or "**possibly**." Jesus used the word "**MUST**." "**YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN**."

- **JOHN WESLEY** was used mightily on two continents to lead people to the Lord (he died 1791). This father of the Methodist denomination preached at a certain location for several weeks. His first message was titled, *Ye Must Be Born Again*. His second message addressed the same subject, *Ye Must Be Born Again*. His third sermon touched on the subject a third time. A man who had attended the services made his way to the evangelist and asked, "Mr. Wesley, I have observed that in every service, you've preached on the subject, *Ye must be born again*. Is that the only Scripture you know? Why do you speak on the subject, *Ye Must Be Born Again* in every service?" John Wesley's answer was apropos. Wesley said, "Because, sir, ye must be *born again*!"
- **CHARLES FINNEY** was a lawyer and effective Christian evangelist from years gone by (he died 1875). Someone once asked him, "Why do you always preach on the subject, *You must be born again*?" His response was, "I preach on it so often **BECAUSE YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN!**"

S SOMEONE MIGHT ASK, "Why do you preach on this subject today?"
The answer is, "**BECAUSE YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN!**"

S LISTEN TO JESUS AGAIN
(V. 3), "**EXCEPT** a man be born again, he **CANNOT** see the kingdom of God."
(V. 7), "You **MUST** be born again." (read Luke 13:3)

- ◆ THE *SECOND BIRTH* is NOT a **SUGGESTION**,
THE *SECOND BIRTH* is NOT a **RECOMMENDATION**,
THE *SECOND BIRTH* is NOT a **PROPOSAL**

JESUS DID NOT SAY:

- "Be born again if you think it is **A GOOD IDEA**"
- "Be born again if you think it **WILL BE HELPFUL**"
- "Be born again if it **MATCHES YOUR THEOLOGY**"

- ◆ JESUS SAID, "**YOU MUST** BE BORN AGAIN." THE *SECOND BIRTH* IS AN **ABSOLUTE NECESSITY** FOR WHICH THERE IS NO **SUBSTITUTE**
 - **(John 14:6)**, "Jesus saith unto him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life: **NO MAN** cometh unto the Father, but by me.'"
 - **(Acts 4:12)**, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
- ◆ **HEAVEN IS A PREPARED PLACE FOR A PREPARED PEOPLE** and the preparation God requires is called the ***SECOND BIRTH***.

II. THE MYSTERY OF THE *NEW BIRTH*

(V. 7), “**MARVEL** NOT that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”

S THE WORD “**MARVEL**” means to be *puzzled* or *astonished*. Apparently Nicodemus was **puzzled** and somewhat **dumbfounded** by what Jesus said to him.

S **TWO THINGS** MIGHT HAVE **INDICATED** NICODEMUS’ WONDERMENT:

1) **HIS QUESTION**

(V. 4), “. . . **HOW CAN** a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?”

Nicodemus thought Jesus was telling him he had to become a little **pre-born baby** again. As we search out this passage in detail, we will discover that is not what Jesus meant at all.

2) **HIS BODY LANGUAGE**

Nicodemus’ **nonverbal communication** must have indicated **DISBELIEF**. His nonverbal body language must have been saying, “**COME ON JESUS, GET REAL!**” “What you just said **DOES NOT MAKE SENSE.**”

IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT NICODEMUS WAS ON THE VERGE OF REJECTING JESUS because what Jesus had said **SEEMED SO UNBELIEVABLE.**

HOW MANY people today reject the *second birth* simply because they do not understand it? Because it does not make sense to them, they reject it outright. They fail to acknowledge that life is filled with **MANY EXAMPLES OF THINGS** we do not understand but that we accept without hesitation.

1) **JEAN & I** served two years overseas as **MISSIONARIES**. When we returned to the United States, a new invention was on the market. We had not seen one while overseas, but we had heard about it. They called it a **MICROWAVE OVEN**. We were told it would cook food without the inside of the microwave getting hot. I have to admit my first thought was, “That is just not true. You can’t cook food without the oven getting hot.” Just because I did not understand it did not make it untrue! Once we returned to the United States, we discovered everything we had been told was completely true.

2) I do not understand the electronics involved in a **TELEVISION**. My lack of understanding does not make TV transmission untrue.

3) I do not understand how the **INTERNET** works. We have folks in our church that have video conference calls with folks overseas using the internet. My lack of understanding of how that works does not make it untrue.

S I accept **microwave ovens, television and the internet** even though I do not understand how they work. I also accept what Jesus said about the *second birth* even though I don’t understand everything about it.

S **DANIEL WEBSTER**, the great American Statesman, was dining in Boston with a group of prominent men. In that gathering were some individuals of the Unitarian persuasion. (Unitarians deny the doctrine of the *TRINITY*. They do not believe that God is three-in-one: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.) At one point their conversation turned to the topic of religion. Webster stated in terms that could be easily understood that he believed in the deity of Jesus Christ and His atoning work of salvation.

One man replied, "But, Mr. Webster, **can you comprehend** how Christ could be both God and man?"

Mr. Webster replied, "**No, sir, I cannot comprehend it. If I could comprehend Him, He would be no greater than myself. I feel that I need a superhuman Savior.**" (*Through the Year With Warren W. Wiersbe, 366 Daily Devotions, Second Edition, pg. 91*)

S **DON'T REJECT THE *SECOND BIRTH* SIMPLY BECAUSE YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND IT. ETERNITY HANGS IN THE BALANCE** based upon one's experience of the *second birth*. **RATHER THAN REJECTING** the *second birth*, **ASK GOD FOR HELP TO UNDERSTAND**. We cannot understand our need for the *second birth* apart from God's help anyway.

- **(1 Cor 1:21)**, "For after that in the wisdom of God **THE WORLD BY WISDOM KNEW NOT GOD**, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."
- **(John 6:44)**, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: . . ."
- **(Mat 16:17)**, "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

S **ASK GOD FOR HELP**. God is **DELIGHTED TO HELP** every sincere seeker. He will help you just like He helped Nicodemus.

S **JESUS HELPED NICODEMUS BY DRAWING TWO COMPARISONS**. Those two comparisons will help us all to better understand the *second birth*.

THE TWO COMPARISONS ARE:
#1. THE **BIRTH OF A BABY**
#2. THE **BLOWING OF A WIND**

#1. JESUS COMPARED THE *SECOND BIRTH* TO THE BIRTH OF A BABY

(V. 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."

S When Jesus used the word "**AGAIN**," HE WAS COMPARING THE ***SECOND BIRTH* TO THE *FIRST BIRTH***. The first birth is the birth of a baby. Jesus used the birth of a baby to illustrate spiritual birth into God's kingdom. God requires that every human be born a second time by a spiritual birth.

S **SOMEONE HAS ACCURATELY STATED**, "If you have been **BORN ONCE**, you will **DIE TWICE**. If you have been

BORN TWICE, you will **DIE ONCE**.” They are correct! If a person is born once (physically), they will die twice (physically and eternally). If a person is born twice (physically and spiritually), they only die once (physically). When we are *born again*, we are promised eternal life.

S I would like to draw upon **TWO PARALLELS** used by **EVANGELIST MICHAEL GOTT**. He states that as *PHYSICAL BIRTH* is **DEFINITE** and **BRINGS NEW LIFE**, so *SPIRITUAL BIRTH* is also **DEFINITE** and **BRINGS NEW LIFE**. Michael Gott says:

"Just like it took a **PHYSICAL BIRTH** to get you into your physical family, it takes a **SPIRITUAL BIRTH** to get you into God's spiritual family."

S Let's expound upon the parallels between physical and spiritual births

[#1]. PHYSICAL BIRTH IS DEFINITE

S **NO ONE EVER DOUBTS** when a baby is born into physical life. **NEW BABIES HAVE A WAY** of letting you know they are present. They make all kinds of loud noises. They wake you up in the middle of the night demanding to be fed. Physical birth is definite.

S All of us are present today because each one of us have been born. We could all tell the **month, day, year** and **location** of our birth because our birth was a definite event

#1. PHYSICAL BIRTH IS DEFINITE

[#2]. PHYSICAL BIRTH IMPARTS NEW LIFE

S You may have had the privilege of adding some **NEW WORDS** to your vocabulary by visiting new parents in the hospital after the birth of their baby. They might have heard — "**Daaa-daaa,**" "**Maaa-maaa,**" "**O, how sweet.**" Sometimes folks say, "**He looks just like his daddy.**"

- I always hoped I didn't look like my kids when they were first born. They all looked like wet PRUNES. They were PURPLE. They looked ANGRY. They were kind of UGLY.
- Did you hear about the little baby that was so ugly when he was born that the doctor spanked the mother?

S **NEW LIFE IN A BABY IS WHAT BRINGS SUCH GREAT JOY**. Someday that little baby will grow up to **laugh**, and **play**, and **fellowship**, and **bring** times of **unbelievable joy** because that baby is **A LIVING HUMAN BEING**.

S **MANY OF US GREW UP LISTENING TO ART LINKLETTER** interview little children on his variety show called *House Party* (1943-67). He created the show's popular segment "**KIDS SAY THE DARNDEST THINGS**." Something about the little ones brings great joy to adults. It is true that *kids say the darkest things*.

- A little guy asked his mother, "Mommy, why doesn't baby talk? She replied, "Johnny, little babies don't talk." He said, "Well, that

is not what I learned in Sunday school. Last Sunday my teacher read to us out of the Bible and it said, ` ***JOB cursed the day he was born.***

- I am told a little girl hit her brother with a **BROOM STICK**, called him a bad name and spit on him. Her mother got after her and said, "Sweet heart, you shouldn't have done that. The devil made you do that." "Well," she said, "the devil made me hit him with a broom stick and call him a bad name, but spitting on him was my idea."

S Joy is found in the hospital room of new parents because new life has come into the world.

- #1. PHYSICAL BIRTH IS **DEFINITE**
- #2. PHYSICAL BIRTH **IMPARTS NEW LIFE**

WHAT IS TRUE about **PHYSICAL BIRTH** IS ALSO TRUE REGARDING **SPIRITUAL BIRTH**

[#1]. THE SECOND BIRTH IS DEFINITE

- S Just like the *first birth* of a baby is real, so the *second birth* is real, too. Being *born again* is something that happens just like physical birth is something that happens.
- S Many Christians can tell you the exact **month, day, year** when they were *born again*. Most people can tell you the exact **location** where they were *born again*.

CAN YOU SAY WITH DEFINITENESS, "I HAVE BEEN BORN AGAIN?"

- Some people can say, "I HAVE **joined** a church."
- Others can state, "I HAVE been **baptized**."
- Another might say, "I have **ALWAYS BEEN RELIGIOUS**."

THE QUESTION ISN'T, "Are you *religious, baptized* or a *church member*?" The question is, "**HAVE YOU BEEN BORN AGAIN?**" Can you say with **CERTAINTY**, "I know that I am going to heaven?"

- **(1 John 5:13)**, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."
- **(2 Cor 13:5)**, "**EXAMINE YOURSELVES**, whether ye be in the faith; **PROVE YOUR OWN SELVES**. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"

#1. THE *SECOND BIRTH* IS **DEFINITE**

[#2]. THE SECOND BIRTH IMPARTS NEW LIFE

(2 Cor 5:17), "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is **A NEW**

CREATURE: old things are passed away; behold, **all things are become NEW.**"

S THE CONVERSION OF **SAUL** on the road to Damascus is a good example of *new life* being imparted at salvation (Acts 9). Before Saul was *born again* he was dragging Christians out of their homes and imprisoning them. After his salvation he became perhaps the world's greatest evangelist.

S IT IS **COMMON** TO FIND MANY CHANGES TAKE PLACE IN THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO ARE *BORN AGAIN*:

- a). **VOCABULARY** often undergoes transformation.
- b). **INTERESTS** are frequently redirected.
- c). **PLACES** people go are sometimes modified.
- d). Listening to **GOD'S WORD** usually becomes exciting.
- e). Being with **GOD'S PEOPLE** becomes a source of great joy.

S **SOMEONE MIGHT ASK,**

"HOW ABOUT **THE GUY** who is a member of a church, but **THERE IS NOTHING NEW** ABOUT HIS LIFE?"

- You just described **NICODEMUS**. **NICODEMUS** was religious but he was lost. He was a good guy, but he had not been born again.
- JESUS WAS SPEAKING OF **RELIGIOUS PEOPLE** WHEN HE SAID:
(Mat 7:21-23), "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. {22} Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? {23} And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

#1. THE *NEW BIRTH* IS **DEFINITE**

#2. THE *NEW BIRTH* **IMPARTS NEW LIFE**

JESUS SHARED WITH NICODEMUS **A SECOND COMPARISON**

#1. JESUS COMPARED THE *SPIRITUAL BIRTH* TO **THE BIRTH OF A BABY**

#2. JESUS COMPARED THE *SECOND BIRTH* TO THE BLOWING OF A WIND

(V. 8 NKJV), "The **WIND** blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

S **IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE** THE GREEK WORD FOR "**WIND**" AND "**SPIRIT**" ARE THE SAME WORD.

- **(John 3:8)**, "The **WIND {pneuma}** bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, . . . "
- **(Mat 3:16)**, "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the **SPIRIT {pneuma}** of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:"

- S PERHAPS THE **WIND WAS BLOWING** that night as Jesus and Nicodemus met to discuss eternity. They might have been sitting under a **fig tree** when a sudden gust of wind caused the leaves to rustle.
- S WIND GIVES **EVIDENCE** of its presence THROUGH TWO DIFFERENT AVENUES:
- 1) Wind gives evidence of its presence by the **SOUNDS** it makes. As a little boy I loved to go to sleep with the sound of a howling wind outside my window.
 - 2) Wind gives evidence of its presence by **THE THINGS IT MOVES**. Wind can move something as small as a leaf. Wind can show itself by moving something as mighty as a tree.
- S WIND LETS US **KNOW IT IS PRESENT** by THE THINGS IT **MOVES** and by THE **SOUNDS IT MAKES**. **BUT** with all the **sights** and **sounds** associated with wind, wind **STILL CANNOT BE SEEN** because wind is **invisible** to the human eye.

JESUS SAID TO NICODEMUS:

(V. 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."

- THE FACT THAT WIND CANNOT BE SEEN WITH THE HUMAN EYE, **DOES NOT INVALIDATE WIND**.
 - **A LITTLE BOY** was flying **HIS KITE** high into the clouds one overcast day. An elderly gentleman walked by and asked, "What you doing, sonny?" The little boy said, "I'm flying a kite." The man asked, "How do you know, you can't see it?" The boy replied, "I don't have to see it, I can feel it tugging on my string."
- S JESUS WAS NOT PLAYING THE PART OF A **WEATHERMAN** that night He talked about the wind. Jesus was **TEACHING SPIRITUAL TRUTH** so that Nicodemus might understand the spiritual nature of the *new birth*. Just as wind is not invalidated because it cannot be seen with the human eye, neither is the work of the Holy Spirit invalidated because He cannot be seen. Lack of physical sight does not invalidate the miracle God accomplishes through the *new birth*.
- S When the Holy Spirit carries out the supernatural work of the *second birth*, there is no doubt that He has done a creative work. Just as a mighty wind can change the landscape, so the mighty Holy Spirit can transform a life by the work of salvation. Just as a *physical birth* makes a person brand new, so the Holy Spirit through the *new birth* makes a person brand new.
- **(2 Cor 5:17)**, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is **A NEW CREATURE**: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."
 - The Holy Spirit **DOES NOT** change the physical characteristics of a person's body (eyes / height / hair). The Holy Spirit **DOES** change a person spiritually (attitude / language / direction).

S **ONE EXPLANATION** for the LACK OF “NEW LIFE” in a person’s life, even though they might be religious, is they have never really experienced GOD’S “NEW LIFE.” The wind of God’s Spirit has never blown through their life. They **don’t like GOD’S WORD** because they don’t personally know the One who had those Words recorded. They don’t like to **SING PRAISES to God** because they do not have a personal relationship with God. They **don’t enjoy FELLOWSHIP with GOD’S PEOPLE** because they are not members of God’s spiritual family.

(1) SOME YEARS AGO AT **BOYS’ CAMP**, THE CAMP DIRECTOR OFFERED the boys **A POLAR BEAR AWARD** if they would jump into the cold mountain river before breakfast and stay a certain length of time. A few folks accepted the challenge. (I was not one of them.) It was interesting to watch what happened that morning. The guys jumped in and stayed only long enough to get the award. Something about the human body does not like ice cold water. The body is out of its element while in ice water.

SOME PEOPLE react to fellowship with God and His people the way those guys reacted to that ice cold water. They might come in contact with spiritual things on occasion, but just as soon as they do, they begin looking for a way out. **ONE EXPLANATION** for such a reaction is they are **OUT OF THEIR ELEMENT**. Spiritual things are to them what ice cold water is to the human body. They have no appetite for spiritual things because they have never been *born again*.

(2) Suppose a lady prepared A **WONDERFUL EVENING DINNER**. She set the dinner table with her best **china**. Soft **cushions** were placed on every chair. **Candles** were in place to provide the right atmosphere. Expensive **Hor-d’oeuvres** were prepared. **Steaks** were cooked out on the grill. Expensive **fragrance** was sprayed in the room. The **lights** were turned down low and the **dinner music** was just right. With the meal prepared to perfection, suppose that lady walked over to the **FISH AQUARIUM** and extracted six little **GOLDFISH**. She walked over to the table and placed one goldfish on each seat cushion in order to serve them the finest steak dinner ever prepared.

WOULD THOSE LITTLE FISH be happy? Never! Why? They would be **OUT OF THEIR ELEMENT**.

SOME PEOPLE react to fellowship with God and His people the way those little fish would react to a steak dinner. When they come in contact with spiritual things on occasion, they get away from that environment just as soon as they can. **ONE EXPLANATION** for such a reaction is they are **OUT OF THEIR ELEMENT**. It is difficult to enjoy spiritual things when a person has never experienced spiritual birth.

THE QUESTION IS:

(1) **HAVE YOU BEEN BORN OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?**

S THE QUESTION IS NOT:

- have you been **baptized?**
- have you joined a **church?**
- have you said a **prayer?**
- have you read the **Bible?**
- have you been **good?**

S THE QUESTION IS HAVE YOU **BEEN BORN AGAIN?**

(2) **DO YOU KNOW FOR SURE?**

(1 John 5:13), "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; **THAT YE MAY KNOW THAT YE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE**, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

I. THE **NECESSITY** OF THE *NEW BIRTH*

II. THE **MYSTERY** OF THE *NEW BIRTH*

IV. THE "MEANS" OF THE NEW BIRTH

S JESUS CONTINUED TO **EXPLAIN** to Nicodemus the details related to the *new birth*. **JESUS' GOAL** for Nicodemus was to have him **MOVE BEYOND CONVERSATION** about the *new birth*, TO **PERSONAL EXPERIENCE** of the *new birth*.

S **GOD'S GOAL** for every person is that we move beyond sermons about the *new birth* to personal experience of the *new birth*.

S JESUS SHARED **TWO ADDITIONAL MATTERS** THAT HELPED NICODEMUS UNDERSTAND THE **"MEANS"** BY WHICH GOD ACCOMPLISHED THE *SECOND BIRTH*

#1. **HE ILLUSTRATED** THE *NEW BIRTH* BY USE OF AN **O.T. STORY**

#2. **HE APPLIED** THE ILLUSTRATION BY USE OF THE WORD **"BELIEVE"**

#1. HE ILLUSTRATED THE NEW BIRTH BY USE OF AN O.T. STORY

(**V. 14**), "'And as Moses lifted up **THE SERPENT** in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,"

S AS A *TEACHER OF ISRAEL* (v. 10), NICODEMUS WOULD HAVE BEEN **VERY FAMILIAR** with the story of the serpent. The event Jesus referred to is found in THE BOOK OF **NUMBERS, CHAPTER 21**.

THE ISRAELITES had murmured against God and Moses because they were in such difficult circumstances in the wilderness. God judged them by sending **POISONOUS SNAKES** among them. Many of the Israelites were bit by the snakes and died. Israel went to Moses and asked him to intercede before God in their behalf. Moses prayed to God and God told him what to do.

(**Num 21:8-9 NIV**), "The LORD said to Moses, "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live." {9} So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived."

(It is interesting to note that the **INTERNATIONAL SYMBOL FOR THE MEDICAL FIELD** is a snake on a pole. That is more than a coincidence.)

IS IT SAFE TO ASSUME that some of the Israelites thought God's instruction regarding the snakes was **ABSURD?** If anyone came to that conclusion and refused to look to God's cure because of unbelief, they died. Those who believed God's instruction looked at the snake on the pole and were cured of their snakebite. God's instructions for

Israel were simple, but faith was required to experience God's cure.

JESUS USED THAT O.T. STORY TO ILLUSTRATE WHAT WOULD EVENTUALLY HAPPEN TO HIM ON **THE CROSS**. LISTEN AGAIN: **(V. 14)**, "'And **AS MOSES** lifted up **THE SERPENT** in the wilderness, **EVEN SO** must the Son of Man be lifted up,"

S **JESUS PROPHESED HIS COMING DEATH ON THE CROSS** when He shared that O.T. story. Like that snake on a pole provided the cure for the snakebite in Numbers 21, so Jesus' death on the cross provided the cure for sin. Just as the bronze serpent lifted up on a pole **WAS ISRAEL'S HOPE**, so Jesus Christ lifted up on the cross **IS OUR HOPE**. When a person dying of sin looks to Jesus, they are cured of their sin. It was on the cross that Jesus bore our sin.

- **(1 Cor 15:3)**, "... Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,"
- **(Eph 1:7)**, "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, . . ."
- **(1 Pet 2:24)**, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."
- **(Gal 1:4)**, "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:"

#1. HE ILLUSTRATED THE *NEW BIRTH* BY USE OF AN O.T. STORY

#2. HE APPLIED IT BY USING THE WORD "BELIEVE"

- THE KEY WORD IS "BELIEVE." Those who believe in Jesus are **given eternal life**. Those who place their faith in Jesus are **born again**.
- **FIVE TIMES** THE WORD "BELIEVE" IS USED IN THREE VERSES: **(V. 15-16)**, "That whosoever **BELIEVETH** in him should not perish, but have eternal life. {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. {17} For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."
(V. 18), "He that **BELIEVETH** on him is not condemned: but he that **BELIEVETH** not is condemned already, because he hath not **BELIEVED** in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

S **BIBLICAL BELIEF CARRIES THE IDEA OF "TRUST" AND "COMMITMENT."** Someone once commented that some people are **18 INCHES FROM HEAVEN**, the distance between the head and the heart. Saving faith is more than just knowledge, it is **TRUST** and **COMMITMENT** to the Lord Jesus Christ.

S Perhaps you watched the **T.V. SERIES SOME YEARS AGO CALLED THE "A" TEAM**. Mr. "T" would not get on an airplane. He believed an airplane could transport him, but he refused to get on one and fly. In order to get him on a plane, they had to put him to sleep. You have probably known a person like Mr. "T."

- S How many people believe that Jesus died to save them, but they refuse to commit themselves to Him for that salvation? They believe Jesus can take them from earth to heaven, just like they believe an airplane can take them from point A to point B. THE QUESTION THAT **BEGS AN ANSWER** regarding their belief in Jesus is have they placed their faith and trust in Jesus? Have they placed their lives into His care?
- S A PERSON DYING IN THE DESERT might believe **WATER** is needed to quench their thirst, but water does them no good until they drink it. A person dying of sin might believe that Jesus is the way to heaven, but their belief does them no good until they **RECEIVE JESUS**.

(John 1:12), "But as many as **RECEIVED HIM**, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:"

- S **A STUNTMAN** strung a cable above **NIAGRA FALLS** and purposed to walk across the cable pushing a wheelbarrow. "Can I walk safely across this cable?" he cried to the crowd of onlookers. "Yes," they roared in reply. After safely walking the cable above the rushing water, he returned to the crowd's thundering applause. He asked, "Do you believe I can safely transport a person in this wheelbarrow across the cable?" They responded again with a hardy, "Yes, we believe you can." Then came the clincher. He asked, "Which of you will get into the wheelbarrow and let me push you across the cable?" Suddenly, the onlookers "belief" took on a different dimension. No one was willing to **commit** their life to the stuntman.

THE REAL QUESTIONS ISN'T, "Do you believe Jesus can save?" **The question is**, "Is your belief such that you have placed your *trust* in Jesus?" Has your belief caused you to *commit* your life to Him? Saving faith gets on the "**plane**"; drinks the "**water**"; gets in the "**wheelbarrow**" with Jesus. BELIEF IS MORE THAN INTELLECTUAL ASSENT. Belief is TRUST IN and COMMITMENT TO JESUS.

(Rom 10:9), "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the **LORD** Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be **SAVED**."

(V. 3), ". . . Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

(V. 7), "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be **BORN AGAIN**."

- S God has used these verses throughout history to make **THE DIFFERENCE IN ETERNITY** for a multitude of persons. Wouldn't it be **wonderful** if God used these verses again to bring someone to Himself? Wouldn't it be especially wonderful if that someone was you?
- S **HAVE YOU BEEN BORN AGAIN?**

- S **(John 1:12)**, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:"
- S **GOOD REASON EXISTS** to believe that Nicodemus was eventually *born again*. That conclusion is based on that fact that Nicodemus helped to bury Jesus (John 19:39).

(Rom 10:9), "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

(Rom 10:13), "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."