

The New Birth

Nicodemus traveled the dark streets of Jerusalem to talk to Jesus. He may not have been fully convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, but he knew that Jesus was a man of God who could perform miracles (John 3:1-2).

Nicodemus was a Pharisee. Those who belonged to this Jewish sect believed that inventing their own religious rules and traditions would lead a person closer to God. Jesus constantly condemned their thinking (Matthew 15:1-9).

Jesus knew that Nicodemus came to discuss more than His miracles (John 2:23-25). Nicodemus probably wanted to learn more about the teachings of Jesus and the kingdom of God. This would explain their discussion about the new birth.

The new birth is critical (John 3:3, 5, 7).

- One must experience the new birth to enter into the kingdom of God.
- Nicodemus' physical nationality as a Jew would no longer be good enough. If he wanted to be part of the kingdom of the Messiah, he needed to be born again spiritually.
- The language of Jesus teaches that "born again Christian" is redundant. There are no Christians who have not been born again! Being born again is not something a person does to take their Christianity to the next level. Instead, it is something that a person must do to become a Christian.

The new birth involves water and the Spirit (John 3:5-6).

- Nicodemus wanted to know more about the new birth (John 3:4). How exactly is a person born again?
- Jesus revealed that the new birth involves water and the Spirit.
- The water refers to water baptism for remissions of sins (Acts 2:38; 8:36; 10:46; 1 Peter 3:21).
- The Spirit is a reference to the Holy Spirit. Only when a person is converted by the revealed teachings of the Spirit (the word of God) can he learn the truth about God, his sins, and how to receive God's forgiveness (John 16:12-15).
- When one is converted by the teachings of the Spirit, he is born again of the Spirit (1 Peter 1:3, 23-25).

The new birth should be evident.

- People of the world should easily recognize a person has been born again. There should be something unique and different (2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:4).
- The person who is born again puts off the "old self" (Ephesians 4:22). This is a reference to the life of sin and wickedness.
- He also puts on the "new self" (Ephesians 4:23-24). This refers to a life that is truly converted. It is a life made up of new habits, new attitudes, new priorities, and new thinking (Ephesians 4:25-32).

Conclusion:

Do you need to begin the New Year by experiencing the new birth?

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