

BORN OF THE SPIRIT

TEXT *John 3:6-7:*

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

INTRODUCTION:

These words are from a vital discussion between Jesus and Nicodemus. Nicodemus was a very religious person. He was a member of the Sanhedrin, a Pharisee, and a well trained Rabbi. He believed Jesus was a God-sent teacher; but he was a timid, weak believer. He came to Jesus alone, by night, afraid of 'what people might think'. But he did come sincerely inquiring, and Jesus took the time to give him answers to meet his need.

Jesus patiently, but firmly, explained that just as physical life is dependent upon birth, so spiritual life is dependent on birth also. Jesus' Words to Nicodemus are for all of us!

John 3:3-11:

³ Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except ^a 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.

Physical birth gives us human life. We are so familiar with this type of birth that we accept the fact of it automatically. It is a great mystery. Can anyone explain life? Even if at some future time scientists create a form of life in a laboratory, they will not have invented it, only discovered it. It will certainly not be any kind of complex form of life, but a very, very simple type of organism. So, if we cannot explain something as “ordinary” as physical birth, is it any wonder we have difficulty grasping the full understanding of spiritual birth?

Every born-again person has two natures. The nature of the flesh is a sinful one with a corruptible body that will eventually die. The nature of the spirit is one which abhors sin, is in communion with God, and has eternal life.

These two natures are in opposition to each other. Even though you are born of the Spirit, some of the old nature still remains and, as Paul said, “I die daily”.

1 Corinthians 15:32: If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die.

Sin must be put down daily! You don't become perfect instantly. This is the cause of much misunderstanding. When a person makes a decision to accept Christ as Savior, he receives the new life offered in Christ. If then he sins, invariably someone will say, “See, it didn't make him any different.” Whoever speaks this way doesn't understand that a Christian, especially a new Christian, is on a battleground. The two natures compete for mastery and the right to reign in the person's heart.

Romans 6:12: Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

When the old nature is kept in subjection, sin cannot be committed, for the new nature cannot sin.

When the **old nature** is kept in subjection, sin cannot be committed, for the **new nature** cannot sin.

1 John 3:6-10:

6 Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him.

⁷ Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is Righteous.

⁸ He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

⁹ Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

¹⁰ In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

When a baby is born, every care and precaution is taken to see that he grows steadily and well. There are germs and diseases which must be combated and destroyed. The illustration is apparent; there are necessary things a new Christian must do, and some he must not do, to insure that the spiritual nature grows strong. These steps in Christian growth will be taken up later on.

Many people find themselves in the place of Nicodemus as he came to Jesus that night.

The person who is born of the Spirit knows that Jesus is the Messiah!

They believe in God, acknowledge that Jesus was a great man and good teacher. The person who is born of the Spirit knows that Jesus is the Messiah!

¹ John 5:1: Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth Him Who begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him.

The Pharisees were well known for their love of themselves. Those born of the spirit have a different kind of love. They love others, even the unlovely people.

¹ John 4:11-14:

¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

¹² No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us.

¹³ Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit.

¹⁴ And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God.

16 And we have known and believed the Love that God hath to us. God is Love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

Perhaps on the human level we still cannot “like” everyone, but through Christ’s love in us we have a genuine concern and caring for the whole world.

We don’t do good works in order to be saved. A ‘Christ-ian’ will do good works because of the new birth which gives us the new spiritual nature. Martin Luther said: “*You could no more separate true faith from works than you could separate fire from burning. The one brings about the other.*”

These three:

- 1) Faith
- 2) Love
- 3) Good Works

are the results of being born again. Now from this new birth grows the Life in the Spirit.

1 Peter 2:2: As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby:

1 Peter 3:18: For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

As any real encounter with Jesus Christ does, this meeting and discussion with the Master encouraged the weak faith of Nicodemus. He became such a devoted follower that after the crucifixion, when other disciples were in fearful hiding, Nicodemus came forth and helped bury the body of Jesus in the tomb. Even Jesus’ death did not shake the faith of this one who responded to the prompting of the Spirit; this man who did experience the *new birth* the Master explained to him.



John 7:50: Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,)

John 19:39-42:

39 And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.

40 Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

41 Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.

42 There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

There is one big difference between physical and spiritual birth. We have no choice about being born as a human being into this world; but we do have an opportunity to choose or reject this spiritual rebirth. The first birth is not optional with us, although the second one definitely is optional. The choice is ours; but the work is the work of the Holy Spirit. He brings into our human nature the Divine Nature. First, we experience the coming of the new birth, then the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and then the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Do you believe in God, as Almighty Creator and as your Father in Heaven? Do you acknowledge Jesus Christ as His Son and your Savior? Do you surrender all of your self and your life, more and more, in the power of the indwelling Spirit? Then you are born again, and you know the blessed unity of God with us, and God in us.

John 14:17: Even the Spirit of Truth; Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

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