

Title: "You Must Be Born Again"

Scripture: John 3:1-15

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I. Introduction

Nicodemus is mentioned three times in the New Testament, all in the Gospel of John, (John 3; John 7:50; John 19:38). Not much is known about Nicodemus, except that he was highly educated, a well to do ruler and teacher in the Jewish community who came by night wanting to be taught by Jesus. Being a Pharisee, he was a strict observer of the law (John 7:50-51). However, there was something different about Nicodemus from the other members of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Council of seventy men; he was spiritually hungry.

II. The Lesson

1. vv. 1-2

The Scripture points out that Nicodemus came to Jesus under the cover of darkness. It is clear from his comments that Nicodemus accepted Jesus as a Teacher and a Rabbi from God who could work miracles. "No one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him". The Bible tells us that deceivers and false prophets can sometimes perform remarkable signs. Nevertheless, Jesus was not impressed with the depth of Nicodemus' belief or understanding.

2. vv. 3-6

"Verily, Verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Jesus' reply to Nicodemus *shattered the Jewish assumption* that their racial identity assured them a place in God's kingdom; only being born again gives this assurance. It reveals that there must be a work of God "from above". It teaches the necessity of a new beginning, a spiritual rebirth. God made a way to bring us back to Him and give us new life through Jesus Christ. The way back to God is to acknowledge our need of a Saviour and to accept what Jesus did on our behalf. The first birth, born of water, gives us physical life. The new birth gives us spiritual life and membership in God's family. That can only happen through a supernatural act of God through the Holy Spirit. Nicodemus clearly did not grasp the meaning or understand Jesus or the truth about the new birth (John 3: 4). He thought that the Jewish people already had a place in God's kingdom. To be born again is to have the Holy Spirit transform our hearts from indifference and hostility toward God to a love for God. The only way to experience what it means to be born again is through repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ. It cannot be earned in any other way. A physical birth can only produce humanity while the Holy Spirit can produce the spiritual birth required for entrance into God's Kingdom.

3. vv. 7-8

"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again". Nicodemus did marvel at the statement because he believed he already was included in God's kingdom. Jesus wanted him to

understand the fact that he was not a part of God's family without being born again. Jesus explained to Nicodemus that he did not understand everything about the wind, but he, Nicodemus, could see its effects. That is how it is with the Spirit. Its effects can be seen in the transformed lives of those who are born of the Spirit. Nicodemus did not have to understand everything about the new birth or being born again before experiencing it.

4. vv. 9-12

Nicodemus was still confused, and Jesus continued to teach him. Jesus chastised Nicodemus, a teacher of the law, for not being aware of the promise of the new birth. If he could not see that he needed spiritual transformation, what more could Jesus tell him?

5. vv. 13-15

Jesus made it clear that He can speak with authority about things in heaven, though no one else can (John 1:1). Jesus made a remarkable statement explaining that the serpent (sin) was a picture of the Messiah and His work. Even though Jesus bore our sins on the cross, He was never a sinner. Unless we have that new birth, we cannot see or enter the kingdom of God. That is the word of Jesus Christ (John 3:15)!

III. **Conclusion:**

Eternal life is available to anyone who is **born again** in the Spirit if he will acknowledge his need of Jesus and receive Him. This is where eternal life begins.