

You Must Be Born Again

BY PASTOR JOE FOCHT



In John Chapter 3, Jesus tells a Pharisee named Nicodemus that one must be **“born again”** to have eternal life with God. Nicodemus asked Jesus two things: “How can a man be born again?” and “How can these things be?”

In verse 2, Nicodemus came to Jesus because of the miracles He had done. He says, **“Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”** He had probably seen Jesus overturn the tables of the moneychangers in the temple. Maybe he thought, “Could we really have a genuine prophet in our midst?” He had seen something different about Jesus; maybe he was thinking, “How can I have a relationship with God like Yours?”

Jesus cut right to the heart of the matter: **“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”** (verse 3). What does “born again” mean? Some say it’s turning over a new leaf. Some call it personal reformation, but it is regeneration—a new birth, a new creation, old things being passed away.

The second question Nicodemus asked was “How?” He didn’t ask “why?” because he saw the truth in what Jesus was saying. He asked, “How can these things be?” He was asking genuinely; he knew it’s impossible to be born physically a second time. This man was considered by many to be the topmost theologian among the Pharisees. He was a member of their most prestigious group, the Sanhedrin. Jesus called him “the teacher in Israel”—the language implies he was the leading theologian.

Nicodemus had all the religious traditions, all the credentials and certificates, everything in place. But Jesus told him, “You need to be born again, Nicodemus.”

There may be more religious people on the path to hell than any other group. You may have many titles, but unless you have been born again, you are not a Christian. You must be “born again”—I didn’t say it; Jesus

there’s a physical seed and egg, there is also the spiritual seed of God’s Word that is sown into the deepest part of the human being by the power of God.

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said it. If you consider yourself “born and raised a Christian,” Jesus said you must be born again.

Nicodemus said, “Master, how?” He was asking, how can I experience this? Can I really change? Could there really be a new beginning?

Jesus said one must be **“born of water and the Spirit. ... That which is born of the Spirit is spirit”** (verses 5b-6). It is a spiritual birth. And it should be evident in the believer’s life. If the new birth is powerful enough to change someone’s eternal destiny, it should be powerful enough to change the way they live now. Part of the confusion for a lot of people is meeting Christians who say one thing and live another—drinking, using drugs, talking and living like the world. The evidence of the Holy Spirit in a believer’s life should be love, joy, peace, faith.

After I was born again, I looked at my parents in a new way. The Bible made sense for the first time. God’s presence was real to me. Jesus explained that just as one can see the effects of the wind, so one will see the effects of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. **“So is everyone who is born of the Spirit”** (verse 8b).

The spiritual birth is a work of the Holy Spirit. Just like in natural birth, where

Jesus said, **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life”** (verse 16). To “believe” in Christ means to place all of one’s hope in Him, to lean on Him entirely for our salvation—not on our good works, not on our credentials, not on ourselves. We must place all of our faith in Him.

“Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.” Isaiah 45:22

When I leave this earth and go to heaven, it will be because I am trusting in Jesus—not my righteousness, not the purity of my thought-life, my intentions, or motives. I am trusting totally in Him. If you have not experienced that new birth, it’s not about religion but a relationship. It’s not knowing about Him, but knowing Him personally.

If you are not born again, turn from your sins today. Turn to Jesus. Say, “Lord, I need to be cleansed. I need to be born again.” Tell Him in your own words, “Lord, I believe in You today. I repent of my sins. I understand why You died on the cross. I don’t want religion; I want a relationship with You. I know I’m a sinner, so please forgive me. I don’t want to play church; I want to walk with You.” ↩

Joe Focht has been senior pastor of CC Philadelphia, PA, for 27 years. His daily Bible teaching ministry, “Straight from the Heart,” is featured on the radio and the Internet.