

## Food for thought from the Gospel of John

### # 3 – 2 The New Birth

#### John 3:1-8

Whatever nice things Nicodemus was trying to say to Jesus, it was not as important as what Jesus wanted to say to Nicodemus. It is the most important thing that we could talk about to anyone. As we can see with the example of Nicodemus, you can be a relatively good person who is very faithful to their religion and still not have a personal relationship with God. It is the new birth – not religion, not good works that determines your eternal destiny!

**Here are five things Jesus said about being “born again:”**

**You cannot comprehend the kingdom of God without the new birth (John 3:3).** It is spiritual in nature. This dilemma could be compared to trying to watch television programs when the television is unplugged and has no power. The new birth is like plugging the television back into the wall socket. It is a restoration of that which was lost when Adam and Eve sinned (i.e. our ability to know and love God).

**To be born again is to be born of “water and the Spirit” (John 3:5).** This is not two separate actions. This is one action involving two important components.

- The water of the Word of God. See Ephesians 5:25-26 cp. Psalm 1:2-3.
- The cleansing, life-giving action of the Spirit of God / Christ, using the Word of God to create a new person within. See Titus 3:5; John 4:10,14; 6:63; 7:37-39.
- Note: This is not a discussion on baptism.

**There are essentially only two kinds of people (John 3:6).**

- **Those who are only born one time – Physically.** They were born as sinners, descendants of Adam. They are dead in their trespasses and sins. They cannot know/understand God. They cannot desire/seek God. They cannot please God. See Psalm 51:5; Romans 3:23; 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3; I Corinthians 2:14; Romans 3:10-12; 8:5-8.
- **Those who have been born twice – first physically, then, at some later point in life, spiritually.** They have received the gift of eternal life. They have called upon the Lord for

forgiveness and for salvation from sin. A new life has been created within them. The Spirit of God dwells in them. They have a new heart that can know/understand God and God's Word. They can desire/seek God and the things of God. Through faith they can please God. See John 1:12-13; Romans 6:23; 10:9-13; Ephesians 1:12-14; 2:4-10; 4:20-24; I Corinthians 2:9-13; II Corinthians 5:17; Romans 5:1-5; Hebrews 11:6; I Peter 1:22-25.

From this major division of humanity we can conclude:

- 1) **If you are born once, you will die twice.** The natural man will experience a second death after the physical death. This is to die in your sins and be eternally separated from God (Revelation 20:11-15).
- 2) **If you are born twice, you will die once.** Physical death is only separation from the body. Believers (those who are born again) will be eternally united with God.

**Though it is marvelous / amazing, a careful examination of Scripture and of human nature will show you that the new birth is essential for having a saving relationship with God (John 3:7).** This necessity should come as no surprise. Yet, religious people continue to attempt righteous living in their own strength and rely on ritual and form to supplement their efforts. See Romans 10:1-4; II Timothy 3:5,7.

**The new birth is a mysterious work of the Holy Spirit (John 3:8).** It is compared to the movement of the wind:

- The wind blows where it wants to. No one can control it or predict it.
- The wind produces effects that we can observe – like sound. We can see some of the effects of God's Spirit working (i.e. changed lives).
- The wind itself is invisible and unpredictable. God's Spirit works independently and sovereignly.
- Don't settle for anything less than the work of God's Spirit, through the gospel, in your life. Religion and good works will not save you!