

# John 3 (pt 1) - You Must Be Born Again

## NICODEMUS COMES TO JESUS

Joh 3:1 ESV Now there was a man of the **Pharisees named Nicodemus**, a ruler of the Jews.

### What is a Pharisee?

- There were about 6000 Pharisees, the Sanhedrin was made of 70 men, mostly Pharisees (rulers)
- These men were very conscientious about keeping the Ten Commandments. The Scribes, who were members of the Pharisees spent their lives studying the Ten Commandments and applying them to situations of life so that the Pharisees could carry out these commands and thus obey God.
- They compiled a very thick book, called the **Mishnah**, made up of sections devoted to applying the Ten Commandments to life. There are **24 chapters alone** on obeying the rule of not working on the Sabbath
- There is another book, the **Talmud**, which is made up of commentaries on the Mishnah. In the Talmud **156 pages are devoted to the Sabbath as it applied to life!** You can see how serious the Pharisees were about keeping the Law.

## WHAT WAS HE LOOKING FOR? SPECULATION

2 This man came to Jesus **by night** and said to him, "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 came to Jesus by night** - Afraid of what others think?

### He called him "RABBI"

- Unusual, because **Pharisees considered themselves the masters of the law** - calling Jesus rabbi was a matter of respect and a recognition that he had something important to say
- Was he looking for someone that could offer Him GREATER insight? A better teacher to get himself more in line with the law? Trying to gain his favor?

### He said "WE KNOW" you are a teacher from God

- He said "WE" - He was not the only one of the Pharisees who was impressed with Jesus

## TEACHER

- Maybe Nicodemus was looking for deeper insight into the Scripture
- Trying to get the inside scoop from Jesus...so he could do a better job of keeping the commandments

### Because of the signs - no one can do this unless God is with him

- While they tried to deny him and trip him publicly - some of them believed he was from God
- They recognized that the SIGNS he performed proved that GOD WAS WITH HIM

## JESUS MOVED THE CONVERSATION TO THE ONE THING THAT IS MOST NEEDED

3 Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born again** he cannot **see** the kingdom of God."

- To Nicodemus, "seeing the kingdom" was likely centered around his ability to OBEY
- Jesus said, Nicodemus would never see the kingdom of God if he continued on his current path

- You can focus all day on the minute details of the law, but **“Unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God!”** - UNLESS - one option...ONE - it is universal - for all....CANNOT - impossible
- “He cannot **SEE** the kingdom of God” (to see, to know, to perceive, to understand)

BORN AGAIN -- It is the Greek word, *anōthen*, which has three meanings:

1. It means **again** - or to do it a **second time**;
2. It also means to begin radically, completely, **a new beginning**;
  - a. 2Co 5:17 ESV Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.
3. And it also means **from above**, and it is used in that sense in other places in Scripture.

In a sense the understanding of being born again carries all those meanings. It is a second birth (a spiritual vs natural birth).....It speaks of something radical, a new beginning.....and it comes from above. It is from God not man

LOTS OF CONFUSION ABOUT BEING BORN AGAIN - THERE IS A MIRACULOUS CHANGE

1Jn 2:29 ESV If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that **everyone who practices righteousness** has been born of him.

1Jn 5:1 ESV Everyone who **believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God**, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him.

1Jn 4:7 ESV Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and **whoever loves has been born of God** and knows God.

1Jn 5:3-5 ESV For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. 4 For **everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world**. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

1Jn 5:18 ESV We know that **everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning**, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.

1Jn 3:8-10 ESV Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. 9 **No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God**. 10 By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

NICODEMUS DOES NOT UNDERSTAND

4 Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is **born of water and the Spirit**, he cannot **enter** the kingdom of God. 6 That which is **born of the flesh** is flesh, and that which is **born of the Spirit** is spirit.

- Vs 3 Jesus said, “He cannot **SEE** the kingdom of God” (to see, to know, to perceive, to understand)
- Vs 5 Jesus said, “He cannot **ENTER** the kingdom of God” (cannot come in)
- Born of water (flesh) or born of the Spirit (Spirit) (there is a natural birth, there is a spiritual birth)

- We entered the natural world through a physical birth
- We enter the kingdom of God through a spiritual birth

## BORN AGAIN - DRIVEN BY THE WIND

7 Do not marvel that I said to you, '**You must be born again.**' 8 The **wind blows** where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. **So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.**"

- To be born again is to have God's life - alive in you
- Nicodemus saw the effect of the Spirit in Jesus's life ("*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 saw the effect of the Spirit in Jesus -- and like the wind he could not tell where it came from or where it was going...
- Jesus identified it as the breath or wind of the spirit...SO IS EVERYONE WHO IS BORN OF THE SPIRIT

## SO IT IS WITH EVERYONE THAT IS BORN OF THE SPIRIT

- Rom 8:14-16 For **all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.** 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,
- Gal 5:25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

## HAVE WE LOST THE EXCITEMENT AND MYSTERY THAT COMES WITH BEING BORN OF THE SPIRIT?

- Have we lost the excitement and mystery that comes with being born of the spirit?
- Is there an expectation of being led or directed by the spirit?
- It is somewhat of a mystery - (sort of like the wind, we see its effect, but in another sense we don't know where it came from or where it is going)

## HAVE WE BECOME COMPLACENT REGARDING THE SUPERNATURAL ASPECT OF WALKING WITH HIM

- the excitement of how the LORD will speak to me
- how the LORD will use me
- how the LORD will direct me

## EXAMPLES:

- Philip and Samaria and the Eunuch
- Paul on the road to Damascus
- Peter on the way to the temple - silver and gold I do not have - but rise and walk
- What about us - are our "glory days" in Christ no different than a 40 year old talking about the high school days, or are our glory days happening now...