

JESUS AND NICODEMUS

John 3:1-8

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: Everybody handles things differently. Some are quick and loud, some are slow and quiet, some don't want anything to change and therefore resist. These truths apply as well as to how people react to Jesus. A well known, well educated, influential, religious man wanted to know more about Jesus so one night he quietly went to where Jesus was staying and had a conversation with Him. The result of that quiet meeting with Jesus was that this man heard something that was far beyond his understanding and seemed just impossible to happen. Jesus told the man, Nicodemus, *"...Verily, verily I say unto thee: Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God..."*

I. JESUS TAUGHT THAT A PERSON HAD TO BE BORN AGAIN

1. Nobody can live a human, physical life before he/she is born, therefore nobody can live a spiritual, Godly life until he/she has been born AGAIN.
2. The kingdom of God refers to the things of God, spiritual things which are understood and enjoyed by those who have been reborn here on earth.

II. WHAT BRINGS ABOUT THE NEW BIRTH?

1. *"...I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God..."*
2. Regeneration by water is not what most teach and preach.
 - Baptism is in no way essential to being saved.
 - If it were then nobody was saved before John the Baptist.
 - Every professing believer who has died before being baptized is eternally lost.
 - Every scripture verse that teaches that God saves by Grace and not works, that salvation is a free gift must be ignored.
3. "Water" is the Word of God.
 - Jesus told the woman at the well about water He had that did away with thirst and would give eternal life.
 - Jesus said that if anybody was thirsty to come to Him and "living water" would flow out of those who did come to Him.
4. The new birth comes by the Word of God, represented by the word - "WATER."
 - Except a person "hear" the Word of God...

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT CAUSES THE NEW BIRTH

1. *"...That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit..."*
- "...It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing..."
2. Go back to the creation account and there is revealed that the *"...Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters..."* The God said, *"...Let there be light..." (Genesis 1:2-3)*
3. Being born again is of the same order of the creation:
 - A person is in darkness, the darkness of spiritual death.
 - The Spirit moves upon that person who is in spiritual darkness, touching the heart and mind.
 - Then the Word of God is heard by that person in darkness.
 - Suddenly there is light, the person once in darkness of spiritual death is enlightened and brought out of darkness into God's wonderful light because the Holy Spirit was there.

IV. WHY IS A NEW BIRTH NECESSARY?

1. **"...Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God..."**
 - By one's first, natural human birth, he/she enters into this world as a sinful person.
 - Such every person is and all are separated from the life and ways of God.
 - Every person is far away from God in his/her natural condition.
2. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.
 - Those not born again have no care for spiritual things, bored by those who are, finds the Bible dull and dry, and is a stranger to the throne of grace and would be miserable if in heaven.
3. The new birth is necessary because the natural person is totally devoid of spiritual life.
 - Not that any are ignorant, or feeble, or sickly, they are just plain DEAD!
 - Those not reborn are spiritually lifeless and need to be made alive.
 - What the natural person needs above everything else is SPIRITUAL LIFE.

V. WHAT IS SO DIFFERENT ABOUT THE NEW BIRTH?

1. There are a lot of different ideas and opinions as to what the difference is.
 - Some think that they must reform, mend their manner of life, turn over a new leaf, however the main problem is inside. If a person has a watch and the battery is dead, no matter what that person does to the rest of the watch, it still won't work. So it is with the new birth which is represented by the watch battery.
 - Others think that being born again is becoming religious.
 - They feel comfortable thinking that the religious things they are doing is what it means to be born again.
 - They give, they attend, they pray, they read the Bible, what more can they do?
2. The new birth is not removing anything, nor changing anything, IT IS GIVING SOMETHING - A COMPLETELY NEW NATURE!
 - Whatever one plants in the garden or field, that is exactly what will be produced.
 - Whatever kind of animal, bird or fish there is, they will produce exactly what they are.
 - **"...That which is born of the flesh is flesh..."** It can't be anything else.
 - **"...That which is born of the Spirit is spirit..."** It can't be anything else.
 - That which is born of people is sinful and that which is born of God is Spiritual.
 - The nature of the new birth is NOT reformation, it is NOT education, it is NOT purification of the old human nature.
 - It is being made a NEW creation, it is becoming a partaker of the Divine nature, it is being born into God's family.
 - Every born again person has two natures that are contrary to one another and only the grace of God can control the normal, old human nature and it is only the Word of God which can feed the new nature.

VI. THE PROCESS OF THE NEW BIRTH

1. One's birth determines one's nature.
 - Musical talent, artistic talent, etc., extraordinary abilities are by nature, born into people. Others can do music, art, etc., but up to a point, nowhere near those born with the talent.
 - In like manner, a person must have a spiritual nature before he/she can enter the spiritual world.
 - One must have God's own nature before he/she can enter God's kingdom, therefore one must be born again.

2. *"...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..."*

- As the wind blows where it blows, so works the Spirit, unregulated, uncontrolled.
- As the wind is unstoppable, so is the Spirit for there is no power greater than that of the Spirit's power and none can oppose or stop Him.
- As the wind is sometimes strong and then sometimes a gentle breeze, so moves the Spirit of God. He works gently with some and then strongly with others.
- As the wind is invisible, so is the Spirit.
- As the wind is unexplainable, thus it is with the works of the Holy Spirit.
- As the wind is needed and the world would wither away without it, so it is with the Holy Spirit for without Him, there could be no spiritual life at all and no new birth.
- As the wind is invigorating, restoring tired, worn out human lives when exposed, so it is with the Holy Spirit, for it is He who strengthens the inner person, who energizes, revives and empowers those who have been born again.

CONCLUSION:

1. Did Nicodemus become born again? Did he become a believer in Jesus? It is thought so as it was Nicodemus who got permission to take Jesus down from the cross and then had Him taken to his own private tomb.
2. God's grace and Jesus' death on the cross has provided a way for anyone who wants to have a fellowship with God and spend eternity in God's heaven can do so but every person must be BORN AGAIN as Jesus explained to Nicodemus.
3. Being born again is being born into God's spiritual world with the ability to live there as one is born into this world with the human ability to live here.
4. The Holy Spirit causes a person to become "interested" in Jesus, then that person hears the Word of God and "light" begins to come to that person and upon acceptance of that "light" the new birth happens. Born again, a child of God, indwelt with the Holy Spirit, that person then has two natures - a human nature for this world and a divine, spiritual nature for God's world.
5. So, have YOU been born again?