

Jesus and Nicodemus.

Part 1: Born from Above - John 3:1- 8

1 Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. ² He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no-one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."

³ In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no-one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." ⁴ "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" ⁵ Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no-one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. ⁷ You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' ⁸ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

⁹ "How can this be?" Nicodemus asked.

Nicodemus... (v1)

John 7:45-53 - At the critical council meeting, Nicodemus boldly stood up and defended the Saviour!

Jn 19:39 - Nicodemus must have been very wealthy, for he brought spices to anoint the dead body of Jesus, which were worth a king's ransom.

Kingdom of God... (v3)

Simply the place where God is king -- but where in this world is this?

Born-again (better translated "Born from above") (v3)

To belong to the heavenly kingdom, one must be born into it.

There are three basic terms used in describing the Christian life and what happens to a person when they become a Christian. They are Justification - Regeneration - Sanctification.

Justification -- being put right with God. Because of Jesus death and resurrection, believers receive the status of being righteous in the sight of God. (Just as if I never sinned). See Romans 3:20 - 24, Romans 5:1

Regeneration - the renewal of a person's inner being by the work of God's Spirit.

Sanctification -- the process of renewal by which believers are changed - made holy, through the work of the Spirit. Romans 12: 1 - 3 ; 2 Corinthians 3:18.

"Water and the Spirit"... (v5)

Since Jesus' ministry came shortly after that of John the Baptist, Jesus may have been referring to John's preaching, which dealt with the baptism of water, signifying repentance, and with the coming messenger of God who would endow men with the Holy Spirit (John 1:31-33). The new birth is conditioned on the repentance and confession of the individual in response to the appeal of God and by the transformation of life by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

"The wind blows..." (v6-8)

Jesus asserted that the entrance into the kingdom of God that Nicodemus desired could not be achieved by legalism or outward conformity. It requires an inner change.

Membership in the kingdom of God is not a prerogative of any particular race or culture, nor is it hereditary. It is given only by the direct act of God.

The origin and the destination of the wind are unknown to the one who feels it and acknowledges its reality. Just so, the new life of one born of the Spirit is unexplainable by ordinary reasoning.

"How can this be?" (v9)

Nicodemus's question should not be interpreted as an exclamation expressing incredulity. Rather, it is a plea for direction. He wanted to know how this experience could become his.