

Second Sunday in Lent – 2023

Saturday, 3/4 at 4:00 & Sunday, 3/5 at 9:00

# Are You Born Again?



What does that mean?

Text: John 3:1-17 NAS-95

Lenten Wednesdays: Services 11 & 7; Meals 12 & 6

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: Today's text from **John 3** contains the famous **verse 16**, *but also an important discussion on being born again*. Since Jesus said that a **person MUST BE BORN AGAIN** to see the kingdom of God, let's discover that important truth AND some others as well!

- The Setting:** <sup>1</sup> Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; <sup>2</sup> this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."
  - The meeting was covered by darkness and included Nicodemus – a Jewish leader, Jesus, and possibly His disciples – John, Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael.
  - Nicodemus began with a compliment. Furthermore, he was open to learn more about Jesus – SO IMPORTANT!
- Jesus Got Right to the Point:** To what Nicodemus needed:
  - <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered and said to [Nicodemus], "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again [from above]

he cannot see [experience, enter] the kingdom of God.”

<sup>4</sup> Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?” // Jesus told Nicodemus about his helplessness – **everyone MUST be born from above, from God!** This message is needed: you are helpless, you need to be born from above! The response of Nicodemus showed his genuine interest.

b. <sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup> That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

i. Jesus told **HOW** to be born again: by “water and the Spirit...” What do those words mean? Those who deny God’s work in baptism reject the “water” referring to baptism, *but* (from Titus 3:5, Acts 2:38-39, and John’s baptizing for the forgiveness of sins) *we believe those words point to God’s work through baptism!*

ii. To be born from above is not reincarnation – *putting on flesh again*, but being born in a second way – spiritually, *and only by the Holy Spirit!*

3. **Jesus Explained about being Born Again:** <sup>7</sup> “Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again [from above].’ <sup>8</sup> The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

a. Nicodemus had probably worked very hard for many years to keep the OT laws. He thought he had an advantage over others, *but he learned that HE was in trouble!* Like everyone, HE must be born from above!

b. Like the wind long ago, there are hidden things of God that we **cannot understand**; nevertheless, *God calls us to **fully believe** all He has told us in His word!*

4. **Nicodemus Wanted to Understand:** <sup>9</sup> Nicodemus said to Him, “How can these things be?” // He was saying, “Okay, I believe it can happen, but how?” *That is progress!* Let’s keep telling people what the Bible says, then, when someone wants more info, **let us seize the opportunity.**

5. **Jesus Explained How He Knows the Truth:** <sup>10</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things? <sup>11</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, we [I and John the Baptizer] speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony. <sup>12</sup> If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? <sup>13</sup> No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man.”

a. Verse 10 seems to indicate Jesus’ frustration with Nicodemus – “the teacher of Israel...” How sad when anyone is relying on *a religious teacher who is ignorant of God’s saving truth!* Paul warned of a time to come when people would be “holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power” (2 Tim. 3:5).

b. Jesus and John had not just heard, they were eyewitnesses – *but Nicodemus still did not believe.*

c. Earthly things are basic ( $1 + 1 = 2$ ), while heavenly things are more complex ( $10 - 10 + x = 15 - 10$ ). Jesus was calling Nicodemus to believe Him – first regarding the earthly, then regarding the heavenly.

d. How did Jesus know of heavenly things? He was in heaven and descended; **He is the Son of Man!**

## 6. **Jesus Explained His Saving Work:**

- a. <sup>14</sup> **“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; <sup>15</sup> so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life. //** Nicodemus would have been familiar with the account of Moses and the poisonous serpents (Num. 21). Jesus wanted Nicodemus to see what kept the people from dying – **NOT** Moses and **NOT** the bronze serpent, *but the people looking on the serpent with God-given faith!* Then Jesus spoke of His own manner of death on a **+** – *when He said that the Son of Man MUST BE LIFTED UP.* So, how are people saved? By looking to Jesus, *the Son of Man*, with God-given faith!
- b. <sup>16</sup> **For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. //** Because God so loved, *He gave!* **He wants EVERYONE to believe and live!** Eternal life is *the best of all things* 😊, while perishing is *the worst of all things* ☹️ – and both continue forever!
- c. <sup>17</sup> **For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.” //** Note that “world” is mentioned three times; the world is **everyone** and God sent His Son to save **everyone!** **Please stop clinging to your own goodness and your own feelings and trust in JESUS!**

**Let Us Pray:** Dear HS, we are all at Your mercy, so please  
♦capture our attention, ♦open our hearts, ♦show us the truth, ♦make us sorry, and ♦keep us always trusting in Jesus!

**Website:** [www.BLC7500.com](http://www.BLC7500.com); **YouTube and Podcast:** Benefit from the Bible  
**Facebook:** Bethlehem Lutheran Church Parma; **Pastor:** [RevRLGreen@aol.com](mailto:RevRLGreen@aol.com)  
7500 State Road, Parma, Ohio 44134, 440-845-2230