

# The Holy Spirit Regenerates

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AM Service

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Text: [John 3:1-16](#)

## Introduction

Humanity can be divided into two and only two groups. They are either regenerate or unregenerate. They are either born again or not. They are either born once or born twice. The Bible teaches there are two births. The Lord announces that here in this chapter.

[John 3:6](#) That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

There are two births - one is physical, and the other is spiritual. The natural birth and the second birth which the commonly known as the new birth. **Those who are born once will die twice and those who are born twice will die once.** The great tragedy in life is to be ignorant of and indifferent to the spiritual birth.

J. C. Ryle writes, "*A man may be ignorant of many things and still be a Christian, but if a man is ignorant of the things that we find in John 3 (referring to regeneration), then he is on the high road that leads to destruction.*"

There are many things in life in which ignorance or indifference is either tragic or deadly. For example, most of us do not know how a brown cow could eat green grass and then gives white milk. We don't know and we don't care, as long as we enjoy the milk! But there are some things that you cannot afford to be ignorant nor indifferent, such as the subject the Lord declares here in this chapter, the second birth.

This morning consider with me the subject of "born again" in three headings - The **Necessity** of the New Birth; The **Nature** of the New Birth; and The **Source** of the New Birth.

## I - The Necessity of New Birth

Our Lord Jesus Christ clearly states that if you and I are going to see and enter the kingdom of God we must be born again. Without the new birth there is **no perception** and **no admission** into the kingdom of heaven.

[John 3:3](#) Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except** a man be born again, he **cannot** see the kingdom of God.

[John 3:5](#) Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except** a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he **cannot** enter into the kingdom of God.

[John 3:7](#) Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

“**Must**” is a **strong word of necessity**. It means it is **not an option**. We must experience the new birth. We must experience a radical change in our being before we can see and enter heaven.

Whatever our Lord is saying to this man named Nicodemus as an individual is also **true for all men**. It is true for all of us. All men are born unregenerate and so all men must be regenerated. Regardless of who you are, you must be born again. That’s what Nicodemus painfully discovered when he came to Jesus by night.

### **Who is Nicodemus?**

[John 3:1](#) There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

[John 3:10](#) Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

According to these verses, Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews and a master of Israel. He was a **well-respected leader** in the Jewish community. Nicodemus was not an “*eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die*” kind of person. He was not an extortionist, nor an adulterer, nor an idolater, nor a fornicator, nor a murderer, nor a thief. He was a very religious person. He fasted, he paid his tithes, he kept the written Law and the traditions of the elders. He knew, believed and practiced the Scripture. He was **morally pure** to a degree **that you and I cannot attain!**

[Matthew 5:20](#) For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the Pharisees and the teachers of religious law, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!

[Philippians 3:5](#) Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; 6: Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

Regarding the righteousness based on the law, the Pharisees are without fault. They have these reputation. But with all these reputation and position, our Lord told him “*Ye must be born again.*” All of Nicodemus' religion, all of his amazing education, accomplishment and discipline and law-keeping, **cannot change the fact that he needs to be born again**. It is good to be respected and to have a good name among men, but that will not provide anyone a place in Heaven.

Our Lord in effect is saying, “*Nicodemus, I know that you are a man that is highly respected, a man that is deeply religious, and a man with high moral and ethical standard, but still, what you have achieved does not change what you are! So do not be surprised when I say, “You must be born again.” Do not be amazed when I say, “You must be born of water and of the Spirit.”*”

Here is where many well-meaning people are confused. They think that they can get to Heaven without being born again. They think that by being good enough or doing enough, it will guarantee them access into Heaven. That is a lie straight from the pit of hell. Many today,

believe that lie. **They rather listen to some religious leader than listen to the Lord Jesus Christ.** Notice how the Lord states this must or necessity in these following verses ...

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Our Lord wanted Nicodemus to know that he is the One speaking. The One speaking is **the very Son of God Himself**. The One speaking is the incarnate truth Himself. He has to say this because He knew what was in the heart of Nicodemus and in the hearts of men. He knew the human heart will constantly avoid the implications of this truth.

Jesus reveals there is only one way to enter into the Kingdom of God. A man must be born again. This is true of Nicodemus and it is true of all of us here this morning.

## II - The Nature of the New Birth

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

This was **hard for Nicodemus to comprehend**. Nicodemus thought our Lord was referring to a physical birth.

John 3:4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

Our Lord declares **the same truth in different words**, in order to make it more plain and simple to his hearer's mind. But Nicodemus still did not get it.

Except a man be born again ... Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit ...

Our Lord in verse 5 gives a **twofold explanation of the “new birth,”** which led Nicodemus to be amazed. “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be **born of water and of the Spirit**, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

### Born of water

There are those who interpret the phrase “born of water” as referring to water baptism. But we know that this interpretation is not according to the Bible’s overall teaching! If it is true that baptism is necessary for salvation, why do we read, **Jesus has refrained from baptizing people.**

John 4:1 When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, 2: (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)

So what does it mean to be born of water? What does water do? **Water washes, cleanses, and rinses.** Born of water is symbolic of what happened to a person who has experienced new birth. **A person who has been born again had been purged from sins.** Born of water means to be cleansed from sins. It is to be washed from sins. It is to be pardoned. It is to be forgiven.

### **Born of the Spirit**

Born of the Spirit means to be renewed. It is a new beginning. It involves inward renewal. It involves a changing in the inside. It is a recreation. It is an **impartment of new life.** It is to be raised from the dead.

That is what it means to be born again according to Jesus Christ. In the new birth we cleansed and renewed. We are forgiven and recreated. We need both cleansing and renewing. We must be changed inside and not only that we must be made a new man.

Unless our sins have been forgiven and made new person we will never see and enter the kingdom of God. Unless we are cleansed and renewed, we will never see and enter the kingdom of God.

Titus 3:4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5: Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, (born of water) and renewing of the Holy Ghost; (born of the Spirit) 6: Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

There are two errors that men make regarding entrance to heaven: The first one is they think they can get to heaven without the new birth. The second one is they think they are born again without new life (holiness); without transformed life. But our Lord clearly declares one must be born of water and of the Spirit in order to see and enter the kingdom of God.

Are you born again? Have you been born of water and of the Spirit? Have you been cleansed and renewed? Have you been forgiven and recreated?

### **III - The Source of the New Birth**

Who is the source of this new birth?

John 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

It is called **born of the Spirit.** God is the source of this new birth.

### **The Divine Source**

John 6:63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

**The Holy Spirit and He alone gives life.** It is the Spirit of God that quickens dead sinners, by entering into them as the Spirit of life, and causing them to live. **Human effort accomplishes nothing.**

John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

But to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God. They did not become God's children by natural means, not of human generation, not of man in any manner of way. **It is by the will and power of the God, particularly the Holy Spirit.**

James 1:18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

Jeremiah 13:23 Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.

Can an Ethiopian change the color of his skin? Can a leopard take away its spots? The answer is obvious. No! So is a sinner who is by nature sinful and accustom to sin cannot change his own nature. It will take a power outside of ourselves to effect the change in our nature.

Matthew 19:23 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. 24: And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 25: When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? 26: But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, **With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.**

### **The Divine Instrument**

What is the instrument that God uses to cause to be born again?

1 Peter 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, **by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.**

The instrument that God uses is the word of God. The revealed word of God is the appointed and divine instrument of our being born again.

The psalmist testified to this truth in ...

Psalm 19:7 **The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul:** the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for **it is the power of God unto salvation** to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

What mighty power, then, has the Word of God in the hands of the Spirit!

### **Closing Thoughts**

The Lord Jesus Christ is very clear, no man, no woman, no boy, no girl shall see and enter the kingdom of God without the new birth. You must be born again! Have you been born again? If you have not, you shall never see, you shall never enter the kingdom of God and my words to you this morning are:

John 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even **so must the Son of man be lifted up**: 15: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17: For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

**Look unto Jesus Christ the Son of God**, for as Moses lifted the serpent in the wilderness even so must the Son of man be lifted up upon a cross.

John 12:32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. 33: This he said, signifying what death he should die.

Jesus Christ was lifted up from the earth upon a cross, crucified upon a cross, upon a cross, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. As He is lifted up look unto Christ and be saved. **Look away from yourself**, there is nothing there but flesh. Flesh produces flesh and flesh will profit nothing. Look away from what you have done and what you can do. Look away from what another fellow human being or what some church or religion or minister can do for you.

John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Call upon the name of the Lord. Ask Him to save you. Cry to Him for mercy, for forgiveness and pardon and salvation. Cast yourself upon Him. And you will find Him willing, a ready, an able, and a gracious Saviour.

To those who by the grace of God have been born again, I pray that you realize the importance of declaring the gospel, because it is through the gospel the sinners are born again.

1 Peter 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, **by the word of God**, which liveth and abideth for ever.

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**AMEN!**