You Must Be Born Again

John 3:1-8
6-30-2024

Introduction:

What is the new birth?

I. The new birth is a vitally <u>important</u> birth (v. 1-3)

A. "Religious" people need the new Birth (v.1-2)

B. The New Birth is necessary for anyone to enter the Kingdom of God (v.3)

II. The new birth is a <u>supernatural</u> birth (v. 4-6)

III. The new birth is an <u>instantaneous</u> birth (v. 6-7)

IV. The new birth is an <u>mysterious</u> birth (v. 3:8)

V. The new birth is an <u>invisible, yet powerful,</u> birth (v.8)

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Introduction:

One of the happiest times in life is when a mother gives birth to a healthy baby boy or girl. There was a specific time and place when you were born. At that time, you were given the last name of your father and your parents may have noticed how much you looked like them. Most people even remember their birthday with a time of celebration each year. Even though the day you were born was an important day, it was not the most important day of your life.

The Lord Jesus spoke of a birth more important than even your physical birth. He said that it is not enough for someone to be born once, but they must be born twice.

In this message, we will discover what Jesus meant when He said, "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7).

John 3:1-21 is one unit of thought with three subdivisions:

Verses 1 – 8 -- The Need for the New Birth
Verses 9 – 12 -- The Ignorance of the New Birth
Verses 13 – 21 -- The Provision for the New Birth

What is the new birth?

I. The new birth is a vitally important birth (v.1-3)

A. "Religious" people need the new Birth (v.1-2)

"July 2, 1505, Martin Luther, returning home from a visit with his parents, found himself caught in a violent storm. Terrified, he vowed to become a monk if he were allowed to live.

"Luther made it through the storm and fulfilled his vow, entering the Augustinian order of monks in Erfurt, Germany. By his own admission, he entered the monastery more out of constraint than commitment. Reflecting on the incident years later, Luther said: "Not freely or desirously did I become a monk, but walled around with the terror and agony of sudden death, I vowed a constrained and necessary vow."

"While at the monastery and as a friar at the University of witenberg, Luther diligently, even obsessively, performed his religious tasks. He frequently went to confession and dutifully fulfilled the imposed penances.

“But his hard work, his confessions, his penances never seemed enough. Anguished of soul, Luther wrestled with his own salvation. Hungering for acceptance by God, he realized his emptiness. Gnawing inside was the incessant, ravenous truth that his external righteousness wasn’t enough: ‘For however irreproachably I lived as a monk, I felt myself in the presence of God to be a sinner with a most unquiet conscience, nor could I believe that I pleased him with my satisfactions.’

“On a trip to Rome, which he thought would earn him some form of spiritual merit, he climbed the steps of Pilate’s house on his knees. It is suggested by some church historians that this was where Luther first gained a true understanding of the gospel. As he climbed those stone-hard steps of religious works, a verse came to his mind that changed his life: Romans 1:17, ‘the righteous man shall live by faith.’ Like a flash of lightning, the realization struck him: It is <u>faith</u> that justifies—not works!

“Luther looked back on that revelation as the time of his conversion: ‘At last I began to understand the justice of God as that by which the just man lives by the gift of God. . . ‘The just man shall live by faith.’ At this I felt myself to have been born again, and to have entered through open gates into paradise itself.” (Swindoll, p. 39, quoting “Martin Luther,” <u>Encyclopedia Britannica</u>)

v. 2

Nicodemus was:

1) A <u>man</u> (at least 40 yeas old)

2) A <u>Pharisee</u>

(the word “Pharisee” comes from a Hebrew term that means “to be separated” – Standing aloof from society in self-righteous smugness (compare Luke 18:9-14), the Pharisees were a tight-knit brotherhood dedicated to preserving, interpreting, and defending Jewish Law, which they legalistically forced upon the people of Israel. Commenting on the commandment to keep the Sabbath holy, these theological hair-splitters devoted sixty four columns in the *Talmud* to Sabbath requirements. They also wrote twenty-four chapters in the *Mishnah* defining what qualified as a work on the Sabbath and what didn’t.” (Swindoll, . 40)

A Jewish religious leader; legalistic; perhaps from outward appearance, morally upright

3) A <u>ruler of the Jews</u>

A member of the Sanhedrin Council, an elite religious council consisting of 70 members providing spiritual and political leadership for the Jews all over the world

“Came to Jesus by night” - Why at night? Most likely because of fear of the other members of the Sanhedrin Council. He could be association be linked to Jesus and lose his position.

Although Nicodemus was perhaps now afraid of what his peers would say about his visit, he later would boldly speak up in Christ’s defense (7:50, 51) and take part in His burial (19:39-40).

Nicodemus saw the miracles Jesus did at Jerusalem (Jn. 2:23).

Nicodemus recognized that Christ’s miracles were:

--<u>real</u> (bonafied, authentic)
--<u>amazing</u> (awesome, great)
--<u>supernatural</u> (“from God”)
--<u>vindicating</u> Him as authoritative

Nicodemus was obviously searching for the truth, yet was <u>not</u> born again yet! Regeneration or the new birth does <u>not</u> come before faith in Christ. It occurs at the moment of salvation and not before. Do not confuse God’s “drawing” on a person’s heart with the new birth. The drawing must precede the new birth as is evidently the case with Nicodemus.

B. The New Birth is necessary to enter the Kingdom of God (v.3)
Being born again is a <u>prerequisite</u> for entering God's kingdom.

No one is saved unless he is regenerated
"Behold, I make all things new!"
This promise given by the LORD God describes the new eternal city that will one day be the home for every Christian (Rev. 21:5).

We not only have a new future to look forward to, but the Bible teaches that we ourselves become "new" the moment we believe the Gospel message.
This "newness" of life is called <u>regeneration</u>.

. The <u>Definition</u> of Regeneration

<u>Regeneration</u> is the instantaneous work of the Holy Spirit, who imparts spiritual life to one who was spiritually dead.

This spiritual life is referred to in Scripture as the "new birth," being "born again," or being "renewed" (Ti. 3:5)

Prior to regeneration, the Bible teaches that the following is true about man:

a. Man is dead spiritually (Eph. 2:15)
b. Man is not God's child spiritually (Jn. 8:44; Acts 13:10)
c. Man is blind to spiritual things (II Cor. 4:3-4; I Cor. 2:14; Eph. 4:18)
d. Man, left to himself, is totally unable to change his spiritual condition (Eph. 2:1, 8; Col. 2:13)

The Purpose of the New Birth
(Why does God regenerate man?)

1. That we would be adopted into God's family (Jn. 3:1-8; Ro. 8:15)

2. That we would receive a new nature (II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:15; Col.3:10)

   Note: It is by our faith in God's promises that we become energized to live a new life by His divine nature - II Pet. 1:4).

3. That we would enter the kingdom of God (Jn. 3:3)

4. That we would have confidence (a "living hope") of eternal life (I Pet. 1:3-4)

5. That we would be joint heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:16-17)

6. That we would be the first fruits of His creation (Ja. 1:18)

   God's regeneration of sinners is a guarantee that one day He is going to regeneration the rest of creation (Mt. 19:28)

7. That God's Spirit would be able to produce good works in and through our lives (Ti. 3:2-6; Eph. 2:10; I Cor. 6:9-11)

   Regeneration is the starting point of spiritual growth (sanctification).

II. The new birth is a supernatural birth (v. 4-6)

It is a work accomplished by the Holy Spirit, not by man's efforts (Jn. 1:13)

The Work of Regeneration (How is man regenerated?)

1. The Author of regeneration = God (Jn. 1:12-13)

   The new birth is provided because of the love of God (I Jn. 3:1; Ja. 1:18)

2. The Agent of regeneration = The Holy Spirit (Ti. 3:5)

   "Regeneration" - Greek "palingenesia" -
   palin = again
   genesis = birth

   "Renewing" - lit. to make "new again"

3. The Instrument of Regeneration = The Word of God
   (I Peter 1:23-25; Ja. 1:18; the Gospel message - I Cor. 4:15)

4. The Attainment of Regeneration - Faith in Christ (Gal. 3:26; Jn. 1:12-13)

What the New Birth is not:

1) The new birth is not of blood (1:13a)

   not hereditary (EX: by being linked to Abraham – Mt. 3:8-9; Gal. 3:6)

2) The new birth is not of the will of the flesh (v. 13a)

   not a result of human decision or changing of bad attitudes or bad habits (Rom. 8:7-8)

3) The new birth is not through the will of another man (v. 13b)

   not through infant circumcision nor infant baptism

Question: What is meant by the phrase "born of water" in John 3:5?

4 popular views:

1) The water of Baptism (Proponents: RCC View; UCC & Boston Mvmt.)
2) The water of the Word (Eph. 5:26; Jn. 15:3))
3) The spiritual water of God cleansing a sinner (Ezek. 36:25-26)
4) The water of the Womb

The answer is clear from the context that Jesus is referring to the water in the womb. * Note: A woman who is pregnant with a child carries her baby in her womb which is filled with "water" -technically called "amniotic fluid." In this context, Jesus' reference to "water" is to the womb from which a child enters this life.

The phrase "born of water" refers to the first birth (physical birth), whereas the phrase "born of the Spirit" refers to the second birth (spiritual birth).

Proofs that the phrase "born of water" refers to physical birth:

a. Nicodemus was thinking about this kind of birth and makes mention of the mother's womb (v. 4)

b. The phrase "born of water" literally should be translated "born out of water" (ek)

v. 5
"Genethe eks hudatos" – shall have been born out of water

The passive voice of the verb points to an act of God. The aorist tense points to a single, one time completed event.

c. The parallel in verse 6 contrasts the physical birth with the spiritual birth.

"That which is born out of the flesh is flesh"
"That which is born out of the Spirit is spirit"

d. Physical birth is contrasted with the spiritual birth in John 1:12-13

e. The analogy of "water" issuing out of a womb was a common Hebrew expression (cp. Job 38:8 - Job also uses the analogy of water issuing out of a womb.).

III. The new birth is an <u>instantaneous</u> birth (v. 6-7)

Just as one is born physically only <u>once</u>, so one is born again spiritually only <u>once</u> (for all time). (cp. Jn. 1:13; I Pet. 1:23)

IV. The new birth is an <u>mysterious</u> birth (v. 8)

"listeth" - wills; the wind blows where it desires, man has no control over it.

So the Spirit of God works independently of the works and efforts of men mysteriously transforming people in the invisible part of their inner most being

"Jesus explained that we cannot control the work of the Holy Spirit. He works in ways we cannot predict or understand. Just as you did not control your physical birth, so you cannot control your spiritual birth" (Life Application Bible, not. P. 1905)

V. The new birth is a <u>invisible yet powerful</u> birth (v.8)

The new birth is visible only by its results.

Just as one can see the <u>effects</u> of the <u>wind</u> and not the wind itself, so one can see the <u>effects</u> of the new birth, but not the birth itself. The effect of the new birth is a changed heart (Mt. 12:33, 35) which evidences itself by a changed lifestyle (II Cor. 5:17).

WHAT IS THE <u>EVIDENCE</u> OF BEING "BORN AGAIN?"

Just as growing children have a tendency to "take after" their parents, children of God will also take after their Heavenly Father as they grow up spiritually.

What will God's children be like?

Those who are born of God will have:

1. A lifestyle characterized by righteousness (I Jn. 2:29)

2. A freedom from continual sinning (I Jn. 3:9; 5:18)

3. A love for one's brother (I Jn. 3:10, 14; 4:7; I Pet. 1:22-23)

4. A confidence in the Biblical revelation concerning Jesus Christ (I Jn. 5:1)

5. A love for God (I Jn. 5:1-2; Jn. 8:42)

6. A sincere desire to be obedient to God (I Jn. 5:2-3)

7. Victory over the world's system (I Jn. 5:4)

8. A concern for moral purity (I Jn. 5:18)

CONCLUSION:

Those who are born only once will die twice (Rev. 20:15; 21:8), but those who are born twice will die only once (and should the Lord return in our lifetime—not even once!)