

"Born From Above"  
The Gospel of John Chapter 3: 1-15

While Jesus is in Jerusalem for the Passover, Nicodemus meets with Him. Nicodemus is also mentioned in John 7 :50 and helped to bury the body of Jesus (fun. 19:39). The Pharisees were a strict religious sect of Judaism. Nicodemus was also a member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish high Court (fun. 7:50). He may have come at night because of fear of his fellow Jews or simply because of the large crowds often surrounding Jesus (Mk. 2:2). His address to Jesus, though complimentary, showed a lack of understanding of the true nature of Christ (Deut. 18:15-18; Jhn. 1:1-14).

Jesus' answer is directed to the very heart of Nicodemus. He must be born again! The Greek word translated again is also translated above (Mk. 15:38; Jhn. 19: 11; Jms. 1: 17). There is no other possibility of eternal life (verse 7). Nicodemus interprets Jesus' words in a literal physical sense. He is wrong. They are literally true in a spiritual sense (Jhn. 1:29,2:19,4:15).

The Master patiently and carefully explains this "new birth." The reference to water in verse 5 has been explained as referring to the amniotic fluid around the baby, water baptism, or the washing of the Holy Spirit (1Cor. 6:11). Jesus likens the work of the Holy Spirit to that of the wind. The wind, like the Spirit, is invisible. Yet the results of both are highly visible and very mysterious. The birth of a human baby is incredible; the birth from above an incredible miracle (Col. 1:26-27)!

Nicodemus remains confused. He should have understood because the Old Testament spoke of receiving this new life from above (Jer. 31:33; Ez. 11: 19). Now, before Nicodemus, is the One Who has been in heaven from eternity past and now has descended to reveal God to man (Jhn. 1: 14).

Jesus illustrates the means by which this life is given unto men. The children of Israel had complained against Moses and God in the wilderness. Those bitten by the venomous serpents sent as judgment have only to look at the fiery serpent made of bronze that is lifted upon a pole. An act of faith is required. Jesus fulfills the type when He is lifted upon the cross to die. Whoever has faith in Him, believes and trusts in Him, will be saved from their sins and receive eternal life. Like the Israelites, only judgment and death are deserved by men. But God, Who is rich in mercy and grace, makes us alive spiritually by the new birth (Eph. 2:4-6). There is no work on our part, only receiving by faith the gift of God (Jhn. 1: 12; Eph. 2:8-9).