

What Is The New Birth?

John 3

'Born again'

- Buzz word

Alcoholics

Chrysler

Religious leaders

- What did Jesus say? (John 3:1-8)

¹Now there was a man of the Pharisees
named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews

- Nicodemus, an exceptional ruler . . .
- Nicodemus, an exception to the rule (1:11)

²This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, **we know** that you are a teacher come **from God**, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.'

- **We know:** 4:22, 42
- **From God:**
 - Saw His Signs
 - Heard His Teaching

³Jesus answered Him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God'

- Truly, truly: Jesus told people what they needed to hear.
- Unless one is born again: Your Jewish birth cannot save! Mt.3:7-9.

⁴Nicodemus said to him, 'How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

- **How?:** Thinks on fleshly level, not spiritual.

⁵ Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.'

- **I say to you:** Jesus responds to real issue
 - What does 'born again' mean (3)?
- **Born of water and the Spirit:** Spiritual, not physical birth

6‘That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.’

- **Flesh is flesh . . . Spirit is spirit:** like begets like
 - Flesh produces fleshly life
 - Spirit begets spiritual life
 - Physical birth – from parents
 - New birth – from above (3)

7“Do not marvel that I said to you, “You must be born again.””

- To you: plural
 - Universal requirement

8‘The **wind blows where it wishes,** and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. **So it is** with everyone who is born of the Spirit.’

- **Wind blows...**: Cannot see wind; can see its effects.
- **So it is...**: Cannot see sins washing off the soul.
 - Can see effects on person’s life.

I. What Did Not Save Nicodemus??

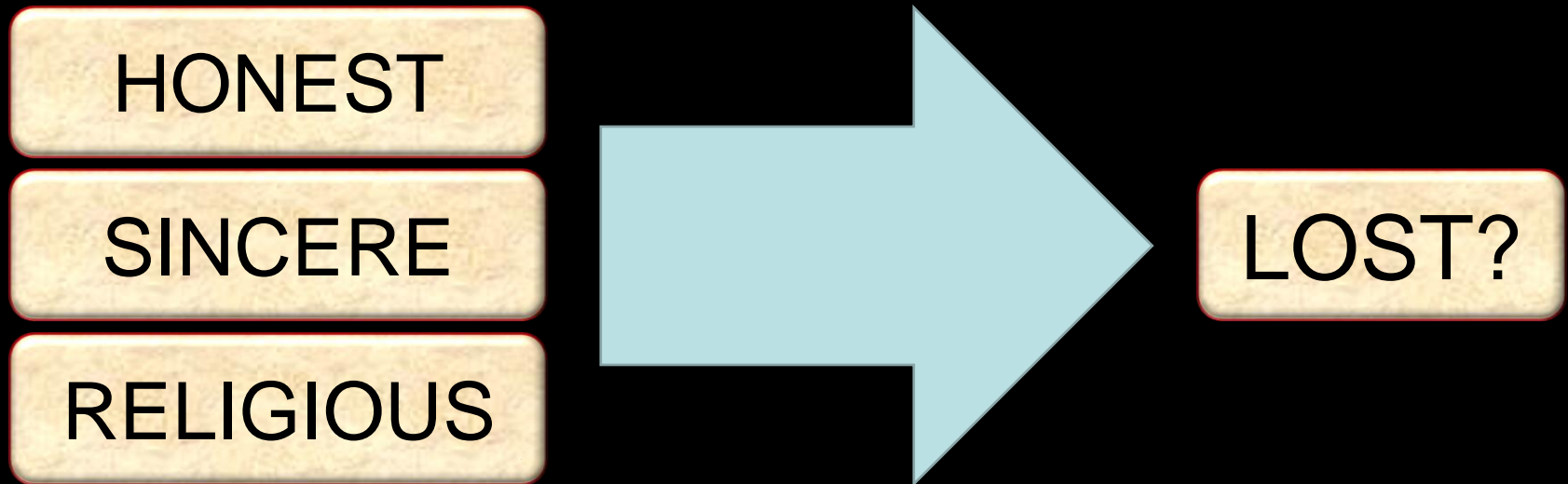
Being a man, 1

- Man – generic
- ‘Him’ – masculine (v.3)

Jews thanked God they were not born a Gentile, a slave, or a woman

Religious, 1

- Pharisee (Mt.5:20; Ac.26:5).
- Nicodemus must have been honest / sincere. Lk.7:29-30.



Name, 1

- Nicodemus: ruler of the people
- Aristocratic family?
 - Physical blessings / wealth / status do not save

Position, 1

- 'Ruler of the Jews' – Sanhedrin.
- Not prejudiced like others –Jn.12:42-43.

Spiritual interest, 2

- Came to Jesus.
- Could have pursued many other duties / interests . . .

Respected, 2

- ‘Rabbi’ – term of respect for teacher (10).

Confession, 2

- ‘We know’ – puts Jesus at least on level of OT prophet
- Took courage. Jn.7:50-52; 19:39

‘Reasonable’ belief, 2

- ‘For no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him’
- Nature / Number of Lord’s signs verified His claims
 - No ‘hidden’ ailments: Jn.9 (Ex.4)
- Variety of miracles proves reality

Nature

Jn.2

Material world

Jn.6

Disease

Jn.9

Death

Jn.11

Demons

Mk.1

Humility, 4

- Old man, honored teacher, yet listens to 'young Man'
- When corrected, he humbly submits

Fame, 10

- 'The teacher of Israel.'
- Talmud: one of four richest men in Jerusalem.

Jews equated riches
with righteousness

Summary: most would consider him saved

3: without birth from above, CANNOT
SEE kingdom of God

– 2: UNLESS...CANNOT (signs)

– 3: UNLESS...CANNOT (salvation)

5: UNLESS one is born of . . .

1. Water and 2. Spirit

7: MUST (14; 30; 20:9)

I. What Did Not Save Nicodemus?

II. 'Born Again' Is
Figurative (Jn.16:25)

No correct interpretation will contradict other Scriptures

1. 'Natural birth of the flesh.'

Jesus states it as future condition.

Every unborn infant would be lost.

If physical birth, Nicodemus was already saved. [All are born again]

No correct interpretation will contradict other Scriptures

1. 'Natural birth of the flesh.'

2. 'Faith alone.'

'You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only' – James 2:24

If faith alone, saved without repentance

No correct interpretation will contradict other Scriptures

1. 'Natural birth of the flesh.'
2. 'Faith alone.' Ja.2:24. No repentance?
3. 'Holy Spirit alone' (regenerates at random, without means.

Why did Jesus say 'water and Spirit'?

Who would be lost?

Context:

- John was baptizing people, John 1:24-28, 31, 33 . . .
- Mk.1:4 – ‘John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.’
- Jn.3:22-23, 26; 4:1-2.

Baptism requires water.

Demonstration

- Every conversion includes 'water & Spirit'
 - Acts 2:36-38 (1 Pt. 1:1...22-25)
 - Acts 8:29, 36-38
 - 1 Corinthians 4:15 / Acts 18:8
 - Ephesians 5:26
 - Titus 3:5

Forced Conclusions

‘...Receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls’ – Ja.1:21

‘...having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever’ – 1 Pt.1:23

1. Those who receive word are saved, Ja.1:21
2. Those who receive word (gospel, 25) are born again, 1 Pt.1:23
3. ∴ saved are born again

Forced Conclusions

Born again are saved (Ja.1:21; 1 Pt.1:23)

‘Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ’ – Ep.1:3

1. Born again are saved, Ja.1:21; 1 Pt.1:23
2. The saved are in Christ, Ep.1:3
3. ∴ all born again are in Christ

Forced Conclusions

Born again are in Christ (Ep.1:3)

‘For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ’ – Gal.3:27

1. Born again are in Christ, Ep.1:3

2. We are baptized into Christ, Gal.3:27

3. ∴ one must be baptized into Christ to be born again

Forced Conclusions

All born again are in the kingdom, Jn.3:5

‘And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved’ – Ac.2:47; 5:11

1. Born again are in kingdom, John 3:5
2. All the saved are in His church, Ac.2:47; 5:11
3. ∴ if not in His church, not born again

Summary: A New Relationship

‘Then those who gladly received His were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them’ – **Ac.2:41**

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship . . .” – **Acts 2:42**

- 1. Their sins are forgiven** – Acts 2:38
- 2. They continue in apostles’ doctrine and fellowship . . .** – Acts 2:42
- 3. ∴ in fellowship with apostles, these are born again**

From time book of John was completed
until 16th Century . . .

No writer denied that 'water' of Jn.3:5 is
baptism

Schaff (Presbyterian)

‘In view of the facts that John baptized, that Christ Himself was baptized, that His disciples (iv.2) baptized in His name, it seems impossible to disconnect water from baptism. Calvin’s interpretation arose from doctrinal opposition to the R. Catholic over-valuation of the sacrament, which must be guarded against in another way’ – Lange, Jn.iii:5

Barnes (Presbyterian)

‘Be born of water. By water, here, is evidently signified baptism. Thus the word is used in Eph.v.26; Tit.iii.5’ – Barnes Notes

Alford (Church of England)

‘There can be no doubt, on any honest interpretation of the words, that [born of water] refers to the token or outward sign of baptism ... All attempts to get rid of these two plain facts have sprung from doctrinal prejudices, by which the views of expositors have been warped’ – Gk. Test., Jn.3:5

Clarke (Methodist)

‘Baptism by water, into the Christian faith, was necessary to every Jew and Gentile that entered into the kingdom of the Messiah’ – Commentary on John iii.5

Wilmarth (Baptist)

‘Christ himself, in his early Judean ministry, “made and baptized disciples.” His preaching at the outset, was of similar purport with that of John. It is natural to suppose that his Baptism (in connection with Repentance and Faith) was, like John’s, in order to Remission. We are confirmed in this by our Saviour’s words to Nicodemus...’

– Baptism and Remission, Baptist Quarterly, July 1877, p.309

Plummer (Church of England)

‘The outward sign and inward grace of Christian baptism are here clearly given, and an unbiased mind can scarcely avoid seeing this plain fact. . . . The Fathers, both Greek and Latin, thus interpret the passage with singular unanimity’ – CGT, 102

A Comparison

‘Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit’ – Titus 3:5

‘No statement of the New Testament, not even Jn.3:5 more unambiguously represents the power of baptism to lie in the operation of the Holy Spirit’ – G.R.Beasley-Murray, Baptism in NT, 215.