

Source of the Solution, John 3:2-7

Listen to our Lord's didactical dialogue with the renowned Jewish theologian, Pharisee, and member of the Sanhedrin, Nicodemus in John 3.

John 3:2 - 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.

John 3:3 - Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

John 3:4 - 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?"

John 3:5 - "Truly I say unto you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

John 3:6 - That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

John 3:7 - Marvel not that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

The words "born again" from the Greek are: *gennao anothen* and literally means, "to be born from above."

This "spiritual birth" is the birth which connects the sinner with the grace plan of God and makes its solutions available to resolve the problems of the "body of death."

This passage makes it clear that condemnation must precede justification. A person must be selected into human life before he can qualify to be regenerated into eternal life.

Jesus has just informed the theologian that he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God unless he has experienced the second birth. Nicodemus, an unbeliever who can only think in human terms, asks the Lord how he can return to his mother's womb and be born a second time.

Our Lord is faced with the task of taking Nicodemus's finite mind and communicating to it divine truth. In order to communicate on Nicodemus's level, our Lord takes the man where he is and then tries to lead him to where he needs to be.

Nicodemus can only think in terms of physical birth so that is where the Lord begins his approach. Remember that Nicodemus is a Jew. Jews are familiar with the use of water for ceremonial cleansing but they never associate it with any form of spiritual birth.

Everyone however is aware of the presence of water in the process of physical birth. Nicodemus wants to be saved but he can only think in terms of the physical when discussing birth. Jesus has to take him from the physical and lead him to the spiritual.

Nicodemus has obviously been born physically, and our Lord refers to that event in John 3:5 when He says, "*Born of water.*" This refers to obstetrics and parturition. In other words, He is saying to Nicodemus that only those who are born physically qualify to be born spiritually but that if they have only been born physically they cannot enter into the kingdom of God because they must also be born again—"of the Spirit."

"Unless one is born of water (physical birth) and the Spirit (spiritual birth), he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

That our Lord is trying to distinguish in the mind of Nicodemus the difference between physical and spiritual birth is indicated by John 3:6,

“That which is born of flesh (the water birth) is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit (the spiritual birth) is spirit.”

Spiritual birth is what our Lord means when He reiterates in John 3:7 that Nicodemus must be *“born again.”* Those who have physical birth from the water of the womb but no spiritual birth from the Holy Spirit must remain forever separated from fellowship with God.

Although few seem to believe it, failure to believe in Jesus Christ for salvation results in eternal punishment in the Lake of Fire, erroneously referred to as Hell. However, the poor scholarship and weak theology of current Christendom promotes the idea that *“there ain’t no hell”* to which every good Southern Baptist is trained to respond, *“The hell there ain’t!”*

Gushee, Steve. “Harboring Some Thoughts From Hell: What’s that infernal place all about?” St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 1 Aug. 1996, p. 3G.