

## Born Again!

I heard a story about a couple called Kevin and Sarah, they a young couple, and one day they were sitting out on a swing in the park. Sarah asked, "Kevin, do you think my eyes are beautiful?" Kevin answered, "Yep." In a few moments: "Kevin, do you think my hair is attractive?" Again Kevin answered, "Yep." In a while: "Would you say that I have a gorgeous figure?" Once again Kevin answered, "Yep." "Oh, Kevin," she said, "You say the nicest things."

So many times we say the nicest things to people, or we tell them what they want to hear. But when it comes to Bible truths we can't always tell people the nicest things. We need to tell them the truth as we find it in the Bible no matter how difficult the answer may be for them to accept.

We're going to learn about a man who had a question but the answer he received from Jesus is an answer which many people in the world just simply cannot accept. "There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus". John 3:1+2

Now this guy called Nicodemus was an important man. He was a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews. But he had fears; he was scared that the other leaders would see his interest in Jesus that's why he came to Jesus at night.

Now I'm wondering if you have a fear which is stopping you coming to Jesus. Maybe it's your friends at school who would think you're a freak for going to church. Maybe it's your neighbours who would think you're weird for wanting to ask Bible questions.

You see Nicodemus had a fear about what other people would think but it didn't stop him coming to Jesus. And loved ones you need to understand that we can go to Jesus at anytime of the day or night. [Did Jesus get upset with Nicodemus for coming to see Him at night?](#) No He didn't.

So please don't ever think that anyone is ever going to get upset with you for wanting to know more about Jesus. This congregation is filled with godly men and women who would be more than happy to talk to you about Jesus anytime of the day or night.

So Nicodemus comes to Jesus and says in [John 3:2](#) "Rabbi we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you." [John 3:3](#) "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God."

[Now do you notice something strange about these verses?](#) These verses are amazing to me because Nicodemus didn't ask, 'How do I see God's kingdom'? He just told Jesus he thought Jesus was a teacher from God.

## Born Again!

Nicodemus was a ruler of Israel, kind of like a politician except he ruled religious matters, as well as civil. He was part of the same council that, three years later, would condemn Jesus to death. And again because Nicodemus snuck out at night to see Jesus, it seems things weren't looking very good for Jesus politically, even then. Nicodemus and a few friends were probably part of the minority on this council, believing Jesus was "from God." Still, Nicodemus didn't ask the crucial question. But Jesus answered it!

Time and time again in the gospel we see Jesus not answering things that are asked, and answering things that were never asked. **But why? Why does He do that?** Well quite simply because He's God. He knows what's really on our minds. Jesus speaks to our needs, not to our wants.

**Psalm 139:1-4 "Lord, you have examined me and you know me. You know everything I do; from far away you understand all my thoughts. You see me, whether I am working or resting; you know all my actions. Even before I speak, you already know what I will say."**

I believe Jesus knew Nicodemus was sincere, and gave him what he needed. **And what did he need?** He needed to know how to get into the kingdom of God. Jesus said it takes nothing physical, but a Spiritual birth is required. As were going to see in a minute even though Nicodemus didn't understand what 'born again' meant, he must have had the question nagging at his insides.

And I know that all of us have those nagging questions inside. When were teaching the kids in **KBC**, I know that all of you have those nagging questions inside because you ask them. But the ultimate question which should be on the mind of all non-Christians is the question 'How do I get to heaven?' It's like, the most important question we could ever ask.

In our life time we ask millions of questions but so often it's the wrong question. But guys you need to know that choosing the wrong question has eternal consequences. And getting answers which you want to hear instead of the truth is going to have eternal consequences.

Let me ask you, if you had only one question to ask God's Son when you met Him, **what would it be?** Surely you wouldn't ask, "Hey Jesus how did you do that virgin birth trick?" Surely you wouldn't ask, "Hey Jesus how did you turn that water into wine at that wedding you attended?" Surely you wouldn't ask, "Hey Jesus how did you do that walking on water thing?"

Now these are important questions but surely if you had one question to ask Jesus, you would ask, 'Jesus, **how can I spend eternity with you? How do I get into heaven where you are?**

## Born Again!

So Jesus gives Nicodemus the answer to a question he had deep within his heart but Nicodemus doesn't understand. **John 3:4 "What do you mean? How can an old man go back into his mother's womb and be born again?"**

He says to Jesus, 'What do you mean? Now it's amazing to me how one simple question can cause so much confusion in the religious world. One question with thousands of answers, some contradicting others, each claiming to be the answer! This is one of the most frustrating things we've seen in all of Christianity. If you talk to more than one religious person, you'll get more than one answer to the question.

If you are seeking God, how are you to know what do to? How is the religious world ever going to know how to get into heaven? Who is the author of confusion, anyway? I'll give you a hint, it isn't God! The question is how is a person born again and how do they ensure a place in heaven for eternity?

You see Nicodemus thought to himself, 'wow how on earth can I go back into my mothers womb?' And maybe some of you guys are thinking 'wow, how am I supposed to get back inside my mothers womb?

Now not only would that be too painful for your mothers, it's impossible. But thankfully as always Jesus has the answer. **John 3:5 "I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit". "Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life."**

Jesus says that you need to be born of water and spirit if you want to enter the kingdom of God. The only way to be born of water and spirit is by being baptized in water which is when and only when a person receives the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Now we can see this idea coming together in **Acts 2:38, "Each one of you must turn away from your sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins will be forgiven; and you will receive God's gift, the Holy Spirit."**

Now that's simple enough to understand isn't it? Jesus is talking about becoming a new person after being baptized. **Galatians 3:27 "You were baptized into union with Christ, and now you are clothed, so to speak, with the life of Christ himself."**

You see guys before baptism, a person is to repent (**change**) and when he is baptised, his sins are forgiven him and he is like a new person who has been born again. And when you hear someone say "**I'm a born again Christian**", you should know what they mean. Because let me tell you loved ones, there is no such thing as a Christian who hasn't been born again.

Now being born again is more than just changing clothes. In fact, when you are born again your outward appearance does not change at all. What changes is what is inside of you, your heart. When you are born again, you no longer belong to this world, you belong to Jesus.

## Born Again!

And this new life is not temporary like our bodies, it is everlasting. And what is the source for this new life. Jesus of course. We know this because we read it in the Word of God and it's the Word of God, the Bible which is our source for new life.

Now I know this is difficult to understand for some people, well loved ones you should take some comfort from Nicodemus because he as an educated man found it difficult to understand too. He asks Jesus in **John 3:9** "How are these things possible?" "As Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life". **John 3:14+15**

Now if anyone should know what Jesus meant here it should be our kids because we talked about this a few weeks ago. **But you remember the events of the book of Numbers 21, don't you?**

The people are grumbling against God and Moses and saying, 'we're sick and tired of having nothing to drink, we're sick and tired of eating this same old boring food every day.' 'God can we not just back to Egypt at least we would die in decent surroundings instead of this desert?' So God sent thousands of venomous snakes among them because of their grumbling and many people were bitten and died.

**Numbers 21:7-9** "The people came to Moses and said, "We sinned when we spoke against the Lord and against you. Now pray to the Lord to take these snakes away." So Moses prayed for the people. Then the Lord told Moses to make a metal snake and put it on a pole, so that anyone who was bitten could look at it and be healed. So Moses made a bronze snake and put it on a pole. Anyone who had been bitten would look at the bronze snake and be healed."

**Do you understand the connection here with Jesus' words?** Jesus says just the bronze snake had to be lifted up, He too needs to be lifted up which is Bible language for crucifixion. He's saying just as the people had to look up towards the snake to be healed and be saved, people today need to look up to Jesus on the cross to be healed of their sin and be saved.

Listen guys this world cannot heal your sins; this world hasn't got the power to forgive your sins. And since Jesus is the only one who has that kind of power we should not only look to Him for salvation, we need to listen to His words.

**Mark 9:2-8** "Six days later Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John, and led them up a high mountain, where they were alone. As they looked on, a change came over Jesus, and his clothes became shining white---whiter than anyone in the world could wash them. Then the three disciples saw Elijah and Moses talking with Jesus. Peter spoke up and said to Jesus, "Teacher, how good it is that we are here! We will make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He and the others were so frightened that he did not know what to say. Then a cloud appeared and covered them with its shadow, and a voice came from the cloud,

## Born Again!

"This is my own dear Son---listen to him!" They took a quick look around but did not see anyone else; only Jesus was with them."

They are up a mountain and the disciples see Moses representing the Law which governed the Israelite's lives and Elijah representing the prophets who were God's spokes people.

They disappear and who's left? Jesus. And what does God say? Listen to Him. So let me ask you guys, when it comes to getting into heaven who should you listen to for the answer? Jesus.

And so Jesus says in John 3:16 "For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."

Shortly after the Korean War, a hungry orphan wandered the darkened streets trying to find shelter from the bitter cold of winter. A night watchman noticed his plight and said, "GoMa (child), go to yonder house and say to the one who answers the gate, 'John 3:16.' " "But I do not know what John 3:16 is," replied the lad.

Nevertheless, desperation took him to the gate and brought that strange expression to his lips. He did not understand, but he whispered, "John 3:16." The lady smiled and took him into her warm home. The lad was puzzled as he thought, "I do not know what this John 3:16 is, but it sure makes a cold Korean boy warm."

Seeing his gaunt cheeks, the lady soon had him seated before a steaming bowl of soup. As he ate, the lad thought again, "I do not know what this John 3:16 is, but it sure makes a hungry Korean boy full." After a bath, he lay there on the warm bed with tears flowing down his cheeks, "I do not know what this John 3:16 is," he thought, "but it must be the most wonderful thing in the whole world. It makes a strange lady love a lonely Korean boy."

You see loved ones I don't care who you are or what you've done in the past; you need to know that God loves you. He loves you so much that He sent His Son to die for you and God says if you look up to Jesus He will give you eternal life.

You know many people enjoy boating, fishing, sailing, and canoeing on lakes, rivers, and streams. Have you ever gone out in a boat? If so, I am sure that you know what this is. It is a life jacket. You know that it is very important to put on a life jacket any time you go out in a boat. You never know when an accident might happen or when a storm might come up. If you are thrown from the boat, a life jacket can save your life.

I remember a true story about some men and boys who went fishing on a lake. Before they got into the boat, they began to put on their life jackets. One of the men refused to put on a life jacket.

## Born Again!

Perhaps he thought it made him look like a sissy, or maybe he thought, "I know how to swim. If anything happens I can save myself." They had only been on the lake for a short time when a sudden storm came up. The wind blew and the waves became so high that they turned the boat over.

The ones who were wearing life jackets made it to shore and were saved. The man who was not wearing a life jacket drowned because he had refused to take the one thing that could have saved him.

The Bible tells us that "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." Jesus wants to save us and take us to Heaven to be with him, but there are some people who think they might look like a sissy if they admit that they need Jesus.

They think that they can take care of themselves without him. When the storms of life come up, they are thrown overboard and are lost forever because they refused to take hold of the one thing that could save them, Jesus.

It is foolish to go out onto the water without a life jacket, but it is even more foolish to try to sail the sea of life without Jesus! Now you might be thinking 'well I believe in Jesus and that's enough!'

Loved ones keep the text in its context. Jesus is still speaking with Nicodemus and he's just finished telling him that he needs to be baptised to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Was Nicodemus ever baptised? Did he obey Jesus words? Well according to John 7:50 he was the one argued for Jesus to have a fair trial. In John 19:39 Nicodemus brought spices, myrrh and aloes to help with the burial of Jesus. The Bible doesn't tell us anymore about him and that could be a question we ask Jesus when we see Him.

But the most important question you need to ask yourself, now that you know how to get to heaven is, are you willing to listen to Jesus and obey His commands?