

JOHN CHAPTER THREE VERSE THREE

YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN



John's gospel contains the core elements of our salvation. Chapter three is special in that in it are found all the critical elements for our salvation, that Jesus discussed with Nicodemus late one evening. Nicodemus, a religious ruler of Israel, comes to Jesus at night, alone, to enquire about His mission on Earth as Nicodemus himself must have witnessed the miracles Jesus had performed up to that point. Jesus' explanation to Nicodemus shows the lack of understanding this Jewish religious leader had. He may have had knowledge of the Old Testament, but he lacked insight and wisdom. Solomon asked God for understanding. He got more than that:

Give therefore thy servant an **understanding** heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, **I have given thee a wise** and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.— **1 Kings 3:9-12**

God did not just give Solomon knowledge (understanding) on how to rule his kingdom but gave him wisdom as well. There is a distinct difference. Knowledge is knowing that a tomato is a fruit, not a vegetable. Wisdom is knowing that you cannot use a tomato in a fruit salad. Wisdom comes after knowledge and is always of superior value. Academic knowledge is of no use if it cannot be wisely applied.

As Jesus did on other occasions as well, He would often seem not to answer a question directly but use an example to teach a much deeper truth. Nicodemus asks Jesus about the miracles:

The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these **miracles** that thou doest, except God be with him. — **John 3:2**

Nicodemus has knowledge of the Scriptures but lacks the wisdom to apply it. He recognises the power of the miracles, and recognises that Jesus comes from God, and that God is indeed with Him. Note that he does not ask a question but makes a statement. We would normally expect an answer to a question, but not usually to a statement. Still, Jesus answers him, having already anticipated where the discussion was going to lead.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. — **John 3:3, 3:6-8**

The answer catches Nicodemus off guard and he immediately asks how this is possible. As if normal childbirth is not already difficult enough, he tries to rationalise the reverse to take place. Of course, this is not at all what Jesus had in mind. Jesus's response shows that Nicodemus's insight is limited:

Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? – **John 3:9-10**

Jesus expects a man of Nicodemus' stature to understand the Scriptures, which all pointed towards the coming of the Messiah. It was what the role of Messiah would be that Nicodemus did not understand. For Israel, the promised Messiah was expected to be a military leader that would depose the Roman oppressors. Even at this early stage it was clear that this was not going to happen. Jesus then hits Nicodemus with another one: if you are not born again, you cannot enter the kingdom of God. The Jews always felt that the Kingdom of God was theirs by default and that they did not have to do anything else to deserve it. Hearing that they still had to do something else, a strange request – to be born again – just did not make any sense.

The carnal man (before the rebirth has taken place) cannot enter the Kingdom of God. This simply means that in your current state, both physically and spiritually, you cannot enter heaven. The reasons are as follows:

1. The body is essentially **corruptible flesh**, as a result of the Fall of man. This body cannot inherit a place in heaven (1 Corinthians 15:50). The rebirth of man allows for the corruptible body to be changed to become incorruptible (1 Corinthians 15:53);
2. The unsaved man's **spirit is not yet renewed** to conform to the Holy Spirit's standard (1 Corinthians 2:12). He has the spirit of the world. The rebirth exchanges this with the Spirit of God.

The rebirth

When Jesus says you must be born again, He has the following in mind, some of which was already stated by John in chapter one, verses 12 and 13:

1. Your rebirth is now not by the blood of a man but of Jesus Christ (John 1:13)
2. Your rebirth is now not by the will of a man but by the will of God (John 1:13)
3. Your rebirth is not optional: you **must** be born again. Your spiritual welfare is more important than your physical welfare, being mistreated by an enemy (the Roman occupation of the time) (John 3:7).
4. Your rebirth's first step is breathing the Spirit of God and not natural air.
 - a. As a new-born baby you took your first breath to allow oxygen into your lungs to provide to your body.
 - b. As a person reborn of the Spirit, your first breath is of the Spirit and this provides sustenance for your own spirit. Let us consider something here:

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. – **Genesis 2:7**

Adam, the first person, was not formed in the womb of a woman and was not born as a baby. Thus he was not in the position to take a first breath. God Himself breathed the breath of life into Adam and he became a living soul.

Take a moment to think about this carefully. Imagine what it must have been like to be created by God from the dust of the earth and then have Him breathe life into you so that you can live.

The rebirth is the same. All those who are born again, are already alive but because of the fall of man, are sinners. The rebirth allows the Spirit of God to breathe Life into you so that you can live as a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). The old creation ceases to exist.

5. Your rebirth allows for a change of ownership. As a carnal person, born in the flesh, you were essentially controlled by the devil (All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God – Romans 3:23 – from their birth.). At your rebirth the Spirit of God takes up residence in your body, which now becomes a temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Corinthians 6:19).

The spiritual rebirth of man has been mocked through the ages, and the devil has often led man astray by having him focus on something else instead. Without rebirth, you will not see the kingdom of God and you are destined for eternal damnation.

How am I born again?

If you have not yet been reborn, do not delay. God is waiting for you to declare your inability to live life without Jesus Christ, today. Once you do, He will give you the Life you need. As Jesus said, I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me (John 14:6).

This website gives the steps towards salvation and being reborn – repent of your sin; request His forgiveness; and receive His forgiveness. Being forgiven for your sins is as easy as the sinner's prayer. God is a loving Father and His plan for salvation is simple. Do this today and your name will appear in the Book of Life!