

# BORN AGAIN

*“How can a man be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!”*  
—JOHN 3:4

Nicodemus was a Pharisee, which meant he kept the laws of Moses and many extraneous impositions listed in Pharisaic law. He was also a member of the Sanhedrin Council, and no doubt, greatly respected, but he knew something was missing. Jesus, on the other hand, was a preacher without credentials or position, but people were gathering in great numbers to hear Him. Nicodemus recognized something in this young preacher which he did not have in himself.

When Nicodemus stole away to talk quietly with Jesus, Jesus said to him, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again” (John 3:3). The term ‘born again’ has been largely misunderstood. The general assumption is that it involves a fresh start or turning over a new leaf, but that is not what Jesus meant by ‘born again’. Nicodemus had asked a genuine question. “How can a man be born again when he is old?” Jesus answered, “No one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh but the Spirit gives birth to spirit” (John 3:5-6).

Being born of the flesh is, of course, our physical birth, but in Christ we are given a second birth; that of the inception of the Holy Spirit who imparts not a fresh start, but a new life, the life of Jesus Christ born in us. With this second birth, we begin seeing, hearing and understanding things we never did before. There is a whole new world opening up to

us, because we have a new life; a spiritual life with spiritual appetites for the things of God.

Jesus said to Philip, “The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work” (John 14:10). This is what Nicodemus recognized in Jesus. What flowed out of Him could only have had its source in God and only be explained by the fact that God was with Him. Jesus said to Nicodemus, “The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit” (John 3:8).

There comes a moment when the Holy Spirit begins His work in us. Like the wind, we don’t know when it started or where it came from, but we know something is happening to us. We’ve become aware of our need and the Holy Spirit’s solution to that need, which is the divine life of Jesus Christ, indwelling our hearts and transforming our lives.

***PRAYER: Dear Father, thank You for the life of Jesus Christ and the transforming work of His Spirit which has so greatly enriched my life, especially in coming to know Him.***

***TO REFLECT UPON: What changes in myself did I first notice when the Holy Spirit began working in my life?***