

HIGHLIGHTS

Context

1. New Testament, Gospel (biography of Jesus)
2. Important references to the Old Testament
3. A private interview with Jesus by Nicodemus, a prominent religious leader
4. Applied as universal in the New Testament

Titus 3:5 *he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,*

James 1:18 *He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.*

1 Peter 1:3 *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

1 Peter 1:23 *For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.*

1 John 5:1 *Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God . . .*

Content is a dialogue.

Nicodemus' First Question: What? (unstated)

John 3:1 *Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. 2 He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."*

Jesus' First Answer: You must be born again.

John 3:3 *In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."*

Nicodemus' Second Question: How?

John 3:4 *"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!"*

Jesus' Second Answer: Be born by the Spirit

John 3:5 *Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying,*

'You must be born again.' 8 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."

Nicodemus' Third Question: How?

John 3:9 "How can this be?" Nicodemus asked.

Jesus' Third Answer

1. Diagnosis of unbelief

John 3:10 *"You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? 11 I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. 12 I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?"*

2. OT reference to the "Son of Man"

John 3:13 *"No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven — the Son of Man."*

3. OT reference to salvation by faith

John 3:14 *"Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life."*

4. The greatest explanation

John 3:16 *"For 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."*

Carry Out

1. This is the simplest and greatest story of Jesus.

For God – THE GREATEST BEING

so loved – THE GREATEST MOTIVE

the world – THE GREATEST COMPANY

that he gave – THE GREATEST ACT

his one and only Son – THE GREATEST GIFT

that whoever – THE GREATEST INVITATION

believes – THE GREATEST DECISION

in Him – THE GREATEST PERSON

should not perish – THE GREATEST PROMISE

but – THE GREATEST DIFFERENCE

have – THE GREATEST CERTAINTY

everlasting life – THE GREATEST POSSESSION

2. Have you been born again?

3. Nicodemus risked his life for Jesus? Are you ready to take the risk?

John 19:38 *Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jews. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. 39 He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds.*