

In every denomination of the professing church today there are two classes of members: those who have been born again and are therefore members of the true Church, and those who have not. The wheat and the weeds will grow together until the Lord comes (**Matthew 13:30**), but when He comes, only the “**wheat**” (those who are truly born again) will be saved everlastingly.

**John 3:3: “Jesus answered him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.’”**

- **Grammatical Usage:** “truly” or “amén” in the Greek means, “I solemnly declare”; “born” or “gennaó” means, “beget; bring forth”; “again” or “anóthen” meaning, “from above”; “see” or “horaó” meaning, “perceive, discern, understand.”
- **Literal Interpretation:** Jesus responded by saying, “I solemnly declare, I solemnly declare what I am telling you: If any person is not brought forth from above, he is not able to understand the Kingdom of God.
- **Contextual/Comparison:** God keeps His Word: God continually uses His Word. In the light of **John 3:3**, how tremendously important it is that we not only understand the DOCTRINE of regeneration, but that we really know the EXPERIENCE of regeneration! The new birth is the greatest blessing that anyone can experience in this life, and it is the foundation of all our hopes for the world to come. It is the key doctrine to every other truth revealed in the Word of God. To understand this doctrine is to open the door to an understanding of every other Bible doctrine:

## 1. WHAT THE NEW BIRTH IS NOT

- It is not a NATURAL birth (**vv. 4; 6**), though it is characteristically the same as a natural birth. Before we started to live we were born; before we begin to live spiritually we must be born again.
- It is not BEING RELIGIOUS. Nicodemus was very religious, but not born again (**v. 10**). He was the Master in Israel, yet blind concerning his need of and the nature of the second birth.
- It is not HEAD KNOWLEDGE (**v. 2**). Nicodemus had much intellectual belief, much head knowledge. He began his conversation with the Lord Jesus by saying, ‘**We know...**’ (**v. 2**); but any amount of knowledge is no substitute for the new birth. Even the devils believe (**James 2:19**)!
- It is not mere EXTERNAL REFORMATION. Here again, who could be more outwardly correct than Nicodemus? Yet he was not born again (**2 Timothy 3:5**).
- It is not self-effort or GOOD WORKS (**Ephesians 2:8-10**). No amount of good works will produce the new birth. We are only to work out our salvation after God has worked it in (**Philippians 2:12-13**).
- It is not rites and ceremonies, such as BAPTISM or CHURCH MEMBERSHIP. Look up **Titus 3:5**. The word ‘**water**’ in **John 3:5** does not refer to the ordinance

of baptism. Baptism and church membership come after we have been born again - not before, or as a means of producing the new birth (**Acts 2:41**).

## 2. WHAT IS THE NEW BIRTH?

- It is the commencement of the life of God in the soul of man (**John 5:40; 10:10; 1 John 5:11-12**). When we are born again we ‘**may participate in the divine nature**’ (**2 Peter 1:4**).
- It is being made alive from the dead; passing from death to life. By nature man is spiritually dead (**Ephesians 2:1**), but by the miracle of the new birth he is raised to newness of life (**Romans 6:4; 1 John 3:14**).
- It is a second birth; a birth from above (**vv. 3; 7**). Notice the word ‘**again**’ in **John 3:3; 7**.
- It is the giving of a new nature (**2 Corinthians 5:17**). The new birth is a new creation within the human personality - not a patching up, an improvement of the old nature (**John 3:6; Ephesians 4:22-24**).
- It is a divine work - all of God (**John 1:12-13**).

## 3. WHY IS THE NEW BIRTH NECESSARY?

- Because our Lord said so (**John 3:3**). This word is imperative.
- Because we all possess a fallen nature. However well-educated and cultured we may be, **Ephesians 2:2-3** describes us in God’s sight.
- Because by nature we are spiritually dead (**John 5:40; Ephesians 2:1; 1 John 5:12**).
- Because in our fallen state we cannot please God. Look up **John 3:6** and compare **Romans 8:8**. How conclusive these verses are!
- Because we can never enter the kingdom of God until we possess a nature capable of enjoying the things of that kingdom. The sun and the stars are astronomically understood; a piano concerto is musically understood; flowers and shrubs are botanically understood. Heaven and spiritual things are spiritually understood (**1 Corinthians 2:14**).

## 4. HOW AND WHEN IS THE NEW BIRTH EXPERIENCED?

How does the new birth take place? How may a person be born again? It is accomplished:

- By the HOLY SPIRIT. Look again at **John 3:5-6; Titus 3:5**. The new birth is not the work of man, but the operation of God the Holy Spirit.
- Through the WORD OF GOD. The instrument the Holy Spirit uses is the Word of God (**James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23**). The Holy Spirit sows the seed of the Word in our hearts and gives us new life.
- In response to FAITH. Study carefully **John 1:11-13; 3:14-15**; compare **Numbers 21:1-9**.

➤ **Conclusion:** Have you believed...received the Lord Jesus Christ, and been born again?