

WHAT DO YOU MEAN.....BORN AGAIN??

Pastor: John B. Neal

Did you know that a man named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, asked Jesus that very same question? He came to Jesus by night with these same thoughts in mind, because he didn't want the people to know that an important person like himself was asking questions about this Christian way. "What do you mean, born again?" he asked Jesus secretly "How can this be when I am old? Can I enter a second time into my mother's womb and be born?" But Jesus was not speaking of a natural birth, but a spiritual birth, which people don't seem to understand. Some people have strange ideas about being born again.

I once heard of a strip-tease dancer, who claimed she had been born again, I don't know what she based it on, but a reporter asked her what changes, if any, this would make in her life. If she was going to give up her dancing. She replied, "Oh no, I'm not giving up dancing, this will only make me better."

I don't know what kind of rebirth she had, but it wasn't any thing that I know of. The phrase, "Born again" is banded around too freely today. When I heard this, I couldn't help but ask myself the question that came to my mind, "What do you mean....born again?"

There are so many thoughts on the subject, and each one seems to have a different idea. It's no wonder that people are so confused today. If a person believes in the Bible, then I believe that the best place to search for answers is the divine word of God.

Moses wasn't born again. Isaiah wasn't born again; they lived under the law, during the Old Testament times. We, today, of the New Testament times are living under Grace. Jesus told Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again." He didn't say you "Should be", nor it would be best if you were. No, he said, you must. It was not a statement, but a command. Why do you think Jesus would make a statement like that?

We can find the answer in St. John 3: 6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh;" (this is speaking of our natural birth) But the scripture goes on to say, "And that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." What could Jesus mean, "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." We realize that being born of the flesh is speaking of our

natural birth, and in our natural state we are born in sin, (Psalms 51: 5) for all are born of the lust of the flesh.

The Apostle Paul tells us in Romans 7:18, “In me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.” We all know to do good, but our fleshly nature won’t let us do what we know is right. It is the nature of man to do what he or she wants to do. But it’s not the right thing nor the spiritual thing, (Gal. 5:17).

The Apostle Paul goes to say, “So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Romans 8:8). So what is one to do? And the turmoil goes on within the heart and soul of man. This is why Jesus said, “Ye must be born again.” How? You ask, as Nicodemus did.

Do you know the story of Abraham and Sarah, how she was unable to bear a child, so she encouraged Abraham her husband to sleep with Hagar, her handmaid, that she might have children through her. This practice was accepted at that time. Now the Old Testament is a type an shadow of the New Testament and we find in Gal. 4: 23 that, “He who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh.”

But Isaac, the child of Abraham and Sarah his wife, who represents the freewoman, was the child of promise, the spiritual seed. Now you may be wondering, what has that got to do with anything? Plenty. For Paul tells us that, “Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed” (Romans 9:7-8).

Who are the children of the promise? And what is the promise anyway? I will let the divine word of God answer these questions for you. Galatians 3:29 says, “If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Notice the scripture said, “If you be Christ’s,” Then and only then can you be heirs according to the promise. St. John 1:12 tells us that, “As many as received him, (that is Jesus Christ) to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.”

Take a close look at this scripture, you will see that not everyone will receive Jesus Christ into their lives, they will not have that born again experience. But the scripture said, “As many as receive Him.” Jesus gives us all a choice. We can reject Him, and continuing walking after the flesh or we can be like Joshua, “As

for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” Those who receive Him, they are the children of the promise.

How can we know what the promise is, you may ask? Well, let us see if we can find the answer. Jesus being assembled together with his disciples, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but “wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence” (Acts 1: 4-5).

Some people feel that the words, “Holy Ghost” is a misprint, but the dictionary says that ghost is the “appearing of a person who has died, unto the living.” Jesus died on the cross of Calvary and was placed in the tomb and a seal placed upon the closing of the tomb. But on the third day he arose and was first seen of Mary Magdalene and later he was seen of all his disciples. The Holy Ghost is no misprint.

St. John 14: 26 says, “..The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name,.....” Notice, the scripture said, “The Comforter, is the Holy Ghost.” And the Comforter was sent to us in the name of Jesus. For we find that Jesus was talking to his disciples when he said, “The Father will send the Comforter in my name.”

When Jesus said in Acts 1: 4-5, “Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost,” He was speaking of His spirit. On the day of Pentecost this promise was fulfilled, “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they; (referring to the 120 in the upper room, Acts 1: 15) were all with one accord in one place.” And Acts 2:4 goes on to say, “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the **Spirit** gave them utterance.” They did not go to school to learn how to speak in other tongues, but as the spirit gave them utterance. No man taught them how to speak in other tongues. The Holy Ghost is the Comforter that Jesus promised to all who receive Him, with the evidences that the Comforter is there by speaking in other tongues as the Spirit of God gives utterance. Jesus said, “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you” (St. John 14:28).

To receive this wonderful experience one must come through the cleansing of the blood of Jesus Christ, through the baptism in the name of Jesus. There is no other way. There is a song that comes to my mind at this time, “God leads His dear children along, some through the water, some through the flood, some through the fire, but all through the blood.”

We can't get to the Father except through the blood of Jesus Christ. Being baptized of the Spirit is the highest experience anyone could receive in this life. There is no record where the disciples received a spiritual experience before the day of Pentecost. In fact it would be scripturally impossible for them to get a New Testament experience until Jesus as our High Priest had ascended into heaven. Why? Jesus told His disciples, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you" (St. John 16:7). Jesus had to ascend into heaven before the Comforter could be sent back to earth.

Notice Acts 2:4 tells us that, "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost" that means that if they were filled, the very Spirit of God dwelled on the inside of them. Thank about it. This was what Jesus was speaking about when he told His disciples, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth... for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you" (St. John 14:16-17).

Jesus said that he would be in them as the Comforter, which the Father would send. The Spirit could not be given until Jesus went away or until he had ascended back up into heaven. Then, and not until then, could they receive the Spirit of the Comforter.

When Jesus was speaking to Nicodemus he said, "....., except (meaning unless) a man be born of water (which is the baptism in Jesus' name Acts 2:38) and of the Spirit, (which is the Holy Ghost or Comforter given on the day of Pentecost) he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God" (St. John 3: 5).

Nicodemus wanted to know; how can these things be? He was ignorant of the spiritual meaning, like so many are today. Eph. 4:18 Paul says, "Having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." This is a spiritual blindness.

Preacher are teaching that it don't happen like that anymore, that it was only for the disciples, and that after the disciples died no body else need or does receive the Holy Ghost anymore. But they are telling you a pack of lies. We need the Holy Ghost today just as the disciples. Jesus said, "I change not." He is not here today and gone tomorrow, and beside that, how can anyone be born again without the Spirit of God abiding within them.

If one has received Him and the Holy Ghost abides within them, then there is a change made in one's life. A person cannot do the works of the flesh and the works of God, for you cannot serve two masters (Matt. 6: 24).

If you have a friend or a family member who you would like prayer for or that you would like to see saved, please send us your prayer list with the name, that we may hold them up before God in prayer, and entreat God on their behalf. May God bless.