

New Birth

Part 1

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| Speaker | R. K. Campbell |
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Note: This text is a computer generated transcript of the sermon. In some cases it may contain errors.

[00:00:00] In John 3 we read about a man of the Pharisees and a ruler of the Jews who came to Jesus by night and acknowledged him as rabbi and a teacher come from God. Jesus then answered by saying to him, verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again or anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God. When Nicodemus questioned as to how a man can be born when he is old and so forth, the Lord explained further and emphatically stated, marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again. Five times the Lord spoke about being born anew, born from above, born of the Spirit of God. This indicates the absolute necessity of the new birth, of being born of the Spirit of God, born anew of a heavenly source. So the Lord told Nicodemus, a religious leader in Israel, that except or unless a man be born anew, he cannot see the [00:01:03] kingdom of God. So then new birth by the Spirit of God is the vital necessity for entrance into the kingdom of God. Without this new birth, one cannot see the kingdom of God. We may inquire as to why the new birth is positively necessary for entrance into the family of God. It is because, as the Lord stated, that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. In Romans 8, 7, we are informed that the mind of the flesh is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, for neither indeed can it be, and they that are in the flesh cannot please God. This is the divine verdict as to the whole human race born from fallen Adam and Eve. As born of this sinful fleshly line, we all have received the fallen [00:02:02] sinful nature of our forefathers, and that nature is corrupt, deceitful, and at enmity with God. This sinful rebellious nature has been manifested in all the world by man's history of some 6,000 years of violence and corruption. The Bible says there's none righteous, no not one.

There's none that understandeth, there's none that seeketh after God. There is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. See Romans 3, verses 10, 11, and 22, and 23. And man with all his attainments and advancements in this enlightened 20th century has not changed or improved from this divine conclusion of God stated in the above words over 1900 years ago. There's no hope for mankind outside of a new birth or being born anew by the Spirit of God. [00:03:01] Therefore the Lord Jesus said, marvel not that I said unto thee ye must be born again. Now what is the new birth? The new birth which the Lord Jesus spoke of is a work of the Spirit of God in the believer. Therefore, or thereby, a new sinless nature is imparted by God.

The Apostle Peter tells us we are born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the Word of God, 1 Peter 1.23. This spiritual birth is from an incorruptible sinless source, from God himself. So 2 Peter 1.4 instructs us that the believer in Jesus Christ is made partaker of the divine nature. With this the words of the Apostle John agree. He wrote, whosoever is born of God does not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he's born of God, 1 John 3.9. John is speaking here about the new nature that one [00:04:07] receives when born of God. It cannot sin

because it is a divine nature imparted by the Spirit of God in new birth. Of course the child of God still has within him the old nature that is sinful and can sin, as we learn from Romans 7. But he now has a nature that hates sin and loves righteousness. The prophet Ezekiel wrote about what the Lord will do when he regathers Israel and places them into their own land. His words described a new birth when a nation shall be born in a day. God said through the prophet, then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, [00:05:03] and I will give you a heart of flesh, and I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. Ezekiel 36 verses 24 to 27.

New birth brings about a moral cleansing in the soul and gives the believer in Jesus a new heart and a new spirit. There's an absolute change wrought by the Spirit of God within one who is born of God. So 2 Corinthians 5.17 says, therefore, if any man be in Christ, he's a new creature or new creation. Old things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new. From the foregoing scriptures, it should be clear what the new spiritual birth is. It surely is not just an emotional religious experience of pious feelings and so forth. It is a positive work of the Spirit of God in the soul of one who believes the word of God and the gospel of [00:06:05] salvation in Jesus Christ. A change of heart is thus wrought and manifested in fruits of repentance and faith. This brings us to our third point as to how one is born anew. When the Lord told Nicodemus that he had to be born anew of the Spirit of God, he answered with the question, how can these things be? The Lord had just made reference to the mystery of the wind blowing and said, so is everyone that is born of the Spirit. He thereby indicated that the work of the Spirit of God in new birth is something beyond our explanation. However, Jesus said, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Here two things are mentioned in connection with being born again, born of water [00:07:03] and of the Spirit. They are the means by which the new birth is accomplished. Once the Lord coupled together water and the Spirit, and twice he mentioned the Spirit only. Thus he indicated that the symbol of water is only the medium used, and that the life-giving power in the accomplishment of the new birth is the Spirit of God. But what did the Lord mean by the figure of water, born of water? We need to compare scripture with scripture and let it teach us, rather than giving this verse in John 3, 5 our own interpretation. Water cleanses, and in Psalm 119, verse 9, and John 15, verse 3, and in Ephesians 5, 26, the cleansing of the word of God is spoken of. Clean through the word, and the washing of water by the word.

[00:08:05] Here water is used as a symbol of the word of God. Then in James 1, 18, we read, of his own will begat he us with the word of truth. And 1 Peter 1, 23 says, being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God. And John 1, verses 12 and 13 state that those who have received Christ and believed on his name become the sons of God and are born of God. The new birth, then, is affected by the word of God, which tells us as to our lost and sinful state, and brings us the word of salvation by faith in Christ's death for us. When the word of God is to one's lost and helpless condition, and as to the atonement for sin in the cross of Christ, is brought home to the soul in the power of the Spirit, and is believed and accepted in [00:09:03] the heart, one is born anew by the Spirit of God and becomes a new creation in Christ. The believing of the word of God is the human side in the matter of the new birth, while the work of the Holy Spirit is the divine side. Both are needed. From all these scriptures as to the symbolical meaning of water, and as to being born again by the word of God and the Spirit of God, it should be abundantly clear that water baptism is not meant by the words of the Lord, as many think and teach. To bring water baptism into John 3, verse 5, born of the water, born of water and of the Spirit, is to do violence to scripture and create confusion and contradiction with other statements in the Bible about water and new birth. The Bible

does not contradict itself. Everything is in divine harmony when we study scripture in the light [00:10:02] of scripture and keep our own thoughts out. Water baptism has its place following new birth and salvation, as the book of Acts and the epistles clearly teach, but it has nothing to do with being born anew by the Spirit of God. When Nicodemus was a religious man, we should note that it was to this religious man that the Lord spoke emphatically of the necessity of being born anew by the Spirit of God. Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews and of the Pharisees and the strictest sect of Judaism. The requirement of the new birth in order to see and enter the kingdom of God made him realize his helplessness to accomplish this necessity. The emphatic words of the Lord brought Nicodemus down from his religious place. Their purpose was to cause him to see himself as a helpless sinner outside of the kingdom of God and unable to fit himself for that place. So today the words of the necessity of being born anew of the Spirit of God should make [00:11:06] every unregenerate religious person realize that he or she is a helpless sinner and needs to be saved by simple faith in Jesus Christ the Redeemer. I speak of the must of redemption.

It's important and encouraging to know that the Lord did not just leave Nicodemus with the impossible human accomplishment of the necessity or must of being born anew. He went on to tell him the good news of a work that must and would be done for him by another. Jesus said, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life. John 3, 14 and 15. Here we have the must and promise of a divine work of salvation to be done for man. Since the death of Christ at Calvary we know this work of salvation has been accomplished. It is finished. Jesus said when he [00:12:06] was lifted up on the cross and whosoever believes and trusts and commits himself to him has eternal life is born again and saved for all eternity.