



The New Birth

Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader, was intrigued by Jesus Christ. Some people referred to Jesus as teacher, some saw Him as a king, others saw Him as a savior from an oppressive government, but many thought of Him as an opportunist. Therefore, to avoid controversy, Nicodemus went to Jesus at night when there was little chance he would be recognized. He believed that Jesus was from God because of the miracles He did. However, even before Nicodemus had the opportunity to ask a question, Jesus declared, “No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again” (John 3:3). Christ made it clear that a born-again experience was essential to being saved from sin’s power and penalty of death.



The difference between one who is a Christian and one who is not can be summed up in one word—LIFE! Man, in and of himself, is “dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1). He is completely without spiritual life. His major problem is not that he is ignorant needing life instruction; nor is it that he is weak, needing life invigoration. Rather, man’s biggest problem is spiritual death. Physical life came when we were born into the world. Spiritual life comes as we are born into God’s kingdom.

At first, Nicodemus was puzzled by what Jesus said and wanted an explanation of how to be born again. Jesus simplified the whole issue when He made a declaration that has become the best known and best loved scripture in the Bible: 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.”* As a result of Christ’s words that night, Nicodemus was born again. Later in the scripture, we find that he was no longer afraid to be identified with Jesus. He defended Christ after a foiled attempt to arrest Jesus (John 7:50-51). Following Jesus’ crucifixion, Nicodemus risked career, alienation from his peers, and even death to help remove Jesus’ body from the cross and prepare it for burial (John 19:31). Christ’s conversation with Nicodemus that night resulted in a man who found new life in the Lord Jesus.

Overview

The New Birth is not merely a belief system or religiousness. It initiates a full and complete spiritual life. Jesus said, *“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full”* (John 10:10). Christ in us is a lifestyle. It begins when we are

born again and continues through eternity. It involves birthing, cleansing, renewing, creating, and resurrecting. It brings joy, peace, reconciliation, and adoption. It is based on our being made just and right in the eyes of a Holy God. The Lord, by His own grace, took the judgment for our sins and has

justified us so that we can enjoy life at its absolute best. It doesn’t get any better than that. God loves us and wants us to be born into His family, thereby becoming his sons and daughters. He wants to have a close relationship with us, and He wants us to realize all the blessings of new life in Him.

DECLARATION OF FAITH

"We believe that the change which takes place in the heart and life at conversion is a very real one; that the sinner is then born again in such a glorious and transforming manner that old things are passed away and all things are become new; inasmuch that the things once abhorred are now held most sacred and dear; and that now having had imputed to him the righteousness of the Redeemer and having received the Spirit of Christ, new desires, new aspirations, new interests, and a new perspective of life, time, and eternity, fills the blood-washed heart so that his desire is now to openly confess and serve the Master, seeking ever those things which are above."

– Aimee Semple McPherson,
Founder ICFG



To better understand what being born again is all about and its importance to us, break up into groups of two or three. Then, work at filling in the answers from the scriptures listed. Towards the end of this sections time frame, the teacher will discuss the answers with you.

THE RESULTS OF THE NEW BIRTH

THE NATURE OF THE NEW BIRTH

Who is born of God? (1 John 5:1) _____

What two events take place when we are born again?

(Titus 3:5)

(1) _____

(2) _____

What happens to us as persons when we experience the new birth? (2 Corinthians 5:17 and Ephesians 4:24)

God doesn't just patch up the old person. He makes us new people in Him.

What are we made when we are born again? (1 Corinthians 15:22) _____

John Wesley said that the new birth is "that great change which God works in the soul when it brings it into life; when he raises it from the depths of sin to the life of righteousness."

We receive _____. (1 Peter 1:8)

This is the natural result of being released from sin. It is not like the "fun" that the world is seeking after based on heightened sensations. It is the realization within that our sins are forgiven and that we have a home forever in heaven.

We receive _____. (Romans 5:1)

There is the wonderful assurance that we will NOT have to face God's wrath for our sins.

We receive _____.

(2 Corinthians 5:18).

Whereas we were once at enmity towards God, attested to by our sinning, at the moment of the new birth we are brought back into fellowship with Him.

We receive _____.

(Romans 8:15-17 and Ephesians 1:5-6).

The legal act of _____ brings us into the status of complete sonship in the family of God. As fully recognized members of the household of God, we have all the rights and privileges of sonship. Because of this, we can come boldly to the throne of God's grace and obtain whatever He has promised. .

Think about the Scripture verses you have studied in this lesson. Consider how you might answer the following questions. Write down your first response to these questions and then discuss your thoughts with the same group of two or three.



Personal Response

What does it mean to be born again?

What are some of the privileges you have as God's child?



HEART PERSPECTIVE

A mother, in expressing her love to her adopted daughter, explained to her that she was not born under her heart in her womb. Rather, she was born in her heart. In a similar manner, when we are born again and thereby adopted into the Lord's family, we become the center of God's attention and love. Psalm 17:8 tells us that we are the apple of God's eye. A father, wanting to illustrate God's love to his son, began to swing his arm in a circle over his head. He explained, "God's love is as big as all that you can see in every direction." Then, with only the wisdom that the Lord could give a child, the boy responded, "Then, daddy we must be right in the center of God's love."

A few years ago at a graduation ceremony of the Los Angeles Mission, a very moving incident occurred. The L. A. Mission helps to rehabilitate alcoholics and drug addicts. When it came time for this particular graduation, those who had successfully completed the program lined up in front, facing the audience. Just before the pastors and chaplains were called up to pray for the graduates, a seven-year-old girl in the back yelled out across the crowd of people, "I LOVE YOU DADDY!" In that moment, everyone present knew that, not only was a man's life restored, but a family was reunited as well. Tears filled the eyes of many in the room. This is how the Lord feels about the lost. He wants them to be born into His family and to begin new lives. God wants us to tell them, "I love you!"





Lesson 3 Teaching Outline

The New Birth

1 REFERENCE POINT (10 minutes)

Begin by asking the students why they think they should go to heaven? A lot of people think that salvation is based on living a good life. If they just try harder and become more religious they will make it. Now have the students read the *Reference Point* of this lesson.

Remind them, that no matter how religious we become, we are still spiritually dead. Bring a picture of a cemetery to class. Remind the students that the people buried there are still dead even though we fix up and beautify the graves. It is the same with people who have not been born again. No matter how much they try to fix up their lives, they are still spiritually dead. Spiritual life only comes from God as we are born again into His family.

2 OVERVIEW (10 minutes)

Bring a rock and a plant to class. Have the students to read the *Overview* section of the lesson. Explain that the rock represents our spirits before we are born again. There is no life to it.

The living plant represents the life that Christ gives us when we are born again. Have the students suggest ways in which they are like a living plant after being born again. For example: as a plant grows towards the sun, so we begin to grow towards the Son of God.

3 INSIGHT (25 minutes)

Help the students break up into groups of two and three. Then, working together as groups, have them answer the questions. The answers are as follows in sequential order. They may differ slightly according to the Bible translation used.

THE NATURE OF THE NEW BIRTH

Those who believe that Jesus is the Christ; (1) Washing of rebirth & (2) Renewal of the Holy Spirit; We become a new person; We are made alive.

RESULTS OF THE NEW BIRTH

Joy, Peace, Reconciliation, Adoption, Adoption.

As you go over the answers, take time to teach what the new birth is and why it is so important to be spiritually born again.

TAKING IT HOME

PERSONAL RESPONSE (Conclusion, 15 minutes)

Divide the students into groups of two or three and have them work on the questions. Afterwards, write down on a chalk board or overhead transparency some of their answers concerning, first, the meaning of being born again and, second, the privileges of being God's child.

HEART PERSPECTIVE (Personal Devotions)

This section further emphasizes the fact that, when we are born again, we become the children of God. It also emphasizes the tremendous love that He has for us in that regard!.

FAITH SHARING (Follow-Up)

There was a man once that was so intent on people's accepting Jesus that he threatened to beat them up if they refused. We should never browbeat people into accepting Christ. God wants us to simply share His love for them.