

John 3:1-21: Born Again.

1. (1-8): You must get a new birth.

This is the most famous conversation, one that would lead to the summary of the Gospel in a simple sentence. Nicodemus was one of those impressed by Jesus' signs, an educated member of the ruling religious council, the Sanhedrin; didn't believe in the spiritual (angels, resurrection), strict-legalist and self-righteous as well.

Jesus' reply to Nicodemus shatters the Jewish assumption that their racial identity - their first birth - assured them a place in God's Kingdom. Jesus makes it plain that a man's first birth does not assure him of the kingdom - only being **born again** gives this assurance.

The ancient Greek word translated **again** "depicts repeated action, but requires the original source to repeat it. In other words, the one who did the work the first time does it again." Nicodemus clearly does not understand Jesus or the truth about the new birth. Jesus is emphatic in saying that man does not need *minor change*, but a *radical transformation* by the Spirit of God. We must be **born of water and the Spirit**.

Again, Nicodemus *did* marvel at this statement, because he - like most all Jews of his time - believed they *already had* the inner transformation. Jesus wants him to take hold of the fact that *he does not have it*, and **must be born again**. "*You don't understand everything about the wind, but you see its effects. That is just how it is with the birth of the Spirit.*"

2. (9-21) How to get new birth, believe.

Numbers 21:4-9 - *Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live." So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.*

How can the serpent be a picture of the holy Jesus? Moses' serpent in was made of bronze, and bronze is a metal associated with judgment in the Bible, because bronze must be made by passing through the "fires" of judgment.

So, a *bronze* serpent does speak of sin, but of sin judged. In the same way Jesus, who knew no sin became sin for us on the cross, and our sin was judged in Him. A bronze serpent is a picture of sin judged and dealt with.

The people were saved not by *doing anything*, but by simply *looking* to the bronze serpent. They had to trust that something as seemingly foolish as looking at such a thing would be sufficient to save them, and surely, some perished because they thought it too foolish to do such a thing.

Isaiah 45:22: *Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.*

We might be willing to do a hundred things to earn our salvation, but God commands us to only trust in Him - to *look to* Him. To *believe* is to have confidence in, to receive as true and to accept.

John 17:3 - *“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*

Love explains why He came. Love explains why He died. His hometown kicked Him out. A so-called friend turned Him in. Hucksters called Him a hypocrite. Sinners called God guilty...for He so loved.

2 Corinthians 5:17 - *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

Every human is a sinner. God's penalty for sin is death. In His great love, God has made provision for the salvation of sinners. Each person must put his trust in God's Son, Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 12:1 - *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith**, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*