

John 3:1-8

There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. ²After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. “Rabbi,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you.”

³Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.”

⁴“What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?”

⁵Jesus replied, “I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. ⁶Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. ⁷So don’t be surprised when I say, ‘You must be born again.’ ⁸The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can’t tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can’t explain how people are born of the Spirit.”

Background

Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a respected member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council. Unlike many Pharisees who were self-righteous and opposed Jesus, Nicodemus approached Him with genuine curiosity and respect. He called Him “Rabbi” and recognized that His miracles must come from God. He came to Jesus at night, perhaps out of fear or for privacy, but he was sincerely seeking truth. Later, Nicodemus defended Jesus before the Sanhedrin, showing his growing commitment to Christ.

Teaching Points

1. Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus recognized Jesus as a teacher from God, but Jesus responded abruptly by telling him what he needed to hear most: that no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again—a spiritual rebirth brought about by the Holy Spirit. In verse 8, Jesus used the wind to illustrate spiritual birth. Though invisible, its effects are clearly seen. Likewise, being born of the Spirit isn’t something visible, but its impact is evident in a transformed life.

2. Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

In verse 5, when Jesus said one must be "born of water and the Spirit" to enter the kingdom of God, the exact meaning of "water" is debated. It could refer to John's baptism of repentance, the cleansing power of Scripture, spiritual purification, or even natural birth. Some even interpret "water" as another reference to the Holy Spirit. While the precise meaning is uncertain, the central truth remains clear: no one can enter God's kingdom without spiritual rebirth through the Holy Spirit.

Application

1. Let's be like Nicodemus and not like Demas.

Who is Demas? Demas worked in ministry with the apostle Paul, but abandoned it, loving the world more than God (2 Timothy 4:10). In contrast, Nicodemus grew in faith. He defended Jesus and boldly helped with the burial of Jesus when others fled. Demas faded; Nicodemus finished strong. Let's follow Nicodemus's example and stay committed to the end.