

Living Word Fellowship Church

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His Life. Your Life.

John 3:1-15

A. **Blind While Seeing (vs. 1-3):**

1. Rabbi – Nicodemus viewed Jesus as a great teacher while explaining His signs. Can see that Christ is from God, but does not see Him as the Christ, even when everything lined up (John 5:39-40; Matthew 16:13-16).
2. We know – The Jewish leaders knew who Christ was (John 5:39-40), not just Nicodemus.
3. Answered – Jesus responds to Nicodemus recognition that God is with Him. Christ agrees implicitly.
4. Truly, truly – What Jesus is saying is a solemn pronouncement of what is totally a divine message.
 - a) Knowing the Word of God and seeking to obey it does not save you. God is a Spirit being we have to have His Spirit to relate to Him, understand His Word, and be able to lovingly obey them (John 3:11; 1 Corinthians 8:1-2; Hebrews 5:14).
5. I say to you – What Jesus is saying is always going to be this way. It will never change.
6. Unless one is born again – Before salvation, a person is dead while living (Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13 – “*dead in our trespasses and sins*”). At the point of salvation (Rom. 10:9) the Holy Spirit quickens our spirit regenerating our life (Titus 3:4-8) so that along with our spirit the Holy Spirit fully lives in us (Romans 8:9-11; Eph. 1:3-4; our body is His temple – dwelling place forever; 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19-20) so that we can comprehend the Word of God (Eph. 3:16-19) as the Spirit guides us into truth (John 14:16-17; 16:13; 1 Cor. 2:10-15).
 - a) No one, no matter the amount of scriptures they know, can do this without God.
 - b) A person like Nicodemus can be a teacher of teachers (3:9-10) and still die and live in hell eternally (Matt. 7:21-23).
7. Unless one is born again – A person must, once and for all, have a new beginning because God infused His divine nature into their life because He has regenerated their spirit by His Spirit.
 - a) Whereas Jewish teachers generally spoke of converts to Judaism as “newborn” only in the sense that they were legally severed from old relationships, an actual rebirth by the Spirit would produce a new heart (Ezek. 36:26).
 - b) Although the Old Testament does not literally refer to God’s Spirit “giving birth” to spirit (cf. 6:63), it does hold out the vision that God, who is spirit (4:24), will “put a new spirit” in his people (Ezek. 36:26; cf. 37:5, 14).¹

¹ Arnold, C. E. (2002). [Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: John, Acts](#). (Vol. 2, p. 35). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

- c) New birth - The phrase new birth comes from <John 3:3,7>, where Jesus told Nicodemus, "*Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" Jesus meant that all people are so sinful in God's eyes that they need to be regenerated - recreated and renewed by the sovereign activity of God's Spirit <John 3:5-8>. The activity of God's Spirit that regenerates sinful man comes about through faith in Jesus Christ <John 3:10-21>. Without faith, there is no regeneration, and without regeneration, a person does not have eternal life. Regeneration occurs at the moment a person exercises faith in Christ. At that point, his sins are forgiven, and he is born again by the power of the Holy Spirit working on behalf of Christ (Eph. 2:80-10). The new birth is a decisive, unrepeatable, and irrevocable act of God. Similar words are used elsewhere in the Bible to describe the same general concept. Paul said, "*If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation*" <2 Cor. 5:17>. Although our "*outward man*" is perishing, the Christian's "*inward man is being renewed day by day*" <2 Cor. 4:16>.
- d) Must: There are no exceptions.
8. Unless one is born again – There can only be radical change if the divine nature of God has been imparted into a person's life because they have been regenerated.
- a) Jesus explains to Nicodemus that religious knowledge and ethnicity are not a sufficient basis for a relationship with God; one must be born into his family by the Spirit. John often contrasts water rituals and the Spirit (3:5; 4:7-26).²
- b) What is to be maintained is that to be "born again" is a gift from God through the Holy Spirit as a result of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. To be born again is to become a member of God's family through faith in Jesus Christ, initiated by repentance and the desire to lead a new life to the honor and glory of Christ (1 Pet. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:17). Jesus' purpose was never to condemn the world, for that is something we do to ourselves through our own willful choice to reject Christ, but rather Jesus' purpose was to save the world.³
- c) The Greek word translated "again" can mean either "from above" or "anew." The new birth, or regeneration (Titus 3:5), is the act by which God imparts spiritual life to one who trusts Christ. Without this spiritual birth, a person cannot perceive spiritual things (1 Cor. 2:10, 13–16), nor can he or she enter the kingdom of God (v. 5).⁴
9. Unless one is born again – To be born again is a free gift from God; it cannot be earned (Ephesians 2:8-9).
10. Unless one is born again – No matter how hard a person like Nicodemus seeks to know the law, abide by it, and obey it, they cannot experience eternal life as the rich young ruler desired (Matt. 19:16-26).
- a) Because Jewish teachers spoke of Gentile converts to Judaism as starting life anew like "newborn children" (just as adopted sons under Roman law relinquished all legal status in their former family when they became part of a new one), Nicodemus should have understood that Jesus meant

² Keener, C. S. (1993). [The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament](#) (Jn 3:1–8). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

³ White, J. E. (1998). [John](#). In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), *Holman concise Bible commentary* (p. 469). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

⁴ Radmacher, E. D., Allen, R. B., & House, H. W. (1999). [Nelson's new illustrated Bible commentary](#) (p. 1318). Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers.

conversion; but it never occurs to him that someone Jewish would need to convert to the true faith of Israel.⁵

- b) John sought to show how entrance into the kingdom came by regeneration (3:1–8). The content of the entire book concerns the offer of a second birth from God (1:12–13) and the things in this world that try to block that new birth. John 3 is yet another example of the offer and its conflicts. The historical context for this conversation is given in 2:23–25, the feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread.⁶
- c) Explain how the Spirit gives birth (John 6:44; Romans 3:10-12).

11. Unless one is born again – God draws us to Himself (John 6:44), we surrender and His Spirit rebirths ours (Titus 3:3-8).

12. He cannot see – We cannot see Christ if God does not rebirth us (Luke 17:21).

- a) The centurion (Matt. 8:5-13) – I have not seen faith like this, not even in Israel.
- b) The blind man on the road to Jericho (Mk. 10:46-52); he did not just say “*Son of David...*,” the man said “*Rabboni*” meaning, ‘My teacher,’ my Master. The blind man can see, but those who could see could not see.

13. Kingdom of God – A believer cannot comprehend the divine rule of God in their lives (Luke 17:21) and be in God’s powerful presence eternally if they are not born again.

- a) The exact expression “kingdom of God” is, surprisingly, not found in the Old Testament. Yet Nicodemus has no difficulty understanding its meaning. The Hebrew Scriptures make clear that “the LORD is king” and that his sovereign reign extends to every creature (e.g., Ex. 15:18; Ps. 93:1; 103:19). Moreover, the Jews expected a future kingdom ruled by the Son of David (Isa. 9:1–7; 11:1–5, 10–11; Ezek. 34:23–24; Zech. 9:9–10), the Lord’s Servant (Isa. 42:1–7; 49:1–7), indeed, the Lord himself (Ezek. 34:11–16; 36:22–32; Zech. 14:9). While not everyone was to be included in this kingdom, Jews in Jesus’ day generally believed that all Israelites would have a share in the world to come, with the exception of those guilty of apostasy or some other blatant sin (m. Sanh. 10:1).⁷
- b) The kingdom of heaven is the rule of God and is both a present reality and a future hope.
- c) The idea of God’s kingdom is central to Jesus’ teaching and is mentioned 50 times in Matthew alone.

14. Kingdom of God – God cannot rule through spiritual growth or take full control of our lives if there is no rebirth.

- a) The kingdom of God is the Holy Spirit in us:
 - Comes as a result of the Gospel (Mk. 1:14-15).

⁵ Keener, C. S. (1993). [The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament](#) (Jn 3:3–4). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

⁶ Hughes, R. B., & Laney, J. C. (2001). [Tyndale concise Bible commentary](#) (p. 468). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

⁷ Arnold, C. E. (2002). [Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: John, Acts](#). (Vol. 2, p. 35). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

- Once we accept Christ, the Kingdom of God is within us (Lk. 17:20-21).
- If we live in the flesh, we will not experience the work of the Holy Spirit who is our inheritance (Christ died and left us an inheritance, the Holy Spirit) (Gal. 5:21; Eph. 13-14).