

# Born Again!

## The Miracle of New Spiritual Life

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Church January 1, 2023

### Part1- Introduction

#### John 3:1-21

**1 Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews;**

**2 this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."**

**3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."**

**4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?"**

**5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**

**6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.**

**7 Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'**

**8 The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."**

**9 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can these things be?"**

**10 Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?**

**11 Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony.**

**12 If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?**

**13 No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man.**

**14 As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up;**

**15 so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.**

**16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.**

**17 For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.**

**18 He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**

**19 This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.**

**20 For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.**

**21 But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."**

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son; and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Now, as is my Custom, I want to begin the new year of 2023- by taking a short "Vacation" from our verse-by-verse "Journey" through the **Gospel of Matthew** to examine a very important Subject that the Scriptures clearly and repeatedly teach- the Miracle of the "*New Birth*".

Now with all of the terrible things that are going on in our Country today- I was tempted to preach a series of Messages about the "*Fall of America*"- and I may still do that at some point in the Future. But, instead of talking about how Bad everything is- I want to present to you great Encouragement to have and to hold and to hope in- as we begin this new year. And so, I want us to explore what the Bible infallibly teaches about what each of us has already experienced- the Miracle of God- in giving us "*New Spiritual Life*."

Now like many of you- when I was born again back in 1971- I wasn't taught very well about this Subject. And it depended on who was teaching as to what they said- as one Teacher would contradict what another Teacher had taught. In fact, I was taught so poorly that this Subject became very confusing to me. And back in the early 1970's I was taught something like this:

### **We must Believe in order to be Born Again**

... and some of you may relate to that.

But it wasn't until I began to pastor this Church that I realized that, as Good as that Statement may sound- the Bible actually teaches the opposite. The Scriptures teach:

### **We must be Born Again in order to Believe**

The *first* Statement *presupposes* that Lost people already have everything they need to be born again and that our *believing* is what brings about this Miracle. That means the first Statement has to do with “*Man’s supposed Free Will Choice*” that *initiates* or that *causes* us to receive new, spiritual Life. So, the first Statement teaches that we are born again as a result of something that we do for ourselves (choosing to believe).

But the *second* Statement says that the New Birth is a sovereign Act of God alone- and it is the Miracle of the New Birth *itself* that grants to us- the Faith that all of Humanity lost in the Fall. So, the second Statement teaches that lost people do NOT already have the Faith that it takes to believe. And it goes on to teach that Faith MUST be graciously *given* to us- which happens in the New Birth.

Now in over 51 years of endeavoring to follow Jesus- I have never met the first person who *didn’t* believe that God is “Sovereign”. *Everybody* believes God is Sovereign. And I have never met the first person who didn’t believe that Mankind is “Fallen”. Again, everybody I know believes that Mankind fell in the Garden with Adam’s Sin. So, believing these two Issues is NOT the Issue.

The Issue is what God being Sovereign *means*. So, we need to find out just “HOW Sovereign God really is.” Is God a *little bit* Sovereign; a *lot* Sovereign; or is God **absolutely Sovereign over everything – all the time?** And how does God’s Sovereignty relate to things like:

- Man’s supposed “Free Will” (Our ability to freely choose and decide)
- How does God’s Sovereignty relate to our Salvation?
- Do we choose God or does God choose us?
- And if God sovereignly chooses us- are we merely robots *unable* to choose; and make Decisions; or to freely love God?

So, just “HOW fallen is Man?” Most people agree that Mankind is “fallen”. But what does that *mean*? Is Man a *little bit* fallen; a *lot* fallen; or is **Genesis 6:5** true where Moses was moved by God the Holy Spirit to write:

**Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**

... EVERY intent of the thoughts of his heart was ONLY Evil- CONTINUALLY.

And this means that, after Adam’s Sin- ALL of Mankind was so *radically* and *negatively* ruined by his Rebellion that ALL of Mankind is now...

**ALL Evil- ALL the time!**

... NO Good in any of us. NO capacity for Good. NONE are Righteous; NONE seeks after God. (**Romans 3:10-18**). And I would suggest that very *few* people believe this.

But if we really are just that “Bad”- then that would explain WHY being born again MUST be a sovereign Act of God alone- that happens WITHOUT any Cooperation and absent ANY Contribution on our part.

But because there is so little good solid Teaching about the New Birth- there is MUCH Confusion surrounding it. And as a Result of this Confusion- many believe that being born again is the same thing as being “saved”. And so, in most cases- the two terms, “Saved” and “Born Again” are often times used *interchangeably* as though they are the same thing. But they’re not.<sup>1</sup> This Series will clear up that Confusion.

Also, far too many people, who make up the “modern American Church” have never even heard of the term, “*Justification*”. And even though this was the “*Material Cause*” of the Protestant Reformation- most modern American Protestants have little or no understanding of this term or what it means.

And because so many people have “*watered down*” the biblical Gospel to be nothing more than, “*Accept Jesus into your heart*”- scant few people even consider what the Issues of both “*Righteousness*” and “*Repentance*” play in their own Salvation. Again, I will seek to clarify this in this Series on the New Birth.

Now in order to understand just what the New Birth is; why we need it; how it comes about; and what the results of it are- I am going to conduct this Series like this:

- Introduction to the Study
- The Need for new, spiritual Life
- The Sovereignty of God in the New Birth
- The Response of being Born Again
- The Fruit of having new, spiritual Life

... so, after the Introduction today- we will look at four things:

1. Need
2. Sovereignty
3. Response
4. Fruit

Now this Series will be what is called a “*Topical Sermon*”- meaning that it will deal with a particular Topic or Subject. But, as I preach on this one single Topic- I

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<sup>1</sup> Being “born again” is part of the overall Work of God in Salvation- but it is only one part.

will do so- by carefully examining what the Scriptures infallibly say about it. So, I will preach this “Topical Sermon Series” in an *expositional* Manner. Now why am I going to do that? Because I passionately believe that expositional Preaching is *particularly* glorifying to God as well as being *particularly* helpful to us.

You see, “*Expositional Preaching*” has to do with carefully and completely *analyzing* what the Bible actually says; and then rightly and fully *explaining* the biblical Text- as I “herald” or “preach” it. So, expositional Preaching is actually “*Expository Worship*”. And this type of Preaching asks and answers three Questions about every single Word of every single verse; of every single Chapter; of every single Book of the Bible:

1. What does the Text *say*?
2. What does the Text *mean* by what it says?
3. How may we (who live in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century) be *obedient* to the Text?

... which are the ONLY three Questions about the Bible that matter.

So, let’s examine each of these Questions together.

## 1. What does the Text *say*?

Now the first thing we need to understand is what I mean by using the word, “*Text*”? The “*Text*” is the particular Verse; or the Passage; or the Chapter; or the Book of the Holy Bible that is being dealt with at any given time. So, for example, in this first Sermon of the Sermon Series on the New Birth- I am dealing with **John 3:1-21**. So, that is the “*Text*” being discussed.

But in order to understand what these twenty-one verses say- I need to first find out the History behind them. These verses are part of the “Gospel Record” that the Apostle John wrote down (or had written down by a Scribe).

Now there is some Controversy as to just when John wrote this Account. Most scholars believe that John wrote this Record of Jesus’ Life; Ministry; Death; and Resurrection in or around the close of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century (80-90AD). But others teach that John wrote this Record while the Temple in Jerusalem was yet standing (before 70AD).

But while there is some Controversy as to *when* this Book was written- there is no debate about *who* wrote it. The early “church Father”, Irenaeus (ca. A.D.130–200) was a Disciple of a man named, Polycarp (ca. A.D. 70–160), who, according to History, was an actual Disciple of the Apostle John. And Irenaeus testified on Polycarp’s Authority that the Apostle wrote this Gospel Record while he lived in the city of Ephesus- that was in Asia Minor (Turkey)

when he was well- advanced in age<sup>2</sup>. In addition to Irenaeus' Testimony- the other early "church Fathers" were all unanimous in *assuming* John to be the Gospel's writer. Clement of Alexandria (ca. A.D. 150–215) wrote that John,

“... aware of the facts set forth in the other Gospel Records (**Matthew, Mark, and Luke**) and being ‘*moved*’ by the Holy Spirit, composed a ‘*spiritual Gospel*’”<sup>3</sup>.

Okay, but is the Passage of **John 3:1-21** that Brother Vern just read to us- true? Is it reliable? Can we trust what it says? I mean it was written over 2,000 years ago by an illiterate Fisherman, who had NO formal theological Training. And it was *originally* written in Koine Greek<sup>4</sup>- which was the language of the “common man” of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century.

During the 4<sup>th</sup> Century, this Passage (as well as the entire Bible) was translated into Latin. But it wasn't translated into English until almost a *thousand* years later. Since the Word of God has come to the English speaking world- it has been “updated” several times to keep up with the ever-changing English Language. So, how do we know we can rely what it says today?

With all these Translations and Updates- how do we know we can trust what our English Bibles say today? **John 3:1-21**- is *part* of the Gospel Record that the Apostle John wrote down as he was “moved” by God the Holy Spirit. And that means that the **Gospel of John**- *including* Chapter 3:1-21 is “**Inspired**”.

## **2Timothy 3:16&17**

**16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;**

**17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.**

Now the word that was translated into English here as “**inspired**” comes from a Greek word, (*theopneustos*; Strong's # 2315), which has to do with “*breath*”- *especially* “*exhaling*”. So, ALL Scripture (66 Books) has been “*breathed out*” or “*exhaled*” by God the Holy Spirit. And that means that ALL Scripture is:

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<sup>2</sup> *Against Heresies* 2.22.5; 3.1.1

<sup>3</sup> *Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History* 6.14.7

<sup>4</sup> As opposed to “*Classical Greek*”- which was the Language of the educated; the legal and medical Professions; and the Mariners. The first seven verses of the **Gospel of Luke** were written in *Classical Greek*- showing the Education of both Dr. Luke and of Theophilus.

- **Inerrant** (*Does not* contain any Error)
- **Infallible** (*Cannot* contain any Error)
- **Relevant** (Applicable for Today)
- **Sufficient** (All we need for a Life of Godliness [**2Peter 1:3**])

... and the Apostle Paul teaches here that Scripture and Scripture ALONE- precisely because it IS Inspired- is what should be used for four things:

1. ALL Teaching
2. ALL Reproof
3. ALL Correction
4. ALL Training in Righteousness

... that goes on in the Church with God's people.

And because that is true- Scripture reigns *supreme* in the Hierarchy of Intellectual and Academic Learning. In other words, if a person says God has spoken to him to give him new Revelation- we would reject what he says- because we already have the final, full, and completed Revelation of God in the pages of sacred Scripture. If an individual says he has had a dream; or has had an angelic Visitation; or utters a Prophecy; or gives a supposed "Word from the Lord"- we would *categorically* reject those things as well. And here is the Logic behind that Rejection:

If those Utterances or those Experiences are in complete *accord* with what we already have in Scripture- they are NOT needed (precisely because we already have the Scriptures). And if they are at odds with Scripture- we dare NOT accept them (precisely because we would be believing contrary to the Word of God). Either way- they are of NO use to us today. Such is the "*Final Authority*" of sacred Writ.

During the Protestant Reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century- the Issue of "*Final Authority*"<sup>5</sup> rose up and became the "*Formal Cause*" of the Reformation. Who or What has the Power to "*bind the Conscience*" (Conviction); and to be the Arbiter of what is "*Right*" and "*Wrong*"? The "Roman religious *System*"<sup>6</sup> taught that the Pope- in his official capacity as the "vicar of Christ" had "*Final Authority*". But the Protestants argued that this was ridiculous because of how

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<sup>5</sup> "*Final Authority*" is NOT the same thing as "*Authority*".

<sup>6</sup> After the Council of Trent (1545-1563)- Rome *officially* and *formally* condemned the biblical Gospel (Sola Fide). And with that Condemnation- they ceased to be in unity with the One; Holy; Universal; and Apostolic Church created by Jesus; and which were formulated by the Apostles in their Teachings, which are contained in the Holy Bible. They are now an apostate religious "System"- which has isolated themselves from the Authority of Scripture. I earnestly pray for their Repentance.

*inconsistent* and *contradictory* various Popes had been with each other. So, those who had a “Protest” against the Abuses and false Teaching of Rome said that Scripture and Scripture ALONE- had “*Final Authority*”. And they summarized that Truth with a Latin phrase, “*Sola Scriptura*”<sup>7</sup>- which means: “*by Scripture Alone*”.

And the Logic behind this is crystal clear:

The Word of God is superior- *in every way*- to the words of mere men. There is a *profound* and *fundamental* Difference between our words and God’s. The Word of God is Perfect; while the words of men- even the best men- are filled with Error; Mistakes; Biases; Ignorance; and Prejudices. Also, the words of men will NEVER rise to become the Word of God- even as Man himself will NEVER rise to become God.

**John 1:1** says, “... **the Word was God**”. So, there is NO distinction between God and His Word- they are one and the same. God’s Word represents God Himself. So, God alone is God; and we are His created Creatures. God is ALWAYS above; and we are ALWAYS below. God ALONE is exalted; and we are to bow before Him and worship WHO He is; and WHAT He alone has done. God is True; and “... **it is impossible for God to lie**” (**Hebrews 6:18**). Therefore, what God speaks- is True and Perfect in both part and in whole.

So, we are given Absolute, Divine Truth on the pages of the only Book that contains Inspired, Inerrant, and Infallible Words- the Bible. And that is the “*Text*”- that we labor to “*get Right*” whether that is an entire Book; or a Chapter; a Passage; or a single Verse.

Now God *could* have chosen anyone HE wanted to- to bring us the Word of God. But the men God chose- were very common and ordinary men. And God could have chosen any Method that He wanted to give us Divine Truth. But what He chose was very common and ordinary Nouns; Verbs; Pronouns; Adverbs; Adjectives; and Prepositional Phrases- that people use every single day. The ONLY difference between the common words that *we* use and the Words of Scripture- is that the Words of Scripture are Inspired and ours aren’t.

. But to fully understand what a particular Text actually *says*- requires that we go back to the original Language in which that Text was written. You see our Bibles today are an English Translation of a Book that was originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek. And so, *whichever* English Bible we use<sup>8</sup>-

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<sup>7</sup> It is important to understand that “*Sola Scriptura*” is NOT “*Solo Scriptura*”. So, we may use other Sources beside the Bible to help us to understand what the Bible says and means. But *Sola Scriptura* says that Scripture Alone has the *Final Authority*.

<sup>8</sup> I recommend six English translations: The King James Version (KJV); the New King James Version (NKJV); the English Standard Version (ESV); the New American Standard Bible (\*95 update) (NASB95); the Christian Standard Bible (CSB); and the Legacy Standard Bible (LSB). If you use any of these- you can trust what they say.



*requires* that we utilize those Languages. And we basically have two Choices here.

1. We can go to School and learn how to speak, read, and write fluent Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek
2. We can purchase Software that does that for us

... and all serious Students of the Bible will do one or the other.

So, in the same way that our 8<sup>th</sup> Grade English Teacher taught us- we conjugate the verbs and diagram the sentences in their original Language- so we know what was actually written.

Now it is very important to realize that it doesn't matter what the Text may mean to us. That is NOT our Goal. Our Goal is to uncover what that Text meant to the man God used to originally write it down- at the time he wrote it. Now if we could just walk up and ask him- that would solve the Problem. But all of the biblical writers are dead. So, all we have left are the Words- the *God-breathed* Words that the writer wrote. And, thanks be to God, that Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek are all very *precise* Languages. And that means that each Word means something very *narrow* and very *precise*. And it also means that these Words do NOT mean anything other than what they have ALWAYS meant.

You see, Words mean things; and so, we must try very hard to find the one, single, correct Meaning of every Word in the Text. That is all *part* of finding out what the Text *says*.

Another very important issue in discovering what the Text actually *says*- is to arrive at the correct "*Context*". You see, Words are NEVER spoken or written in a vacuum. They are spoken and written in *connection* to; or in response to other Events; and to other People- who lived in a particular Time; for a particular Reason. So, we have to try to uncover that as well.

Now here is a good place to say something. My Effort here is NOT to become an Academic or an Intellectual. The Effort to arrive at what the biblical Text says is all about loving and worshipping and obeying Jesus. NOBODY is helped by believing things that aren't true. And Ignorance is NEVER useful- *especially* when we are talking about Divine and Eternal Matters. So, while, many times, understanding what a Text says is relatively easy and simple- many times- it isn't simple or easy. But because we are dealing with the infallible Word of the living God- our Labor to understand what the Text says- is worth whatever Effort we need to put forth.

## **2. What does the Text *mean* by what it says?**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Step is finding out what Divine Truth; what Doctrine; or what area of Theology is being taught in the Text. And again, sometimes this is relatively easy. But *regardless* of how easy or hard it may be we NEED to be able to answer this Question. There are times when a verse may be written in such a way that it *appears* to contradict other verses; or it *appears* to contradict other areas of Divine Truth. In reality, no verse contradicts any other verse or true Doctrine- because while there are 40 human writers of the Bible- there is only one, single Author: God the Holy Spirit. So, there are NO Mistakes and NO Contradictions anywhere in the Bible.

But there are “Mysteries”; and there are “Paradoxes” that have to be explained. So, as we examine a Text- we must make sure that the way that the Text is structured does not contradict any other area of Divine Truth. For example, **Genesis 6:8&9** says,

**8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.**

**9 These are the records of the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God.**

Now from a *surface* reading- you *may* get the Impression that Noah found Favor with God BECAUSE he was *already* a righteous and blameless man; and BECAUSE he was already “walking” with God. In other words, you might think that because Noah was already a righteous man- that it was his own personal Righteousness that had *earned* God’s Favor. Also, you might think that because Noah was already “walking with God”- that this is what caused Noah to *deserve* God’s Favor.

But we know that isn’t true- because that would *contradict* the Divine Truth that is taught in many other places in the Bible that teaches that God’s Favor CANNOT be *earned* by humans; and it is NEVER deserved. EVERYTHING God does for us- is “by” His Grace; and it is “through” the Gift of Faith (or the ability to believe) that God gives to us.

This Text also *says* that Noah was both “Righteous” and “Blameless”. That’s what it *says*. But we must put these two words in their proper Context because we already know that NO human is sinlessly Perfect. The Bible teaches clearly and repeatedly that ALL human beings are Sinners- and that includes Noah. So, how should we understand what this Text *means* by what it *says*? We do that the Bible teaches us to do: We compare Scripture with Scripture.

The phrase, “*walking with God*” has to do with a person *striving* to humbly and joyfully obey what God has commanded in their normal, daily Life. So, while it is true that Noah was NOT sinless- he DID put forth Effort to obey God- all the time. So, did that Effort *cause* God to give Him Favor? No. It is the

Fact that God had *already* given Noah His Favor (Grace)- that empowered Noah with both the Ability and the Desire to walk with God. So, “*walking with God*” was the human Response that Noah had to the Reality that God had already given His Divine Grace (Favor) to him. So, we arrived at the MEANING of this Text by taking what the Text *says* and allowing other inspired Texts to define or explain it.

### **3. How may we (who live in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century) be Obedient to the Text?**

Now this is where the “Rubber meets the Road”. This is what all of our Effort to understand the Bible is for. Because if we simply “get smart” about the Bible- yet we do not seek to obey what we have learned- all we have done is to garner greater Damnation on our heads. It would have been better that we never learned the Truth- than to learn the Truth and disregard or ignore it and continue to live contrary to it.

We must understand that the overall Goal of Salvation is: Righteousness. The Reason God saved us- is so by saving us- we would then be able to see the Value; and the Worth; and the Importance; and the Beauty; and the Glory of God. And as we see the Glory of God in the Person of Jesus Christ- we then love what we see. But this Process doesn’t end with us Beholding and Loving.

**2Corinthians 3:18** says,

**But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.**

The ONLY correct Response to seeing God’s Glory in Jesus- is that we are *changed* into what we see and now love. So, seeing and loving God’s Glory *empowers* and *enables* us to begin to struggle against the Lusts of our Flesh (by the Power of the Holy Spirit) to be humbly and joyfully submitted to the Authority of Scripture (in our daily Life)- all to the Glory of God! Now we CAN’T struggle *perfectly*- but we MUST struggle *honestly*. And it isn’t that we actually reach sinless Perfection, either. God is honored by the fact that we so valued Him that we were willing to Struggle- NOT because we attain what we struggle for. And so, this third Step is where our own, personal, “*Obedience*” and “*Application*” to the Truth of Scripture comes in.

You see, the Bible was *originally* written down thousands of years ago. And many things have *radically* changed since the Bible was first written. So, how do we *apply* the Divine Truth of an ancient Document (that we discovered in the first two Steps) to our personal Lives?

We must understand that there is ONLY one correct “Meaning” of every verse in the Bible. But there may be many different ways we can *apply* that one, single Meaning to our own personal Lives today. For example, **2Timothy 2:15** says:

**Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.**

So, after we go through Steps 1 and 2- and find out what this verse *says* and what it *means* by what it says- we now need to *apply* what this verse commands to our own Lives. So, the Command is for us to “Be Diligent” to do all of the rest of what this verse says:

- Present ourselves approved to God (as opposed to being approved by Man) involving Prayer and diligent Study
- As a “Workman (Context in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century: a Master Craftsman)- learning our “Trade” which, in this Case- is learning how to “handle” or “use” the Bible correctly.
- Who do not need to be ashamed (the word, “ashamed is not to be embarrassed- it is not to be “Condemned”)
- Accurately handling the Word of Truth (the three Steps we are talking about)

So, first of all- in order to apply this verse to our Lives today- we must agree that we CANNOT be “laid back” or “nonchalant” about accurately handling the Word of Truth. Why? Because we are *commanded* to “**Be Diligent**”. Secondly, even though the Bible *commands* us to do this- it doesn’t tell us *how* to do it. So, we are free to apply other things that will help us to become a “Master Craftsman” as it pertains to accurately handling the Word of God like Prayer; and Fasting; like Theological Training; like other Tools like Software; Dictionaries; Thesauruses; Encyclopedias; etc. that will help us with the Greek and with the Context; and with the verbs and the prepositional phrases.

This Text also doesn’t tell us WHEN to do this. Should we do it in the Mornings or the Evenings? Should we do it all in one day or a little every day? But as we strive to obey this Verse- are we free to *neglect* other things that we are commanded to do- like maintain our Relationship with Husband, Wife, and Children? And what about our own Health and well-being? And what about having to work outside the Home? What about raising Children?

So, I hope you can see that there are *many* “Variables” that we have to deal with in order to be obedient to this Text. And that means that one person may

obey this Command a little *differently* than another. And that is fine- as long as the Divine Truth is being obeyed.

So, now with all of that in mind- let's dig into the inspired Text from **John 3** about the Miracle of the New Birth. And as we do that- we discover many amazing Truths:

### **1. The New Birth is *Commanded***

**3. "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."**

**5 "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**

**7 Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'**

### **2. Nicodemus did NOT understand this.**

**4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?"**

**9 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can these things be?"**

### **3. Nicodemus *should* have understood this.**

**10 ..."Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?**

**11 Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony.**

**12 If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?**

### **4. Being "born of Water and the Spirit" is the *same thing* as being "Born Again"**

**5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**

**8 The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."**

### **5. Flesh CANNOT produce Spirit**

**6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.**

**6. Belief (Faith) is a *Requirement* to be Saved**

**15 so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.**

**16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.**

**18 He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**

**7. Being Born Again is NOT a new Truth- but is the Way all have been saved from the very Beginning**

**13 No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man.**

**14 As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up;**

**8. All who are born again desire for God to see what they do while those who have not been Born Again seek to hide from God**

**19 This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.**

**20 For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.**

**21 But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."**

**9. Being "Lost" is WORSE than *committing* Sin. The Lost LOVE Sin**

**19 This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.**

**10. People are ALREADY Lost**

**18 He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**

## **11. God, providing for the Lost to be Born Again IS the Love of God**

**15 so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.**

**16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.**

**17 For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.**

## **12. There is both Eternal Life and Eternal Perishing**

**15 so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.**

**16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life**

## **13. Not everybody will be Born Again**

**15 so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.**

**16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.**

## **14. The Divine Truth that we believe MUST be "Practiced"**

**21 But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."**

## **15. There was NOTHING in 1<sup>st</sup> Century Judaism that taught about the New Birth (False Religion)**

**10 Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?**

**11 Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony.**

**12 If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?**

## **16. Nicodemus came to Jesus at Night**

**1 Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews;**

**2 this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."**

**3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."**

#### **17. Jesus was NOT impressed with Compliments from Lost people**

**2 this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."**

**3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."**

#### **18. Being Born Again is likened unto receiving New Spiritual Life similar to Natural Birth**

**3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."**

**4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?"**

**5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**

**6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.**

Now I am not suggesting that these 18 Issues are all that there is in this Text. It isn't. There is much more. But understanding these 18 Issues will go a long way in helping us understand what the New Birth is- so that we may examine ourselves to make sure that we all have *personally* experienced the Miracle of the new Birth.

So, what we have done today- is to find out what the Text actually *says*. And in the next Sermon, we will explore what the Text *means* by what it says. And then we will get into what we, who live in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century can do- to obey this Passage and make sure that we have genuinely experienced the Miracle of the New Birth.

So, we will examine these 18 Issues next week- and at least two more that *begin* in this Text and which conclude in *other* Texts- so we can get a very well-rounded Understanding about how lost Sinners are given New, Spiritual Life



But in the meantime- take this week to read and study and ponder and think and pray about these 18 Issues and let's come back next week and put it all together.

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.