

**Subject: *New Life in Christ***

**Scripture: *John 3:1-13***

As we prepare to take the Gospel to every home in Bristol I think it's important to understand what we are asking God to do. People need to have a new life in Christ. They need to be born again. Christians are not just nice people. They are new creatures. People use the term "born again Christian." Is there any other kind? To say born again Christian is like saying wet water or hot fire. If you are a Christian you have been born again.

We have been surrounded by death in these last few weeks and we know that death is coming for all of us. Did you know that if you are born once you die twice, but if you are born twice you only die once? The Bible says we are born physically and then die physically (in the body). But if we have not been born again then we are separated forever from God in a place called Hell and that is called the "second death."

- If we are *born once* we must *die twice*
- If we are *born twice* then we only *die once*

The Bristol Herald Courier ran a story last Friday about a man who was pronounced legally dead after he vanished from his home eight years ago. That is a strange and unusual story. The fact is that many people are alive and walking around who are spiritually dead. They need new life in Christ, a life from above.

Nicodemus was such a man. He was a Pharisee (a religious and moral man). He was a leader of the Jews (a respected man). But he needed to be a regenerated man. He came to Jesus by night to discuss some things with Him and Jesus told him that he needed to be born again or else he would not see the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus should have known about the new birth because he was a teacher of the Jews and he should have understood what the scriptures taught.

- *Ezekiel 36:26-27*<sup>26</sup> *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.*<sup>27</sup> *And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.*

### **The MIRACLE of New Birth:**

The new birth is a miraculous work of God by which He gives a person spiritual life and changes a person's heart causing him to live a new life.

- The new birth is *impossible without God* – When Jesus said "you must be born again," He was not giving a command. He was making a statement. Just like your first birth, this is something only God can do. The words "born again" can be translated "born from above." This is a work of God. ***John 1:10-13***
- The new birth is *instantaneous* – Just like physical birth, it doesn't happen over time. It happens at a moment in time. Ask a person, "Are you a Christian?" "Well, I'm working on it." How were you born, piece by piece, or all at once?
- The new birth is *irreversible* – Once a person is born, nothing can ever change that. Once a person is born again, he is spiritually alive forever.
- The new birth is *irreplaceable* – Nothing can take its place (no ritual, no religion).

- The new birth is *impressive* – Only God can give life. When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead people were impressed. Only God has that kind of power. When a person is born again, the dead person comes to life.

*Ephesians 2:1* *And you hath he quickened (made alive), who were dead in trespasses and sins.*

*Romans 6:13* *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

### **The MYSTERY of New Birth:**

How does it happen? It is a spiritual birth. It is a birth “from above.” It is something that happens in the heart and soul of a person. It is something we can’t see. This is what the Bible teaches:

- The Word of God must be involved

*James 1:17-18* <sup>17</sup> *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.* <sup>18</sup> *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.*

*1 Peter 1:23* *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*

- The Spirit of God must be involved

*Titus 3:5-6* <sup>5</sup> *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit;* <sup>6</sup> *Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.*

Here’s what must take place. The Word of God is the seed. The human heart is the soil. The Holy Spirit prepares the heart to receive the Word of God. The person hears and believes and the Spirit gives new life through the truth of God’s Word. The person is born again and has new life. He is a partaker of the divine nature.

*1 John 5:11-12* <sup>11</sup> *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* <sup>12</sup> *He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*

### **The MARKS of New Birth:**

Jesus told Nicodemus that it was like the wind. You can’t see the wind but you can see the effects of the wind. You can’t see the Spirit and you can’t see the new birth take place, but you know there is new life. You can see what a difference it makes in a person’s life.

- *2 Corinthians 5:17* *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

What does that mean...all things?

- A new heart to love – A person now loves God and the things of God instead of loving the world and the things of the world. He loves other believers in God's family.

*1 John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

*1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.*

*1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.*

- A new mind to understand

*1 Corinthians 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*

*1 Corinthians 2:16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.*

- A new desire to obey

*John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.*

*1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.*

- A new way to live

*1 John 2:29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.*

*1 John 3:9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*

*1 John 5:4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*