

“Ye Must Be Born Again”
John 3:1-8

Introduction:

1. According To A Pew Research Poll:
 - Around 75% Of Americans:
 - Believe In A Place Called Heaven!
 - And Even Though:
 - Heaven May Be Defined & Understood Differently By Many Of Those Same People:
 - They All Still Want To Go There:
 - When They Die!
2. Of Course:
 - The Bible Gives Us A Much Clearer:
 - Definition & Understanding Of Heaven!
 - Not Only As:
 - A Place Of Eternal Reward:
 - For Those Who End Up There!
 - But As:
 - The Place Of God’s Special Presence:
 - And Eternal Reign!
3. As We Turn Back In Our Bibles:
 - To John 3 - We Are Introduced To:
 - Nicodemus:
 - Who Understood The Biblical Definition:
 - Of Heaven - And:
 - Had A Great Desire:
 - To Enter Into The Kingdom Of God!
 - And Even Though:
 - Thousands Of Years Separate Us:
 - From Nicodemus:
 - What Jesus Says To Him:
 - Still Resonates With All Who Have The Same Desire - And Even:

1. *The Same Pursuit:*

- As Nicodemus - A Pursuit After:
 - The Kingdom Of God!
 - So - As We Begin Our Look At This Profound Chapter - John 3:
 - Let’s Read Together John 3:1-8!
 - “There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: / The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. / Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. / Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? / Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and [of] the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. / That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. / Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. / The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit!”
 - It Is Clear From These Verses:
 - That Nicodemus Was In Pursuit Of:
 - The Kingdom Of God & Heaven Itself!
 - And So - He Pursued It:
- With Sincerity!
 - In 3:1 - We Are Told That:
 - Nicodemus Was:
 - “A Man Of The Pharisees!”
 - Now - We Saw This Group Earlier:
 - In John 1 - When Several Pharisees:

- Went To Find Out *Who* John The Baptist:
 - Was - And *Why*:
 - He Was Baptizing People!
- Well - Nicodemus' Religious Persuasion:
 - Was That Of A Pharisee!
 - Which Meant That He Was Very Particular In His Commitment:
 - To The Jewish Law & Traditions!
 - "Pharisee" - To Distinguish!
 - And So - He Would Have Tried To Keep:
 - Every Letter Of God's Law:
 - In Pursuit Of:
 - God's Pleasure & Reward!
- Nicodemus Pursued Heaven:
 - With Great Sincerity!
 - But - Was It Enough?
 - No - Because As Jesus Told Him In 3:3:
 - "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God!"
- But - Nicodemus Also Pursued After Heaven:
- With Sagacity - With Wisdom!
 - Also In 3:1 - We Are Told That:
 - He Was:
 - "A Ruler Of The Jews!"
 - More Than Likely:
 - This Meant That He Was A Member Of:
 - The Jewish Sanhedrin!
 - A Group Of 70 Jewish Elders:
 - That Was First Composed By Moses!
 - And So - Nicodemus:
 - Would Have Been A Respected Leader:
 - Of The Jews!
 - Respected For His Position:
 - And For His Wisdom!
 - Wisdom About:
 - The Word Of God - And:
 - About The Ways Of God!
 - And So - Nicodemus Would Have Pursued Heaven:
 - With Great Sagacity!
 - Much More Than The Average Jew!
 - But - Was It Enough?
 - No - Because As Jesus Told Him Again In 3:5:
 - "Except a man be born of water and [of] the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God!"
 - But - Nicodemus Also Pursued After Heaven:
- With Sensitivity!
 - In 3:2 - We Are Told That:
 - Nicodemus - "Came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him!"
 - More Than Likely:
 - Nicodemus Was One Of Those:
 - That We Read About In Chapter 2:23:
 - Who Even - "Believed In Jesus' Name, When They Saw The Miracles Which He Did!"
 - So - There Was A Sensitivity:
 - In The Heart Of Nicodemus:
 - That Caused Him:
 - To Want To Know More!
 - And So - With All Of His:
 - Religious Sincerity & Sagacity & Sensitivity:

- He “Came To Jesus By Night!”
 - To Seek & To Find Out:
 - Who Jesus Was!
- Now - He May Have Come:
 - At Night - Out Of Some Fear:
 - But - That Fear Was Still Mingled:
 - With Some Faith & Hope!
 - Because - He Still “Came To Jesus!”
- So - Nicodemus Pursued After Heaven:
 - With Great Sensitivity!
 - Even Seeking After Jesus Himself!
 - But - Was This Enough?
 - No - Because Jesus Told Him A Third Time:
 - In 3:7 - “Ye Must Be Born Again!”
- There Are Many People:
 - In The World & Even In The Church:
 - Who - Like Nicodemus:
 - Not Only Believe:
 - In A Heaven!
 - But Are Pursuing After Heaven:
 - With Great Sincerity & Sensitivity:
 - Seeking After The Kingdom Of God:
 - With All Their Heart!
 - But - Is This Enough?
 - Some Of These People:
 - Perhaps Including Some Of You:
 - Are Very Religious!
 - They Know God’s Word!
 - They Know Even The Gospel!
 - But - Is This Knowledge:
 - And Wisdom Enough?
 - Religious Sincerity:
 - Biblical Sagacity:
 - And Even Spiritual Sensitivity:
 - Are Not Enough For Anyone:
 - To Enter The Kingdom Of God!
 - And That Is Because:
 - We All Have:

2. ***The Same Problem:***

- As Nicodemus - That Keeps Us From:
 - The Kingdom Of God!
 - In 3:1 - Nicodemus Is First Described As:
 - “A Man!”
 - And - As “A Man” - He Was:
 - A Fallen, Sinful Man:
 - Because He Had The Same Parents:
 - We All Have In Common:
 - Adam & Eve!
 - And His Problem:
 - Is Our Problem!
 - Because We Are Sinners:
 - The Gates Of God’s Holy Kingdom:
 - Are Closed To Us!
 - And - Deep Down:
 - Nicodemus Knew This!
 - Because - After A Life Filled With:
 - Seeking After The Things Of God:

- He Was Still Troubled!
- He Was Still Uncertain!
- And - That Is Why:
 - In 3:3 - We Are Told That:
 - “Jesus Answered” Nicodemus!
 - But - What Was His Question?
 - None Given In The Text!
 - But - Instead Of Beating Around The Bush:
 - Like Nicodemus Was:
 - Jesus Addresses & Answers The Question In His Heart!
- In Ecclesiastes 3:11:
 - We Are Told That:
 - God Has “Set The World / Eternity In Their Heart!”
 - A Desire For Eternity!
 - A Desire For Immortality!
 - A Desire For Heaven!
- And - The Only Way:
 - For A Sinner To Get There:
 - The Only Way:
 - For You To Get There Is:
 - To Be Born Again!
- And So - Three Times:
 - Jesus Gives Us The Solution:
 - To Our Common Problem!
 - First - There Needs To Be:
- A Second Birth!
 - 3:3 - “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God!”
 - Jesus Uses The Phrase “Verily, Verily” 25 Times In John - Always To Deliver:
 - A Statement Of Serious & Perpetual Truth!
 - So - Need To Pay Attention!
 - Especially Since This Answer Applies Not Just To Nicodemus But To Everyone!
 - The Word Translated “Again” In This Verse:
 - Can Also Be Translated “From Above!”
 - So - Jesus Is Talking About:
 - Another Birth - But One:
 - That Is Different & Higher Than Physical Birth Into This World!
 - And - Though This Is A True Statement:
 - It Boggled The Mind Of:
 - Nicodemus!
 - His Mind & His Heart:
 - Like Ours - Was So:
 - Earth-Bound:
 - He Could Only Think In Terms Of Physical, Natural Birth!
- And So - He Asked Jesus:
 - Perhaps With A Sense Of Despair:
 - “How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?”
 - How Did Jesus Respond To:
 - Nicodemus’ Misunderstanding?
 - Not With Condemnation, But With Compassion!
 - And So - In 3:5 - He Repeats Himself:
 - In Terms Nicodemus Would Have Understood!
 - And - How There Needs To Be:
- A Special Birth!
 - “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and [of] the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God!”
 - Now - Some Have Seen In These Words:

- Not Greater Clarity - But:
 - Greater Confusion!
- Is Jesus Talking About:
 - Two Births Here?
 - “Water” - Referring To:
 - Physical, Natural Birth!
 - “Spirit” - Referring To:
 - Spiritual, Heavenly Birth!
 - If So - Then Its Not Much Clearer:
 - Than What He Just Said In 3:3! Or:
- Is Jesus Talking About:
 - The Manner Of The New Birth?
 - With “Water” Referring To:
 - Repentance & Baptism!
 - With “Spirit” Referring To:
 - Regeneration & Faith!
 - If So - Then Jesus Is Saying That:
 - You & I Have Something To Do:
 - With Being Born Again!
 - Which Is Contrary To What We Find Later!
- Instead - Jesus Is Explaining To Nicodemus:
 - What It Means To Be:
 - “Born Again” - 3:3 - In Biblical Terms:
 - He Would Have Or Should Have:
 - Understood!
 - The Best Way To Translate 3:5 Is This:
 - “Except A Man Be Born Of Water And Spirit!”
 - Not Referring Here To The Holy Spirit - But To The Transformation Brought About By The Spirit!
 - In Ezekiel 36:25-26 - We Have A Special Prophecy:
 - About This Kind Of Transformation:
 - That We All Need! And:
 - Which The Lord Alone Can Provide!
 - “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. / 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!”
 - I Believe This Is What Jesus Had In Mind:
 - When He Explained To Nicodemus:
 - What He Meant By Being:
 - “Born Again!”
 - There Must Be:
 - A Divine Cleansing:
 - “From All Your Filthiness!”
 - And - There Must Be:
 - A Divine Change:
 - So That You Have A “New Spirit” Within You!
 - And - Who Alone Can:
 - Do This? “I” - 6 Times! The Lord!
 - And - When This Happens:
 - It Is Likened To A New Birth!
 - A Heavenly Birth - Which Makes You Into:
 - An Entirely New Creation!
 - 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!”
 - But - This Birth - Is Nothing Like:
 - Your Physical Birth!
 - Because - It Is:

- A Spiritual Birth!
 - As Jesus Adds - In 3:6:
 - “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit!”
 - The Kind Of Transformation:
 - Jesus Described In 3:5:
 - Divine Cleansing & Divine Change:
 - Can Only Come About:
 - By The Spirit Of God!
- The Problem Nicodemus Had:
 - Is The Same Problem:
 - That You & I Have!
 - We Are Sinful People:
 - Who Have Inherited:
 - The Sinful Flesh That Has Been Passed Down To Us! Generation!
 - But - The Solution Given To Nicodemus:
 - Is The Same Solution:
 - That You & I Need!
 - We Must Be Born Again! Anew! From Above!
 - We Must Be Cleansed! Changed! Transformed!
 - We Must Be Translated From The Kingdom Of This World To The Kingdom Of God & His Dear Son!
 - But - How Can This Take Place?
 - How Can This Happen?
 - Well - In 3:8 - We Find That:
 - We Have:

3. ***The Same Provision:***

- As Nicodemus - To See & Enter The Kingdom Of God!
 - 3:8 - “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit!”
 - In This Verse - Jesus Illustrates:
 - The Work Of The Holy Spirit:
 - With The Effects Of The Wind!
 - And - His Point Is This - The New Birth:
 - That Is Absolutely Necessary:
 - Is Not Something That Can Be Done *By* You!
 - It Is Something That Is Done *To* You & *For* You:
 - By The Spirit Of God!
 - You Can Only Be Born Again:
 - According To:
 - The Will Of The Spirit!
 - Just Like The Wind:
 - 3:8 - “Bloweth Where It Listeth!”
 - Or - It “Blows Wherever It Wants / Pleases!”
 - Of Course - Wind Has No Will!
 - But - Jesus Here Gives It Some Personality!
 - But - Wind Is Unpredictable!
 - Even By Those Whose Job It Is:
 - To “Predict” It! Yet It Is Unpredictable:
 - In Its Drive / Direction / Duration / Danger!
 - So Is The Will Of The Holy Spirit:
 - When It Comes To Being Born Again!
 - He Moves Upon The Hearts Of Men:
 - According To His Own Will And Pleasure!
 - Because - He Is God!
 - Also - You Can Only Be Born Again:
 - According To:
 - The Word Of The Spirit!

- Even As The Wind:
 - 3:8 - Has A “Sound” Or “Voice” That You Can Hear!
 - Though The Wind Has No Mouth:
 - You Can Still Hear It!
 - Sometimes Softly, As It Brushes By Your Hear!
 - Sometimes Loudly, As It Pushes Through Whatever Is In Its Way!
- So Is The Word Of The Holy Spirit:
 - When It Comes To Being Born Again!
 - He Speaks To The Hearts Of Men:
 - Through His Word In Different Ways - But:
 - When He Speaks, Nothing Can Get In His Way!
 - Isaiah 55:11 - “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper [in the thing] whereto I sent it!”
- Also - You Can Only Be Born Again:
 - According To:
- The Ways Of The Spirit!
 - Even As - 3:8 - You Cannot Tell:
 - Where The Wind Comes From & Where It Goes!
 - Of Course - Today - We Have Some Sense Of The Wind’s Ways - High & Low Pressure Systems!
 - But - Still - Wind Remains Unpredictable:
 - Even In Our Scientific Age!
 - So Are The Ways Of The Holy Spirit:
 - When It Comes to Being Born Again!
 - Jesus Adds - 3:8 - “So Is Every One That Is Born Of The Spirit!”
- The Provision - That Nicodemus Needed - And:
 - The Provision - That You & I Need:
 - To See & To Enter The Kingdom Of God:
 - Is Entirely Dependant Upon:
 - The Will & The Word & The Ways Of The Holy Spirit Of God!
 - “Ye Must Be Born Again!”

Conclusion:

1. This Teaching Of Jesus:
 - Can Be A Hard Teaching!
 - You Mean - I Have Nothing To Do:
 - With Being Born Again? From Above?
 - You Have As Much To Do:
 - With Being Born Spiritually:
 - As You Had:
 - When You Were Born Physically!
2. Which Is Why Jesus Told Nicodemus:
 - In 3:7 - “Marvel Not!”
 - The Marvel & The Wonder:
 - Is Not *How*:
 - Someone Is Born Again!
 - The Marvel & The Wonder:
 - Is Not *When*:
 - Someone Is Born Again!
 - The Marvel & The Wonder:
 - Is Not Even *Who*:
 - Is Born Again By The Spirit Of God!
 - The Marvel & The Wonder:
 - Is *Why Anyone*:
 - Would Be Born Again!
 - The Marvel & The Wonder:
 - Is Why The Holy Spirit:

- Would Move Upon The Heart Of *Any* Of Us:
 - To Believe On Christ & His Gospel!
 - Which Becomes The Evidence Of Being Born Again!
 - To Cleanse & Change Us!
 - And - To Bring Us Into The Kingdom Of God!

3. Daniel Webster Whittle:

- Captured This Marvel & Wonder - When He Wrote These Words:

- I know not why God's wondrous grace

to me is daily shown,

nor why, with mercy, Christ in love
redeemed me for his own.

- I know not how this saving faith

to me he did impart,

nor how believing in his word
wrought peace within my heart.

- I know not how the Spirit moves,

convincing us of sin,

revealing Jesus through the Word,
creating faith in him.

- But "I know whom I have believed,

and am persuaded that he is able

to keep that which I've committed

unto him against that day!"

4. So - What Are You To Do:

- With This Message? This Truth?

- "Ye Must Be Born Again!"

- Believe It! And Trust In:

- "Unsearchable" Wisdom Of God!

- And - When The Breeze Of God's Holy Spirit:

- Is Felt In Your Heart!

- Or - Is Seen In Your Life!

- Or - Is Heard In Your Ears!

- Respond! For God Is At Work!

Grace Baptist Church

Stephen Elmer, Pastor

4245 North 200 West

Greenfield, Indiana 46140

317-326-2362

www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace

www.growatgrace.org

pastor-elmer@hotmail.com