

Embracing Spiritual Rebirth: The Journey to Being Born Again & Entering the Kingdom

Delivered: April 28, 2024

Scriptures: John 3

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## **Recap**

### John 2.23-25

23 Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed (*pisteuo*) in His name as they observed His signs which He was doing.

24 But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting (*pisteuo*) Himself to them, because He knew all people (*pas* - all, the whole),

25 and because He did not need anyone to testify about mankind, for He Himself knew what was in mankind.

Because of the miracles, many people professed to believe in Him but there was something incomplete about their faith... Jesus did not accept their profession of faith. No matter what the people themselves said, He did not accept their testimony.

The majority in Jesus' day who saw the miracles, heard the stories, even believed in Him, ultimately decided this Man could not be trusted.

This is what is happening in the end of **John chapter 2**. This is setting us up for an important encounter in **John chapter 3**.

## **John 3**

### John 3.1-2

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

2 this man came to Jesus at 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."

Nicodemus had *also* seen the miracles. Nicodemus had *also* believed because of those miracles. So he comes to Jesus in the cover of night so the other Pharisees wouldn't see him going to Jesus, and he wants to ask Jesus some questions about some of the things He has been teaching. Listen to how Jesus responds...

### John 3.3 - Born Again

3 Jesus responded and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless someone is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Jesus completely changes the conversation. The expectation is that Jesus would say something like, “You’re right, Nicodemus, very good. God *is* with Me, and the signs that I perform prove it...so continue believing so that you can inherit the kingdom of God.”

But that’s not what Jesus says. Jesus says for anyone to see/inherit/come into the kingdom of God they must be “born again.” Believing is absolutely essential, but it’s incomplete.

You can’t be born again without believing, but you can believe and not be born again.

-The crowds who saw the miracles all believed, but they weren’t born again.

-Even the demons believe ([James 2.19](#)).

-63% of our community says they believe.

Belief is important, but Jesus did not tell Nicodemus, “unless someone believes he cannot see the kingdom.” Jesus says we must be born *again*...which implies there must be a death to the first life so that a second life can be born.

And this fact is what keeps the multitudes from entering the kingdom of God; it’s easy to believe when He’s multiplying bread...it’s easy to believe when He’s healing diseases...but when He starts saying things like “pick up your cross and follow Me,” the true heart of a man is exposed.

And that’s His goodness.

It’s the goodness of the Lord to expose our selfishness, our pride, our propensity for self-preservation, our desire to manipulate the bread multiplier and the dead raiser into our own little genie.

It's the goodness of the Lord's word (which is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword...) to slice us open like a scalpel so we can see who we really are apart from Him.

It's the goodness of the cross to put to death anything that we inherited from Adam that keeps us from following Jesus into *His* kingdom.

It's the goodness of the Lord to *not* entrust Himself to those who simply *say* they believe... not until those words of faith allow a man to be pinned to the cross of Christ...*so that* he can be born again.

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

"Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 15:50).

### Born from above

The phrase for "born again" literally means "born from above."

The Greek word for "born" is *gennaō*...it's where we get the word "gene" from. To be born again means that we are "re-gened."

You may have been born of this earth, but are you born from above?

You may have been born of the flesh, but have you been born of the Spirit?

You may have received a certain genetic code from mom and dad, but have you been re-gened, re-coded, by the Spirit of God?

Jesus People don't just believe in Jesus.

Jesus People haven't just been saved.

Jesus People have been re-gened, re-coded, re-born into *His* likeness.

Followers of Jesus are now re-born in *His* image.

### What we inherited from Adam...

When each of us was born we inherited our nature and genetic makeup from mom and dad. We were predisposed to certain things: our hair color, our height, certain personality traits, athleticism or two left feet. When we're born, our family lineage makes us who we are. And here's the problem that humanists and idealists don't want to deal with; if we trace that family tree back far enough we find ourselves in the garden...where a man and

a woman ate from a tree that God had told them *not* to eat from. They sinned. That sin separated them from the God who created them to be with Him. That sin caused something to break inside of them. All of the sudden they saw God through that lens of brokenness and projected the consequences of their sin onto God. So in Adam's mind, Adam hiding from God wasn't because of Adam...Adam was hiding from God because he was afraid how this God, who he had never seen before, was going to respond to his nakedness.

“I need to create some distance from that god.”

And now, everything that God does is filtered through that lens of brokenness and confusion. And because sin is a cancer that one generation passes on to the next, every man or woman who has ever been born inherits Adam's brokenness.

Until finally the Son of God, who is also born a son of Adam, comes and breaks the power of sin forever. Now, because of the death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and enthronement of Jesus, it is possible for sons and daughters of Adam to die to everything they inherited from their *first* birth, and be born *again* into the family of God.

Unless one is born again he cannot SEE the kingdom of God. Why? Because if you are still “in Adam” then you're still “in sin”...you are still in brokenness...you are still in confusion about who God is...you can't SEE the kingdom of God because you still SEE everything through the lens of Adam's brokenness.

But when we believe that Jesus is who He says He is, and we join ourselves to Christ...we join ourselves to His cross and the Bible says that, by faith, we actually experience the same death that He died (“we were crucified with Him” - [Galatians 2:20](#)). And the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead gives new, resurrection life to our mortal bodies ([Romans 8:11](#)).

Everyone born in the lineage of Adam dies as a result of Adam's sin...even Jesus. But Jesus, the last Adam, because He never sinned, could not be defeated by sin. Death couldn't hold Him in the grave. So Righteousness says, “NO! This One died the death of Adam without sinning the sin of Adam...this One died as a sacrifice for all sons of Adam...the debt for Adam's sin has now been paid.”

And to prove that this is true, the Holy Spirit raised Jesus, the Last Adam, from the grave.

Now, to all who believe in Jesus, and believe in His sacrifice, they can receive the same death and re-birth...death to everything they inherited from Adam and re-birth into the Spirit of Christ.

45 The first man, Adam, became a living Person. The last Adam was a life-giving spirit...

49 Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Corinthians 15:45, 49).

### Made New

Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5.17,

“if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

He doesn't say “we are *becoming* new.” It's a present tense reality for the one who is now in Christ. You believe, you follow, you're born again? You are a new creation...the old is gone, the new has come.

The Passion Translation translates this verse,

each new believer "has become an entirely new person. All that is related to the old order has vanished. Behold, everything is fresh and new.”

That's the reality of the born again life. That's the identity of the born again believer. Brand new, re-gened into the image and likeness of the resurrected Messiah.

But how you see your new life in Christ determines how much of that new life in the Spirit you actually walk in. The money is in your account, but you still have to make the withdrawal. I can have a billion dollars in Amazon stock and still live like a pauper if I don't withdraw that stock. It does me no good to believe in the stock if I never access it's benefits.

For example; you can believe in the death of Jesus, and you can be born again into His image, but if you don't appropriate for yourself the total annihilation of sin that was

accomplished by the cross, then you won't walk in the victory over sin that His cross accomplished. If you still believe that freedom from the tyranny of sin comes when we die and go to heaven some day, then what saves you from sin; Jesus or death? Because my Bible says that Jesus won the war over sin, and now I have the power to appropriate His victory by living a life empowered by His Spirit...His death put holiness and righteousness into my account, which means I can now make the withdrawal of living in purity when I *know* I am as righteous and holy as Jesus.

“He who knew no sin became sin for us so that we could become the righteousness of God in Christ” (2 Corinthians 5.21).

That's the reality of the born again life. That's the identity of the born again believer. Brand new, re-gened into the image and likeness of the resurrected Messiah. How you see your new life in Christ determines how much of that new life in the Spirit you actually walk in.

Another example; you can believe in the death of Jesus, and you can be born again into His image, but if you don't understand that the old has gone and you are made new, then you'll still self-identify as a son of Adam who can't help making the same mistakes dad did...who can't help yelling at the kids because “that's how it was when I was a kid”... who can't help wasting money because you come from a lineage of poverty and poor stewardship of resources...who can't help it because,

“that's just how we in the Johnson family are made up.”

But when you understand that Jesus makes all things new then it won't matter how messed up your parents and grandparents were, it won't matter where you were before He found you. All of that stuff died the death of Adam and you are now re-born into the life of Christ. Being born again means the lineage of addiction, divorce, poverty, depression, and witchcraft ends with your re-birth. That may be the story of your family tree, but you've been grafted into a new vine. The old has gone the new has come. You are re-gened and there is no pre-disposition in those genes to things like addiction, poverty, depression, suicide, anger, fear. You've been re-coded according to the God-code. That's what it means to be an image-bearer. You have been re-born in His image. So walk in Him. Live in Him. Be who you actually are. Make it your aim to now spend the rest of

your life loving the One who has re-made you in His likeness...and loving those around you in the same way that He loved you...so that they can be re-gened, too.

### Union

Contrary to popular belief, no one wants to remain in their sin. They're just looking for someone to show them a better way. And if we can be the church that Jesus says is His church, and love Him because we actually know who He is, then the world will see what they have been designed for...union with God. THAT'S the kingdom...God reconciling us to Himself so that we can be one with Him. Jesus didn't die to bring us into a relationship, and He definitely didn't die to bring us into a religion called Christianity. Jesus died to bring us into UNION with Him and the Father.

But to be *in Him* we must be born again *like Him*.

This is the kingdom...God and man dwelling together...where everything that once separated man from his God has been defeated by that Man seated on the throne. To come into that kingdom realm means that everything the King defeated stays outside the gates...everything you and I inherited from Adam that has its origin in the tree of knowledge can't come into that kingdom...because nothing of that tree can be found in the King.

He is the kingdom.

The kingdom is a kingdom of meekness and love and humility because the King is meek and loving and humble.

The kingdom is void of death and disease and fear because the King has defeated death and disease and fear.

Nothing from the tree of knowledge and the family line of Adam is found in the kingdom of God. So we must be born again so we can inherit this great kingdom of our God and King.

Are you born again?

If not, believe in the Lord Jesus, repent of your sin, and receive a new life in the Spirit.

If you are born again, live like it...think like it...talk like it...give like it...spend your time like it...build relationships with other born agains believer like it...believe that you are the image of God in the earth and that the Holy Spirit dwells in you.

You want to change this community? It's easy...just be who Jesus says you now are...just be the "you" that Jesus says you are and empowers you to be...and let everyone around you see what it actually looks like to be a born again follower of the King.

Be the answer to the prayers that unbelievers are praying.

"God, if You're real, send someone who can show me who You are."

"God, if You're real, heal my child."

"God, if You're real, help me pay my rent this month."

"God, if You're real, help me find a church that won't hurt me again."

"God, if You're real..."

Being born again means you can now show the world what Jesus looks like...because you are re-made into His image and likeness.