

Part 1

Nicodemus, a Pharisee and a member of the Jewish ruling council, came to Jesus:

He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him."

Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."

"How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"

Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' "

John 3:2-7, NIV

A text without a context is a pretext.

"Born again (*gennēthē anōthen*)" can be translated "born from above," i.e., by the Holy Spirit," *which the context dictates*

. The word

anōthen

is best translated "from above," although it has been translated "again" or "anew."

"Born of water and the Spirit (*gennēthē ex hudatos kai pneumatos*) is literally, "born out of water and of Spirit."

Note that Nicodemus is talking about natural human birth and says (knows) that it is impossible to enter one's mother's womb and be born a second time. Jesus then replies that one has to be born of water [amniotic fluid] and the Holy Spirit. Both Nicodemus and Jesus are talking about natural human birth. Then, in sequence, adds that one has to be born into the Kingdom of God by the Holy Spirit.

The New Birth Is Absolutely Necessary

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"Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit" indicates that the context has not changed. In order to be saved, the conditions are (1) one has to have been born physically and (2) one must be birthed into the Kingdom by the Holy Spirit!

After we have been born again (saved) we should be baptized in water. Jesus commanded us to be baptized and then to baptize new converts:

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20, NIV

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