

Approximately 40 minutes Expository



Born from Above: The Necessity of New Life John 3:1-21

Opening Prayer:

**Father God,
thank You for Your holy Word. Thank
You for sending Your Son, Jesus Christ,
to save sinners like me, like us. As we
open John chapter 3, please open our
hearts. Help us understand what it truly
means to be born again. Remove
confusion, remove pride, and remove
fear. Let Your Spirit teach us today. For
the believer, strengthen faith. For the
one who is unsure, draw them to You
Lord. For the lost, bring salvation. We
ask it in the mighty name of Jesus.
Amen.**

Quick Historical Setting:

John chapter 3 takes place early in the ministry of Jesus. The nation of Israel was under Roman rule. The Jewish people were very religious, very familiar with Scripture, and deeply connected to temple worship, traditions, and teachers of the Law. Among the most respected religious leaders were the Pharisees. They were known for strict outward obedience, careful study, and strong influence among the people.

In this chapter we meet a man named Nicodemus. He was not just religious. He was a Pharisee. He was also a member of the Jewish ruling council, the Sanhedrin. That means he was educated, honored, and powerful. Humanly speaking, Nicodemus was the kind of man people would point to and say, *“If anybody is right with God, it must be him.”*

And yet, Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night.

That alone says something. He was curious. He was cautious. He was drawn to Jesus, but he was not yet ready to stand in the light publicly. But praise God, even a nighttime meeting with Jesus can lead to eternal truth.

1. A Religious Man Comes to Jesus:

John 3:1-2(NIV) Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. ² 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."

Nicodemus comes and says, in effect, ***"Rabbi, we know You are a teacher who has come from God. No one could do these signs unless God was with Him."***

That sounds respectful, and it is. But notice what Nicodemus is doing. He is trying to begin with compliments, with titles, with what he thinks he understands. But Jesus does not let the conversation stay at the surface level.

That is one of the amazing things about Jesus. He always goes straight to the heart.

- Nicodemus came talking about signs. Jesus started talking about **salvation**.
- Nicodemus came talking about teaching. Jesus started talking about transformation.
- Nicodemus came with religion. Jesus answered with regeneration.

Brothers and Sisters, that is important. 🙌 A person can be interested in Jesus without being saved. 🙌 A person can admire Jesus without surrendering to Him. 🙌 A person

can be moral, educated, and respected and still be lost.

Nicodemus had religion, but he needed life.

2. You Must Be Born Again:

John 3:3(NIV)³ Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”

👉 That is one of the clearest statements in all the Bible.

- Jesus did not say, “You must try harder.”
- He did not say, “You must become more religious.”
- He did not say, “You must clean yourself up first.”

👉 He said, **you must be born again.**

That means salvation is not self-improvement. It is not turning over a new leaf. It is not religion added on top of your

old life. It is not church attendance, baptism alone, family heritage, or good works.

👉 To be born again means to receive **new life from God.**

The problem with man is not just that he does bad things. The problem is deeper. The heart is fallen. The nature is sinful. The soul is dead in sin apart from God. That is why Jesus did not come merely to make bad people nicer. He came to make dead people alive.

- You can polish the outside and still be lost inside.
- You can know Bible stories and still not know God personally.
- You can be deeply religious and still need to be born again.

That must have shocked Nicodemus. He probably expected Jesus to tell sinners and tax collectors they needed radical change.

But Jesus tells a master teacher of Israel,
“You must be born again.” (Vs.3)

If Nicodemus needed it, then everyone needs it.

3. The Natural Man Cannot Produce Spiritual Life:

John 3:4-8(NIV)⁴ “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!”

⁵ Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. ⁷ You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ ⁸ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it

comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”

Nicodemus responds almost literally: **“How can someone be born when they are old?”** (Vs. 4) In other words, **“How can this happen?”**

Jesus explains that flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. Natural birth gives natural life. Spiritual birth gives spiritual life.

Jesus is teaching that human effort cannot produce divine life.

- A person cannot save himself.
 - A church cannot save you.
 - A preacher cannot save you.
 - A denomination cannot save you.
- 👉 Only the Holy Spirit can bring new birth.

Jesus uses the picture of the wind. You cannot see the wind itself, but you can see its effects.

- You hear it.
- You feel it.
- You see what it moves.

That is how the Holy Spirit works. You may not see Him with physical eyes, but you see the changed life He produces.

- He convicts.
- He awakens.
- He softens.
- He transforms.
- He gives new desires.
- He brings a person from darkness to light.

The new birth is supernatural.

This is why Christianity is not just a system of rules. It is a miracle of grace. It is God doing what man cannot do.

4. Nicodemus Knew Scripture but Missed the Meaning:

John 3:9-13 (NIV)⁹ “How can this be?” Nicodemus asked.

¹⁰ “You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things? ¹¹ Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. ¹² I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man.

Nicodemus asks, **“How can this be?”**
(Vs.9)

Jesus answers with a challenge. He basically says, **“You are Israel’s teacher,**

and yet you do not understand these things?" (Vs.10)

That is a sobering thought.

- A man can know theology and still miss the central truth.
- A man can study the Scriptures and still fail to see that all of it points to the need for cleansing, redemption, and new life from God.

The Old Testament had already pointed toward this.

- God promised washing.
- God promised a new heart.
- God promised His Spirit.

The problem was never that the truth was absent. The problem was that the **heart of man** was blind apart from God's insight.

And that still happens today.

- Some know church language, but not Christ.
- Some know doctrine terms, but not grace.
- Some know arguments, but not surrender.
- Some know about Jesus, but have never trusted Jesus.

Knowledge alone cannot save. We must come to Christ personally.

5. Look and Live:

John 3:14-15 (NIV) ¹⁴ *Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,* ¹⁵ *that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.*”

Then Jesus gives one of the most powerful pictures in the chapter. He says that just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that

everyone who believes may have eternal life in Him.

Jesus is referring to the event in **Numbers 21**. The people had sinned against God. Judgment came in the form of venomous snakes. People were dying. God instructed Moses to lift up a bronze serpent on a pole. Those who looked in **faith** were healed.

👉 What a picture.

The people were dying and could not cure themselves.

The remedy came from God.

The provision had to be lifted up publicly.

👉 The response was simple: look in faith and live.

Jesus is saying, “**That was pointing to Me.**”

- We are bitten by sin.
- We are dying under judgment.

- We cannot heal ourselves.
👉 Christ would be lifted up on the cross. And whoever looks to Him in faith will live.

What a gospel picture that is. **Salvation is not earned.** It is **received by faith** in the One who was lifted up for us.

6. The Heart of God: John 3:16

John 3:16-17 (NIV) ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

This scripture Vs.16 & 17 the most loved verses in all the Bible: **“For God so loved the world...”**

Do not rush past that.

God loved the world.

- Not because the world was good.
- Not because the world deserved it.
- Not because the world was seeking Him perfectly.

👉 He loved because that is His gracious heart.

And what did He do? He gave His one and only Son.

👉 The cross was not an accident. It was not a backup plan. It was the expression of the **love of God** meeting the justice of God. **Jesus came to die in our place.** He took the punishment we deserve so that we could receive the life we do “**not**” deserve.

And the promise is clear: **whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.**(Vs.16)

👉 Whoever.

- That means the moral person.

- That means the broken person.
 - That means the churchgoer.
 - That means the addict.
 - That means the proud.
 - That means the ashamed.
- 👉 That means the sinner who comes to Christ.

Jesus did not come to condemn the world in His first coming. The world was already condemned in sin. He came to save.

That is **good news, The Gospel...**

7. The Great Divide: Belief or Unbelief

John 3:18(NIV) ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

Jesus then makes the issue plain. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but

whoever does not believe stands condemned already.

That means there are only two categories in the end: 🙌 **saved or lost, life or condemnation, belief or unbelief.**

The dividing line is Jesus Christ.

- Not sincerity.
- Not religious activity.
- Not family background.
- Not human effort.
- Not comparison with others.

🙌 The issue is what you do with Jesus.

People often think the great issue is whether they are good enough. But that is not the question. The question is: 🙌 **Have you believed in the Son of God?**

Because if salvation could come by works, then Jesus would not have needed to die. But He did die. That means our sin problem

was so serious that only the **blood of Christ** could pay for it.

8. Why Men Reject the Light:

John 3:19-21(NIV) ¹⁹ This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. ²¹ But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

Jesus says light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

That is such a piercing statement. The problem is not that the light is unclear. The problem is that sinful man loves darkness.

People do not naturally run to the light because the light exposes what they are.

- Darkness hides.
- Darkness excuses.
- Darkness delays.
- Darkness pretends.

👉 But light reveals, and that can be uncomfortable. That is why **many** resist Jesus. Not because there is no truth in Him, but because His truth exposes the heart.

Yet the one who lives by the truth comes into the light.

That is the evidence of genuine faith. A born-again person does **not** claim sinless perfection, but there is **a new direction**.

👉 He comes to the light. He confesses sin. He desires truth. He wants Christ. He no longer wants to hide forever in darkness.

9. A Personal Call to Be Born Again:

👉 Now let us bring this home personally.

Nicodemus was religious, sincere, educated, and respected, but Jesus still said, **“You must be born again.”** (Vs.3)

- Maybe you have gone to church for years.
- Maybe you believe in God in a general way.
- Maybe you have tried to live a decent life.
- Maybe you know Christian words and Bible stories.

👉 But have you been born again?

Has there ever been a moment when you stopped trusting in yourself and placed your faith in Jesus Christ alone?

- Not just knowing about Him.
- Not just respecting Him.
- Not just admiring Him.

👉 But trusting Him as Savior and Lord.

Jesus was lifted up on the cross for your sins. He died, was buried, and rose again. He offers forgiveness, new life, and eternal life to all who believe.

And that invitation is still open today.

If you have never been born again, then come to Jesus now. Come just as you are. Do not wait until you feel better. Do not wait until you fix yourself. You cannot give yourself new birth. Only God can do that. But you can come in faith.

You can say from your heart: This very moment..... Let us Pray....

“Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner..... I cannot save myself..... I believe You died for my sins and rose again..... Forgive me. Wash me. Save me.... Give me new life..... I turn from my sin and place my trust in You alone..... Be my Savior and my Lord.” Amen!!!

“If” that is the cry of your heart, He will save you. His promise is not maybe. 🙌 His promise is sure. ***Romans 10:9*** (NIV) ***9 If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.***

Closing Encouragement:

Brothers and Sisters, John chapter 3 is not just for the lost. It is also a reminder to the saved.

- Never get over the miracle of the new birth.
- Never go back to trusting the flesh.
- Never put confidence in religious appearance.

🙌 Walk in the light. Depend on the Spirit. Rejoice in the love of God. Lift up Jesus, because He is still saving sinners today.

And remember this: 🖐️ **the new birth is “not” man reaching up to God by religion. 🖐️ It is God giving life to the one who believes in His Son.**

A gift to you....

That is why this chapter is so powerful. It tells us that salvation is necessary, supernatural, and available through Jesus Christ.

🖐️ You must be born again.

Closing Prayer:

**Father God,
thank You for the truth of John chapter
3. Thank You for Your love. Thank You
for sending Your Son to be lifted up for
us. Thank You that eternal life is offered
freely to all who believe.**

**Lord God, for every believer, help us
walk in the light, live in gratitude, and
stay dependent on the Holy Spirit. Keep
us humble, faithful, and full of joy in our
salvation.**

**And Father God, for anyone hearing this
message who has not yet been born
again, draw them now. Break through
fear, pride, and darkness. Let faith rise
in their heart. Let today be the day of
salvation.**

**We love You, Lord. We praise You, and
we ask all of this in the name of Jesus
Christ our Savior. Amen.**

