

Title: THE WHAT, WHY, AND HOW OF NEW LIFE, JOHN 3:1-17.
(Chatham, NJ; 03/20/11, AM) [E – Topical, Q & A]

Theme: Consistent with John's them that Jesus offer eternal life, in this chapter Jesus presents the means by which we initially appropriate that new and everlasting life.

Purpose: To present and explain to the audience the what, why, and how of being born again to a new life and entering into the Kingdom of God.

Introduction:

1. John's Gospel presents his readers the opportunity to obtain eternal life, John 20:30-31.
2. It is one of his predominant themes: 1:4 & 10:10.
3. For someone not always attuned to spiritual matters, this rings a strange bell, and he may ask what that is all about.
4. Perhaps some have heard the expression "born again" bandied about. Once again, this may be a peculiar concept.
5. In the mind of Jesus and John the ideas presented here are reasonable and consistent with the human condition and the teachings of the Bible.
6. Jesus speaks of being born again, the Kingdom of God, and the Holy Spirit.
7. Listen to Jesus as he talks with Nicodemus, who, though a teacher of Israel, doesn't comprehend it either.

I. What?

- A. Jesus speaks on God's authority, 2. (Notice also that he re-enters the life of Christ in 7:50 & 19:39.)
 1. Nicodemus recognizes Jesus' right to speak on behalf of God.
 2. This Gospel makes it clear that Christ has this authority.
 3. Among other things, His miracles (John calls them signs) demonstrated it: 2:11, at Cana; 11:42-44, raising Lazarus.
 4. That Jesus conquered death certified it beyond doubt.
- B. Born again.
 1. One must be born again otherwise he cannot enter the Kingdom of God, 3.
 2. First of all, his words seem like a *non sequitur*, a statement that doesn't follow from the previous statement.
 3. Nicodemus doesn't understand the concept.
 4. The Kingdom of God is not unfamiliar to him; it is part of Israel's hope.
 5. The term confuses him, and he cannot understand how a person can be born after he has already been born.
- C. A spiritual birth.
 1. Jesus explains that this is a birth accomplished by the Holy Spirit, 6-8.
 2. It has nothing to do with physical birth.
 3. The Gospel has already prepared us to see this, 1:12-13.
 4. Later disciples will describe it in terms of putting off the old self (or dieing to the old ways of living) and putting on the new self, Ephesians 4:22-24.
 5. It is a new life that lives for God and rejects the old ways of sin and depravity.
 6. One dies and is resurrected to a new life, thus born again.

II. Why?

- A. The need implied and explained.
 1. "Their deeds were evil," explains the condition of mankind, vs. 19.
 2. Christianity states that "all have sinned," Romans 3:23.
 3. All humanity has rebelled against God. (Emphasize.)

4. We need to have our sins atoned for and our guilt removed.
5. John describes Jesus as the “Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world,” John 1:29.
6. At his birth (Mt. 1:21) his father learned that he will “save his people from their sins.”

B. We must turn from darkness to light.

1. This turn must occur if we are to appropriate eternal life and escape judgment.
2. All of us will face God one day, Hebrews 9:27.
3. A resurrection to life or to judgment, John 5:28-29.
4. Choosing Jesus now assures us of our direction in the next life, 3:16-18.
5. God sent his Son to give us eternal life and that we might not be condemned because of our sins.
6. Why do we need this? We are sinner who must turn back to God and receive forgiveness for our sins.

III. How? By water and Spirit, verse 5.

A. The Spirit is the Holy Spirit.

1. He touches us in mysterious fashion.
2. However, we know we’ve been touched by him when we are convicted of our sins, John 16:8.
3. This is the truth Jesus says we need to be set free, Jn. 8:32.
4. Belief in Christ (16) comes through his leading and power.
5. In Acts 2:37 Peter’s message came through the power of the Holy Spirit and many who heard it were “cut to the heart,” Acts 2:37.
6. It is the Holy Spirit who urges us to believe that Jesus is the Son of God who takes away our sin.

B. Water

1. Perhaps water seems too mundane to be associated with this process that is a spiritual awakening.
2. However, it cannot be the water of physical birth because we already know that Jesus informs Nicodemus that he isn’t talking about a physical birth.
3. The most prominent item involving water among John the Baptist’s disciples, among Jesus’ disciples, and in the early church is baptism.
4. Jesus commands his disciples to baptize people, Mt. 28:20.
5. Paul explains to one of the churches the meaning of it, Romans 6:3-4.
6. It is a death, burial, and resurrection.
7. We are born again when we are baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Conclusion:

1. This entire process has a spiritual depth that we can only scratch the surface of today.
2. However, there are simple steps you can take to appropriate it.
3. Believe that you are a sinner in need of forgiveness.
4. Believe that Jesus is the Son of God who can relieve you of this guilt.
5. Confess your belief that he is the Lord of your life and of all mankind.
6. Be baptized for the remission of your sins, Acts 2:38.
7. Live the rest of your life in faithfulness to that profession of faith.