

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

What is the New Birth?

John 3:1-5

4/20/2012

1 From the Gospel of John, Chapter 3, verses 1 through 5 we read . . . 2

Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him.” In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.” 3 “How can a man be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!” Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.

The immediate context for this passage is found in the last section of Chapter 2. It’s close to Passover and Lord Jesus arrives in Jerusalem. He goes immediately to the Temple where the animal sacrifices are being

sold and money is being exchanged. It has the hustle and bustle of a marketplace instead of the dignity and reverence of the most holy place on earth. Jesus makes a whip of cords and forces everyone out!

The priests and the Levites, the ones who are supposed to be in charge, confront the Lord for doing this. After all, the Temple was the Kingdom of God to them. It's important that you understand this. In John Chapter 2, verse 18, these Jewish leaders said a miracle would be necessary to prove Jesus had authority over the Temple ¹ ₄

Then, in John Chapter 3, verse 2, Nicodemus, a Pharisee and a member of the Jewish high court, accepts that Jesus had that authority based on the miracles he had seen ². ₅ So, the Lord now explains

¹ John 2:18 - Then the Jews demanded of him, "What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?"

² John 3:2 - He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."

who has the authority to enter, or even see, the Kingdom of God!

I. You Need to Be Reborn Spiritually ⁶

In verse 3 ³ the Lord tells Nicodemus that he has to be reborn spiritually. ⁷ He uses the word “birth” so we would think about physical birth and what would take place in the birth process.

The word “again” is a very dynamic word in the original language ⁴. It means you need to start life “again” but with a different nature. ⁸ But it also had a dual meaning. ⁹ It could also mean “from above”. Combine the definitions to come up with the idea that you have to start a new life “from above”, but with a spiritual orientation this time.

³ John 3:3 - In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”

⁴ Ἀνωθεν = again, from above.

Nicodemus correctly understood, from verse 4 ⁵, ¹⁰ that a different life would have to develop. He just couldn't understand how it could happen. So the Lord proceeds to tell him.

II. This Birth Begins as a Result of the Holy Spirit ¹¹

In verse 5 ⁶ the Lord says that this birth begins as a result of the Holy Spirit. ¹² It's to be a spiritual process, not a physical one.

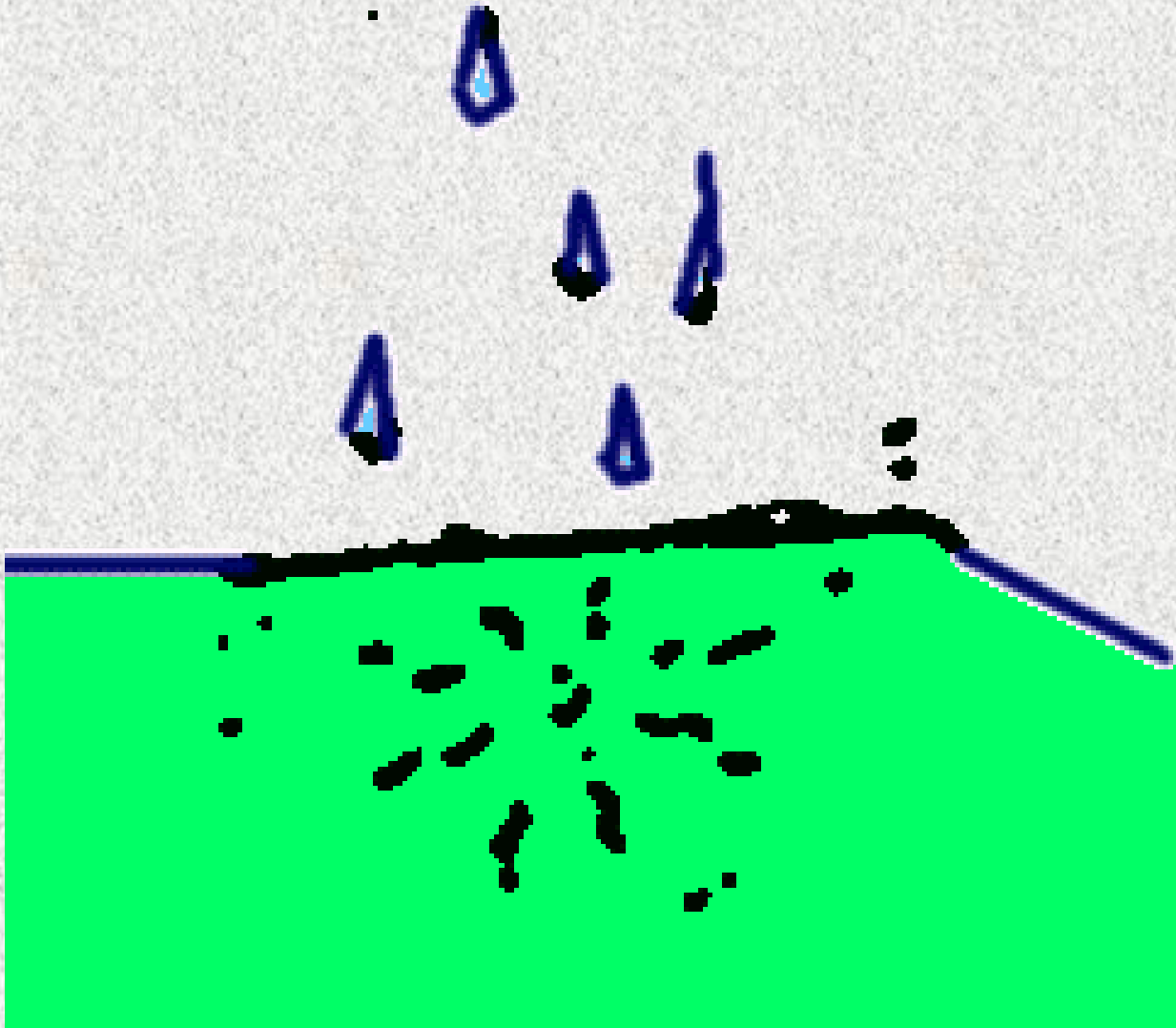
In the plant kingdom, ¹³ you plant a seed;

⁵ John 3:4 - "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!"

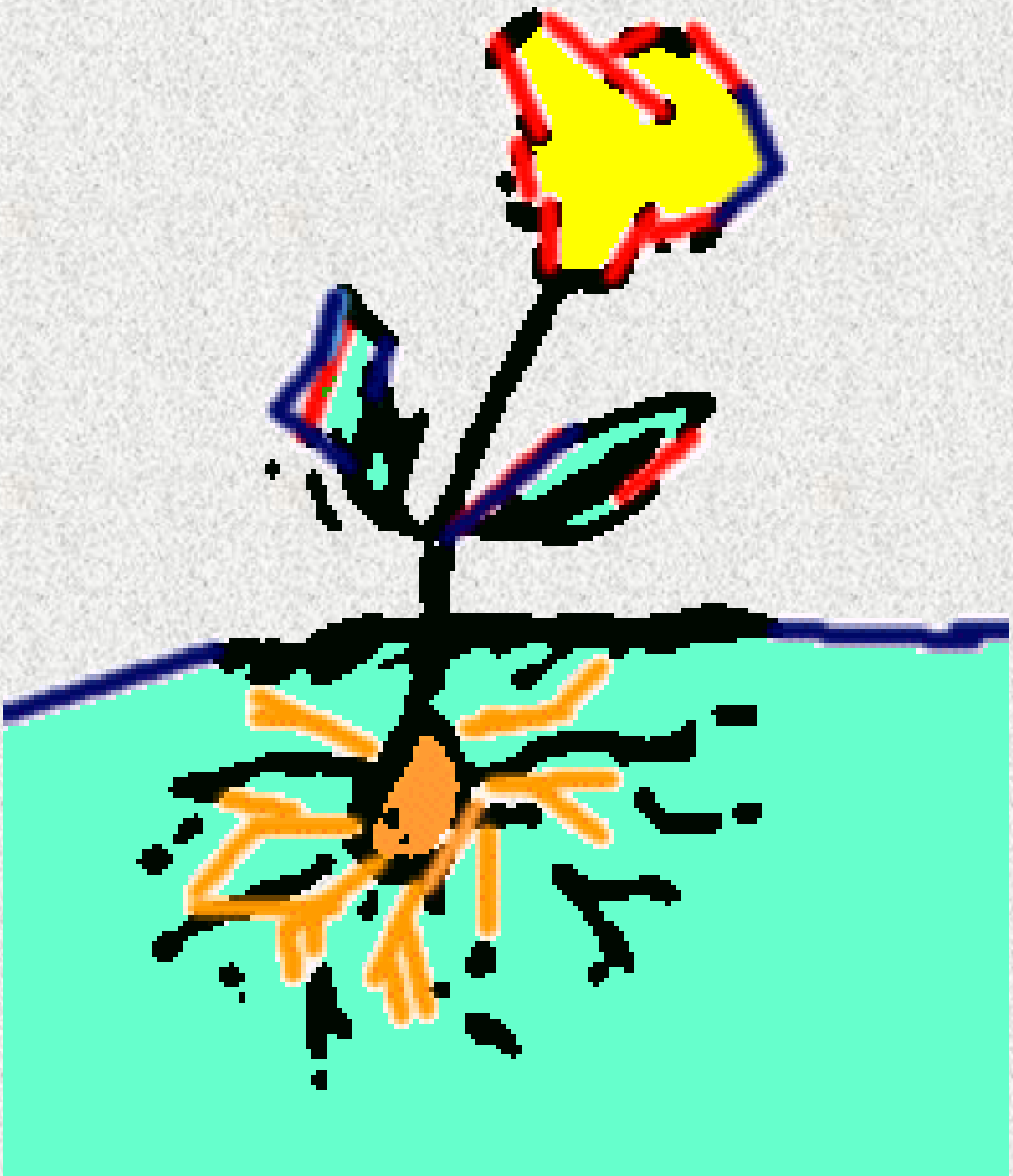
⁶ John 3:5 - Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.



you water and fertilize it 14



and it eventually sprouts from the ground. 15



In the human kingdom ¹⁶ you have a physical union between a husband and a wife.



Conception of a fetus results. ¹⁷



In nine months you have a baby. 18



The spiritual birth process is very similar. ¹⁹ The father's role in spiritual conception ²⁰ is played by the Holy Spirit using, primarily, the word of God. The word of God is planted in your heart and the Holy Spirit uses it to convict you.

Romans 10, verse 17 ²¹ says **Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.** You are conceived when you hear the gospel message, the Word of God. You are conceived by the Holy Spirit.

First Corinthians 4, verse 15 ²² says, **Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.** The King James translation says in this verse that we are begotten (conceived) through the gospel. The apostle conceived the Corinthian believers when they accepted the gospel message he presented to them. They were conceived by the Holy Spirit.

In James 1, verse 18 and 21 ²³ it says, **He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.** The King James Version tells us here that we are begotten, or conceived, by the word of truth. You received spiritual birth through the word of truth, the gospel message. The word planted in you is able to save your soul. You are conceived by the Holy Spirit.

In First Peter, Chapter 1, verses 22 through 25, ²⁴ it says, **Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of perishable, through the living and enduring word of God.** For, “All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the

grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever.” And this is the word that was preached to you. People are born again and purified by obeying the living and enduring word of God which was preached to them. They are conceived by the Holy Spirit. ²⁵

How does this process work? ²⁶ You somehow come in contact with the word of God. ²⁷ You may hear a sermon, talk to a Christian friend, read a book or see a biblical concept lived out before you. The Holy Spirit uses the seed of this word to convict you to surrender your life to God. ²⁸ This spiritual gestation period varies with each person. The time comes in your life when you must make a decision; to surrender your life to God and be born again – or to be stillborn spiritually.

III. This Birth is Completed in the Watery Womb of Christian Baptism ²⁹

Verse 5 ⁷ tells us this birth is completed in the watery womb of Christian baptism. This is the mother's role in spiritual birth. ³⁰ It is supplied for you by other believers, the church and the baptismal pool. There are several passages from the Bible that point this out. See and be convinced.

In Galatians 3, verse 27, ³¹ it says that **all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.** You put on Lord Jesus like a suite of clothes. You are born of water.

In Ephesians 5, verse 26, ³² the Lord loved the church so much that He gave Himself up for her to make her holy, **cleansing her by the washing with water through the word.** You are cleansed by the combination of the

⁷ John 3:5 - Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.

washing of water (baptism) and the word of God; “the water and the Spirit”.

Titus 3, verse 5 states, ³³ **He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.**

Again, we have the combination of the water and the Spirit providing rebirth!

On the day the church was born, Peter responded to the question, “What shall we do?” desperately asked by the crowd who were convinced they had murdered God’s Son, ³⁴ **“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”** ⁸ The response of repentance and baptism provides the forgiveness of your sins and the reception in your heart of God’s Holy Spirit.

Saul was told at his conversion, ³⁵ **And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your**

⁸ Acts 2:38.

sins away, calling on his name. ⁹ When you are baptized you symbolically wash away your sins.

In First Peter 3, verse 21, in referring to Noah's flood, ³⁶ it says that the water **symbolizes baptism that now saves you** also — not the removal of dirt from the body but **the pledge of a good conscience toward God.** It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Baptism is your pledge, your appeal to God, for a clear conscience. This is also the passage that clearly states that baptism is involved in God's plan of salvation!

Lord Jesus commissioned His disciples to ³⁷ **Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.** ¹⁰ Faith and baptism provide salvation.

⁹ Acts 22:16.

¹⁰ Mark 16:15-16.

According to Romans, Chapter 6, verses 3 and 4, ³⁸ you symbolically die to the old life, bury the old corpse & are resurrected from the old dead self to walk in a new life! ³⁹ You leave the old life, passing through this watery gate, to a new one. ¹¹ ⁴⁰ You leave your old deeds and take on the image of Christ. ¹²

IV. What are the Results of This New Life? ⁴¹

First John tells us about the results of this new life. ⁴² In Chapter 2, verse 29 ¹³, you begin doing righteousness. ⁴³ In Chapter 3, verse 9 and Chapter 5, verse 18 ¹⁴, you will not continue in the sin oriented life. ⁴⁴ In Chapter 4, verse 7 ¹⁵, you will love one

¹¹ II Corinthians 5:17.

¹² Colossians 3:9-10.

¹³ I John 2:29 - If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.

¹⁴ I John 3:9 - No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. And I John 5:18 - We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him.

¹⁵ I John 4:7 - Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

another. ⁴⁵ In Chapter 5, verse 1 ¹⁶, you will hold to your good confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. ⁴⁶ In Chapter 5, verse 4 ¹⁷, you will overcome the world!

⁴⁷ Having a spiritual birth means commitment to a new Lord; Jesus, not Satan. Having a spiritual birth means commitment to a new life; godly, not the worldly. Having a spiritual birth means commitment to a new relationship; being a child to a loving Heavenly Father rather than being conformed to society's mold.

What birth do you have?

<http://www.biblelifemessages.org>

¹⁶ | John 5:1 - Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God . . .

¹⁷ | John 5:4 - . . . for everyone born of God overcomes the world.