

# SERMON NOTES

*Reason To Believe: True Conversion*  
John 3:1-21

Nicodemus was the epitome of religion, morality, culture, and accomplishment. Yet, he was empty and came to Jesus searching for answers to life's most important question. Leon Morris has said, "Clearly Nicodemus is seeking instruction in the way to life." Jesus declared to Nicodemus that in order for him to have eternal life, he must have a spiritual birth.

**Key thought:** Eternal life is given when one has a spiritual birth through the Spirit of God.

In John 3, the discourse is a series of three questions from Nicodemus each followed by a response from Jesus.

## THE MIRACLE OF SALVATION (verses 1-3)

The phrase "born again" literally means "born from above." Nicodemus had a real need. He needed a change of his heart—a spiritual transformation. New birth, being born again, is an act of God whereby eternal life is imparted to the person who believes (2 Corinthians 5:17; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:3; 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1-4, 18). John 1:12, 13 indicates that being "born again" also carries the idea of "becoming children of God" through trust in the name of Jesus Christ.

"The word 'regeneration' (born again) simply means the act of God by which new life is imparted to the person who trusts Christ as his Saviour. Justification gives me a righteous standing before God; adoption gives me an adult standing before God, but regeneration gives me the life of God, the nature of God, in my very being." *Wiersbe*

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." John 1:12-13

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"Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace."

## THE MYSTERY OF SALVATION (verses 4-8)

How does that come to be? Ephesians 2:8-9 states, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."

### The Holy Spirit Convicts Man Of His Sin:

"And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged." John 16:8-11

### The Holy Spirit Calls Us To Salvation:

"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day." John 6:44

### The Holy Spirit Changes Us:

"For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God." 1 Peter 1:23

"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit." Titus 3:5

"For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." Galatians 6:15

## THE SIMPLICITY OF SALVATION (verses 9-17)

### The question logically comes, "Why does a person need to be born again?"

"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins." Ephesians 2:1

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 6:23

### You need to be "born again" because you are in sin and separated from a holy God.

"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." Mark 1:15

"They went out and preached that men should repent." Mark 6:12

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## Jesus presents the simplicity of salvation –

### • God's provision

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8  
Jesus Christ is God's provision for your salvation. He died on the cross to pay the penalty for your sin, and rose from the dead that you might have eternal life.

### • Your response

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast." Ephesians 2:8-9

#### ◦ Repent

"Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God." BF&M 2000

Repentance involves more than just remorse or a feeling of guilt over getting caught in sin. Rather, it refers to a genuine sorrow for sin accompanied by a desire and commitment to leave it behind. Or, as is often stated, it is "a change of mind that leads to a change of action." The awareness of the need to repent is brought about by the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-11). Its importance is evidenced by its inclusion as a key element in the preaching of Jesus (Mark 1:15), John the Baptist (Matthew 3:2) and the early church (Acts 2:38).

#### ◦ Believe – place your faith in Jesus Christ (trust)

"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." Acts 16:31

"The noun "faith" comes from the same root word as the verb "I believe" in the Greek language of the New Testament. More than just acknowledging intellectually that something is true, biblical faith requires a personal trust in and commitment to Jesus based on the knowledge of who He is and what He has done in providing forgiveness for sin. Often in the New Testament, the word "believe" is followed by the word "in" to express this idea. Most noticeably, John 3:16 states that whoever "believes in" Jesus will have everlasting life. Paul also reminds us that it is because of God's grace that we are saved through faith and not by our own works (Ephesians 2:8-9). No one of us could ever do enough "good deeds" to earn God's salvation!"  
*Dr. Danny Akin*

Believe what?

I am a sinner.

Jesus Christ is God who died on the cross to pay the penalty for my sin, He rose literally/physically from the dead.

I cannot save myself from my sin, therefore I cast myself completely on God's mercy and free offer of salvation. I trust in Jesus Christ alone to forgive me and save me from my sinful condition.

My response will be to love Him and obediently seek to live each day to express gratitude for His saving grace.

"Your act of believing and God's act of begetting are simultaneous. You do the one and he does the other at the same instant."

## Consider: verses 18-21

- True conversion (belief) removes judgment (verse 18)
- No conversion (unbelief) leaves you in judgment (verses 18-20)
- True conversion will bear evidence of salvation (verse 21)

For He says, "At the acceptable time I listened to you, And on the day of salvation I helped you." Behold, now is "the acceptable time," behold, now is "the day of salvation." 2 Corinthians 6:2

"A man who hardens his neck after much reproof will suddenly be broken beyond remedy." Proverbs 29:1