

Tract Number Two
"Being Born Again"

NOTES FROM THE TEXTBOOK



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John 3:3 Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

One of the most controversial subjects in recent years has been Being Born Again. We hear of Hollywood celebrities, professional athletes, politicians and others who testify of Being Born Again. How important is this matter and what does the phrase really mean?

The Apostle John records the discourse between the Lord Jesus and Nicodemus about the necessity of Being Born Again. This imperative "to be born from above" is stated by our Lord and a confused Nicodemus inquire concerning its meaning (John 3:31).

In John chapter 3 we discover three implications given for understanding this important issue: An Independent Operation of the Holy Spirit (verse 5); An Incomprehensible Operation of the Holy Spirit (verse 8); An Irresistible Operation of the Holy Spirit (verse 9).

An Independent Operation of the Holy Spirit. "Except a person be born of water and of the Spirit" (verse 5). People have misunderstood the significance of the phrase "born of water" They teach that water baptism is the necessary means to obtaining new life. However, the key word in understanding this passage is the word "and" because it stands between the two phrases. The word "and" is a translation of the Greek word kai which means "even or specifically"

Being Born Again is an Independent Work of the Holy Spirit, free from any of our efforts, regardless of how well intended. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but by the washing of regeneration by the renewing of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5). How easily we become deceived when attempting to merit God's salvation by human effort, not realizing that all our righteousness are like filthy rags before God (Isaiah 64:6).

How difficult it must have been for Nicodemus to accept this truth. His character was of moral excellence, a religious leader in the synagogue, and highly respected in the community. Nevertheless, the Lord Jesus Christ spoke this imperative to him "ye must be born again"

An Incomprehensible Operation of the Holy Spirit. "The wind blows at will but we cannot tell from where it comes or where it goes, so is everyone that is born of the Holy Spirit" (verse 8). The effect of the new birth is like the effect of the wind, and neither can be fully comprehended. Two similarities can be found between the Holy Spirit and the Wind: freedom of mobility and results produced.

First, freedom of mobility and operation describes both these entities. The wind moves in any direction it chooses, so does the Holy Spirit. The sovereignty of these powers can be seen everywhere, and no man can lay claim upon their movement. Second, although invisible in nature results are produced. There is no doubt that the Holy Spirit and the wind do exist for we are able to see their results.

The wind and its forces are made known to us as we witness the blowing of leaves and the flying of dust particles. The events caused by the wind can vary from dust in the eyes to destruction of property. So with the Holy Spirit there is movement upon the hearts of sinful men. The affect is new life to the recipient and a restored relationship with God.

An Irresistible Operation of the Holy Spirit. "How can these things be?" (verse 9). Perhaps, many things went through the mind of Nicodemus at this point as he considered the meaning of our Lord's words. However, in view of the literal question: How can I experience it? Nicodemus was eager and excited about what Christ had said. History reveals that Nicodemus did accept Christ as the Messiah and became a silent follower of his, as did Joseph of Arimathaea.

Being Born Again should be the concern of every person. The condition of humanity and the character of heaven stand to remind us of its necessity.

Dear Friend, have you truly been born from above? Has your thinking, acting and choosing been changed so that you consider pleasing God in matters of your daily living? If not, why not trust the Lord Jesus Christ to save you today and begin a New Life in dependence upon Him.