

**Messianic Bible Teaching
on
Born again or
Born from above**



**Introduction notes to
John 3:3-5**

This study has three sections

1. **Nicodemus**
2. **Born Again (a pre-Yeshua Understanding)**
3. **Born Again (a post-Yeshua and a new Biblical understanding)**

1. Nicodemus

Nicodemus was prominent Jewish leader in the time of Messiah, he is mentioned in the fourth gospel. His name is of Hebrew origin but rendered in Greek, the Hebrew form of the name (Naqdimon, meaning victory of the people) is found in the Talmud. Nicodemus was a Pharisee, and in the Sanhedrin, (John, 7:50). Messiah, in the interview when Nicodemus came to him by night, calls him *THE* TEACHER of Israel. Judging from John 19:39, Nicodemus must have been a man of means, and it is probable that he wielded a certain influence in the Sanhedrin. From his question: "How can a man be born when he is old?", we know that he was already advanced in years, and understood the rabbinical doctrine of 'born again - born from above'.

He next appears (John, 7:50-51) in the Sanhedrin offering a word in defence of the accused Galilean; and we may infer from this passage that he embraced the truth as soon as it was fully made known to him. He is mentioned finally in John, 19:39, where he is shown co-operating with Joseph of Arimathea in the embalming and burial of Yeshua.

His name occurs later in some of the apocryphal writings, e.g. in the so called "Acta Pilati", heterogeneous document which in the 16th century was published under the title "Evangelium Nicodemi" (Gospel of Nicodemus).

It might be that this is the same Nicodemus than according to Josephus (Antiquities: Book: 14 Chapter: 3 Paragraph: 2) There it is mentioned that Nicodemus was the name of one of the ambassadors sent by Aristobulus to Pompey.

How can I who am old be born again? Nicodemus answers as if the words of Messiah were only addressed to only him.

2. Born Again (a pre-Yeshua Understanding)

The 'doctrine of being born again was well developed in 1st Cent Israel. There were **Six (6)** possibilities for a person to become Born from above / again BUT not all applied to every man.

- **1st when a God fearer / proselyte become a convert.**
- **2nd when a person was proclaimed King of Israel.**

THESE it seems do not apply to Nicodemus:

1. There was no indication that he was a gentile who wanted to convert.
2. there is no indication that he was of the line of Judah and he did not ask, when will I be King.

- **3rd when a boy became a man (Bar Mitzvah).**
- **4th when he got married.**
- **5th when he became a rabbi.**
- **6th when he became a Rosh HaYeshiva (Rabbinical College)**

These did apply to Nicodemus:

3. He was Jewish and would have had a Bar Mitzvah.
4. To be a Rabbi and or a member of the Sanhedrin you would have to be married in this period.
5. Since Nicodemus is called teacher he is a rabbi.
6. Since he is called by Yeshua (in the Greek text) **THE Rabbi of Israel** it indicates he is a Rosh HaYeshiva.

So when Nicodemus was OLD and he had fulfilled all the aspects of the Born from above /again that applied to him, How could he do it again? OR as I (personal) see this conversation, Nicodemus is saying 'Been there done that, What do you mean Yeshua IS THERE MORE?'

3. Born Again (a post-Yeshua and a new Biblical understanding)

What did Yeshua Mean when he talked to Nicodemus and said YOU must be born again in the light of the above?

And how did Paul and other apostles see this. Yeshua told Nicodemus "except a man be born of the water and of the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

Water and Spirit

Water denoting physical birth or Baptism and spirit God's Holy Spirit, without God's spirit we cannot be saved (Read Romans 8:1-14.)

Notice verse 9 - "...Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

Notice verse 14 - "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

Acts 10:44,46 - "While yet Peter spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on them which heard the Word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God..."
Read Acts 19:1-6

Of water and of the Spirit--A twofold explanation of the "new birth," so startling to Nicodemus. To a Jewish ecclesiastic, so familiar with the symbolical application of water, in every variety of way and form of expression, this language was fitted to show that the thing intended was no other than a thorough spiritual purification by the operation of the Holy Ghost. Indeed, element of water and operation of the Spirit are brought together in a glorious evangelical prediction of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 36:25-27), which Nicodemus might have been reminded of had such spiritualities not been almost lost in the reigning formalism. Already had the symbol of water been embodied in an initiatory ordinance, in the baptism of the Jewish expectants of Messiah by the Baptist, not to speak of the baptism of Gentile proselytes before that; and in the Christian Church it was soon to become the great visible door of entrance into "the kingdom of God," the reality being the sole work of the Holy Ghost (Titus 3:5).

Note: Just because Nicodemus came at night does not indicate secret or being afraid, or ashamed. Anybody who has been in Jerusalem knows that when even there is a halve moon the walls shine, the famous Jerusalem stone would reflect the light. This was also true in New Testamental Times. On top of that both Yeshua and Nicodemus were famous and busy people, so most likely they were both busy during the day and no secret meeting found place.

שלום ביִשׁוּעַ הַמָּשִׁיחַ

Shalom in Yeshua the Messiah

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