

Ensure fellowship with God through 1 John 1:9

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Historical Chronology between Matt 4:11 and 12 (Review)

1. Jesus returns to Judea after the wilderness testing and John [the Herald] identifies Him as the promised Messiah (John 1:29-36).
 2. Christ calls disciples and travels to Galilee (John 1:37-49).
(Not the same as His withdrawal to Galilee in Mt 4:12)
 - Andrew and John - - vv. 37-39
 - Peter - - vs. 40-42
 - Philip - - vs. 43
 - Nathanael - - vv. 45-49
 3. First miracle occurs at the wedding in Cana of Galilee (John 2:1-11).
 4. Christ travels to Capernaum from the wedding feast with Mary, His brothers, and the disciples (John 2:12).
 5. Christ travels to Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover and drives the temple vendors with their animals out of the temple (John 2:13-21).
 6. He meets Nicodemus (a Pharisee) and communicates that spiritual regeneration is the prerequisite to enter the kingdom of God = kingdom of heaven = Messiah's kingdom (John 3:1-21).
- Continuing on with the conversation between Nicodemus and the Lord Jesus Christ during the week He spent in Jerusalem:
- Things to remember:
 - Many people were believing as they observed the signs that pointed to the fact that He was Messiah.
 - Nicodemus was a Pharisee & member of the Sanhedrin.
 - He came to inquire of the Lord the prerequisite for entrance into Messiah's kingdom under the cover of darkness to avoid consternation from his fellow Sanhedrin.

As Nick approaches Christ he says - -

John 3:2-4

(2) "...Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

The Lord knows why Nicodemus has come -

- In light of John the Baptizer's message to "repent...for the Kingdom of Heaven is about to be instituted" Nicodemus is beginning to doubt the criteria he is relying on to enter the Kingdom.
- He understands that the signs Jesus was doing pointed to the fact that Jesus had divine origin.

(3) **Jesus answered and said to him,**

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Jesus emphatically communicates the prerequisite for entering the Kingdom.

- IT IS NOT from observing the Law.
- IT IS NOT because one is a physical descendent of Abraham.
- IT IS based on being "**born again**".

Nicodemus does not understand this and he takes the reference to birth as a physical birth

(4) **Nicodemus said** to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?"

Since Nicodemus refers to physical birth, the Lord distinguishes between a physical birth and being born again-

(5) Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of **water and the Spirit** he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

"And the Spirit" – καὶ πνεῦμα

KAI PNEUMA – "And the Spirit"

- Emphasizes the Holy Spirit's role in this spiritual birth.
- The 2nd birth is a spiritual birth because God the Holy Spirit is the Agent in the regenerative work which occurs at faith alone in Christ alone.

"Water" - ὕδωρ

HUDOR – "Water"

"Born" - γεννάω

GENNAO – "Born"

- Aorist tense - Past tense snap shot action.
- Passive voice – The individual is born by someone else.
- Subjunctive mood – Indicates the conditional prerequisite.

The Lord continues to explain this to Nicodemus -

(6) "That which is born of the **flesh** is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Flesh
Physical birth

Flesh
Physical life
Includes an OSN

Spirit
Spiritual birth

Spirit
Spiritual life
Includes a new nature

- A physical birth limits one to physical life with an old sin nature
- But a spiritual birth enables one to have a spiritual life with a new nature
 - A person must be spiritually alive with a new nature through the regenerative work of God the Holy Spirit to enter Messiah's kingdom.

The Lord knows Nicodemus is astonished -

(7) "Do not be **amazed** (θαυμάζω) ...

- "**Astonished**" – he is completely out of his mental equilibrium trying to figure this out.
- This is a new doctrine for Nicodemus - -
 - You're not getting into Heaven because you are a physical descendent of Abraham.
 - You're not getting into Heaven because of a self-righteousness derived from being obedient to the Law.
- Nicodemus wants to know **how**?

Getting into Heaven is not based on our works but the work of Another (Jesus Christ) – based on the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit who provides a spiritual life at the spiritual birth with a new nature to do the will of God.

(7) "Do not be **amazed** (or astonished) **that I said to you, 'You must be born again'** (a 2nd birth of a heavenly origin).

Christ uses nature to illustrate that the **HOW** is not important - -

(8) "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Think about this - -

- Nicodemus has heard John's message "repent because the Kingdom of Heaven on the brink of being instituted".
- He knows about Messiah and His kingdom from his study of the Hebrew Scriptures.
- He knows about the **signs** that were all indicative that Jesus possessed Messianic authority.
- John's message and baptism were offensive to the Pharisees.

So what is going on right now?

- Jesus has retired from the city for the evening.
- They are under the night sky.
- *Jesus is the greatest teacher that has ever walked the face of the earth.*
- He is using the elements to teach Nicodemus about the work of God the Holy Spirit.
 - Jesus Christ, as the second person of the Trinity, controls *all things including the wind* (Col 1:16-17).
 - And as the wind begins to blow, He uses it as a teaching aid - -

(8) "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it..."

- Does Nicodemus hear the sound of the wind under that evening sky with the Lord? Yes!
- Can He feel the effects of the wind? Yes!

...but do not know where it comes from and where it is going...

- Do you know where the wind comes from or where it is going? No!
- Do you **need** to understand those things? No – and that is inherent in the Lord's response to him.

...so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

- So, the Lord uses the evening wind to help Nicodemus understand spiritual regeneration and the spiritual life that comes about as a result of being "born from above".
- Think about the experience of **wind** - -

- Can you hear it? Technically NO
- BUT you can hear what it produces
 - You can hear the leaves rustle.
 - You see its effects – the trees swaying and they bow.
- You can feel the effects of the wind
 - BUT you “do not know where it comes from and where it is going” do you? NO.

➤ So it is with the **Spirit of God.**

- The One who regenerates a person is the One who indwells that person.

How do you know you have been born again?

By the experience inherent in a walk by means of the Spirit.

There are results of what the Spirit was sent to do in your life as your mentor.

Can you hear Him? NO

But you know He is present because of the work He is doing in your life.

POD – The Christian must learn the Spirit’s ways with him in the experiential classroom of walking by the Spirit because His ways are like the wind – they must be experienced to be known.

Note the things that the Holy Spirit was sent into the life of a Christian:

Mentorship

- These things can be suppressed because of negative volition.
- There may be lack of malleability to do God’s will - whatever that will may be.



How do I know I am saved? Rationalistically you can look at **John 3:16** and believe what it says.

Beyond that, is there a testimony to the fact that you have been regenerated? Yes - - it is the Spirit’s work in your life - - the reality of the indwelling presence of God the Holy Spirit.

To walk by means of the Spirit results in experiencing victory over the desires of the flesh.

Victory in the life belongs to God!

"A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23" by Phillip Keller

An excerpt from the chapter "Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me," says: "The staff is also used for guiding sheep. Again and again I have seen a shepherd use his staff to guide his sheep gently into a new path or through some gate or along dangerous, difficult routes....In our walk with God we are told explicitly by Christ Himself that it would be His Spirit who would be sent to guide us and to lead us into all truth (John 16:13). This same gracious Spirit takes the truth of God, the Word of God, and makes it plain to our hearts and minds and spiritual understanding....The Christian life is not just one of subscribing to certain doctrines or believing certain facts. Essential as all of this confidence in the Scriptures may be, there is, as well, the actual reality of experiencing and knowing firsthand the feel of His touch -- the sense of His Spirit upon my spirit. **There is for the true child of God that intimate, subtle, yet magnificent experience of sensing the Comforter at his side.** This is not imagination--it is the genuine, bona-fide reality of everyday life.

There is a calm, quiet repose in the knowledge that He is there to direct even in the most minute details of daily living.

He can be relied on to assist us in every decision and in this there lies tremendous comfort for the Christian."

(8) "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

You know He is present through what He does in your life as your Mentor because of a "non-discursive presence" that is recognized in your soul (*Dan Wallace*, Dallas Theological Seminary).

- You know because you know – a tribute to His bearing witness ministry.
- You do not need to know HOW.
- The rationalistic academician detests such a concept – he always has to know **how** with objectively verifiable evidence.
- Because it is "*experiential*" he rejects it and the illustration our Lord uses in - "**the wind**" - does not provide that for him!

Nicodemus being of this caste said to Jesus - -

(9) Nicodemus said to Him, "How can these things be?"

And it you cannot answer **HOW** – to those who object –

(10) Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?"

- The Lord is communicating here that because Nicodemus *was a teacher of Israel* he should have the capacity to understand this new doctrine.

(11) "Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak (Jesus and His disciples – Andrew, John, Peter, Philip and Nathanael) of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony.

- He has rejected the doctrine of spiritual regeneration being the prerequisite for entrance into the kingdom. How does the Lord know that?
 - He is God – He is omniscient and He knows exactly what Nicodemus is thinking.
- This is so similar to people believing they deserve to go to heaven by being a good person.
 - That is merit based.
 - Self righteousness derived from good works.

- And all our righteous deeds are as filthy rags to God (**Isa 64:6**).
- Good people don't go to heaven - sinners go there based on the merit of another- Jesus Christ.

(12) "If I told you earthly things (birth – wind) and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?"

- Nicodemus has the capacity as every member of the human race to understand earthly things but heavenly things – things that are spiritual - can only be understood as they are revealed by the Spirit.
- Nicodemus has no spiritual capacity because he has not been born again.
- With all his knowledge and his academic training, Nicodemus cannot understand spiritual things.

Only God can provide the means to understand spiritual things!

POD – The unbeliever is incapable of understanding spiritual things.

POD – Therefore stick to the Gospel in your work as ambassadors and rely on the Spirit to convict and illuminate in common grace.

It is a lot better to talk to God about people before you talk to people about God!
L. S. Chafer

All Scriptures quoted are from New American Standard unless otherwise noted.