

PART 2

Nicodemus, a Pharisee and a member of the Jewish ruling council, came to Jesus:

Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "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."

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

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?"

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. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. "Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' "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."

John 3:1-8, NASB

The English words "Truly, truly" are stated four times. Jesus was emphasizing that the new birth is absolutely necessary to become and Chrisitan and go to heaven.

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Truly, truly

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above are translations of the Greek word *amēn*.□

Of Hebrew origin [*âmên*]...properly firm, that is, (figuratively) trustworthy; adverbially surely (often as interjection so be it): - amen, verily

James Strong 1890, (S.v., "Amen")

The New Birth and Water Baptism

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Amēn occurs 151 times in the New Testament (KJV).

The Hebrew word *'āmēn* occurs 30 times in the Old Testament (KJV):

'āmēn means ... sure; abstractly faithfulness; adverbially truly: - Amen, so be it, truth James Strong 1890, S.v., "Amen"

When we say "Amen" in English, it is a triple transliteration, from Hebrew to Koinē Greek to English. It is a very strong word doubled, as Jesus used it. In this passage of scripture, Jesus is telling Nicodemus

—

and us

—that i

t is absolutely necessary to be born again to become a Christian

. Otherwise, we may profess to be a Christian, be baptized, do the things Christians are supposed to do and still not go to Heaven when we die.

"Born again (*gennēthē anōthen*)" has been translated "born again," "born anew" and "born from above," i.e., by the Holy Spirit," which the context dictates. The word *anōthen*

is best translated "born from above."

"Born of water and the Spirit (*gennēthē ex hudatos kai pneumatos*) (NIV) is literally, "born out of water and of Spirit." Note that Nicodemus is talking about natural human birth and says (knows) that it is impossible to enter one's mother's womb and be born a second time. Jesus then replies that one has to be born of water [amniotic fluid] and the Holy Spirit. Both Nicodemus and Jesus are talking about natural human birth. Then, in sequence, Jesus adds that one has to be born into the Kingdom of God by the Holy Spirit.

"Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit" (NIV) indicates that the context has not changed. In order to be saved, the conditions are (1) one has to have been born physically and (2) one must be birthed into the Kingdom by the Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit recreates our human spirit and then indells us. What a wonderful truth that God should condescend to live in us by his Spirit!

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The Greek word *baptizō* (bap-tid'-zo), translated in English, "Baptize" is not found in the scripture quoted above.

Baptizō comes from the verb *baptō*, which means to immerse. However, the word *baptizō* is found in this passage in Matthew:

After we have been born again (saved) we should be baptized in water. Jesus commanded us to be baptized:

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20, NIV

But, "What about the person who is born again and dies before being baptized? *Jesus himself* answers that question by giving the example of a man who died before he could be baptized. Jesus was crucified between two criminals, when

One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "Truly [*amēn*] I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

Luke 23:39-23:43, NIV

Note: Paradise is a temporary place, where people who have died stay for a season, before being transported to either Heaven or Hell. Since Jesus and he would be in the same part of Paradise where the righteous are, the forgiven thief, who also had experienced the new birth, would later be transferred to heaven. This power article may be reproduced and distributed freely, provided that it is not edited or sold.

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