

Jacob's Well

Lesson Title: The Why's of the Gospels—Why the New Birth?



Key Concept: The Gospels' themes are often obscure to us, but God has a reason for including them. The new birth gives us a fresh start in a better realm.



Scriptures:

³Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God." ⁴"What do you mean?" exclaimed Nicodemus. "How can an old man go back into his mother's womb and be born again?" ⁵Jesus replied, "I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. ⁶Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. ⁷So don't be surprised when I say, 'You must be born again.'"

(John 3:3–7 *New Living Translation*)

Context Scriptures: John 16:13; Matthew 10:19–20; Isaiah 8:12; Luke 12:4–5; Luke 21:9; Romans 8:10–11



Lesson Thoughts:

The natural birth establishes us within a family and makes it possible for us to perceive by our senses and operate by our abilities. We can then maneuver in the world around us by involvement and education. This is an experience shared and understood by all of humanity.

The new birth makes available a new level of life, relationship, and perception. Water baptism works to separate us from our previous plane of existence and joins us to a new family, name, and heritage. When this is combined with the Spirit infilling portion of the new birth, we now have available a higher realm of life and perception. Among these changes is the benefit of a guide to truth. With the Spirit's direction we can comprehend things we did not understand, or even distinguish, before. This sometimes gives us glimpses of the future (John 16:13).

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The Spirit within can also speak through us in times of crisis, relieving us of the burden of coming up with a response (Matthew 10:19–20).

Life in this new domain also changes our perception of conditions around us. The prophetic voice of Isaiah warns us not to fear a multitude of conspiracies that may not even exist. The Word also instructs us not to be frightened by situations that others fear (Isaiah 8:12). Jesus spoke of shifting our viewpoint of death (Luke 12:4–5). Even wars and other tumults are to be understood differently by those who are reborn into the household of faith. Those who are born only of the flesh will fuss and feud and fight, even warring over things that are already passing away. The twice born can see that wars will happen in a world run by the once born, but strifes are not the sign of an immediate end of it all (Luke 21:9).

This is not the whole list of changes brought by the new birth, but one more is of great import. Though death reigns over those of natural birth because of sin, the Spirit we receive in the new birth is the way we receive life after death, as demonstrated by the resurrection of Jesus (Romans 8:10–11). The beauty is that we not only *must* be born again, but *get* to be born again as we experience stepping into a new realm of existence.

**Discussion Questions:**

- 1) What are some other characteristics of having been born again?
- 2) What problems have your changed viewpoint caused you?
- 3) What life decisions have you made differently because you were born again?
- 4) What positives have occurred because you were born again?

Next Lesson: Why Eternal Life?

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Notes and Reflections

- 1) Make a list and contemplate the situations in the Old Testament when the firstborn did not receive the expected inheritance and position of leadership owed the firstborn.

- 2) Where in the New Testament do we find references to these incidents as spiritual symbols? Hint: those born after the flesh vs. those born after the Spirit.

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Notes and Reflections, cont.