



Middle School & High School Sunday School Lesson



September 20, 2020



What Do You Mean, “Born Again”?

Lesson 3

Bible Point:

The greatest miracle of all is when a person is born again according to the New Testament plan of salvation: repentance, water baptism in the name of Jesus, and the infilling of the Holy Ghost.

Scripture

John 3:1-8, Acts 2:1-4&38-41

Discussion



- 1.** What does the phrase “born again” mean to you?
- 2.** Why do you think we use this phrase?
- 3.** Can you be born again without following Acts 2:38? Why or Why not?
- 4.** Have you been born again? If so, what was the experience like for you?



Born Again?

- The terminology “born again” has become so commonplace in Christian circles today that many people do not even understand how this term was first used. Let’s take a few moments to understand where this phrase originated before we unpack what it means.



- Jesus had a conversation with a member of the Jewish ruling body. His name was Nicodemus. The conversation was very private; notice Nicodemus approached Jesus by night to discuss exactly how His ministry fit into what Nicodemus thought he already knew about the Lord. Let’s listen in to what was said that night.

Jesus Teaches Nicodemus



Read John 3:1–3.

- Notice what Nicodemus said to Jesus: Nicodemus acknowledged Jesus came from God, but apparently, he couldn't figure out why. He didn't really ask a question, but Jesus responded by answering the question that was in Nicodemus's heart.
- **Jesus told Nicodemus he must be born again, or he would not see the kingdom of Heaven.**
- The reaction by Nicodemus seems a little humorous to us today because most people have heard about being a "born-again Christian," but keep in mind, Nicodemus had never heard that expression before.

Read John 3:4.

- Have you ever known people who take everything they hear literally? Nicodemus was obviously that type of person. He thought Jesus meant he would have to return to his mother's womb and be born a second time.
- We all understand that would be impossible.
- Listen as Jesus explained to Nicodemus that the second birth, He was speaking of is a spiritual second birth.

Second Birth?

Read John 3:5-6

- In this answer Jesus got even more specific. He explained that when He said a person must be born again, He was talking about a birth that had two distinct features: the birth of the water and the birth of the Spirit.
- Jesus then clarified to Nicodemus that a physical birth cannot earn an entrance into the kingdom of Heaven, but a spiritual rebirth is required.
- This answer would have been shocking to a Jew like Nicodemus who had been raised being told he was a part of God's chosen people and by his natural birth was guaranteed the favor of God. Jesus came along and explained that being born a Jew would not even allow him to see the kingdom of Heaven unless He was born again of water and of Spirit.
- I can only imagine the look on Nicodemus's face when he heard those words, and apparently, this detail was not missed by Jesus; listen to the next thing Jesus said.

The Wind . . .



Read John 3:7–8.

- Jesus began with what Nicodemus understood: the wind. Jesus related that to what Nicodemus was having difficulty understanding: the new birth.
- We must pay attention to this comparison.
 - Jesus explained that the wind blows wherever it chooses. We cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going next, but we know the wind is present because we hear the sound of the wind.
 - At the end of verse eight, Jesus explained, “So is every one that is born of the Spirit.”
 - That means we cannot tell where the Spirit of God comes from or where it will go next, but every time someone is born of the Spirit, we can hear the sound of it.
 - Jesus did not say “sometimes” people are born of the Spirit, nor did He say only certain types of people are born of the Spirit. **Jesus said everyone born of the Spirit, like the wind, can be identified by the sound that is heard.**

Jesus' Discussion with Nicodemus . . .



Let's take a moment to review what Jesus told Nicodemus.

- Physical birth is not enough to obtain entrance into the kingdom of Heaven; that requires a spiritual rebirth.
- This spiritual rebirth must involve both the birth of water and the birth of the Spirit.
- Every time a person is born of the Spirit, there will be a sound associated with that experience.

What Does the Spirit Sound Like?



The next obvious question to ask is: **Exactly what does the birth of the Spirit sound like? The answer is found in the Book of Acts.**

Read Acts 2:1–4.

- In this passage, there were several amazing occurrences, but only two of them were sounds. **There was the sound of a rushing, mighty wind, and there was the sound of people speaking in tongues.**
- The word *tongue* does not only refer to the part inside our mouths that enables us to speak; it also refers to the language used to communicate. Verse four says when they were filled with the Holy Ghost, they spoke in “other tongues,” meaning languages they had never spoken or learned before. What made this speech so miraculous was “the Spirit gave them utterance,” or the ability to speak.
- Let’s examine a few more examples of people being born again and see what sound we hear every time someone is born of the Spirit, just like Jesus said.



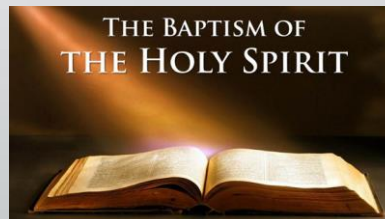
Cornelius Receives the Holy Ghost

Read Acts 10:1–6.



Notice how religious Cornelius was: he gave money to the poor and prayed all the time. However, God had more for him to do and sent an angel to make sure Cornelius was able to find the right preacher.

After all, Cornelius would be the first Gentile to receive the Holy Ghost, and Jesus had given Peter the keys to the kingdom of Heaven. Peter would be the perfect person to tell Cornelius what he ought to do. Listen to what happened when Peter showed up.



More People Receive the Holy Ghost

Read Acts 10:34–46.

- What an amazing event: while Peter was standing in Cornelius's house speaking, the Holy Ghost fell and baptized everyone listening.
- The Jewish people who came along with Peter were astonished that God had given a group of Gentiles the Holy Ghost.
- How did they know the Gentiles had received the Holy Ghost? Was there the sound of a rushing, mighty wind?
- Verse 46 says, "They heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God."

Read Acts 19:1-6

- Our next record can be found in the ministry of the apostle Paul.
- Notice again that while there is no mention of a rushing, mighty wind, the Bible clearly explains that when these followers of John the Baptist received the Holy Ghost, the sound that served as the biblical sign of the birth of the Spirit was speaking in tongues.

Read Isaiah 9:6 and reread Acts 2:38-39.

- The promise of the Holy Spirit is unto you.



What About the Birth of the Water?

Jesus said we must be born again of both the water and of the Spirit.

Looking back at these three stories from Acts, we see that each time these people were born again, both Spirit birth and water birth occurred.

Read Acts 2:38–41

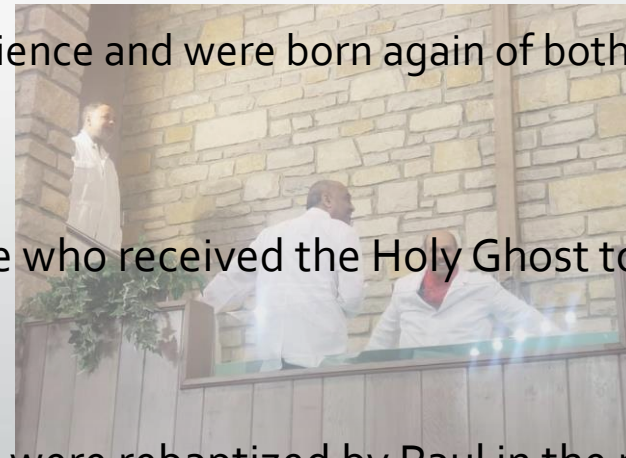
- Peter preached three components to being born again: repentance, baptism in Jesus' name, and receiving the Holy Ghost.
- Peter said the opportunity for being born again was for everyone the Lord called, even those not present on that day.
- Three thousand people received that experience and were born again of both water and the Spirit in that passage.

Read Acts 10:46–48.

- Peter **commanded** (not suggested) those who received the Holy Ghost to be baptized in the "name of the Lord."

Review Acts 19:3–5.

- Those baptized by John unto repentance were rebaptized by Paul in the name of Jesus.



What Do You Believe?

Read Philippians 2:12–13.

- Each person has both the opportunity and responsibility to take the steps necessary to be born again.

Read John 12:48.

- Our role is not to judge anyone. The words of Jesus, the one who said we must be born again, will judge us all.

Read John 3:16.

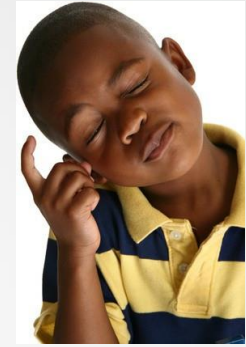
- Belief is essential to salvation, but it is not the only thing required of us.

Read John 3:5.

- Being born of water and Spirit is how we fulfil all Jesus said we must do to begin our walk with Him.



Born Again . . .



“Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.” (John 3:7).

These were Jesus’ words to Nicodemus. If you think about it, it makes sense that we need to be born gain. How many times have you tried to do the right thing, but you didn’t? How many times have you wanted to break free from a specific sin, but you could not find a way to do it? We need the power of the Holy Spirit to be what we ought to be. We need to be completely born again to walk righteously before God. It just makes sense that we need God’s help to be like Him.

In our lesson today we saw that everyone needs to be born again.

Have you been baptized in Jesus’ name and received the Holy Spirit?

If not, why not?

If so, how can you be bolder about sharing your experience with others?

