

## **1018 Born again and how Satan treats us**

**(Verses refer to those in NASB unless otherwise specified, and by Whirlwind.)**

**Today we'll look at the event of Nicodemus' coming to Jesus by night and how they talked about being born again. From the verses, we can see how to be born again and what the feeling of being born again is. Although at that time Nicodemus didn't understand the meaning of being born again, we can see from other verses that he finally became a disciple of Jesus. Finally, after being born again, we need to walk in the way of sanctification to be conformed to the image of Jesus. From the verses, we can see why the servants of Satan absolutely want to tempt us unceasingly on not only spiritual things, but also earthly things.**

**Nicodemus saw Jesus at night as recorded in John 3:1-2, "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." Apparently, he at that time believed that God was with Jesus. To answer his question in John 3:3-4, it says, "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?" We can see that He talked about spiritual things and Nicodemus talked about things on earth.**

**Then in John 3:9, "Nicodemus said to Him, "How can these things be?" "Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things. Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony. If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things." (John 3:10-12) We can see that Jesus is from heaven, so He can say heavenly things. Now He is only talking about things on earth as He said in John 3:13-15, "No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life."**

**Just like what said in John 3:5-6, we on earth have to be born again in order to go to heaven, "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." We can see that born again has to be born of water and the Holy Spirit. Talking about baptized by water, Jesus Himself set an example for us as in Mark 1:10, "Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him." Apparently, He was emerged by water. He also mentioned baptism in the great commission of Matthew 28:19, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." The disciples also know the necessity of baptism as the following two verses show. In Acts 10:47, it says, "Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?" In Acts 8:38, it says, "And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him."**

However, it is not the law to obey, because in Luke 23:43 says, "And He said to him (one of the criminals), "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.'" The criminal had no chance to be baptized, but Jesus said clearly that he would enter Paradise. Another example is when some patients are too sick to be submerged into the water; do they have to be submerged to be baptized? The important thing is to testify to others that I belong to Jesus from now on, not the format of the baptism. But in normal conditions, baptism is absolutely necessary.

Then what is the feeling of being born again? It is said clearly in John 3:7-8, "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." Hence, we cannot really feel about being born again. We must believe, believe what the Bible says in faith, "For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." (Colossians 1:13-14) We have to abide in Jesus, and reside always in the kingdom of His beloved Son.

The reason for The Word becoming flesh and giving us the Holy Spirit is due to the Agape love. This is said clearly in John 3:16-18, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." And we may have life abundantly like in John 10:10, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." He says next in John 3:19-21, "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God." Truly, we must believe, whatever we can do is because we depend upon God.

The Bible mentioned Nicodemus only in other two places. In John 7:50-51, it says, "Nicodemus (he who came to Him before, being one of them) said to them, "Our Law does not judge a man unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?"" We can see that he positively inclined towards Jesus but cannot say it openly. Finally in John 19:39-40, he used actions to express openly that he was a disciple of Jesus after His death, "Nicodemus, who had first come to Him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight. So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews."

At last, we examine from verses how the enemy Satan will treat us. After Jesus was baptized, "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness." (Luke 4:1) Next the Gospel of Luke recorded only three tests Jesus encountered. And in Luke 4:13, it says, "When the devil had finished every

temptation, he left Him until an opportune time." So, the Satan only "temporarily" left Jesus alone. In Hebrews 4:15, it says, "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin." Therefore, we can see that Satan tries everything to tempt Jesus without succeeding. The enemy Satan treats Jesus with unceasing temptation just like 1 Peter 5:8 says, "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." So, we have to be of sober spirit and pray all the time. We cannot give up anytime.

What we want to do is to be conformed to the image of Jesus like what said in Romans 8:29, "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren." In John 13:16, it says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him." And He emphasized, "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also." (John 15:20) Therefore, we have to remember that the enemy Satan will treat us the same way he treated Jesus, with unceasing temptation. The servants of Satan will put every effort to make us confused on not only spiritual things but also earthly things. We have to pray all the time.

Our conclusion is very simple. Because of this, we have to abide in Jesus. Why? The Bible says this is the only way. In Hebrews 2:6-8, it says, "But one has testified somewhere, saying, 'What is man, that You remember him? Or the son of man, that You are concerned about him?' You have made him for a little while lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, and have appointed him over the works of Your hands; You have put all things in subjection under his feet." ... "Satan is a fallen angel. We are a little lower than him since creation. In Hebrews 2:8-9, it says, "...For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him. But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone." Just like what says in John 16:33, "...In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." Through Jesus' nailing on the cross, He has overcome the world. He is the only one who has overcome the world. If we want to overcome the world, how can we not abide in Jesus?