

Born of Water

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When Nicodemus asked the Lord, How can a man be born again when he is old? Jesus replied, *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of 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.* (John 3:5-6).

I do not have a mind to give my views on this text at this time but rather I wish to call the readers attention to the words born of water and deal briefly with the belief some hold that this refers to a person being baptized in order to be born of the Spirit. For the sake of brevity I will confine my remarks mostly to the evidences found in the context here against that theory.

First of all Jesus told Nicodemus that, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. Therefore, if it is true that a person must be baptized in order to be born again then an un-baptized person cannot see the Kingdom of God. This in turn would necessitate the conclusion that a person would have to be baptized into something he could not see in order that he might see it. But if he cannot use what he is being baptized into, how can he know he wants to be baptized into it? Certainly not an arrangement we could attribute to One so great and wise as the God of heaven.

Would it not be far better for the person to first see it, desire a part in it, and then be baptized into it out of love for it? I think so. And thus it is. This is the version of it which we find in the world of God. He that believeth and then is baptized is the scriptural order (Mark 16;16). Not He that is baptized will become a believer as a result of being born again and thereby being able to see what it was he was baptized into.

Also from the context we gather that the new birth is comparable to the wind blowing where it listeth or pleaseth. *Thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.* How then could the new birth take place in the act of baptism and fit, or conform to, such a comparison as this? If it were a known fact that the new birth takes place in the act of baptism, could we not then tell exactly when it would occur? Would we not then limit the Spirit as to when He could give spiritual birth? How then could that birth be compared to the wind blowing where it listeth?

Those who have eyes to see know the answer to these questions. The new birth does not take place in the act of baptism. This would necessitate the conclusion that Jesus Himself had to be born of the Spirit from death in sins.

No! The new birth must precede baptism, for our being baptized is said to be *the answer of a good conscience toward God*. And how could one who was void of the Spirit have a good conscience toward God? We know he could not. This is very plain.

We know he could not. Therefore, the expression, Born of water cannot refer to baptism. The difficulties and contradictions involved in such an interpretation are momentous. -- Elder Ralph Harris