

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## A Nicodemus Moment

(Jerry Fite)

**N**icodemus was bewildered over Jesus' statements demanding a new birth in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. New birth to Nicodemus was constrained by the physical: *“How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?”* (John 3:4). New birth to Jesus centered upon the spiritual: *“That which is born of the Spirit is spirit”* (John 3:6).

In order to get Nicodemus to focus upon the reality of the unseen spiritual part of himself, Jesus gives the following example: *“the wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, or whether it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit”* (John 3:8). While we can hear and see the effects of the wind, with its thunderous howl as it bends trees, or with its melodious whisper as it gently parts the blades of grass, we cannot see the wind itself. But we do not ignore that the wind itself is an unseen reality, even though things about it may not be discernable.

Jesus says, *“...so is everyone that is born of the Spirit.”* Jesus does not say the operations of the Holy Spirit are unfathomable,

or the process of the new birth is mysterious. He says so “is everyone”. Within each person is the spirit or soul making up the inward man. It is the part of man that must be born again, if he or she is to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Emptiness drives some among the rich and famous to face the reality of their spiritual essence. Money, fame and power to not satisfy. Grasping the brass ring of early success leaves many, like actor Kirk Cameron, empty and bewildered. As novelist Anne Lamott realizes, finishing the next praise-giving novel *“does not fill up the Swiss cheese holes in you...that is an inside job.”* Inwardly empty, the rich and famous turn to New Age gimmicks to get in touch with their higher self, or immerse themselves in the various techniques of cultic Scientology, or turn to denominational evangelical Christianity to find Christ.

Finding Jesus through the unfiltered message of the New Testament is the beginning in meeting the needs of our spirit. He is the only One who can make us one again with God. The Lord accomplishes this through “reconciliation”. *“And not only so, but*

*we rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation”* (Romans 5:11). God's judicial wrath is satisfied through the blood of Christ: *“Whom God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood...”* (Romans 3:25). We can be one again with God, the Father of our spirits. But such spiritual reconciliation can only be enjoyed through Jesus.

When we respond to the saving message of the gospel of Christ through baptism, we enjoy the spiritual new birth, Jesus said we must *“be born of water and Spirit”*. The new birth via the “Spirit” is accomplished through hearing the message of reconciliation in Christ. The new birth via “water” is accomplished through the hearer submitting to baptism. It is in baptism where people experience the *“washing of regeneration”* (Titus 3:5), and begin to walk *“in newness of life”* (Romans 6:4).

Keep focusing upon your unseen inward man. There is the spiritual part of you that must be born again. Keep focusing upon your spiritual reality, and satisfy it with Jesus and His Word.