



The Mar Thoma Church
Diocese of North America & Europe
Christian Education Forum

Lenten Meditations

RENEWAL: NEW BIRTH, NEW LIFE

John. 3:1-21

Born from Above

Here we see Nicodemus, a Pharisee of the Jewish ruling council, coming to Jesus to find out about Jesus, His message, and His relationship to God. In verse 3, Jesus says, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again". Nicodemus takes what Jesus is saying literally and questions how someone can be born again when they are old. Jesus reminds Nicodemus that unless he is reborn from above, he will not see the kingdom of God. Jesus tells him that he is not even going to get into heaven as he is. A new birth, a new life is required.

"Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.- John 3: 5-6)

Invisible experience

Jesus compares the saving work of God through His Spirit to the working of the wind. As it is interpreted in Verse 8, the effects of the wind can be seen, but the wind itself is not seen. Neither can the wind be controlled. The wind goes where it wishes and does what it will. We, as human beings, do not control the wind. However, the Spirit's saving work is like this. The Spirit goes about His life-giving work, and no one controls Him. No one, by his own works, or striving, or manipulation can direct the Spirit in His work. But when the Spirit brings about the new birth, the effects are evident. As it says in Verse 17, "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him". Through this new spiritual birth, we are saved through him. Through him we are no longer condemned to sin, but reborn in the spirit to be a witness for his salvation. In this sense, neither Nicodemus nor anyone else can save themselves. Salvation is the sovereign work of God, accomplished by the Holy Spirit.

For Nicodemus this lesson would have been quite a shock; for the first time he became aware of the necessity of consistency between faith and deed. And what may have been even more shocking to him – and shocking even to us – is that true faith does not mean doing good deeds to bring glory to ourselves, but to God.

PRAYER: Heavenly father, during this Lent Season, may our hearts may be transformed and renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Ms. Liza George