

**THE THREE MUSTS OF JOHN 3**  
**JOHN 3:7, 14, 30**

**Introduction**

There are some things in which we do not have any choice. We had no choice in our natural birth. We had no choice concerning what family we would be born into. We had no choice about the color of our eyes, hair, how tall we might be, and so forth.

In the things concerning our eternal destiny, in the things concerning our relationship to God, we certainly do have choices. The choices that I want to share with you today ARE NOT optional; they ARE NOT a matter of "should"; they are a matter of "MUST."

**I. THE SINNER'S MUST. (Vs 7)**

Jesus said to Nicodemus,  
*"Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye MUST be born again."*

Could I tell you that the term, "*born again*" has become used more frequently in our society, but often it is not properly understood by those who use it!

I remember back in the 1970's when Jimmy Carter was elected as our President [I hope nobody is still holding that against the state of Georgia]. There was a resurgence in the public use of the term "*born again*" because the President frequently referred to himself as a "*born again Christian*." In fact, many in his cabinet used the term also.

However, when someone of the press would ask them about the meaning of "*being born again*," most of them could not give a sensible answer as to its meaning.

In fact, there are many Church members even today who cannot give a good answer as to the meaning when asked about what it means to be "*born again*."

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Let us see what the Bible, has to say about the New Birth and settle forever the meaning of that phrase "*Ye MUST be Born Again*."

**A. Jesus Said That Every Person MUST Be Born Again In Order To SEE The Kingdom of God! (Vs 3)**

To SEE the Kingdom means, to understand or to comprehend the kingdom of God!

Without the new birth, the lost man is lost in sin and cannot see.

*2 Corinthians 4:4—"In whom the god of this world (Satan) hath blinded the minds of them that believe not lest the light of the Glorious Gospel of Christ who is the image of God should shine unto them."*

**B. Jesus Said That Every Person MUST be born again in order to ENTER the Kingdom of God. (vs 5)**

The Kingdom of God is not an earthly Kingdom as we think of kingdoms.

*Romans 14:17—"For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, joy and peace in the Holy Ghost."*

**First, let's look on the negative side; what the new birth is NOT.**

**1. The New Birth Is Not RELIGION!**

Many have the idea that if they join some local Church, or group and begin attending, that is an outward sign that they have been "*born again*."

Wrong! This is fine in it's proper place, but becoming "*religious*" is NOT being Born Again. There are many folks who attend Church services somewhere (some even faithfully) who have never been born again.

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There are some religious groups that hold to the idea that the phrase "*born of water, and of the Spirit*" (vs 5) speaks of water baptism. (i.e. They believe that water baptism is a must in order to be born again.)

Listen, that is a wrong idea! Water baptism never saved a single soul! Born of water is not speaking of baptism but of the physical birth!

Note Nicodemus' question in verse 4 that Jesus was responding to!

Then note Jesus answer in verse 5 and his continuing clarification of verse 5 by what he says in verse 6!

The new birth is a Spiritual birth and can be produced by Spiritual means only.

The Spirit, vs 6, is the Holy Spirit.  
*John 6:63—"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."*

The flesh CANNOT produce the Spiritual! When a lost sinner hears the Word of God, the Holy Spirit takes that Word and enlightens the sinner as to his need and points him to Christ! When that lost sinner believes with all his heart, the Holy Spirit then births that lost sinner into the family of God! Then and only then, he/she, is a member of God's family!

RELIGION and works of religion have nothing to do with it. Jesus was speaking to a very RELIGIOUS man in this text. Nicodemus was a Pharisee—a very religious man.

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If our Salvation is determined by water baptism, why didn't our Lord mention water baptism here?

This would have been the proper place. But, He said nothing about baptism.

No, salvation is by faith alone in the Author and finisher of our Salvation, who was standing before Nicodemus that night.

**2. The New Birth Is Not REFORMATION!**

The New Birth is NOT reforming, quitting, stopping, starting, doing, going, or whatever. All the required work is already done! Jesus did it!

If we try to reform, and do better, or do our best in order to be saved, that only leads to frustration!

So-many people come to the place in their life where they know their life is a mess so they vow to turn over a "*new leaf*."

They may begin attending Church somewhere and may begin to try to reform their lives. They try to stop this, or that, and try doing good things. Now that's all very good, in it's place—but it won't bring salvation!

Reformation without regeneration ends in frustration! Like baptism, reformation never saved a soul.

*Religion...Reformation...*

**3. The New Birth Is Not About Our Personal RIGHTEOUSNESS!**

The Bible says that all the personal righteousness that we can muster amounts to a pile of filthy rags.

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*Isaiah 64:6—“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”*

Our personal righteousness does not measure up to God’s holy standard of righteousness, but Jesus Christ’s righteousness does!

Remember now, Jesus was talking to a very “righteous,” (humanly speaking) man. Nicodemus was a Pharisee!

But listen to what Jesus said in *Matthew 5:20*:  
*“Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of Heaven.”*

The righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees was an outward only (or we could say “surface only”). Their hearts were not right with God! They depended on what they could do for themselves.

Jesus rebuked the scribes and Pharisees, in *Matthew 23:25-26*—*“Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter that the outside of them may be clean also.”*

Religion, Reformation, personal Righteousness—none of these can reach into the heart of a lost sinner and transform that sinner into a Child of God!

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We are not to trust our Works, our Church membership, or our Baptism! We are to trust in Christ alone and His Righteousness!

**Next, let’s look on the positive side; what the new birth IS!**

**1. The New Birth is MYSTERIOUS. (vs 8)**

Who can explain it? Jesus said it is like the wind!

We can hear the wind blowing, but we can’t tell from that where the wind came from or where it is going!

*“So is everyone that is born of the Spirit.” (vs8)*

In the same way, we can see the effect of a life that has been transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit even though we can’t understand the working of the Spirit!

Don’t try to figure it all out, because you can’t!

**2. The New Birth is MIRACULOUS. (vs 9ff)**

It is not just a theory, but a reality! If you are a sinner, without Christ, this is your MUST! This is the MUST choice you MUST make! *“Ye MUST be born again!”*

The New Birth is a reality for you the moment you receive Christ, by faith. *1 John 1:12* says,  
*“But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name.”*

Christ alone can save you and make life worth living! I trust that if you haven’t already, you will call upon the LORD, TODAY! You can begin TODAY to live FOREVER!

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**II. THE SAVIOUR'S MUST. (Vs 14)**

*"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so MUST the Son of man be lifted up."*

The term *"lifted up,"* has a different meaning than that which is used in many places today.

To say, *"We are to lift up Jesus"* is not exactly the right terminology. To *"lift Him up"* is to nail Him to a Cross.

In *John 8:28—"Jesus said unto them, when ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then ye shall know that I am He...."*

Look at **John 12:32-34**.

All of these terms, *"Lifted up,"* have the same meaning. They each refer to the Cross of Calvary where Jesus was crucified for our sin.

Christ came to do that which was ordained in Eternity past; that is, to give His life as the only sacrifice for Sin.

*1 Peter 1:18-20—"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold,...But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot...Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world. "*

*Revelation 13:8—"...the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."*

Satan knew that Jesus was The Christ, and did his best to keep Him from the cross. But for this purpose He came and NOTHING could prevent the great event of the cross!

Christ could not have changed His mind. The cross was settled in eternity past. He MUST be lifted up!

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The Lord Jesus referred to an Old Testament example found in Numbers 21:5-8. In that text, the Israelites had sinned in their murmuring and complaining. God sent serpents among the people and much people of Israel died.

When the people confessed their sin, God told Moses to make a serpent of brass and set it high upon a pole. If a serpent had bitten any man, if that man would look on that brazen serpent, he would not die.

That was the only cure for their sin. May I say unto you that upon a hill called Calvary, there was a Saviour, crucified, bearing our sin and judgment. He is God's only cure for the sin of the world! He was lifted high on a cross! It was done according to the eternal plan of God! The Message of the Cross is LOOK AND LIVE!

But the debate continues today... *"Why did Jesus come to this earth?"* Some will say, *"To give us an example as to how we should live."* Now, He most certainly was that; and so much more. But we are not saved by following His example, or trying to walk in His steps!

And others will say, *"He came to start a new religion. Judaism was dead, something new was needed "* He did not come to start a building program, or an educational system or a new religion! He came to earth to be nailed to the cross! This was THE SAVIOUR'S MUST!

**III. THE SERVANT'S MUST. (Vs 30)**

*"He MUST increase, I MUST decrease."*

These are the words of John, the Baptist. He had the attention of the crowd, but John knew that he must step aside. (**John 1:15-17**)

Losing our life in Christ is the way to find life. (**Luke 9:23-24**)

We MUST decrease, Christ MUST increase. This is the key to happy, successful Christian living.

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Jesus said, *"If any man will come after me, let him DENY HIMSELF and take up his cross and follow me."* Self denial is the key to living the Christ life! This is the reason why there are so many "drop outs" along the way.

Jesus prayed to His Heavenly Father, *"Not my will, but Thine be done."* We cannot offer God anything less.

The key to the Apostle Paul's Great life was the word *"committed"*!  
*2 Timothy 1:12—"For I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have COMMITTED unto Him against that day."*

Paul knew that Christ must increase in his life and that he had to decrease!

**A. Paul's life was committed to God's WILL!**

*"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6)*

Jesus said it this way in *Matthew 5:33:*

*"Seek ye FIRST the kingdom of God and His Righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you."*

**B. Paul's life was committed to God's WORK!**

God's Work is carrying out the Great Commission!

Getting the message of the Cross to the nations of the world is the greatest work in all the world! Paul committed his life to that work—God's Work!

**C. Paul's life was committed to God's WORD!**

His message to Timothy in *2 Timothy 4:2-5* was for him to

*"Preach the WORD, be instant in season, out of season.*

*Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*

*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine but after their own lusts, shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.*

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*And they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, do the work of an evangelist."*

Stay true to the WORD of God!

The winds of strange doctrines are blowing from every direction today. We must stay with that which has brought us this far and will take us home!

**Conclusion**

So we've seen three "Musts" in John 3 this morning.

The SINNER'S Must; the New Birth.

The SAVIOUR'S Must; The Cross.

The SERVANT'S Must; To die to self.

Not optional, but MUST!