

# NEW TESTAMENT

## Lesson 5: "Born Again" (John 3-4)



- Jesus teaches Nicodemus that all must be born of water and the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God.
- Jesus teaches a Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well.

# GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASS

A study of this lesson will help us understand that to receive everlasting life, we must be "born again" and continue to follow Jesus Christ.

## Introduction



Imagine an indoor plant. Consider what happens to the plant if you fail to water it regularly. Then consider what happens to you if you don't drink enough water on a regular basis. Just as you would die without physical water, you would die spiritually if you did not receive spiritual water. This lesson presents Jesus' teachings about being born of the water and the Spirit and about the living water he offers.

Jesus teaches Nicodemus that all must be born of water and the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God. (John 3:1-22)



Nicodemus was a leader in the Jewish community. He came to Jesus knowing that Jesus was "a teacher come from God" (John 3:2).

**John 3:5** Jesus taught Nicodemus that he must be baptized to enter the kingdom of God.

Baptism is a symbol of rebirth because being immersed in water symbolizes the death or burial of our past sins; therefore, when we rise out of the water, we are reborn—starting a new life.

Being "born ... of the Spirit" follows as we receive the gift of the Holy Ghost and then actually receive the Holy Ghost as a cleansing influence and constant companion.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught that "*Church members are not born again by the mere fact of baptism alone*" (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 3 vols.

[1966-73], 1:142).

Besides being baptized and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, the following are necessary in becoming born again:

- **John 3:16, 18** Believing in Jesus Christ

NEXT WEEK:

#6 "They Straightway Left Their Nets"

(Luke 4:14-32; Luke 5; Luke 6:12-16; Matthew 10)

- **Mosiah 5:1-7** Experiencing “a mighty change in ... our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually” (verse 2; see also Alma 5:12-14, 26)
- **Mosiah 27:25-26**
  - Being “changed from [a] carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness”....
  - Becoming “[God’s] sons and daughters” (see also Mosiah 5:7).
  - Becoming “new creatures”

**Alma 5:14-35** Having “the image of God engraven upon [our] countenances” (verse 19, see 14 also)

**Alma 22:15-18** - Repenting so our “garments [are] purified until they are cleansed from all stain, through the blood of [Christ]” (Alma 5:21; see also Alma 5:19, 33-34; Alma 22:18)

**Elder McConkie** also taught that being born again “*doesn’t happen in an instant. [It] is a process*” (“*Jesus Christ and Him Crucified*,” in 1976 Devotional Speeches of the Year, 399).

**2 Nephi 31:19-20** gives us guidance on what we can do to continue this

process of rebirth throughout our lives. According to the scripture, we must:

- Maintain unshaken faith in Christ
- Press forward in Christ like behavior
- Have a perfect brightness of hope
- Possess a love of God and all men
- Feast upon the word of Christ
- Endure to the end

We must also consider how we might overcome discouragement or setbacks in our spiritual progress.

Think about what changes you might have observed in yourself or someone else during the process of becoming born again.

**John 3:14-18** teaches truths about the Savior’s mission that are related to his commandment that we be born again.

- The Savior’s atonement provided the way for us to be born again
- To benefit fully from the Atonement, we must believe in the Savior
- Eternal life is possible as our ultimate reward
- The atonement was a gift from

our Heavenly Father

- Christ came to save, not to condemn
- If we choose not to believe, we condemn ourselves

**John 3:19-21** Jesus used the concepts of light and darkness to teach Nicodemus. He taught that those who choose evil like to keep their deeds hidden so that they can avoid being reproved for their wickedness, so they appreciate darkness that cloaks them. On the other hand, those who follow the commandments seek the light so that their deeds glorify God and inspire others.

As we look around us, we see that some choose darkness over light, while we maintain the ability to love the light and shun darkness. Think about what helps us choose the light.

**D&C 50:24; 88:67** remind us of the promises the Lord has made to those who come to the light. We are promised in Section 50 that as we receive light, we can receive more light and it will grow brighter and brighter. In Section 88, we are promised that we can be filled with light and comprehend all things.

## Jesus teaches a Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well. (John 4:1-42)

While Jesus and his disciples were traveling from Judea to Galilee, they stopped to rest at Jacob’s Well in Samaria. While Jesus sat by the well, a Samaritan woman came to draw water.

**John 4:9** records that while the Jews had “no dealings with the Samaritans” and usually avoided Samaria when traveling, Jesus deliberately went through Samaria—drawing attention to his attitude about any person or group considered inferior. We can apply his example as we deal with our modern-day “Samaritans”.

**John 4:9, 11-12, 15, 19, 25** show how the Samaritan woman made it easier for Jesus to teach her by being humble, desiring to know more, and believing his words. Following her example, we should develop those attributes to become more receptive to the Savior’s teachings.

The Samaritan woman changed as Jesus spoke to her and Jesus helped bring about that change. He taught her at her level of understanding, he testified of himself, he used the symbol of water powerfully, and he showed compassion. Obviously, we can follow his example as we teach

others if we are guided and inspired by the Spirit as we teach the gospel.

**John 4:10** Jesus told the Samaritan woman that he could give her “living water”.

After reviewing **1 Nephi 11:25** and **D&C 63:23** we see that “living water” means:

- the doctrines of the gospel
- the love of God
- the Atonement

Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

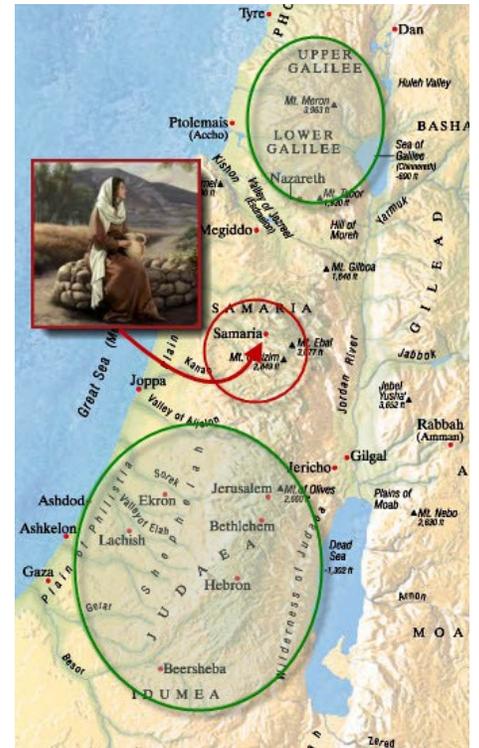
*"Living water is the words of eternal life, the message of salvation, the truths about God and his kingdom; it is the doctrines of the gospel. Those who thirst are invited to come unto Christ and drink. Where there are prophets of God, there will be found rivers of living water, wells filled with eternal truths, springs bubbling forth their life-giving draughts that save from spiritual death."*

(Mortal Messiah, 1:497)

We obtain living water when we study the scriptures, hearken to the living prophets, receive answers to our prayers, and when we worship and perform service in the temples. Pause a moment—think about how living water blesses you.

**John 4:7, 28-29** The Samaritan woman had come to the well for water. However, after she spoke with Jesus, she left her pitcher at the well and went to tell others about the experience. Think about how well you follow her example.

**John 4:39-42** Other people were blessed because of the faith of the Samaritan woman. Because of her testimony, many went to hear the Savior for themselves and asked him to stay with them for awhile. During two days of teaching, he converted many.



## Conclusion

As members of the Church, we have done as the Lord taught Nicodemus and have been born again. To be born again is not so much an event as it is a process. We should continually seek to renew ourselves, to be reborn time and time again as we worship and partake of the sacrament on a weekly basis, as we strive to keep the commandments, and as we frequently go to the well of living water. As we do so, we will be blessed with peace in this life and eternal joy in the life to come.

### Gospel Doctrine Notebook

- Record your thoughts on Jesus' encounters with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman.
- What principles from these stories can you apply in your life?