

John 3:1-15

1. What do people think of when they hear the term "born-again Christian"? Would you ever self-identify as a "born-again Christian"? Why or Why not?

Read John 3:1-15

2. Our understanding of this passage is deepened by understanding who it is that Nicodemus is. From the details of the passage who is Nicodemus?
3. What has Nicodemus seen in Jesus?
4. The accepted theological framework was that if you were a Jew you were guaranteed a place in the coming kingdom of God. What is Jesus' response to that conviction? How is this response heightened in light of who Nicodemus is?
5. Jesus expects that Nicodemus as *the* teacher of Israel should understand what he is talking about. The most likely reference here is Ezekiel 36:25-27. How does this passage help us understand what it is to be born again, to be born of water and the Spirit? How is this accomplished in the work of Jesus?

6. The way we come to be born again is to see Jesus lifted up on the cross, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert. Take a look at the original story from Numbers 21:5-8. What do you make of the comparison between Jesus and the snake being lifted up? What is Jesus trying to tell us by this comparison?

7. (8) The new birth is likened to the wind. We don't know where it is coming from or where it is going, but you can feel, see, hear the results. What are the results of the new birth?

8. Although we don't have an explicit reference we can make inference that Nicodemus received new birth. After the crucifixion we have a record (John 19:38-40) of what he did along with Joseph of Arimathea. Is there evidence here of new birth?

9. How does your exploration of this passage shift your understanding of what it is to be a "born-again Christian"? Are you more likely now to self-identify as one? Why or why not?