

22T01d Tough Questions? – Water & Spirit

Hello my friends. Thanks for joining me today for an @ the PUNLA coffee table.

Even if you have been a Christian for a long time, there are some things in the bible and in the traditions of the modern church that are tough to understand. I find many of these downright confusing. Some of these have troubled me for years.

We want to ask those “tough questions” and then do the research to see if we can find or develop a better understanding for these “tough questions”.

I heard a sermon by a Pastor I admire from California and I was perplexed by his interpretation of John 3:5. I had never heard it talked about this way. I could not imagine an issue with this so I became confused. Let’s read it John 3:5 (NKJV) *Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”*

Let’s pray. Heavenly Father please guide our discussion today. Help me to stay out of the way, so you can use me. We trust you and we know you have promised the wisdom we need to understand your word in the Bible. Help us to let the Holy Spirit lead us and guide us. Bless our time together and I pray all these things in your name Lord Jesus. Amen.

Okay, Jesus said we had to be born twice one of water and one of Spirit. The second part of this is obviously referring to being born again as a Christian or being born of the Holy Spirit. But when I heard this pastor say that being born of water was referring to water baptism and being born of the spirit was referring to being baptized by the Holy Spirit. I was speechless. This is not what I thought at all. I had always assumed Jesus was talking about childbirth as being born of water and spiritual rebirth in the Holy spirit as being born of the spirit. I listened to his entire sermon and thought how did I miss this. So, I decided to open the Bible and see if I could figure it out. I asked one of those tough questions. What was Jesus talking about in John 3:5 when he said we had to be born twice one water and one spirit.?

First thing I did was get my mind focused on the context of this verse. Jesus was speaking to a Pharisee named Nicodemus. Pharisees were very powerful Jewish rulers. This is the context of perhaps the most well-known scripture in all the Bible, John 3:16. Let’s read again starting in verse 1 of John Chapter 3. John 3:1-9 (NKJV) *¹There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ²This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” ³Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” ⁴Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” ⁵Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and*

that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' ⁸The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

⁹Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?"

Well, it seems pretty clear that Nicodemus thought Jesus was talking about natural childbirth when he asks how he can re-enter his mother's womb. Jesus then answers with you have to be born both of water and the Spirit. Then the very next statement by Jesus in verse 6 is *⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.* Born of flesh is flesh sounds like natural childbirth from your mother's womb. And spirit is spirit sounds like being born again through the Holy Spirit. Jesus goes on to say, *⁷Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' ⁸The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."* I don't want to state the obvious but sure seems like Jesus is saying being born of the Spirit is what he means by born again. I don't see any reference in any of these text to water baptism or baptism in the Spirit. I could be wrong. What do you think.?

Jesus goes on to tell Nicodemus some of the most profound and impactful lessons about being a believer in Him. His very reason for taking on the form of man.

I don't want to get too distracted here. Jesus is telling us the importance of being born again. We need to have a relationship with Him to become part of the Kingdom of God.

But this is just my opinion, I think the water baptism is simply not in this scripture. Unfortunately, I believe this is a case of "over spiritualizing" the scriptures. Sometimes the scriptures just mean what it says without some deeper meaning or parallel meaning. I think Jesus was telling Nicodemus he needs to be born again. Born twice. Once of his mother in the water of natural childbirth and a second time into the Kingdom of God by spiritual rebirth through the Holy Spirit. Does not seem like a controversy to me.

One last thing before I let you go today. Listen to your conscience, the Holy Spirit in you, when you hear something that seems off. No matter how much you like and respect someone, when the Holy Spirit urges you to question, then question it. Look it up for yourself and satisfy your curiosity by testing whether what you heard is right. God will show you the truth if you only look. God Bless.

Father God, thank you for giving us the resources and sources to answer these tough questions. we know you know all things. Thank you for guiding our process and giving us the wisdom, we need to understand and help us to be satisfied if you choose not to explain. Thank you for giving us the Holy Spirit to guide us and help us. Help us to open the Bible and look into history to answer our questions. I pray these things in your name Lord Jesus, Amen

Thank you for joining me @ the PUNLA Coffee Table today, I hope you'll join us for the rest of the series about the "Tough Questions" that we struggle with as Christians.

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See you next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.