

Round Top Church Christian Fellowship

Sermon Series in 1 John

The Incarnation

1 John 5

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(This is a two-part sermon preached on July 16 and 23, 2017 A.D.)

Text of 1 John 5:1-6

1 Whoever believes that **Jesus is the Christ is born of God**,
and whoever loves the Father loves the *child* **born of Him**.

² By this we know that we love the children of God,
when we love God, and observe His commandments.

³ For this is the love of God,
that we keep His commandments;
and **His commandments are not burdensome**.

⁴ **For whatever is born of God overcomes the world;**
and this is the victory that has overcome the world—
our faith.

⁵ Who is the one who overcomes the world,
but he who believes that **Jesus is the Son of God?**

⁶ This is the One who **came by water and blood**,
Jesus Christ;
not with the water only,
but with the **water and with the blood**.
It is the Spirit who testifies,
because the Spirit is the truth.

John pens these letters in his later years and has accumulated an immense understanding and insight into God and His redemptive plan. We must grasp that God has prepared John, like all the biblical writers, to this task of writing letters that came to be accepted as Scripture. John has been equipped by God to be God's writing instrument bringing the accurate intent of God's will to the forefront of his audience and therefore possesses the whole body of work that we know as the Old Testament.

There are a few foundational principles and events that God used to create and sustain His creation. To list some: The Creation, His response to the Fall (banishing Adam and Eve from the Garden and posting angels as Sentries by the Tree of Life), the Flood, working through select individuals and people groups, the Incarnation, the Cross, Resurrection, Ascension, Acts of the Holy Spirit (all N.T.), the Return and Final Judgement (placing Satan and followers in the lake of fire for an eternity, and placement of the saints in His Heaven forever). We will discuss a few of these.

One, the creation itself, until the Fall, was running as God had planned. The Fall did not sustain the creation for it was the plan of the Devil/Satan to destroy what God had made. Regardless if a person believes in a spiritual realm where there are spiritual beings at odds with each other, a person cannot ignore that this world, this earth, is at war with itself. Life hangs in the balance of a thin atmosphere that blocks enough of the sun's harmful rays allowing life to exist. Under this

protective atmospheric umbrella, there is a constant struggle for life. Man is at the top of the food chain making major impacts upon the rest of life here on earth. However, man cannot control every aspect of events on our planet. Man cannot contain war, famine and pestilence. Here on earth there is the constant story-line of man verses man, man verses nature, nature verses nature and man verses God. Man cannot force people to love each other. Interesting to note that mankind has no problem creating an environment for hate to flourish. Love is interjected by God in this fallen world, into the hate, into the mayhem of human debris.

Remember the first few lines in Genesis? God came into the darkness, into the formless void and brought light. This is often received as physical acts that God did; however, they are as much spiritual as they are physical. Without God injecting Himself into this free-will-creation, there is a void of order; there is no form of life and no light of love. God created the Light and the Darkness. By creating love (which is a choice), He created alternatives so that there would be a choice. We want our children to love us freely, not because we have programmed them.

**Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ²
And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the**

surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

³ Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

⁴ And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.

Past the creation, which had order for a time, (to the Fall) came the need for God to make a major adjustment, a game-changer, due to the Fall. The first major correction was the Flood. Then God established His presence through a chosen people (Genesis 12 starting with Abram), the Hebrews, who are an example of all humanity. God spoke through prophets and events chronicled in the Old Testament. Then there came a time, at God's choosing, to make another visible correction for all the world to see. From the time God removed Adam and Eve (for rebellion and rejecting God) from the Garden of Eden and posted guards at the entrance of the Garden, there became a need for God to make an entrance for people back into the Garden and the Tree of Life. We remember . . . "So, He drove the man out, and at the east of the garden of Eden, He stationed the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned every direction, to guard the way to the tree of life" (Genesis 3:24).

There marks the time of separation from God and man. There was separation and enmity. Part of the curse of the Fall is that there will be enmity between God and man. ¹⁴ And the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly shall you go, And dust shall you eat All the days of your life;

¹⁵ And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel" (Gen. 3:14-15).

In God's foreknowledge and power, He planned from the beginning to graft fallen man back to Him if they chose to come back. The incarnation is the center point of God's plan. It would have been a better life on earth if Adam and Eve had not chosen to rebel, but then the rest of mankind did anyway. They were the first. It is the most perplexing plan that God has for us to have the free-will to choose Him, to choose to love or chose sin, pride, unforgiveness and hate. Cain chose the latter and murdered his brother Abel. The price of love is the choice for sin. Love is a choice and not a program. We are created by God with the compacity to love, but we have to choose to love. It is not automatic. The choice for sin in this world is so strong that love's light is hard to see. God created His Light and calls us to His Light. However, the dense fog of sin weighs heavy on the hearts of men. For man to change,

he is called by God's Holy Spirit to surrender to His Light. God created the Light in the midst of formlessness, darkness and the void. As God interjected His Light in the beginning, He chose to interject His Light again in the incarnation. (I am the Light of the world...) John. . . ¹²

Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8:12). God became one of us to accomplish two major objectives:

Pay for our sins (propitiation).

Show us how we can have victory in a fallen world and be 'light' too. ¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. (Matthew 5:14).

When the incarnation came, Satan tried desperately to spoil God's plan. Satan worked through King Herod to kill every male child recently born. Then, in the wilderness, Satan came and offered Jesus the temporal world, if He would only bow to worship him. This is the incarnation: our God coming in our form, our likeness, to show us that it is possible to live life as He has planned. But, there is one major adjustment we must make: surrender to God, so He can empower us to live the victorious life He has planned for us from the beginning. We

must be reborn (John 3). **To be a citizen in God's Heaven, we shall have two births.**

Satan is still hard at work trying to stop God's plan. Satan could not stop God, but he is constantly roaming the face of the earth (Job 1) looking to destroy lives. In Romans 7, Paul describes the on-going war inside his body that he becomes the loser. However, Paul declares that he can have victory, if he has the power of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ (Romans 8), thereby being set free from the law of sin and death. He then stands not condemned.

John – An Instrument of God's Redemptive Voice and Plan

So, John writes, as God directs him, as to how the Word becomes flesh to make the Resurrection possible. The incarnation must happen to lay the foundation work for the Cross, the Resurrection and the Ascension. The Cross defeats sin and death.

Through surrendering-faith, everyone attached to the Cross defeats sin and death and has victory over Satan. Satan could not stop the Cross. The Cross is the victory over sin and death and is the power driving the mechanism of judgement and the final placement of sin and death into the lake of fire with all its adherents.

Penetrating Fallen World Religious Systems

John writes to penetrate the religious systems of his day and our day. John writes to refute Gnosticism and the influence of the Greek philosophy systems derived primarily from Plato and his schools of thought that came after him.

"What is the definition of the term *Gnostic*?"

<https://www.gotquestions.org/gnostic-definition.html>

Answer: The definition of the word *Gnostic* is about as easy to nail down as a flopping fish. It is derived from the Greek word *gnosis*, meaning “to know.” In the case of Gnosticism, what is “known” has shifted over the thousands of years since [Gnosticism](#) first reared its head during the formation and solidification of the early church.

Basically, the Gnostic believes in acquiring special, mystical knowledge as the means for salvation. According to Gnostic beliefs, there is a Great God that is good and perfect, but impersonal and unknowable. The creator of the universe was actually a lesser deity—a cheap knock-off of the “true God”—who wanted to create a flawless material universe but botched the job. Instead of having a utopia, we ended up with a world infected with pain, misery, and intellectual and spiritual blindness; all matter is now corrupt and evil. However, when this lesser deity created man, he accidentally imbued humanity with a spark of the “true” God’s spirit, making man an inherently good soul trapped in the confines of an evil, material body.

Plato Greek: Πλάτων *Plátōn*, Classical Attic; 428/427 or 424/423 – 348/347 BC) was a philosopher in Classical Greece and the founder of the Academy in Athens, the first institution of higher learning in the Western world. He is widely considered the most pivotal figure in the development of philosophy, especially the Western tradition. Unlike nearly all of his philosophical contemporaries, Plato's entire work is believed to have survived intact for over 2,400 years. Others believe that the oldest extant manuscript dates to circa, AD 895, 1100 years after Plato's death. This makes it difficult to know exactly what Plato wrote, along with his teacher, Socrates, and his most famous student, Aristotle,

Platonism. The philosophy of Plato, especially insofar as it asserts ideal forms as an absolute and eternal reality of which the phenomena of the world are an imperfect and transitory reflection.

<http://www.yourdictionary.com/platonism>

With this definition, Platonism taught that God in the flesh could not be perfect sinless humanity. God incarnate as Jesus was only a shadow of God in Heaven or God the Father. We can never see God as we did Jesus as He was God in the flesh. This contradicts Jesus when He declared:

John 10:30 He and the Father are one

John 17:22 "And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them; that they may be one, just as **We are one**;

John 14:7-9 ⁷ "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, **and have seen Him.**" ⁸

Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." ⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet

you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how do you say, 'Show us the Father '?

1 Peter 2:22 who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth;

Was Jesus the exact replica of the Father?

We can never become God. There are those that teach we too can become gods. The Mormons.

Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., *Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol.1, p.69 - p.70:

<http://www.utlm.org/onlineresources/mormonshopetobecomegods.htm>

It is clear, that God writes through Paul (**Philippians 2:6**) teaching that man can never be God or like God. Adam and Eve were challenged with this same question, and they pursued their chosen course to know the things that God did and be like Him. Their decision brought separation and death to their family. Obviously, this passage in Philippians brings clarity that we are not to see ourselves equal with God. God incarnates Himself as Jesus not to make us strive to be gods, but to show us that it is possible to have THE GOD indwell us and manage our lives. God is God inside our hearts and minds. We are nothing without God's indwelling. The body that housed Jesus was just a temporal vessel used for an earthly presentation, but temporal it was. Man's relationship to God is that of a bond-servant. God incarnated

Himself in the flesh as Jesus to model perfect humanity as our goal. Perfect humanity surrenders to God and does not strive to be God. This is why Jesus said that He could do nothing without the Father (John 5:19). This models for us that we can do nothing without the Father. Philippians 2:5,6 tells us to have the attitude that was in Christ where equality with God is not to be grasped. God as Jesus was perfect humanity, and, in that perfection, He demonstrated all humility towards God the Father. This makes us complete and at peace with God and our neighbor. Jesus was and is the model Kingdom of Heaven citizen.

Adam and Eve should have accepted their place as God created. They should have not attempted to be like God. After the Fall, we are only made perfect through God/Jesus/Holy Spirit, and this is in regard to judgement. We will never live perfect lives; it is that Jesus, our advocate, covers our sin because of our faith in Him. This is what makes us perfect and **presentable to God**. Paul writes to the saints in Colossae...

Colossians 1:21-23

²¹ **And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, *engaged* in evil deeds,**

²² **yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death,**

in order to present you before Him

holy and blameless and beyond reproach—

²³ if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

[Clarification] Verse twenty-three references ‘if you continue in the faith’ clarifying that those who really received Christ will be there in the end. These will have overcome, because God indwells them. They are not like those in John six, who Jesus knew from the beginning and walked away because they were pursuing in their minds a different messiah. There are a lot of pretenders.

However hard we strive, we will never reach perfection in our bodies that one day will give up our spirit. The price of sin is physical and spiritual death. For Believers, physical death will consume us all, but our spirit received eternal life at the point of salvation. Therefore, our soul lives, and, by our saving faith, we are resurrected in a spiritual body to spend an eternity in Heaven. We receive new bodies for our eternal life (1 Corinthians 15:35).

Identifying Jesus

The major council (Nicaea 325 A.D.) called by the Roman Emperor Constantine was called to produce a unifying statement of

faith regarding who Jesus was. The product from Nicaea was that God incarnated as Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. Key words “begotten, not made,” “one substance,” “was made man.”

It is of note that the Roman Bishop did not call this conference for he was just one of the many Bishops that attended. The line “*And I believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church*” does not originate the church as Roman, but apostolic. Meaning that the letters authored by God and written by the apostle pass down the Good News from Jesus Christ.

Text of Nicaea

*I believe in one God, the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,
and of all things visible and invisible.
And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of the Father before all worlds;
God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; **begotten,
not made,**
being of **one substance with the Father,**
by whom all things were made.*

*Who, for us men for our salvation,
came down from heaven,
and was incarnate
by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary,
and was made man;*

*and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;
He suffered and was buried;
and the third day He rose again,
according to the Scriptures;
and ascended into heaven,
and sits on the right hand of the Father;
and He shall come again,
with glory, to judge the quick and the dead;
whose kingdom shall have no end*

*And I believe in the Holy Ghost,
the Lord and Giver of Life;
who proceeds from the Father [and the Son];
who with the Father and the Son
together is worshipped and glorified;
who spoke by the prophets.*

*And I believe **one holy catholic and apostolic Church.***

I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins;

and I look for the resurrection of the dead,

and the life of the world to come. Amen.

It is true that Scripture tells us that God emptied himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, in the likeness of men.

Philippians 2:5-8

⁵ Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Some view these passages as God emptied Himself to become present to humans by relinquishing the ability to have full **knowledge** of all things (**omniscience**) and all **power** (**omnipotent**). Jesus said that only the Father knew when the Second Coming would take place (Matthew 24:36). Jesus said, also, that He could do nothing without the

Father (John 5:19). God, as the “Son”, completes His mission on earth without splitting His physical Jesus-body to be two places at one time (**omnipresent**). Some scholars group these as the “The Three Omni’s.” However, these three do not make God.

When we look for a definition of God in the Bible we read in 1 John 4:8 “God is love.” The knowledge, power and all-presence of God are attributes God uses to minister to people, but these are all under the umbrella of God’s love. God is perfect love.

1 John 4:7-11 ⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

⁸ The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

⁹ By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Another view of the Philippian passage highlights God, as Jesus, who gave everything He had as a physical form. Surely being crucified on the Cross qualifies a person emptying themselves to their cause. He became a bond-servant all the way to the Cross. This is our example to

keep the faith all the way to death. Jesus is our example. The challenge man has is that he wants to define everything that happens in terms of the laws of physics that he knows. If man (science) cannot explain an event, then it did not happen or it does not exist. However, we use electricity even though man cannot fully explain its origins. Man finds some things he cannot explain conveniently.

In John's first century world, there were many competing belief systems. **Judaism and Greek** schools of philosophy were the top two. **Judaism** is a system of laws originating from the time God gave Moses the Ten Commandments during the Exodus which was about 1,500 years before Jesus came. The Jews misunderstood the Law, and, after a time, did not pursue faith in God but only adherence to the Law as interpreted by the religious leaders. The **Greek** influence came from a culture steeped in **Plato's philosophy** and the men that came after him. Neither of these other competing systems were looking for a savior to save the world from sin and death.

John writes to refute both Jewish and Greek teachings. Therefore, the content of the Gospel of John and 1 John have numerous references to who Jesus is and that He came from God, that God became flesh and lived with us. This is a new concept to the first century world. In fact, this is a challenging message in any century, including our own.

[Survey Finds Most American Christians Are Actually Heretics](#)

By [G. Shane Morris](#) **OCTOBER 10, 2016**

G. Shane Morris is a senior writer at [BreakPoint](#), a program of the Colson Center for Christian Worldview.

In 1 John, and all his letters, John goes into detail and at length repeating who the Believers are and how Believers behave. He qualifies Believers and, at the same time, defines non-believers and who their father is, the Devil. Keeping this in mind, in chapter five, it is the Believers who pray for each other in this challenging life. With this parameter set, God forgives Believers for sin. The first step in God forgiving a Believer is that they must be a Believer. God forgives Believers 1 John 1. John (verse 5:16) makes it clear that he is not directing people to pray for those who commit sins leading to death. By all indications, these are non-believers to whom John refers. God does not hear non-believer's prayers to be forgiven for sin. They have not surrendered to God. Let us be clear. First things first. God seeks the surrender of a person first. A lost person must acknowledge the conviction of the Holy Spirit and surrender to God. Until this happens, the prayer of a non-believer doesn't do them any good. They have not surrendered to THE God. Acknowledging God exists is not sufficient.

James 2:19 You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. Belief/Believing is an active verb, not a static noun. Believing is not an agreement statement; it is a surrendering confession. God seeks surrender and capitulation.

The culture in which we live is biblically ignorant of God. The world population does not read the Bible, and what they know are only perceptions from what they hear. In this case, they are like Plato describes people. They never see the real form of God; they only hear about it, but never come in contact. This leaves them in the dark, uninformed, unknowing and lost without a rudder. This is exactly where Satan wants them to be. Man is blind without God. God has revealed Himself from the beginning of the creation through the creation to all people, and they are without excuse (Romans 1:18, 19, 20 and following).

To some extent, Plato is correct. Fallen man cannot see the real God. Remember, Jesus told Nicodemus that unless a person is born again of Spirit they cannot see or enter the kingdom of God. The difference between Plato's school of thought and God's Word is that it is possible for us to be in the presence of God. God incarnated Himself to be in our presence. Here-in lays the dichotomy between the Greek belief system and the Triune God. God chose to come in direct contact with fallen man. Doubting Thomas was invited to touch the risen Lord

(John 20:26-29). In our times, many do not believe because they cannot accept the thought of a physical form of God, or the physical resurrection. Many do not accept the idea that there is a God. They worship themselves. They are their own god.

Text of 1 John 5

1 Whoever believes that **Jesus is the Christ is born of God**,
and whoever loves the Father loves the *child* born of Him.

² By this we know that we love the children of God,
when we love God and observe His commandments.

³ For this is the love of God,
that we keep His commandments;
and **His commandments are not burdensome**.

[Because God H.S. empowers us]

⁴ **For whatever is born of God overcomes the world;**
and this is the victory that has overcome the world—
our faith.

[born from “above” John 3:3]

⁵ Who is the one who overcomes the world,
but he who believes that **Jesus is the Son of God?**

⁶ This is the One who **came by water and blood**,
Jesus Christ;
not with the water only,
but with the water and with the blood.
It is the Spirit who testifies,
because the Spirit is the truth.

DETAIL DISCUSSION OF 1 JOHN 5:6

There are differing views on the meaning and application of 1 John 5:6. One is the reference to the water-baptism of Jesus and the Cross which Jesus spilt His blood. Another is the piercing of Jesus' side at the Cross when water came from his side; thus, on the Cross, spilling water and blood.

It needs to be kept in mind that verse one identifies Jesus as being **born of God**, and, in verse five, Jesus is the **Son of God**. In verse six, the focus on Jesus is how He came; He **came by water and blood**. **Keep in mind that John is refuting Gnosticism and Platonism.**

Therefore, how did Jesus come into being; how was He born?

How did God become flesh?

Most of western civilization knows of the account of the H.S. coming to Mary leaving her to carry the Son of God into natural childbirth (**the breaking of water**). This is the union of God with fallen man to fulfill God's redemptive plan. Man cannot save himself. Therefore, God intervened. This intervention had to take place or mankind would have been doomed to an eternal separation from God.

Satan was allowed to intervene, due to God's great love that gave us "free will choice", with Adam/Eve (Genesis 3). We also see a glimpse into Satan's effort before the Flood in Genesis 6.

Genesis 6:1-8 1 Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them,

² that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.

³ Then the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless, his days shall be one hundred and twenty years."

⁴ The **Nephilim** were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the **sons of God** came in to the daughters of men, and they bore *children* to them. Those were the mighty **men who were of old, men of renown.**

⁵ Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

⁶ And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.

⁷ And the LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them."

⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

This account in Genesis six is hard to understand. Taken on its face-message, we see beings that are not human that came to procreate with human women which produced people that were wicked. Some scholars trace Goliath, who David fought, from this line. The Bible gives a small window of how this could have happened after the Flood. Genesis 6:4 [“The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward.”](#)

This is a complex account. However, what we do receive out of the account is that human women have the compacity to carry a child of beings not from the seed of man. This is what happened to Mary. God intervened into humanity, and in a way, to counter Satan’s intervention. It seems logical that if the Nephilim dwelt among us, so God came to dwell amongst us. Thus, the Word became flesh.

It is important to understand the incarnation is about The Perfect God, unblemished, Complete love, who came to be one of

us to save us. This account is not possible with any other belief on earth. All other beliefs have their god coming to extract some form of payment from man in order for man to survive in this life and the next.

TWO BIRTHS

God gives us the opportunity to have two births: one by **water** and one by **blood**. Going back to John's Gospel (John 3:3), we see a direct comparison by Jesus in His own words to what it is to be *naturally born (water)* and to be *born-again (spiritually from above)*. This re-birth attaches us to the blood of Jesus' Cross. This re-birth allows us to be God's covenant servants. Therefore, we are empowered to do the works of God as Nicodemus saw Jesus do. Jesus was asked by Nicodemus this question regarding Himself. In a paraphrase. . . How can you do the things you do? When Jesus answers He includes Himself but also encompasses the path for everyone who becomes a Believer, because Jesus gives Nicodemus the blueprint for seeing and entering the kingdom of God.

John 3 Nicodemus and Jesus

John 3:1-7 1 Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews;

² this man came to Him by night, and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have **come from God** as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is **with him**." (Jn. 3:1-2 NAS)

³ Jesus answered and said to him,
"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again
(from above - anothēn)
he cannot **see** the kingdom of God."

⁴ Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be **born** when he is old?

He cannot enter a second time into his **mother's womb** and be born, can he?"

⁵ Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you,
unless one is **born of water and the Spirit** he cannot enter into the
kingdom of God.

⁶ "That which is born of the flesh is flesh,
and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

⁷ "Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

Strong's 509 ἀνωθεν *anothen* **Meaning:** from above

Origin: from 507 **Usage:** above(5), again(2), all over(1), beginning(1), long time(1), top(2).

Notes: Or *from above*

2 Cor 5:17; 1 Pet 1:23; Mat 19:24; Mat 21:31; Mark 9:47; Mark 10:14f; John 3:5

Nicodemus makes a statement to Jesus. In his statement is a question directly asking Jesus if God is with Him, thus empowering Jesus to do the miracles. Therefore, there are two statement-questions: How did you come from God? And, prove that God is in You.

Nicodemus' questions were received by Jesus to be questioning the presence of the kingdom of God for Jesus' response was about seeing and entering the kingdom of God. Jesus does not answer Nicodemus' question directly. Nicodemus wanted Jesus to prove that He came from

God and that God is with Him and empowering Him to do the miracles that Jesus was doing.

First things first. Jesus goes directly to kingdom membership. This teaches Nicodemus that if he wants to participate in the miracles of God he must first see the kingdom and enter the kingdom (verse 5). In other words, only kingdom citizens (saved people) can do the works of God.

Jesus then teaches Nicodemus how this citizenship takes place in that he must be born from “*above*” (born-again). Most English translations use the words “*born-again*.” Young’s Literal translation uses “*born from above*”; being *born from above* carries an additional depth of meaning and needs to be understood to receive the full teaching. It is true that being *born from above carries with it being born again*. Everyone, except Adam and Eve, have come into this world through the womb of their mother. God chose this for His incarnation as well. It is true that the seed of the Holy Spirit visited Mary, but the birth was physical. Remember, the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14 declares the virgin birth of Emanuel. Therefore, God’s intent was to come into this world in the flesh, as we have with the [breaking of water](#).

As soon as Jesus told Nicodemus that he had to be re-born from “*above*” or “*again*”, the response Jesus received from Nicodemus was predictable. Nicodemus focused on the natural re-birth. Obviously, at that point, he did not have the compacity to focus on the spiritual.

Nicodemus' reply was from a natural man, not a spiritual man.

Nicodemus looked back to his own natural birth and asked how can this happen again; **how can a man enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born, can he?**

Jesus' response is crucial in clarifying Nicodemus' question. Note that Jesus brings in the word "**water**" (John 3:5), because Nicodemus referred to natural birth and with natural birth comes the breaking of **birth-water**. Jesus adds to Nicodemus' statement and does not refute the connotation/understanding to natural birth. Jesus told Nicodemus that a person is born naturally through the breaking of **birth-water** and, in addition, to be qualified to see and enter the kingdom of God, must be **born of Spirit**. Jesus added that which is born of flesh is flesh (meaning that it will remain flesh and live in the realm of flesh) and that which is **born of Spirit is Spirit**. The **Spirit re-born/born-again/ 'born from above'** person will enter the kingdom of God and be empowered to do the works of kingdom people. This is what Nicodemus saw Jesus doing.

Again, this refutes the platonic and Gnostic teachings. Jesus refutes Platonism by teaching that man can be indwelled by God. Man can contain the living God. Man can see and enter the kingdom of God. Man is in direct contact with God. Man is not left to see only the shadow(s) of the deity(s). Jesus refutes Gnostic teaching by specifically teaching how a person becomes indwelled/in contact with God which is

not by a “head-ascension” to a higher enlightenment or knowledge. Jesus teaches that it is an act of God that changes man, due to man’s surrendered heart. Gnostics teach that it is through man’s development of himself that he can reach some divine state. This contradicts that through no work of man can he be saved (Ephesians 2:8).

John 3 Gospel and 1 John 5

John is the one who writes for God and chronicles the conversation with Nicodemus. In John 3, we see “**water**” brought into the discussion by Jesus to further Nicodemus’ thought about not being able to enter a second time into his mother’s womb. In **1 John 5:6**, there is the “**water**” and the “**blood**” presented as the two elements by which Jesus **came**. Many observers throughout history associate the “**blood**” with blood Jesus spilt on the Cross. This is most likely to be the best interpretation. It is noted that John 1:14 declares that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. The flesh by which the Word came contained blood, and therefore Jesus **came to us by blood also**. Combined with the breaking of the **birth water**, this seems to be a view that is palatable. However, a stronger case can be made for the blood representing the Cross. There must be consideration given to John 1:12, 13 that identifies those who become children of God were **born not of blood**. This negates the idea that blood in 1 John 5:6 is tied to natural birth. Note here that children of

God become children of God through the blood of Jesus, not their own blood (Ephesians 1:7; Romans 3:25; Acts 20:28). This makes Jesus different, because **Jesus came by water and blood (1 John 5:6)**.

Therefore, supporting the view that the Cross represents the blood, and no one else went to the Cross as the incarnated God to pay the price for the sins of the world, **1 John 5: 6** highlights the blood associated with the Cross. **There is only one man in history that came to us by the breaking of birth water and the spilling of his blood being crucified on the Cross as the Son of God, Jesus, God incarnate, The Christ. By our faith, we are joined to the blood of Jesus Christ on the Cross, and we are also reborn, **reborn with His Blood**. Therefore, our first birth, like Jesus', was through the breaking of **birth water**, and our second birth is by **blood**. Believers have two births.**

Ephesians 1:7 In Him we have redemption **through His blood**, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace,

Romans 3:25 whom God displayed publicly as **a propitiation in His blood** through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;

Acts 20:28 "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which **He purchased with His own blood**."

1 John 5:6

⁶ This is the One who **came by water and blood**,
Jesus Christ;
not with the water only,
but with the water and with the blood.

It is the Spirit who testifies,
because the Spirit is the truth.

**References cited: Born Again/ From Above / of Spirit / of Blood /
New Creature**

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a **new creature**; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you,
unless one is **born of water and the Spirit**,
he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

John 1:12 But as many as received Him,
to them He gave the right to **become children of God**,
even to those who believe in His name,

[To become children of God, we were born
with the blood of Jesus Christ, not our own blood.]

¹³ **who were born not of blood**,

nor of the will of the flesh,
nor of the will of man,

but of God.

[blood of God, Jesus

Ephesians 1:7; Acts 20:28; Romans 3:25]

Strong's 509 ἀνωθεν *anōthen* **Meaning:** from above

1 Peter 1:3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who according to His great mercy
has caused us to be **born again (from above) to a living hope**
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

1 Peter 1:23 for you have been **born again (from above)** not of seed
which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and
abiding word of God.

AMEN