

The birth

Life begins with a man and woman who love each other. Right in the depths of the mother's tummy the new life is formed. It normally takes nine months before the growing baby is born. The birth is brought about by contractions which can be very painful for the mother. In fact, the natural birth of a child is very similar to the way into the kingdom of God. It all starts with love. God is like a loving Father. He loves mankind. He longs to have a relationship with people. He really wants people to live in His kingdom. That is why he sent the Word. The Word is very important so that our eyes will be opened to God, because people had become blind to the kingdom of God, as we have seen before.

What does Jesus bring as the Word?



John 1:1-4 and John 1:14



Rom 5:5 and 8:6

God not only sends His Word, but also His Spirit. The Spirit of God is a Spirit of love and life. In the next story we will read how the Word and the Spirit together bring new life in our heart.

Entering the Kingdom

There was a man who had heard much about Jesus. He wanted to know more so he visited Jesus. This man had learned a lot about God's laws. He knew that it was very difficult to live according to the law and that many people tried to keep the law but were not able to do so. Jesus' message made him very curious.

Jesus said to him that he must be born again to enter the kingdom of God. Read the story yourself:



John 3:1-18

How do you become born again?

We can see in this story that Jesus said you need water. The word water is used in the Bible for 'making clean'. Water and the word both cleanse.



Eph 5:25,26




Titus 3:5-7


Our text from John 1:1-4 has shown that Jesus is the Word. His words bring new life and cleanses us.


The Holy Spirit does the same. The Spirit gives us revelation and ideas about who God is. The Holy Spirit works in our heart and renews our heart with thoughts about God. When the words of Jesus and his Spirit come in our heart and we believe them, then our heart will be changed. We shall see the spiritual world to which our eyes, in the past, were closed.

What do we need to do to enter the kingdom?

 *John. 3:16*


This text shows us what we need to do in order to receive that eternal life. It tells us that we need to believe that God sent Jesus to demonstrate His love. It was out of love that Jesus died for us on the cross (read part 2 lesson 6 again) and took our guilt upon him. By believing in Jesus and what He has done for us we will be saved. This is actually the first of many steps which will be described in the following chapters.

 *Rom 10:10*

 Answer God and try to discover what you really believe now. Speak this out to God in your own words.

Not the law

Nicodemus knew the law very well. He knew that Jesus was talking about a text from Ezekiel.

 *Ezek 36:26,27*

In the Old Testament we see that people tried to live by the law in their own strength but that they kept falling short. In this text we see that God wants to give us a new heart and that the Spirit of God helps us to live as God wants us to live.

Adam and Eve lived in union with God but after their choice to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, life became very different. They no longer wanted to be dependent on God's instructions and chose to go their own way.

Jesus wanted to bring Nicodemus and us back to the time in which Adam and Eve lived together with God, trusted him and wanted to live dependent upon him. Make sure you understand that going to church and doing Christian things cannot change your life. In the same way, keeping Christian laws also cannot change your life.


Again we see the importance of making choices. Do you want God to change your heart? Do you want the Holy Spirit to lead you? You know God is calling you today to make the choice to listen to his voice. He loves you so much and wants the very best for you.

When Jesus started choosing his disciples he said: "Follow me". No more and no less. This is what he is saying to you now. In the following chapters we see the blessing that this choice brings but also that a price must be paid for this. This decision will cost you everything.

EXERCISE:

 Discuss with your mentor if you want to take the step to enter the kingdom of God.

You have now learned what exactly the kingdom of God is and who the God of the kingdom is. It now comes down to if you want to be a follower of the King. You can only do this is if you believe what has been discussed. If you cannot yet do this with your whole heart then take time to ask God for a revelation by the Holy Spirit. He is your helper and he shall show you who Jesus is.

 Read the Gospel of Luke while doing the study of part 3 and pay particular attention to the way in which the disciples time and again are given an opportunity to choose to enter the kingdom of God. Try and keep a record of this in your prayer notebook.

TEXTS PART 3 LESSON 1B

John 1:1-4

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all men

Joh 1:14

14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Rom 5:5

⁵ And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Rom 8:6

⁶ The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.

Joh 3:1-18

1 Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. 2 He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him." 3 Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again." 4 "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!" 5 Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." 9 "How can this be?" Nicodemus asked. 10 "You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? 11 Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. 12 I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? 13 No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. 14 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him." 16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but

have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

Eph 5:25,26

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing^l her by the washing with water through the word,

Tit 3:5-7

⁵ He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

Joh 3:16

16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Rom 10:10

¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

Ez 36:26,27

²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.