

2/9/25

John 3

We come to the third chapter of the gospel of John, which is one of the most important chapter in the Bible regarding the conversation of Jesus with Nicodemus, the eminent teacher of Israel about understanding and entering the Kingdom of God.

* John alone records the meeting of Jesus with Nicodemus, being the second!

3:1-21 The new birth revealed by Jesus to Nicodemus

3:1 The man Nicodemus.

* Nicodemus stands in contrast to those in the preceding chapter. Jn. 2:23-25

1) The religious identity of the man is stated, "There was a man of the Pharisees." vs. 1a

* The word Pharisee means "separated ones", they came out of the Maccabean wars, dedicated to preserving and keeping the Law and they never numbered more than 6,000.

2) The personal named of the man is also given, "named Nicodemus." bs. 1a

* The name means conqueror or the victory of the people.

3) The position of the Nicodemus is also stated, "a ruler of the Jews." vs. 1b

* Nicodemus as a ruler of the Jews was amember of Sanhedrin, the ruling body of Israel.

3:2 The man Nicodemus came to Jesus by night.

1) The specifics of the coming of Nicodemus, "This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him." vs. 2a

a) The fact that he came by night may also indicate the spiritual dark condition of his life despite his religious credentials and position.

b) This is the phrase he is identified by two other times, "he who came to Jesus by night". Jn. 7:50; 19:39

c) The contrasts of light and darkness are prominent in the gospel of John. Jn. 1:5, 9; 3:19; 8:12; 9:4-5; 12:35

2) The man Nicodemus addressed Jesus with respect, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God." vs. 2b

a) The title "Rabbi", means master or teacher.

b) Nicodemus confessed his belief that Jesus was from God as well as others by the plural pronoun "we", which refers to other Pharisees, elders and scribes, as he.

c) The word know "oida" means intuitive knowledge and translated perceive or

understand, the exact same word is translated “see”. vs. 3

- 4) Nicodemus based his belief on the signs done by Jesus, “for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” vs. 2c
 - a) The statement is true regarding Jesus.
 - b) But it is a wrong statement also for Satan will give power to the Anti-Christ to use lying signs and wonders as well as his false prophet. 2Thess. 2:9-10; Rev. 13:13; Deut. 13:1-3

3:3 The answer of Jesus to Nicodemus.

- * The sincere faith in the heart of Nicodemus, not his words.
- 1) Nicodemus was thinking of entry to the Kingdom of God and Jesus knew it, “Jesus answered and said to him.” vs. 2a
 - * Jesus knew what was in man. Jn. 2:25
- 2) Nicodemus heard the secret to enter heaven, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” vs. 3b-e
 - a) This is absolute truth by the phrase, “Most assuredly” being at the start of the sentence. vs. 3a
 - b) This truth is by Divine authority by the phrase, “I say to you.” vs. 3b

- c) This is the only way, “unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” vs. 3c-d
 - 1)) The word “Again” means from above “another”. Jn. 3:31; 19:11; Ja. 1:17; 3:15
 - 2)) This truth applies to all without exception, Jesus declared this truth three times. vs. 3, 5, 7
- 3) The Kingdom is present and yet to come,
 - a) The Church is not the Kingdom.
 - b) The Church will not bring in the Kingdom, like Kingdom of Dominion Theology teaches.
 - c) The Church is part of the Kingdom.
 - d) The Church will reign in the Kingdom.

3:4 The question of Nicodemus is evidence of skepticism.

- 1) This is the futility of the natural mind, “Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old?” vs. 4a
 - * The natural mind cannot understand the things of the Spirit. 1Cor. 2:9-16
- 2) This is an expression of impossibility by the natural to comprehend the new birth, “Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” vs. 4b

3:5 The second declaration of the truth by Jesus.

- 1) Jesus qualifies the important truth of His answer again by the same phrase at the start of the sentence, “Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you”. vs. 3a-c
- 2) Jesus then substitutes some words for the ones in verse three and they are synonymous with the spiritual birth and Kingdom, “unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” vs. 5d-e
 - * The words provide the source and the result of the new birth!
 - a) The first word that Jesus substituted is the word “enter” for “see” in verse three, to emphasize the results of the new birth.
 - 1)) Remember “see” means perceive or understand referring to the Kingdom.
 - 2)) Therefore the word “enter” has to refer to the Kingdom also, namely the one born again is able to understand and enter the Kingdom of God.
 - b) The second word that Jesus substituted is “again” or “above” in verse three by the phrase “of water” and “of the Spirit”, emphasizing the source of the new birth.
 - 1)) Whatever meaning we give to both “water and Spirit” they must be true to the meaning of being “born again”.
 - 2)) The word “again” or “above” described the source of the birth, namely spiritual and from heaven.

- 3)) Therefore the phrases “of water” and “of the Spirit” must refer to something spiritual and from heaven, the new birth, not something earthly, which would only confuse the understanding of Nicodemus further!
- 4)) Jesus said, “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God”, through the proclamation of the word of God and the Holy Spirit illumination, convicting and regenerating the sinner.
- 3) Some declare that water refers to baptism, but this would contradict and supplant the finished work on the cross. Rom. 6:3-4; 1Pet. 3:19-21
- 4) Others declare both phrases refer to the work of the Holy Spirit, but this would accuse Jesus of redundancy.
- 5) The only thing water can mean is “the word of God”.
 - a) We are born of incorruptable seed, the word of God. Ja. 1:18; 1Pet. 1:23
 - b) We are cleansed by the word of God. Eph. 5:26
 - c) We are told Jesus said to His disciple they were clean through the word spoken to them. Jn. 15:3
 - d) We are told to hear the voice of the Spirit which is through the word of God. vs. 8

e) We are pointed to the Scriptures. vs. 14

3:6 The distinction between the two births.

- * This is the correction about the mistaken notion of Nicodemus that Jesus was talking about a natural physical birth.
- 1) The flesh birth is the natural one from our parents, which Jesus is not talking about, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." vs. 6a
 - a) Out of an unclean thing nothing can be brought forth Job 14:4
 - b) Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that that are accustomed to do evil. Jer. 13:23
- 2) The Spiritual new birth the one from heaven, "and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Jn. 1:12-13

3:7 This is the third time Jesus declared the key to enter the Kingdom of God.

- * "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'"
- 1) Nicodemus is not to be perplexed or puzzled by this truth, "Do not marvel that I said to you." vs. 7a
- 2) Nicodemus is to believe the revelation of how to get to heaven, "You must be born again." vs. 7b

- a) The word "must" means and indicates an absolute requirement without exception for all of mankind.
- b) The word is used three times in the chapter. vs. 7, 14, 30

3:8 The illustration of the effects of the Holy Spirit, due to new birth and being born again.

- 1) The simple literal illustration about wind, "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes." vs. 8a-c
 - a) The word "wind" is the word "pnuma" and appears 35 times in the New Testament and this is the only time it is translated "wind", so some teach the word "wind" should be translated "the Holy Spirit breathes".
 - b) The only problem is that John says, "The wind blows where it wishes, and **you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes**", this is clearly an illustration of the "wind" that a person hears the sound, but cannot perceive the direction the wind comes from, but only the effect of the wind.
 - c) We know where the Spirit comes from "heaven" and where it goes "through the earth".

- 2) The punch line and application is being born again, having their hearts transomed, “So is everyone who is born of the Spirit” looking back to the illustration of the wind. vs. 8d
 * So is the effect on a person born of the Spirit, we cannot see the Holy Spirit, but only the effects of the Spirit in the life of the one born again!
- 3) Jesus confirmed this when He told Nicodemus, “If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? vs. 12
 - a) The earthly things is the illustration of the natural wind and its effects.
 - b) The heavenly things is the supernatural spiritual birth of being born again from above.
- 4) The Holy Spirit illuminates the word of God and makes it understood and convicts the sinner, who decides to not repent or repent to be born again from above! Jn. 1:12-13; Rom. 10:17; Eph. 2:8-9

3:9 The further inquiry of Nicodemus.

- 1) The man Nicodemus now rather than asking the skeptical “how”, he asks the humble “how”, the method of becoming born again, “Nicodemus answered and said to Him, “How can these things be?”

- 2) Though Nicodemus was the teacher of Israel, he is a natural man, unable to understand spiritual truth.
 * This comes through the new birth to comprehend the Kingdom of God.

3:10-12 The reproof of Nicodemus by Jesus.

- 1) The reproof is for being “the” teacher of Israel, “Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?” vs. 10
 * This implies the ability to know and should have known them. vs. 10; Ezk. 36:25-28
- 2) The reproof is for rejecting the testimony of Jesus, “Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness.” vs. 11
 - a) The plural pronoun “we” is in contrast to the “we” of Nicodemus, other Jewish Pharisees, therefore the “we” of Jesus refers to John the Baptist, the disciples of Jesus and His followers.
 - b) Jesus never used the plural “we” for Him and His Father.
- 3) The reproof is for relying on his natural mind to understand spiritual truths, “If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?” vs. 12

- * The reproof is from the lesser “earthly things” to the greater “heavenly things”.

3:13 The declaration of Jesus about being the unique revealer of heavenly things.

- 1) Jesus alone has descended from heaven, “No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven.” vs. 13a

* Jn. 1:1, 14; Phil. 2:5-11

- 2) Jesus alone is “the Son of Man”, that **is**, the Son of Man who is in heaven.” vs. 13b

* 100% God, 100 % man through the Incarnation.

3:14-15 The Scriptures are the source of the proclamation to be born again.

- 1) God had a prophetic type of the redemptive work of the cross in the wilderness, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, whoever believes in Him should **not perish but have eternal life.**”

a) The text is found in the book of Numbers. Num. 21:4-9

b) The Son of Man to be lifted up refers to the crucifixion, the antitype, the fulfillment of the propnetic type. Jn. 8:28; 12:32-33

- 2) The entire Old Testament is for our learning and example. Rom. 15:4; 1Cor. 10:6, 11

- 3) The symbolism and type of the anti-type is impossible to miss!

* The pole represents the cross, the serpent represents sin being judge on the cross for brass is symbolic of judgment, the people looking to it represents those looking to Jesus in faith in order not to perish and have eternal life, age abiding life with God forever.

3:16 The love invitation of God to the lost human race.

- 1) The verse is is inexhaustable! The monk Luther calls this verse “The Bible in miniature”, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

- 2) The motive of God to save us was love, God did not save us by His love, but by the death of His Son!

a) The salvation of sinner is by faith in Jesus, who He is and what He did as the God-Man.

b) We are saved by grace through faith, not love, God judged His Son in our place, experiencing death for us and rising the third day. 2Cor. 5:21; Eph. 2:8-9

- 3) The world “kosmos” represents the entire humanity of man, Jesus died for the entire world, not a select few. 1Jn. 2:2

- 4) The gift of His Son was the greatest and indescribable. 2Cor. 9:15
- 5) The person was the only begotten Son of God.
- 6) The people who qualify is whosoever.
- 7) The condition is faith in Jesus, literally, "whoever puts faith into Him."
- 8) The result is that he will not perish but have everlasting life.

3:17 The purpose of God the Father for sending His Son.

- 1) God did not send His Son to damn the world, "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world." vs. 17a
 * God did not send His Son to condemn the world of lost humanity, speaking of the process not the final judgement.
- 2) God send His Son to save sinners, "but that the world through Him might be saved." vs. 17b
 * Thirty-eight times Jesus refers to His being sent by the Father.

3:18 The eternal state of man is by personal choice.

- 1) The person who believes in the person and work of Jesus is saved, "He who believes in Him is not condemned." vs. 18a

- * They will not be separated eternally from Jesus, but joined with Jesus eternally.
- 2) The person who does not believe in the person and work of Jesus is not saved, "but he who does not believe is condemned already." vs. 18b
 * These individual are separated from God, here and now on earth and will be eternally separated from God in Gehenna for all eternity.
- 3) The simple and clear reason, "because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." vs. 18c
 - a) The name Jesus means "Yahweh is salvation, the Greek translation of the Hebrew name Joshua the contraction of Yahweh-shua "Yahweh is salvation.
 - b) The only begotten refers to the Incarnation being 100% God and Man. Jn. 1:1, 14, 18
 * Jn. 3:36; 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1Tim. 2:5; 1Jn. 2:23; 5:12
 - c) If I believe I am not condemned.
 - d) If I believe not I am condemned already by the word I have rejected.

3:19 The condemnation of man is their love for darkness.

- 1) The proclamation, "And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world." vs. 19a-b

- a) Jesus is that true light that has come into the world that lights every person. Jn. 1:4-5, 7, 9, 11
- b) The guilt or judgement that falls on man here and now is in view of the privilege and accountability to the ultimate light of God in His Son.
- 2) The practice of man, “and men loved darkness rather than light. vs. 18c
* This is a choice by each sinner!
- 3) The reason, “because their deeds were evil”. vs. 19d
* The reason is due to man’s evil heart that his deeds are evil. Jer. 17:9

3:20-21 The commentary on the previous verse.

- 1) On those who practice evil, “For everyone practicing evil hates the light.” vs. 20a
* They on the other hand love darkness and evil!
- 2) The reason for not coming to the light, “and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.” vs. 20b
* They stay away from the light that their deed are not expose or revealed as being evil!
- 3) Those practicing truth, “But he who does the truth comes to the light.” vs. 21a
- 4) The reason for coming to the truth, “that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.” vs. 21b-c

- a) They do so that God may examine their deeds to be done in God and by God through them.
- b) This ends the conversation of Jesus with Nicodemus.

3:22-36 The exaltation of Jesus by John the Baptist.

3:22-24 The ritual of water baptism.

- 1) Jesus with his disciples, “After these things, Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea and there He remained with them and baptized”. vs. 22
 - a) Interesting here, Jesus remained in Judea for a time, we don’t know how long, but the tense indicates it was a continuous action.
 - b) We can look at chapter 2, verse 13, and then look at chapter 4, verse 35 and we know there is eight months difference, so anywhere from two, three, to the whole eight months, but there is no discrepancy.
 - c) And now, you’ve got to understand that Jesus never baptized anybody in water. We get that commentary in chapter 4, verse 2. His disciples did. Why?
 - d) The reason was He didn’t want anybody to confuse His baptism of the Spirit with the baptism of water of John. You and I can baptize people in water, but only

Jesus baptizes in the Holy Spirit. We can lay hands and pray in faith, but we don't baptize anybody in the Spirit. That's up to Jesus Christ.

- 2) John with his disciples, "Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized." vs. 23
 - a) The location is unknown, there are people that feel it was up by Samaria, by Bethany, but you know again, there's differing opinions.
 - b) The name means many fountains or "Fountains" and again which demonstrates they needed a lot of water. Which implies what? Baptism was submersion not sprinkling. Why would you need a lot of water, if you're gonna sprinkle? How interesting.
- 3) The commentary on John, "For John had not yet been thrown in prison." vs. 24
 - a) So the ministries of Jesus and John were running simultaneously for a period of time before John had been put in prison. Matt. 14:1-12; Mk. 6:14-29
 - * We would have never known this from the three synoptic gospels if it were not for John the beloved.
 - b) During this period of time John and his disciples and Jesus and his disciple were baptizing, but it was the period of

transition of John fading out and Jesus beginning His ministry.

* But Jesus never water baptized, only His disciples. Jn. 4:2

- c) The three synoptic gospels point out when John the Baptist was put in prison, then Jesus departed to Galilee. Matt. 4:12-17; Mk. 1:14; Lk. 4:14-16

3:25-30 The clarity and distinction between John and Jesus.

- 1) The controversy, "Then there arose a dispute between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purification." vs. 25
 - a) The Jews were into purification and rites with all the ritual and here John is baptizing, and his disciples are baptizing those who are coming in repentance.
 - b) The interesting thing is that water baptism was only for the Gentiles proselytes.
 - c) You had "God fearers those of the gate", who became Jews, but were not circumcised, only baptized and observed the law and the ritual.
 - d) Then there was those who were full proselytes, they were circumcised and baptized, but you would not dare baptize a Jew for they were the children of Abraham.

- e) But John is baptizing Jews, he even tells the Pharisees and scribes, “Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And so, they’re arguing about the whole rite of purification. Lk. 3:7-8
- 2) The disciples of John approached John, “And they came to John and they said to him, ‘Rabbi, He Who was with you beyond the Jordan, (in other words beyond the Jordan means on the east side) was with you beyond the Jordan, to Whom you have testified--behold He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him.’ vs. 26
- a) John’s disciples are getting a little jealous and don’t like that people are going to Jesus, and they see that disciples are leaving John.
- b) Now, it’s commendable, but it’s carnal because John never deceived anybody.
- 3) The response of John to his disciples. vs. 27-30
- a) The simple principle, “John answered and said to them, ‘A man can receive nothing, except it has been given to him from heaven.’ vs. 27

- 1)) This is a tremendous basic and plain principle for ministry, don’t miss it!
- 2)) That if God has called you into ministry, no one can take your ministry. You don’t have to strive for it, you don’t have to fight for it, you don’t have to connive for it, let God establish your ministry.
- 3)) Some say, “people are stealing my sheep.” Who’s sheep are they? Maybe they weren’t even yours in the first place, in the ministry you have. Don’t worry about it.
- 4)) This allows a person to rest in God, for the outcome of ministry, and not focus on numbers. This implies personal diligence and stewardship to maintain and to reproduce what God has given to the individual. This means that we are to be content with whatever God has entrusted us with, for we will have to give an account for everything He gives to us. I am content, but I’m never complacent. I’m always looking to see what else God has, but I’m content. But I don’t become a spiritual slug.
- b) John again declared to them his call, “You yourself, bear me witness, that I said ‘I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before Him.’ vs. 28

c) John plainly illustrates it, “He who has the bride, is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.” vs. 29

- 1)) The friend of the bridegroom rejoices over the voice of the bridegroom. See, the responsibility of the friend of the bridegroom is to hand the bride over to the groom.
- 2)) And even here it’s implied, the nuptial night it was the friend who guarded the room to make sure only the bridegroom went into the bride, and no one else.
- 3)) And when he heard the voice of the bridegroom in the nuptial chamber, he rejoiced because his duty was over. He handed the bride to the bridegroom. John says, “I am the friend of the Bridegroom. Jesus is the Bridegroom all of you are to go to Him.” Did he not say, “Behold, the Lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world”? Jn. 1:29
- 4)) People do this in pastor worship. Even when pastors are not attempting to have people worship them, people do and it’s wrong.

d) The next important principle, “He must increase, and I must decrease.” vs. 30

* John’s mission was to fade away, a little at a time. The principle is that we are to not be an obstacle to hinder people from seeing Jesus. We are to point people to Who? Jesus, that’s Who. Give Him the glory, point them to Him.

3:31-36 The preeminence of Christ.

- 1) The two different origins, “He Who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth, is earthly and speaks of the earth. He Who comes from Heaven is from above all.” vs. 31
 - a) Some believe these words are not the words of John the Baptist, but those of John the beloved, making commentary.
 - b) I believe it is John the Baptist, but it’s possible that it’s John the Beloved, it is still Divine Scripture.
 - c) He’s saying, “I’m of the earth, Jesus is from Heaven, He’s above me.” He’s above all, as a matter of fact.
- 2) The superior authority of Jesus. vs. 32-34
 - a) Jesus is the Messiah sent from the Father, but rejected, “And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony.” vs. 32

- * Jesus is the only One to have descended from heaven!
- b) Jesus the Messiah is excepted by some, “He who has received His testimony, has certified that God is true.” vs. 33
 - 1)) Jesus revealed the true message of God the Father.
 - 2)) Those who have received His testimony put a seal that the revelation of God is genuine and true to its content.
- c) Jesus is the messenger of the Father to man, “For He whom God has sent speaks the Word of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure.” vs. 34
 - 1)) What Jesus was communicating was and is faithful to the words of God the Father, the source is the Spirit of God, is His possession unlimited.
 - 2)) John the Baptist was filled from his mother’s womb, but it was not in complete measure, it was only partial. Only Jesus had the Spirit without measure. Lk. 1:15
- 3) The sole mediator to God the Father is Jesus. vs. 35-36
 - a) The bequeathing of the Father, “The Father loves the Son and has given all things to His hand.” vs. 35
 - 1)) Authority, judgement, power and everything else.

- 2)) All power is given to Me, in Heaven and earth. All judgement has been given to the Son. Every knee shall bow, every tongue shall confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord. Matt. 28:18; Jn. 5:22; Phil. 2:9-10
 - * This is the bottom line of John about Jesus.
- b) The condition for salvation or damnation, “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe in the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides in him.” vs. 36
 - 1)) It’s a choice either you will end up in Heaven by choice, or Hell, but you will never end up in Heaven or Hell by chance. It will be by choice, if you believe in the Son, your sins will be forgiven, you’ll be born again, and you shall have everlasting life.
 - 2)) If you reject the message of the Son, as well as the Son, then the wrath of God abides in you. And the words you have rejected, have judged you already and condemned you.
 - 3)) I pray that you’re not in that state. I pray that you trust Jesus Christ. God loves you so, He doesn’t want you to perish.