



JOHN CHAPTER 3 PART 1

*And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.
-John 3:19-20.*

When people think of John chapter 3 they often instantly think of John 3:16, but what if there was more involved than just 'God loved the world'? What if Jesus was telling us more? In the narrative, a leader of the Pharisees, Nicodemus, approaches Jesus under the cover of darkness. What is interesting about this interaction is, that before Nicodemus even gets his question out, Jesus answers him saying that he must be 'born again.' This is the first time in scripture that this kind of language has ever been used in connection with the kingdom of God. As a result, it has turned into a phrase that has made it deep into pop culture Christianity, but what does it really mean? First, we can understand that being born takes no effort of our own. Jesus is clearly communicating that salvation is the work of God. There is no human effort that can earn our salvation, we just simply recognize that He has saved us. Second, to be reborn is synonymous with being made new. Nicodemus had a hard time understanding these principles because he had an entire lifetime of presuppositions and his own understanding of who God was and how to achieve righteousness. However, Jesus calls us to eject our own understanding and lean on Him. Think new wine in old wineskins, (Mark 2:22) We must reject tradition and lean entirely on what The Word (Christ/Scripture) says.

Finally, Jesus speaks of Salvation rather than condemnation and Light vs Darkness, in verses 16 to 21. These are huge keys to our salvation. Again it's not that we earned anything, but that God LOVED the WORLD. He is willing that NONE should perish, but the reality is that many will. The light came into the world and people chose to live in darkness (Romans 1:18-22) and the reason is clear, the human condition is to hide our sin, or worse, enjoy our sin, even when it is killing us and destroying our life and joy. However, as scripture says, we only find healing when we confess our sins to one another, (James 5:16) this means we must bring our sin to the light so that it can be dealt with. It can be painful to come to the light, just like our eyes must adjust when we walk from the darkness into the bright sunlight, sanctification is a process. For Nicodemus, it took years to come around to The Way.

Read John 3:1-21 - Why do you think Jesus chose to use birth as an analogy here?

Discussion Questions

1. Jesus tells us we must be born of water and spirit. How does this link us back to Old Testament prophecy?
2. How is Jesus' identity as God shown in the interaction between Him and Nicodemus? (Key Jn 2:25)
3. How is Numbers 21 a parallel to Christ? What are some key differences? What must we 'do' to receive salvation?
4. Nicodemus had to wrestle with his own presuppositions and religious traditions to truly see the light. What presuppositions or traditions have you or do you need to bring to the light?
5. Being 'Born again' seems to indicate being made new. What scriptures connect us to being made new in Christ? Are you the same as you were before your salvation?