

John 3

First month or so of Christ's ministry.
Jesus began assembling his disciples. (5)
They believed when they heard about him.
Nathaniel believed when Jesus revealed prophetic insight.
They saw the miracle of the wine, and believed.
Jesus went to the temple.
They remembered the scriptures.
But the Jews asked for a sign.
The people saw the miracles, and believed.
But he didn't commit himself to them.

The next chapter tells us why he did that.

Verse 1

John 3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

Pharisee, vs Sadducees.
They had sent unto John.

A ruler of the Jews.
He would have been one concerned with the temple cleansing affair.

Nico: victory (Greek)
Demus: people
Nicodemus: "victorious among his people"

Verse 2

John 3:2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

NIGHT

No electric lights.
More treacherous to be out at night.
A private, secret meeting?

Light vs darkness.
He's come out of the night to see Jesus.

MIRACLES

They believe he is from God.
Not the Christ, but a teacher.

Because only God could give him the power to do these miracles.

Verse 3

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus didn't say anything about that.
It's like they are talking about two completely different things.

Anybody can believe that Jesus is a miracle-worker, a teacher come from God.
But that isn't what John said.
That's not what his disciples believed.
That isn't what Jesus said in the temple.

But that's what the people were believing in the temple (in miracles).
But Jesus didn't commit himself to them.

Because believing in miracles won't cut it.

Because Jesus didn't come to be a teacher come from God.

John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:
13 Which were **born**, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Those in darkness cannot see the kingdom of God.

What is needed is not for a teacher, a worker of miracles.
What is needed is not for Elijah to come.

What is needed is for the Light.
And not just for it to come, but for men to be made to comprehend it.

What is needed is for the Life to come.
For men to be given a new birth of life.

Nicodemus says, "you're a teacher come from God."
Jesus says, "If that's all I am, then I'm not much good to you."
Because if you want to see the kingdom of God then you've got to be born again.

Verse 4

John 3:4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

You can tell Nicodemus is approaching this purely from the physical reality.
He's thinking of the kingdom of God like it is a purely physical thing.
He's coming from the OT perspective.

You only had to be born once to be a Jew.

Nicodemus says, "But you can only be born once after the flesh."
Jesus says, "Exactly!"

Verse 5

John 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Jesus tells Nicodemus, "That's right. You can only be born once after the flesh."

These are the only times that John uses "kingdom of God"
They are looking for a physical kingdom to come.
But Jesus is reminding him that it is not a purely physical kingdom.
And if you have to be made a citizen of a physical kingdom, then you also have to be brought into the kingdom spiritually.

So to enter into the kingdom, you have to be born twice.
Water and Spirit.
Physical birth.

He's contrasting water-based renewal with Spiritual renewal.

John 1:24 And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.
25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?
26 John answered them, saying, I baptize with **water**: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not;
27 He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.
28 These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.
29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.
30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.
31 And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with **water**.
32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the **Spirit** descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.
33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with **water**, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the **Spirit** descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.
34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

They saw the water baptism, and thought that was the ultimate thing.
They thought Christ would baptize that way.
Nicodemus was one of them.

In the law water-based cleansing was prescribed.
That was the basis for ceremonial holiness.

Verse 6

John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

That won't do you any good.

Verse 7

John 3:7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

Nicodemus has a confused look on his face.

He may be thinking, "Do you really mean that we Pharisees need this?"
"Don't you mean that the Gentiles need to get re-born as Jews?"

Verse 8

John 3:8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Jesus tries to explain with an analogy.

The wind blows wherever it wants to.
And you can hear it (not see).
But you don't know where it came from or where its going.

Something does what it wants to do.
And you hear it.
But you don't know its ways.

Spirit does what it wants to do.
Darkness could not comprehend the light.
You can't tell where the wind is going.
You cannot see it.
Cannot see the kingdom of God.
But you can hear the sound thereof.

This is how you get born of the Spirit.
But when you are born of the Spirit, then you are spirit.

Then you can do as the Spirit desires.
You can speak the word.
You can know where you have come from.
You can know where you are going.
Then you can see the kingdom of God.

Verse 9

John 3:9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

Nicodemus says, “OK, but how is that going to happen?”
How can the Spirit of God interact so with man?

Verse 10

John 3:10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

Jesus is surprised Nicodemus doesn't understand.
OT precedent.

Verse 11

John 3:11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

Jesus says, “We already know this.”
“I'm not telling you anything new.”

This isn't the part they shouldn't be able to comprehend.

Verse 12

John 3:12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

If they can't even comprehend this, then how can they comprehend the full light?

Verse 13

John 3:13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

And this is the only way they can find it out.

He came down while still being in heaven, so that he could testify of heaven, while on the earth.

Verse 14

John 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

Jesus has finished rebuking Nicodemus, and now he answers his question.

Another analogy, from the OT.

Numbers 21:4 And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.

5 And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

6 And the LORD sent fiery **serpents** among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.

7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the **serpents** from us. And Moses prayed for the people.

8 And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery **serpent**, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.

9 And Moses made a **serpent** of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a **serpent** had bitten any man, when he beheld the **serpent** of brass, he lived.

The people were dying.

They asked God to take away the serpents.

God didn't do what they wanted him to do.

He didn't do the will of the flesh.

Instead of taking away the death, he gave them a way to receive new life.

They wanted God to bring in the physical kingdom, and take death out of the world.

But that isn't what God is going to do.

And he's not just going to give them a new body of flesh.

They're going to be born again of the Spirit.

How is that going to happen?

Jesus said he's going to be lifted up just like that serpent.

Became an idol (as would Christ)

Verse 15

John 3:15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Just as those that looked on the serpent did not perish.

Eternal life.

How, being born again in a young body?

Verse 16

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Why did God do this? (love)
God so loved the world he didn't just take away the serpents.

They looked upon a serpent to be healed.
We believe upon death to receive life.

He gave his only begotten Son, that the world might be saved.
Whosoever.

Verse 17

John 3:17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

There is going to come a time where he does condemn the world.
Be he wasn't here on that mission.

Salvation for who? The jews?

Verse 18

John 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

When he comes to bring judgement, those that believe are not condemned.

God sent his Son beforehand, that they might be saved.
Because he so loved the world.
Before the angels ascended and descended, the ultimate work.

He that believeth not is already condemned.
He's in death.

Whether Jew or Gentile.
Your flesh will not save you, you must be born again.

This is a mystery, that God so loved the world that he saved all those who believed.

Verse 19

John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

Those that haven't believed are condemned.
They're already in death.
But there is an even greater condemnation.

Light came into the world.
Witness was born to it.
And yet it was not sought or desired.
They wanted to stay in darkness.

Their deeds were evil.
They're worthy of condemnation.

Why do people reject the light?

Verse 20

John 3:20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

They don't want to be reproved for their wickedness.

When John was baptizing, many didn't come to him.
But Nicodemus was interested.

Many didn't come to Jesus. He came to them.
And they didn't like him.
But Nicodemus did come to him.

Verse 21

John 3:21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

Jesus is telling Nicodemus that his friends are wicked.

But there were those in Israel who did truth.
They were following God's Spirit through his word.
They will come to the light, and not be reproved.

Nicodemus isn't going to be able to reconcile Christ and the Pharisees.

Verse 22

John 3:22 After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.

Jesus leaves Jerusalem, and goes into the region of Judea about it.

And he's baptizing.
Why?
They can't be baptized with the Spirit yet.
Symbolic.

He's also giving a sign to the Pharisees.
That's what impressed them about John.
That's what Nicodemus was thinking of, being born again.

Verse 23

John 3:23 And John also was baptizing in AEnon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.

John is still baptizing.

Aenon: "place of springs" (Hebrew)

Verse 24

John 3:24 For John was not yet cast into prison.

Verse 25

John 3:25 Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.

Two different people baptizing.
The Jews can't understand that. Isn't one baptism enough?
They're thinking in terms of the flesh.

Verse 26

John 3:26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.

Shouldn't you stop now?
Isn't his baptism superior?
Or isn't yours enough then, what is he doing?

Verse 27

John 3:27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

So John says that baptism is also legitimate.

Verse 28

John 3:28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.

So Jesus isn't stepping on John's toes.

Verse 30

John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

So John is going to wind things down.

Verse 31

John 3:31 He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.

He is above John.

John doesn't get to appoint the Christ.

He doesn't get to baptize people with the ultimate baptism.

He just bears witness of him.

Jesus is above him, he's from above.

He was before him.

John is an earthly man, he knew him not.

He's not that Light.

The one who is from heaven must be the Light.

He's the one who must have the ultimate ministry.

It wasn't John.

But they apparently preferred John.

He was an earthly man, with a water baptism.

They could comprehend him.

Verse 32

John 3:32 And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.

The one from heaven is speaking, and they won't receive it.

Verse 33

John 3:33 He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.

But some have received him. (like it said before, he came unto his own)

The Jewish system didn't receive him.

(Judaism was in darkness)

Seal something to prove authenticity.
A letter, or covenant, or law.
Evidence of a purchase.
Witnesses testimony.

Here is a man testifying, and no man is receiving it.
No one will seal it.
“This man gave this testimony, here is what it was, I heard it, I set my seal on it.”

Some have sealed it.
What was the seal they placed on it?
Their own seal? Their own stamp of approval?

Isaiah 8:1 Moreover the LORD said unto me, Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen concerning Mahershalalhashbaz.
2 And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah.
3 And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son. Then said the LORD to me, Call his name Mahershalalhashbaz.
4 For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria.
5 The LORD spake also unto me again, saying,
6 Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son;
7 Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks:
8 And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.
9 Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces.
10 Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us.
11 For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying,
12 Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.
13 Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.
14 And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
15 And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.
16 Bind up the **testimony**, **seal** the law among my disciples.
17 And I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.

18 Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.

19 And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?

20 To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

21 And they shall pass through it, hardly bestead and hungry: and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward.

22 And they shall look unto the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness.

Verse 34

John 3:34 For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

They're not sealing that man is true.

Not that they believe this man.

It's not a man's words.

This man speaks the words of God.

The Spirit abode upon him.

So they're not setting to their seal that they believe this man.

But that they believe God.

Not that this man is true.

But that God is true.

If you believe that God is true then you have to believe in Jesus Christ.

(Otherwise you're saying that God lied about Jesus.)

Verse 35

John 3:35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

You must receive the testimony from the Son, because all things have been giving into his hand.

Receiving his testimony is receiving the testimony of God.

Not is not.

He has been given it all.

He is the Word.

Verse 36

John 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Not only all testimony is in his hand, but all things.
In the word was life, and the life was the light of men.

You receive his testimony, you will also receive all these things.

But if you don't, you remain in darkness and cannot comprehend it.
In death, no life.

Just as Jesus said.
John said all of the same things.

John 4:1 When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,
2 (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)
3 He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.