

**Text Outline****John 3:1-21****I. 3 Now**

- A. there was a Pharisee,**
  - 1. a man named Nicodemus**
  - 2. who was a member of the Jewish ruling council.**
- B. <sup>2</sup>He**
  - 1. came to Jesus at night**
  - 2. and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher**
    - a) who has come from God.*
    - b) For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.”*
- C. <sup>3</sup>Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one**
  - 1. can see the kingdom of God**
  - 2. unless they are born again.”**
- D. <sup>4</sup>“How can**
  - 1. someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked.**
  - 2. Surely they cannot enter a second time**
    - a) into their mother’s womb*
    - b) to be born!”*
- E. <sup>5</sup>Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one**
  - 1. can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of**
    - a) water*
    - b) and the Spirit.*
  - 2. (different natures)**
    - a) <sup>6</sup>Flesh gives birth to flesh,*
    - b) but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.*
  - 3. <sup>7</sup>You should not be surprised at my saying,**
    - a) ‘You must be born again.’*
    - b) <sup>8</sup>The wind blows wherever it pleases.*
      - (1) You hear its sound,
      - (2) but you cannot tell
        - (a) where it comes from*
        - (b) or where it is going.*
    - c) So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”*

**II. <sup>9</sup>“How**

- A. can this be?” Nicodemus asked.**
- B. <sup>10</sup>“You**
  - 1. are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus,**
  - 2. “and do you not understand these things?**
  - 3. <sup>11</sup>Very truly I tell you,**

- a) *we speak of what we know,*
- b) *and we testify to what we have seen,*
- c) *but still you people do not accept our testimony.*

C. <sup>12</sup> I

1. **have spoken**

- a) *to you of earthly things*
- b) *and you do not believe;*

2. **how then**

- a) *will you believe*
- b) *if I speak of heavenly things?*

3. <sup>13</sup> **No one has ever gone into heaven**

- a) *except the one who came from heaven*
- b) *—the Son of Man.*

4. <sup>14</sup> **Just as**

- a) *Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness,*
- b) *so the Son of Man must be lifted up,*
- c) *<sup>15</sup> that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.”*

III. <sup>16</sup> **For**

A. **God so loved the world**

1. **that he gave**

- a) *his one*
- b) *and only Son,*

2. **that**

- a) *whoever believes in him*
- b) *shall not perish*
- c) *but have eternal life.*

B. <sup>17</sup> **For God did not send**

1. **his Son into the world**

- a) *to condemn the world,*
- b) *but to save the world through him.*

2. **(condemnation)**

- a) *<sup>18</sup> Whoever believes in him is not condemned,*
- b) *but whoever does not believe*
  - (1) stands condemned already
  - (2) because they have not believed in the name of God’s
    - (a) *one*
    - (b) *and only Son.*

IV. <sup>19</sup> **This is the verdict:**

A. **Light**

1. **has come into the world,**

2. **but people**

- a) *loved darkness*
- b) *instead of light*
- c) *because their deeds were evil.*

**B.** <sup>20</sup> **Everyone**

1. **who does evil hates the light,**
2. **and will not come into the light**
3. **for fear that their deeds will be exposed.**

**C.** <sup>21</sup> **But whoever**

1. **lives by the truth**
2. **comes into the light,**
3. **so that it may be seen plainly**
  - a) *that what they have done*
  - b) *has been done in the sight of God.*

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## Conceptual Outline

**Theme: Jesus shows Nicodemus & us God's love & the path to eternal life.**

### I. Nicodemus' search

- A. Nicodemus' identity as Pharisee & a member of Jewish ruling council
- B. He came to Jesus at night & affirmed that Jesus came from God
- C. Jesus' invitation to Nicodemus to be born again
- D. Nicodemus was puzzled
- E. Jesus explained 2nd birth
  1. born by water & the Spirit
  2. it is of a different nature & requires the work of the Spirit
  3. As the wind, it cannot be perceived by human nature

### II. How to be born again?

- A. Nicodemus inquired how to be born again
- B. By accepting Jesus' testimony because he knows & have seen
- C. By believing what Jesus teaches us
  1. of earthly things
  2. of heavenly things
  3. Jesus knows because He came from heaven
  4. Those who believe Jesus dies on the cross & is lifted up may have eternal life in him

### III. Reason:

- A. God loved the world
  1. He gave his only Son
  2. whoever believes shall not perish but have eternal life
- B. God sent Jesus
  1. was to save the world
  2. Believe is the only way out of condemnation

### IV. The verdict is just

- A. The light has come into the world but people reject it.
- B. Everyone, who does evil & refuses light, does so because of their deeds.
- C. Whoever lives by the truth comes into the light.

## Questions & Potential Answers:

1. What are some of the different attempts man try to reach God? How successful are these attempts? What are the short/long-term benefits and consequences for these attempts?
2. In this passage, Jesus teaches us the only way we can enter the kingdom of God. It is not how we can reach God, but how God reaches out to us.

### Read John 3:1-8

3. This is a private conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus. Who is Nicodemus?
  - His name means victory of the people.
  - He's a Pharisee :
    - A group which was started around Nehemiah's time. They're separatists focusing on personal holiness and strict obedience to the law.
    - They go through rigorous training and memorize the five books of Moses at a young age.
    - They fast regularly and pray & bath three times a day.
  - He's a member of the ruling council, the Sanhedrin.
    - It's a group consisting of the high priest and 69 members forming the Jewish court. The Sanhedrin has the final authority of Jewish Law.
    - Members master many subjects and are respected as wise men. They are usually wealth as well.

#### When & why did he come to see Jesus?

- He came at night possibly because of fear of being judged by other Pharisee but it can also be for other practical reasons as well.
- It was unclear why he came as Jesus "interrupted" him right away. He might have mixed feelings about Jesus and wanted to reconcile them in order to form his own opinion.

#### What does he already know about Jesus?

- He addressed Jesus as "Rabbi, " a respected title for teacher/master of the Torah (5 books of Moses.) This is a great honor considering Nicodemus' own credentials. Jesus, on the other hand, does not have any human credentials.
- He recognized that Jesus came from God & had God's Presence with Him. This is a higher honor since all of Nicodemus' credentials were from men.
- He recognized that the miracles Jesus performed were from God.

#### Why did he use "we know" instead of "I know"?

- The use of "we" is less intimate. The opinion expressed are generalized to a group rather than personal.
- It might be a safer position to hold. Making a personal profession about Jesus might be more risky for someone in his position.

4. Nicodemus did not even have to raise a question before Jesus saw his need. What did Jesus say to this highly respected man?

- No one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.

What is "the kingdom of God"? Why is it important to Nicodemus?

- To Nicodemus (as his name indicates) the kingdom of God would mean the restoration of the kingdom of Israel back to glory.
- However, Jesus is using it here as equivalent to a new life. This is a kingdom where God is King. Satan, sin, and death are defeated. When a person submits to Jesus and allows Him to be King, he enters into a relationship with Jesus as His citizen. The kingdom began from the time Jesus triumphed over death but will consummate at the end time when He returns to rule the world.

The concept of born again puzzled Nicodemus. What are the two essentials to be born again? What do they mean?

- Jesus said in v. 5 "they are born of water & the Spirit"
- Historically, in Ez 36:25-27, God promised that one day, He'll cleanse us with water and fill us and move us with His Spirit so that we'll obey His laws. Jesus is the fulfillment of this promise. In John 1:33, Nicodemus' contemporary, John the Baptist, was baptizing with water symbolizing repentance from sin and was prophesying that Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit. So being born of water & Spirit means repenting from our former way of life and allowing God to cleanse us, fill us, change us, & move us to live a new life according to His way.

What does Jesus compare this birth with? How is being born again similar to blowing of the wind? Who is responsible of the birth?

- Jesus compared it with the wind.
- We don't have control over the wind. So is the will and power of the Spirit. God has the control. We don't know the ways of the wind but we can experience the effects. We don't know how we're born of the Spirit but when birth takes place, the result is clearly visible.
- We have no control. Not flesh. Not of this world. It is the work of the Spirit.

What does Nicodemus need to do to be born again?

- Be willing to let go of the old self and repent. Be willing to relate to Jesus in a deeper way, not "we" but "I".

#### **Read vs. 9-15**

5. What was Nicodemus' next question?

- "How can this be?" It might be more a comment than a question. It is unbelievable. It is impossible.

What credentials did Jesus have to talk about spiritual birth?

- Jesus knows because He's the only one who came from heaven. He is the Son of Man, i.e., Son of God. Besides Him, no one has even gone into or come from heaven.

What does Jesus want to teach Nicodemus in vs. 14 & 15? Read Numbers 21:4-9.

- In Moses' time, God provided salvation for people who sinned & were condemned to die. He had to look to the snake (repent) and would be healed.
- He's using what Nicodemus knew to teach Him about how He'll fulfill the Old Testament prophecy & become the source of healing.

What is meant by "the Son of Man must be lifted up"?

- Jesus will be lifted up as sinful (snake), as a sacrifice on the cross so that those who believe in Him will be saved.

**Read vs. 16-21**

6. What is the reason for Jesus' death?

- Because God so loved the world.

What are some of the actions God did because of His love for the world?

- He
  - gave his one and only Son
  - send his Son into the world
  - save the world

What is the condition for man to be saved?

- Believe (v.18)
- Lives by the truth (v.21)

How is this believing different from the believing that's described in John 2:23-24? <sup>23</sup> "Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival, many people saw the signs he was performing and believed in his name. <sup>24</sup> But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all people."

- The first is believing in His miracle, His power & maybe wanting something from Him.
- The second believe is putting our trust in Him, surrendering to Him, and allowing Him to help us live.

7. What is the promise for those who believe?

- Negative
  - not perish
  - not condemn
- Positive
  - have eternal life
  - save

When will they have eternal life?

- From the moment they believe

What is eternal life?

- Power and freedom to life by the truth, the life that God intended for us.
- Life everlasting

What are some of the descriptions of this life?

- Freedom from guilt & condemnation
- Eternal
- In the Light (in Christ)
- doing things in the sight of God (in God's Presence)

8. What is the verdict for the rest of mankind?

- They are condemned already. Just as the Israelites who did not look to the snake died because they did not choose the way for healing.

What is the reason man reject Light?

- They love darkness (sin).
  - Their deeds are evil & they fear that their deeds will be exposed.
9. Evaluate your belief. Have you been born again? Would Jesus entrust himself to you? If so, spend a moment to thank God for His love for you and invite His light to come in and shine out your darkness. Invite Him to move you to obey His laws and live by the truth. If not, consider your need for His salvation and pray to receive His free gift for you. Turn from darkness and come into the light.

## Questions:

1. What are some of the different attempts man try to reach God? How successful are these attempts? What are the short/long-term benefits and consequences for these attempts?
2. In this passage, Jesus teaches us the only way we can enter the kingdom of God. It is not how we can reach God, but how God reaches out to us.

### Read John 3:1-8

3. This is a private conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus. Who is Nicodemus? When & why did he come to see Jesus? What does he already know about Jesus? Why did he use "we know" instead of "I know"?
4. Nicodemus did not even have to raise a question before Jesus saw his need. What did Jesus say to this highly respected man? What is "the kingdom of God"? Why is it important to Nicodemus? The concept of born again puzzled Nicodemus. What are the two essentials to be born again? Who is responsible of the birth? What does Jesus compare this birth with? How is being born again similar to blowing of the wind? What does Nicodemus need to do to be born again?

### Read vs. 9-15

5. What was Nicodemus' next question? What credentials did Jesus have to talk about spiritual birth? What does Jesus want to teach Nicodemus in vs. 14 & 15? Read Numbers 21:4-9. What is meant by "the Son of Man must be lifted up"?

### Read vs. 16-21

6. What is the reason for Jesus' death? What are some of the actions God did because of His love for the world? What is the condition for man to be saved? How is this believing different from the believing that's described in John 2:23-24? <sup>23</sup> "Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival, many people saw the signs he was performing and believed in his name. <sup>24</sup> But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all people."
7. What is the promise for those who believe? When will they have eternal life? What is eternal life? What are some of the descriptions of this life?
8. What is the verdict for the rest of mankind? What is the reason man reject Light?
9. Evaluate your belief. Have you been born again? Would Jesus entrust himself to you? If so, spend a moment to thank God for His love for you and invite His light to come in and shine out your darkness. Invite Him to move you to obey His laws and live by the truth. If not, consider your need for His salvation and pray to receive His free gift for you. Turn from darkness and come into the light.