

2. vs. 12 “you” Here is correction and invitation: repentance and faith.

B. Earthly things are plainly understood things

Jesus and John the Baptist preached with clarity: “bring forth fruits”; two coats give one away, don't commit adultery, don't take bribes; let your no be no and your yes be yes. Be truthful etc... But you (second person plural) didn't submit to the teaching or the symbolic ordinance: Baptism.

C. Heavenly things are the designs and plans of God completely inaccessible to man unless God shows them to us.

Incarnation: “fullness of God in a helpless babe”

Omnipresence: “is in heaven”

substitution: Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. I Peter 1:20

He hasn't told him yet of how to be born again. Was there a pause after vs. 12?

**He now will do for Nicodemus what He wouldn't do for the others in Jerusalem: 2:24. He will confide in, He will familiarly disclose Himself and His mission to truth seeking Nicodemus.**

**Nicodemus the Truth Seeker: John 2:23-3:12** MAY 1, 2022

Last week we considered, “Seeking precedes Finding”. Today *Nicodemus the Truth Seeker*. John gives you his purpose statement for writing what he wrote: “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may **believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God**, and that believing you may have life in His name.” Jn. 20:30,31

**I. Identical words are used in different senses: 2:23-3:2.**

This is a difficulty inseparable from the use of language: “love” of hot dogs, popcorn, puppies, kittens, and GOD.

A. There is a kind of **faith (belief)** that is insufficient and can't save.

1. He was in the city for Passover: 2:13-22 (at least 7 days); drove merchants out of the Temple, and did many miracles that week.

2. "many believed" means that His knowledge and unusual power made a significant impression on them, but it doesn't mean they savingly believed.

B. Saving faith is a submission (Romans 10:3), a self-entrustment to a person, the Lord Jesus Christ: John 20:28,29.

1. “He **did** not **commit** Himself to them” (2:24): is a play on words. It is the same Greek word *believe* as in 2:11,22,23. As they did not *entrust themselves* to Him, He did not *entrust Himself* to them.

2. He would not, and really *could not*, confidingly disclose Himself to them familiarly:2:25. They were not in a state of moral receptivity.

3. Nicodemus is somewhat of an exception: 3:1. In hearing Nicodemus's words the whole Pharisaic mentality toward the Kingdom of God presented itself to Jesus. Compare Luke 17:20,21. It isn't expelling the Roman legions, at least not yet.

4. Nicodemus believes he may be seeing the dawn of the kingdom—and plainly states his impression: vs.2. Miracles prove divine assistance.

5. Jesus, probably more shocked than flattered, shocks Nicodemus: 3:3-7.

## II. Don't be afraid to stop people in their tracks and take them in the right doctrinal direction: 3:3-7.

A. Attack doubts: "verily, verily" {KJV} "Truly, Truly" {NASB} "most assuredly" {NKJV}--*implies doubt* against what Jesus says is a fact.

1 "See the kingdom" means enjoy the kingdom: "Abraham saw...was glad."

2. You must have a radical operation—a kingdom entrance, a birth from above, as new as birth itself. Without it you will perish--PERISH.

B. Nicodemus comes to Jesus assured of what the kingdom is, as well his own sure place in it. He will leave with doubts about both: blessed doubts!

1. "How can a man....when he is old"? vs. 4

2. This seems absurd, apparently requiring a new physical (mother's womb a second time) beginning if there is to be a new moral beginning.

3. There is an absolute difference between natural birth and the *new birth*.

## III. The elite religious establishment rejected John the Baptist<sup>1</sup> and Christ.

"The baptism of John was producing at that time an immense sensation in Israel, so that the thought of Nicodemus, on hearing the words, *birth by water*; must have turned immediately to that ceremony; as it was celebrated in the form of a total or partial immersion, it quite naturally represented a birth. Jesus, moreover, at the moment when he expressed Himself, was in a sense coming out from the water of baptism; it was when completing this rite (ceremony) that "the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form upon Him" (Luke 3:21,22).

*Nicodemus* must learn that acceptance of the work of the forerunner was the first condition of entering into new life. "If baptism is, on the part of man, the declaration of the renunciation of sin, it is, on the part of God, the declaration of the pardon of sins."

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1 "...even the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him." Luke 7:29,30

In speaking to **Nicodemus**, Jesus did not think of making salvation depend, either in general or in each particular case, on the material act of baptism. The example of the thief on the cross proves that pardon could be granted without the baptism of water. But, when the offer of this sign has been made and the sinner has rejected it, the position is different; and this was the case with **Nicodemus**. By the two following sentences, Jesus demonstrates the *necessity* (vs. 6a), and the *possibility* (vs.6b), of the new birth, by leaving aside the water, to keep closely to the Spirit only."<sup>2</sup>

Verse 6 is the answer to Nicodemus's question: That which is born of the Spirit is really spirit, and cannot fail to enter, experience, and enjoy the Kingdom. Two phases of one individual is described in verse 6, his first birth, and his second birth. Marvel not as though this is a strange teaching.

## IV. The evidences of supernatural inward new birth are real and recognizable: 3:5-8. Ribbons of Regeneration

A. He's in Jerusalem, a breezy city. You could hear the wind blow, you could see the leaves on the trees move in the breeze. But you could not see the wind because wind is invisible. All we see are the *effects of the wind*.

B. This is the same as the Holy Spirit's work in bringing people to life. No one sees the new birth take place with his or her physical eyes. Yet a real spiritual work is done: you can see the effects: **RIBBONS**.

C. See two astonished teachers:

1. Nicodemus is astonished: 3:9. If what you say is true, then???
2. Jesus is astonished: 3:10. You are *the illustrious teacher*???

## V. Using the light you have and you will get more light: 3:11-13.

A. Some spiritual refusals are not final. Compare

1. vs. 11 We<sup>3</sup>, Jesus and his "seeing" disciples.

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2 Frederic Godet Commentary of the Gospel of John p.378-380

3 "We" is referring to at least six of the apostles. **Andrew** and **John** were won by the testimony of John the Baptist (John 1:35-40) **James** the son of Zebedee also, Mark 1:19: **Peter** by the testimony of Andrew (John 1:40-42); **Phillip** by the invitation of Jesus (John 1:43); and **Nathanael** by the testimony of Phillip (John 1:46,47). Each one acknowledged Jesus' Messiahship (vs. 41,45, 49).

