

C H A P T E R

3

Read verses 1 through 21. This section records the meeting between Nicodemus and Jesus, and the conversation which ensued. It contains some of the most important teaching found in the New Testament.

Verse 1. Nicodemus was a person of some importance, and a recognized leader among the Jews, of the strict sect of the Pharisees. Jesus was not popular with the Pharisees, and it was because Nicodemus did not wish to invite the scorn of his peers, that he came to Jesus at night.

47. Probably because he feared the scorn of fellow Pharisees, Nicodemus came to Jesus by _____.

Verse 2. Nicodemus seemed to be complimenting Jesus when he said, "We know You are a teacher come from God, for no man can do the things You do, except God be with him." The answer he received must have surprised him greatly.

48. True or False? Nicodemus recognized Jesus as the Son of God.

Verse 3. Jesus did not reply. "Thank you sir," as might have been expected. He ignored the compliment, and looking into the heart of this devoutly religious man, He said, "Nicodemus, you must be born again before you can realize what the Kingdom of God is all about".

49. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be _____ he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

Verse 4. Nicodemus' amazement at Jesus' statement is understandable when we remember that as a Pharisee he was trained in a literal and legalistic mode of thinking. This is shown in his reply as he said, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?"

50. True or False? Nicodemus was amazed at Jesus' reply.

Verse 5. Jesus' reply in this instance was similar to His first statement, yet what He added was very significant. "Except a man be born of water and spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God."

51. In verse 5 Jesus says that a man must be born of _____ and _____ to enter the Kingdom of God.

Verse 5 (continued). There is a sharp division of opinion among Bible scholars over the meaning of the term "born of water." Some say it refers to physical birth,

and this is literally true when a baby is born. However, we have good and sufficient reason to believe that to be "born of water" refers to immersion in water. Jesus was immersed and immediately following this, the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove descended upon Him. In Acts 2:38, we see that immersion in water of penitent believers is followed by the gift of the Holy Spirit. One is "born again" when he dies with Christ, is buried with Christ, and is raised with Christ to walk in newness of life. See Romans 6:3-5.

52. True or False? To be "born again," "born of water and spirit," refers to the immersion in water of the penitent believer.

Verse 6. Jesus told Nicodemus this to emphasize that to be reborn referred to the spiritual life, not to the physical.

53. To have spiritual life one must be _____.

Verses 7 and 8. Jesus implied that Nicodemus should have been able to understand and accept the necessity for the "new birth," for it was no more difficult than it was to accept certain phenomenon commonly observed in the physical world.

54. Jesus implied that Nicodemus should have been able to -

_____ the necessity for new birth.

Verse 9. By his reply, which was a question, Nicodemus showed that he still did not understand.

55. True or False? The conversation ended here, as Jesus became impatient with Nicodemus.

Read verses 10 through 13. Jesus gave here the only reliable source of information about Heaven. He knew of what He spoke, because He had seen and experienced these things. Nicodemus' failure to understand was probably due to the fact that he still did not accept the fact that Jesus, the Son of Man, was also the Son of God.

56. The most reliable source of information about heavenly things is He who came

from Heaven, even _____

Verses 14 and 15. The typology which Jesus used in this section referred to the story related in Numbers 21:8,9. That in the raising of the bronze serpent on a pole was a type of the crucifixion of Christ, was shown by Christ's own words in these verses. Now let us study the similarities which make it valid as a type.

(1) The serpents, whose lethal bite was spreading death among the Israelites, were a plague sent by God as a punishment for the sins of the people. God provided a remedy for the bite of the serpent, and He has also provided a way that man may escape paying the penalty for sin.

57. God, who provided a _____ for the snake bitten Israelites, has also provided a _____ for sin-ridden, dying man.

(2) The bronze serpent, a likeness of the thing which was causing widespread death among the people, was raised on a pole where all could see. Christ, in the likeness of a sinful man, and bearing man's sin, was raised on a cross, for all to see. See 2 Corinthians 5:21, where it says that "Christ was made sin for us."

In both type and anti-type, an image of that which caused the hurt was raised high for all to see.

(3) It was not reasonable for the snake bitten Israelites to believe that merely by looking at the image of the thing that had bitten them, they would be cured, and it seems just as unreasonable for sin-cursed man to look at a dying man on a cross and believe that this could save him. In both cases, it requires belief in both the goodness and the omnipotence of God. It demands trust and obedience.

58. In both the above cases, to be saved required _____ and _____.

Verse 16. This verse has been called "the Golden Text of the Bible," and well deserves such a title. God **so** loved (the intensity of that love), He **gave** (love always gives), that **whosoever** believeth (the extent of that love), **might not perish** (the purpose of that love).

59. God _____ so much because He _____ so much.

Read verses 17 through 21. This section states a very important, though often neglected facet of Christ's gospel. God enables and sets free, rather than condemns and enslaves.

Verse 17. This verse again states God's purpose in sending His Son into the world, but in a negative fashion. His purpose was not condemnation, but salvation.

60. God sent His Son into the world, not to _____ the world, but to _____.

Verse 18. He who believes on Christ is not condemned, but he who does not believe is already under condemnation. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23.

61. All one has to do to be lost is _____.

Verse 19. Jesus is the light of the world. The final condemnation of man is not because of his sin, but because he will not come to the light.

62. The condemnation of man is not primarily because he has sinned, but because he chooses to remain in _____.

Verse 20. Both figuratively and literally, those whose deeds are evil fear and hate the light. As they choose the darkness of night in which to steal, so the evil man chooses the darkness of sin, rather than come to the light of God as revealed by Jesus.

63. The evil man both _____ and _____ the Light.

Verse 21. Only the Truth can stand the light of searching investigation. One whose works and deeds are honest does not fear disclosure, so he works in the open, for it can be truly said that all that is true has its origin in God.

64. The man whose works are _____ does not fear the light.

Verse 22. The events of chapter 2 occurred in Jerusalem, and the conversation with Nicodemus must have taken place in or near that city. Jesus and His disciples then went to some rural part of Judea and were baptizing there. It is generally accepted that Jesus Himself did not do the immersing, but the disciples baptized under His direction. (See John 4:2)

65. In the understanding of that culture, it was proper to say that Jesus was baptizing, when in actuality _____ were performing the rite.

Read verses 23 and 24. According to McGarvey, John was probably baptizing in the Wady Farah, northeast of Jerusalem, and not far from the Damascus Road. There are copious springs there, so it fits the description, "much water there."

66. "Much water" is significant because it denotes that the mode of baptism was _____.

Read verses 25 through 30. The growing popularity of Jesus seemed to have caused the disciples of John to become jealous. Here we have an example of the partisan spirit, a tendency of man to follow human leadership, condemned by Paul when he observed it in the Church of Corinth (See 1 Corinthians 3:1 - 3). Partisanship is divisive. It feeds on pride and arrogance, and still today, is a major cause of church quarrels.

67. John's disciples expected him to be A) disturbed B) happy by the news of Jesus' increasing popularity. (Choose A or B)

John compared himself to the friend of the bridegroom (Jesus). Though he was not important, he could rejoice in the good fortune of his friend.

68. John compared Jesus to a _____ and himself as a _____ of the _____.

John told his disciples, "He must increase, but I must decrease." I think there is no more noble example of genuine humility in human history than that seen here. It stems from the fact that John realized his own calling, had accomplished it, and had no reason to feel jealous of one who had a higher calling.

69. John was truly _____ because of his realization that Jesus had a higher _____ than he.

John knew that Jesus was of heavenly origin, and could speak with more authority of heavenly things than he himself could, who was of earthly origin.

70. True or False? John realized that Jesus was more than a great teacher, with ideas worth learning, but that He was the Son of God and the author of eternal life.

Verses 34 and 35. Since Jesus is God's Son, He has the Holy Spirit in "full measure," not partially as did the prophets. God also gave "all things into His hands."

71. John says here that Jesus is in-dwelt and empowered by God's own _____, and He has entrusted everything into _____.

Read verse 36. A more nearly correct translation of this verse is found in Good News for Modern Man, and is as follows: "Whosoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever disobeys the Son will never have life, but God's wrath will remain on him forever." I have yet to hear what "faith only" people say to this. What this verse says is plain enough, no further comment is necessary, except that in James 2:25.

72. To receive eternal life, one must both _____ and _____.

ANSWERS:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 47. Night | 60. Condemn, save |
| 48. False | 61. Not believe |
| 49. Born again | 62. Darkness |
| 50. True | 63. Fears, hates |
| 51. Water and spirit | 64. True or honest |
| 52. True | 65. His disciples |

53. Born again
54. Understand
55. False
56. Jesus Christ
57. Remedy, remedy
58. Trust, obedience
59. Gave, loved

66. Immersion
67. a.) Disturbed
68. Bridegroom, friend, bridegroom
69. Humble, calling
70. True
71. Spirit, His hands
72. Believe, obey

**AT THIS TIME, PLEASE REFER TO THE SPECIAL STUDY ON
BAPTISM**

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