

Bible Study

The book of John

Lesson 2



Life in God's Gift

Many Jews gathered in Jerusalem from all over the country to celebrate the Passover. Jesus came into town at the temple, He saw men selling, buying, and cheating. Jesus took a whip and drove the money changers and sales people out of the house of God. When the Jewish religious rulers saw the authority that Jesus used with the people it made them jealous.

Many people saw the authority Jesus used and became curious about who He was. During the Passover Jesus met the needs of many people by doing miracles. Some people followed Jesus only to see the miracles that He did. They were not true followers of Jesus; they only pretend (acted) to be followers so they could see the miracles. Jesus knew their hearts were far from Him.

Nicodemus is an example of the people who followed Jesus only to see the miracles. One night Nicodemus secretly went to see Jesus. What strange message did Jesus tell him? Study carefully and you will see.

Search the Scriptures: John 3:1–36; 2:1-25. God sent Jesus to the world so that we could believe.

Interpretation

I. BE BORN AGAIN

John 3:1-3, 9, 14, 15. There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 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. 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 answered and said unto him, How can these things be? . . . And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life.

A. Born Again

Jesus did not want to become a great teacher or famous man. He never did anything just to show off His power or great knowledge. Jesus simply wanted to meet the everyday needs of the people. Sometimes people had needs that they did not know about until Jesus met them.

Nicodemus had a need. Nicodemus did not know he had a need in his life until he met Jesus. Nicodemus was a respected teacher in Israel. He came to Jesus one night to talk with him.

Nicodemus was a religious man, but he did not understand much about who Jesus really was. Nicodemus saw no need for a change in his own life. He thought he could go to heaven because he was so good and respected in Israel. But he had to learn something about himself before he could learn more about Jesus. Nicodemus needed to be born again. He needed to be born into the family of God. He could never go to heaven without the new birth.

It is the same today. If you want to go to heaven you must be born again. Many people today forget this teaching in the Bible. *Born again* means to receive new life through Jesus. We must become a part of the family of God if we want to go to heaven.

B. New Birth

When you first read this verse about becoming *born again* what did you think? Nicodemus thought, *Impossible! A person cannot become a baby in his mother's belly and be born again.* Nicodemus came to Jesus because of the miracles he had seen Jesus do. Nicodemus thought Jesus would maybe do a miracle and make him be born a second time. Nicodemus thought Jesus was talking about physical (body) birth.

Jesus showed Nicodemus that He was *not* talking about physical (body) birth. Jesus was talking about spiritual birth. Being born again means that your life is made new when you accept Jesus into your heart. This new birth cannot be received by doing good things or saying nice words.

“He saved us—not because we were good enough to be saved, but because of His kindness and pity—by washing away our sins and giving us the new joy of the indwelling “Holy Spirit” (Living Bible, Titus 3:5).

We do not completely understand how Jesus washes our sins away. We do not completely understand how Jesus makes us be *born again*. But we know that He does give us new life.

Jesus compared it to the wind. We cannot see the wind. We do not know where it begins. But we feel the wind and know that it is real. The same is true with the new birth. We cannot understand all about it, but we know it is real! Praise God!

C. Look at the Cross

Nicodemus still cried out. “How can this happen? How can a man become a baby and be born again?” He still did not understand how the new birth could happen. Jesus said, “You are a very important person in the town and you do not understand such a simple thing?”

Jesus explained it more by reminding Nicodemus of something that happened many years before in the history of Israel. Read Numbers 21:4-9. Jesus compared himself to the brass snake. One time when Israel turned away from God and sinned. God let many snakes come and bite the people. This was judgment on the Jews because they turned away from God. God told Moses to build a cross and put a brass snake on it. The brass snake (serpent) on that cross was a symbol of God’s mercy. Everyone who looked at the brass serpent was saved from the snake bites. Everyone who looked at the serpent lived. This is a picture of victory over Satan.

The cross of Jesus is a symbol of God’s mercy. It is a picture of victory over Satan. Now everyone who looks to Jesus and accepts Him can also live. The life Jesus gives is eternal (forever). That is the new birth into the family of God. That is the new birth into the family of God. The new birth becomes real to each of us when we receive Jesus into our lives.

II. LIFE BECAUSE OF GOD’S LOVE

John 3:15-19. That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 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. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

A. Life for the Believer

Almost every Christian can quote John 3:16 by memory. When you read John 3:16 in your Bible you might think that this verse is just a repeat of verse 15. But it is not just a repeat. Jesus shows us in verse 15 that it is necessary to look to the

Cross for the new birth. But verse 16 shows us that the Cross is made possible because God loves us so much. The Bible shows us that our new birth comes from the love of God. Why must we believe? Why can't we have the new birth even if we do not believe? Because God sent His only Son to earth for that great purpose—that we might believe. When we believe, it brings us new life. It brings us eternal life.

“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” (John 3:36).

B. Salvation for the World

Jesus and Nicodemus were almost finished talking. Jesus wanted Nicodemus to understand something very important. God sent His Son into the world to save people from their sins, not to judge people for their sins. This includes every person in the world. Nicodemus knew that not all people accepted God's Son. But now the True Light had come into the world. This made people come to the decision. They had to accept or reject Him. Those who rejected Jesus loved their darkness more than His Light.

III. JESUS MUST INCREASE

John 3:29, 30. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.

A. John Was Humble

Some of the Jews tried to make John the Baptist become jealous of Jesus. But John was not jealous. John compared himself to the friend of a groom at a wedding. The best friend of the groom does not become jealous. The friend is happy for the groom because of what he does. This friend does not try to steal away the bride. John said, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” John told his followers it was now time for them to begin following Jesus.

B. Christ Is Able

When John was giving his final witness about Jesus, he made three things clear.

1. Our attitude about Jesus is very important. Our attitude about Jesus will decide if we go to heaven or hell. Jesus comes from God. If we reject Jesus, we are rejecting God. If we accept Jesus, we then agree that God is true.

2. Our attitude about Jesus is important. God loves His Son Jesus. If we reject Jesus we are rejecting the One God loves.

3. The word *believeth* in John 3:36 means “to keep on (continue) believing and obeying.” If we want to go to heaven, we must continue to believe and obey God. It is not enough to believe today and forget Him tomorrow. We must live for Him every day of our lives.



??THINK??

Scripture Scramble

Rearrange the words of this Bible verse so they will be in the right order (sentence). There is one extra word below that does not belong in the verse. Can you find the word that is out of place?

Kingdom **Three**
A **The**
Be **Except**
Again **He**
See **Born**
God **Man**
Of **Cannot**
Twelve **Three**
John

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

For correct answers

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