

# John 3 – Nicodemus

These are the leaders notes from the Kielder Bible Study Group for the meeting that was held on 11th September 2012

## Recap

- Chapter 2 was the start of a section that covered the next few chapters covering 7 miracles/events – We looked at two of them in the chapter. John uses these to show us different aspects of the Messiah.
- Miracle 1 – turning water into wine John 2 1-11
- Miracle 2 – cleansing of the temple John 2 12-25

Some key points from chapter 2 :-

- We need to make sure God is at the heart of our worship – not shops, money making endeavours.
- Jesus can take the ordinary and turn it into the extraordinary
- Jesus is in control and will not be hurried in His plans
- Jesus was not quite the Messiah the Jews had thought that they were getting.

## John 3

Has anyone ever been driving abroad or in Scotland where it is all in Gaelic where you can see the road signs – they are a collection of symbols but you don't have a clue what they mean. Do they mean the place where you want to go to or do they mean something completely different. This was the dilemma Nicodemus had. As a leading Pharisee he knew all about the old testament, but, as we shall see he could not understand what he was seeing happening with Jesus

v1-3

Q Why did Nicodemus come at night? A It is suggested that he may have been troubled by the crowds if he came in the day time

Q Why might Nicodemus have been upset with Jesus's answer. A He thought he would get into heaven as a right of his birth as a Pharisee.

v4-9

Q Nicodemus's comment of v4 seems to make a lot of sense – what do we make of it?

A Jesus indicates that there are two births (v.5), the natural birth when we come into this world (v.6a), and a spiritual birth that comes about by the Holy Spirit (v.6b).

v10-15

Q What is Jesus saying in v14 – As humans we need some form of symbol to help understand our faith and the cross will be such a symbol, just as the snake was in Moses times

These verses from Ezekiel 36 25-27 & Ezekiel 37 1-10 esp v9 & 10 are probably being referred to here

v16-21 – These famous verses are John's take on what Jesus said.

Q So what do we think they mean?

Q Do we agree that John is saying In a nutshell - The world is split into two camps – God's camp and the Devil's camp – There is no halfway house?

A Jesus exposes men's hearts and shows them up for what they are (v.20). A person of truth comes joyfully to Jesus (v.21), while the self-centred, self-deceived, deluded, evil man shies away and rejects Him. We cannot hide things from Jesus.

Let's pause for a minute and think about how being born again (regeneration) relates to baptism, as we sort of skipped it a bit when it was mentioned in chapter 1

*(John 1:32-34) - And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and he remained upon him. I did not know him, but he who sent me to baptise with water said to me, "Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, this is he who baptises with the Holy Spirit." And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God"*

*(Luke 3:16) - John answered, saying, to all "I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire"*

*(Galatians 3:26-28).- especially "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ"*

*(1 Corinthians 12:12-13). especially "For by one spirit we were all baptised into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free - and have all been made to drink in one spirit"*

Q So in simple terms how would we explain to someone what being born again is and where does baptism fit into the process. (It is actually mentioned again in John 4)

On God can save – It is not a human activity, but a miracle. Our role in this process can be prayer.

We now move on to the second part of this chapter which covers John the baptist

v 22-26

Q When we see another church/fellowship how do we know that they are Christians?

v27-30

Q What does John (the baptist) say is happening to his ministry? And how does he compare that to a wedding

v31-36

Q What do we think this means??

A It is like a witness being questioned by a reporter. The witness knows what they saw to be true and correct. The reporter reports what they have been told to others and are limited by this.

Jesus is the “one from heaven” & John is the “one from earth”

Q what do we think about v36?

Q The word believe appear 8 times in the NIV version of the chapter – Why do we think John keeps mentioning it.

A John is not talking about a momentary state but one that is continuing and settled and life changing.

## Recap

Some key points from the chapter :-

You must be born again to be a Christian. It is not a human activity, but a miracle. It is not something we do but something God does.

- A Christian is one who has received a new life from God and is indwelt by the Holy Spirit
- Jesus often speaks in ways that only the believer will understand

- Jesus exposes men's hearts by the way they respond to him
- Jesus is challenging people in how they respond to him – no sitting on the fence.