

The Gospel of John

Chapter 3, part 1

I. Introduction

- a. The 3rd chapter of John is one of the most quoted chapters in the Bible
 - i. I've heard messages out of several passages in this chapter a number of times
 - 1. Hopefully, we can all be challenged to study in the coming lessons

II. Commentary

a. Verses 1-2

- i. Nicodemus was a powerful, influential man in Israel
 - 1. He was a "ruler of the Jews"
 - a. This is a reference to him being a member of the Sanhedrin
 - i. This was a supreme court, of sorts
 - 2. He was a Pharisee
 - a. Remember, these were the religious "conservatives" of the day
 - b. He was knowledgeable of the Scriptures
 - 3. He came to Jesus at night
 - a. Most likely, he was afraid of the implications of talking to Jesus openly
 - 4. He admits that Jesus is a man from God
 - a. He calls on the miracles as a witness to this fact

b. Verse 3

- i. Jesus answers a question that Nicodemus doesn't ask
 - 1. He informs him that a man must be "born again" to see the kingdom of God
 - a. The "kingdom of God" speaks of the Millennium primarily
 - b. The Jews thought being a descendant of Abraham was enough to enter the kingdom
 - i. Jesus corrects this thought

c. Verse 4

- i. Nicodemus is looking at things from a worldly perspective
 - 1. He understood the physical birth
 - 2. He didn't understand how a person could literally be born a second time

d. Verses 5-8

- i. Jesus explains to Nicodemus that a man must be born of the "water and the Spirit"
 - 1. There are three chains of thought here
 - a. First, some say baptism is the entrance into the Lord's church and that is what is meant here
 - i. Since the kingdom is at question and not the church, this seems unlikely
 - b. Secondly, some say the "water" here is the Word

- i. Though the Word is used to wash us at regeneration(**Eph. 5:26**), this doesn't seem to be the context here
 - c. Thirdly, some say the "water" speaks of the natural birth
 - i. Since Nicodemus just asked about physical birth, it seems that Jesus is adding to that thought
 - 1. It's as though Jesus is saying, "Yes, Nicodemus, a man surely must be born physically. However, he must also be born spiritually."
 - ii. This thought is continued with the next verse
 - 1. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit"
 - a. As I said, a continued contrast between the physical birth and the spiritual birth
 - 2. Jesus again explains that a man must be born a second time
 - a. That is, born again
 - b. A man must be born of the Spirit
 - i. We call this being born again, being quickened, being regenerated, being called, etc.
 - 3. Jesus compares the Holy Spirit to the wind
 - a. Man can't control either
 - i. But, the results are apparent
- e. **Verses 9-10**
 - i. Nicodemus does not understand what Jesus is saying
 - 1. He asks how this can be
 - a. Jesus asks him why he didn't know these things since he was "the teacher" of Israel
 - i. This title indicates that Nicodemus was a prominent teacher
 - ii. Jesus points out the lack of knowledge of the Jewish leaders here
 - 1. The teachers in Israel should have understood the need for regeneration
 - a. However, they continued to believe that the natural birth into the family of Abraham was enough to merit them entrance into the Millennial Kingdom
 - i. It was not – "a man must be born again"