

## Small Group Bible Study Questions

- A) The Old Testament backdrop to John 3 is of extremely high importance. Take some time to read both John 3:14-15 and Numbers 21:4-9 (as a group). Picture the scene with Moses in your mind and then re-read Jesus' words in John 3:14-15. It's an interesting comparison, isn't it? Serpent & Savior. What are the similarities as you think through the comparison, and what is the point of the comparison (in Scripture)?
- B) Nicodemus has no response to Jesus' words in John 3. He leaves the scene after asking "How can these things be?" (John 3:9). We know Nicodemus eventually responds to Jesus Christ (John 7:50-52 (timid?) & John 19:39 (assisting @ Jesus' burial)). Why is it when we are confronted with the truth (substantively) and/or the Truth (the person of Christ) we often resist and delay?
- C) John 3:33 & 36 state that in order to be saved we must believe in the testimony of Christ. What is His testimony? What have you found is the connection in your own life between belief and obedience? Can you "believe in the Son" and simultaneously disobey Him?
- D) John 3:17 states that the Son did not come "into the world to judge the world." Yet, in John 9:39 it says that Jesus came into the world "for judgment." Further, it says in John 5:27 that God has given Jesus "authority to execute judgment." What does it all mean, how do you synthesize these verses?
- E) John 3:5 states that we must be "born of water" and "born of the Spirit." By virtue of birth from our mother's, we have all been "born of water." But, being "born of the Spirit" is a different issue. It seems that Jesus Christ says that being "born of the Spirit" is unpredictable (like the blowing of the wind) in John 3:8. It doesn't happen to everyone, it is up to God, who is so far beyond us, we cannot predict His ways. Have you been "born of the Spirit?" How do you know? Share your experience of being "born again" with your group and any prayer requests you might have for accountability this week.

# How Can These Things Be?

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**NOW THERE WAS A MAN OF  
THE PHARISEES, NAMED  
NICODEMUS, A RULER OF THE  
JEWS; THIS MAN CAME TO  
JESUS BY NIGHT AND SAID...  
~JOHN 3:1-2A (NASB)**

## **1) A Conversation In The Dark**

- A) Jesus knew the hearts of **ALL** people (John 2:24-25). People were trusting Jesus because of His "signs" (John 2:23), Nicodemus even comes to Jesus because he believes in the "signs (John 3:2). However, this "weak milk-toast faith" in signs was not enticing to Jesus -- He did not trust those who were following the signs (John 2:24).
- B) There is a connection with the word man (anthropos/ ἄνθρωπος) from verses 2:24, 25 (twice), 3:1, 2, & 4.
- C) Nicodemus comes to Jesus "by night" (John 3:2). While not a major focal point, it is notable that every usage of night in John's gospel (John 3:2; 9:4; 11:10 & 13:30) represents an individual or situation which is morally or spiritually bankrupt. Contrast this against the clear "bookend" theology of the

passage regarding "the Light" (John 3:19-21), and you have a theological setting for Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus -- and (as we see from the next point) **OUR OWN LIVES**.

- D) Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus is meant to be an explanation of how to get to Heaven for **ALL** of mankind (John 3:1-2). The "man" of John 2:24-3:4 is not just Nicodemus! Nicodemus represents **ALL** men/mankind, including you and me.
  
- E) The 'one' of John 3:3 is **EVERYONE**. Everyone must be 'born again' if they are going to go to Heaven (John 3:3).

## 2) Clarifying The Signs With Substance

- A) Becoming 'born again' was (and is) a confusing concept (even for an early synagogue leader), which needed explanation, both then and now (John 3:3-4).
  
- B) Being 'born again' literally means 'born from above' (heaven). It refers to a spiritual reality, not a physical reality (John 3:3-7).
  
- C) In order to be 'born again,' you must "accept the testimony" of Jesus Christ (vs. 11, 32) and "believe" (vs. 12, 15 & 36).

- C) If you do not believe in Jesus Christ, you are spiritually dead (vs. 14 & 18).

## 3) The Heart Of The Matter

- A) Jesus is the living example of God's love toward us. How we respond to Jesus Christ (or reject Him) is the defining issue in our relationship with God (John 3:36).
  
- B) "Believing" is an action which results in change, note "evil" vs. "practicing the truth" (John 3:20-21).
  
- C) Changing how you act does not amount to belief (Matthew 7:21-23).
  
- D) Jesus did not come to bring judgment. He came to bring life. No response to the life of Christ is the same as closing your eyes really tight when the lights come on in a room -- it amounts to rejection of the Light (John 3:17-21).
  
- E) John follows this section with another story about his mentor, John the Baptist, noting that the appropriate response to the revealed person of Jesus Christ is to place Him as #1 in your life (John 3:30). The critical issue is trust (faith) in Jesus Christ (His testimony), and is a measure of your belief in the truth of God's love (John 3:33 & 35).