

The Gift of Eternal Life
John 3

Introduction

How do people respond to the Son of God? John has introduced us to those who reject and those who accept but who are not trustworthy. Faith tends to have different depths and degrees. We are introduced to a religious leader names Nicodemus a “leader of Israel”. We shall see how he is contrasted with John the Baptist, one who is sent from God. Let us review from the last time we looked at this section-

- I. The Social Situation 3:1-2
 - A. The Previous Section
Many believed with the evidence of signs. 2:23. Jo 20:31
(Some do not 12:35-37!)
 - B. The Present Situation

- II. The Theological Dialogue :3-17
 - A. Theological Conception :3
Kingdom of God- Who is the King?

 - B. Theological Confusion :3-12
 1. The Reality :3 “Born again”
 2. The Response :4-9
 - a. Nicodemus Question :4
 - b. Jesus Reply :5-8
“Born of water and Spirit” “Water and Wind”?
Reason-
The Word for “Spirit” is also translated “Wind” in both:
Gk Pneuma πνευμα, spirit or wind
Heb Ruach spirit or wind
This understanding will fit the idea of being “born from above”
Water and wind come from above
Nicodemus as a Pharisee should know his OT.
* Isa. 44:35 Water is the Spirit
(see also Isa 32:15-17, Ezk 39:29, Joel 2:28, Acts 2:17
Titus 3:5-6 for the Spirit as a divine effusion from on high)

 - * Ezk, 37:9-10 Breath of God into the dry bones of man.
(The Spirit animates dirt Gen 2 and the dead Ezk 37)
Man must receive the Spirit -symbolized as
water and wind and both come from above that gives
Mankind eternal life.

- God promised a future to His people that includes the cleansing of sin
and the filling of the Spirit Ezk 36:24-28

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"For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands, and bring you into your own land. "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. "And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. "And you will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God.

c. Nicodemus is Incredulous :9

d. Jesus' Indignation :10-12

"We" The Godhead- irony to Nicodemus :2 "we" the rulers

*See Luke 24:27, 44 The OT is about the Jesus of the NT!!

C. Theological Confession that Results in Conversion :13-36

1. The Person

The Eternal Son The Logos- incarnation- descended / ascended up

2. The Pronouncement :13-15

The Historical Story: Serpents destroy Num. 21:4-9

The Holy Savior: Jesus delivers

God "gave"- LXX Isa 53:12 "poured out- from same word as "gave"

"Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He **poured out** Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors."

"Only Begotten" Son 3:16, 18 1:18 Unique, one of a kind

3. The Promise 16-17

Believe in Him, :16 "His name" 1:12, 2:11, 2:23

First time "Eternal life" is used (John 3:16, 36, 4:14, 36, 5:24, 39,

6:27, 40,47, 54, 68, 10:28, 12:25, 50, 17:2-3)

Life "Zoe" zoology physical or transcendent

Life "Bios"- Physical life

God sent the Son to Save not to Judge :17

* Save- only a few times in John (GK) 5:24, 10:9, 11:12, 12:27, 12:47

* Saved from Judgment- krino- krisis- crisis 3:17, 12:47

As Nicodemus pondered these truths after the night time interview perhaps on the roof he would have seen the celestial backdrop to the words of Jesus. For it was Jesus, who descended (3:13) from above who has been lifted up to offer a sacred sacrifice (3:14-15) for the world which He created (1:1-3), who also ascended and returned to heaven to offer eternal life to all who would believe (1:12, 2:23, 3:16). He offers eternal life from

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above as the water and wind come from above to provide an effusion of life to the parched and arid ground of a heart doomed to the darkness of hell.

Perhaps Jesus had hoped that Nicodemus would reflect upon Proverbs 30:4-5
“Who has ascended into heaven and descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has wrapped the waters in His garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name or His son's name? Surely you know! Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.”

Here he and we see the ascending and descending, the heavenly activities of water and wind in a call to faith to receive the Spirit. But beyond it all was the challenge to know the name of God's Son: That knowledge alone could provide eternal life if we know His name. It was and forever will be Jesus, the logos, the divine one who is the eternal Son of God to whom we must look to live. Typified as a serpent on a pole in the old testament offered to save men from death, now personified as the lamb of God who dies and the cross and takes away the sin of the world now ascended in heaven. All that is required, is that we Believe on Him- Believe in His name. 1:12, 3:16, 5:24, 20:30-31

Exclusive Action to receive the gift of Eternal Life:

“Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.” 20:30-31

Exclusive Agent that provides Eternal Life:

“I am the way the truth and the life no one comes to the father but by ME.” Jo 14:6
 (“There is no other name under heaven by which a man must be saved.” Acts 4:12)
The divine Logos John 1:1-18

Inclusive Attitude God so loved the world! 3:16 (Jo. 1:29, I John 2:10, 4:10)

Notice the heart of God! Love serves at a cost.

“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore, also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Phil. 2:5-11)

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Mar 10:45) (See Isa. 53 for the Suffering Servant Our Savior)

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The all important and only condition (if we can call it that) for a person to meet in order to change the direction of their life for all eternity- from hell to heaven is to BELIEVE in Jesus. But what does that mean to believe? This is the crux issue for every person. 1:12

4. The Problem :18-21

This section is a hinge to the next (:22-36 John the Bapt.) Jesus is continuing His discussion about believing or not believing. The results are either judgment because people hate the light (See 1:5,10) or no judgment because they believe.

The problem is in understanding the phrase “Come to the light” :20 and the phrase “his deeds wrought (worked) in God” :21. This is very often simply glossed over which is evidence that it is a difficult verse to reconcile so most do not try. Here are two options.

Option # 1

:19 "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil."

:20 "For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

²¹ "But he who practices- does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

This means that those who are non believers, prior to coming to the Light are able to be called “doers of truth.”

Those who believe gain eternal life because :21 “they do the truth”

(do works) and then “come to the light” which means- believe) :21?

If “practicing the truth” is necessary to gain the free gift of eternal life and this reveals that “their deeds are wrought in God” (:21) then “practices the truth” is a work that is done before you “come to the light” (believe) Hence, works are part of believing and works prove you have eternal life. (Rom 2? and Rev 22? Judged by works) (NICNT Michaels) This then makes the proof of assurance of eternal life to be based on your lifestyle of good works. The question is- how many? and what kind? and for how long? Do Christians always do the truth? No! And some are not trustworthy!! (2:23)

Option # 2

The Context of :20-21

- We know that there are some who believe that are not trustworthy 2:23
- We know that Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night (not in the light of day) and is apparently fearful to being seen with Jesus for fear of the Jews. 3:2. However, it is possible that Nicodemus is an OT saint- saved under Abrahamic Cov.
- We know there are others of the religious leaders that believe in His name but are afraid to openly confess Jesus for fear of losing their standing in the synagogue leadership 12:42-43. Perhaps Nicodemus was one of them. Jo. 7:50
- We know that Nicodemus will eventually come out into the light to proclaim his loyalty to Jesus with Joseph of Arimathea a secret disciple of Jesus. 19:38-39
- We know and must remember that these are the words of Jesus to Nicodemus!
- We know that Jesus knows what is in the heart of all men. (2:25 is hinge to 3:1)

- We know that the next section is to focus on John the Baptist and builds off of statements that he has made about his ministry and Jesus' ministry in terms of importance. "He must increase and I must decrease" 3:30

The Concept of :20-21

1. The phrase "hate the light" in :20 is either about non believers or believers. "Practicing the truth" is only used by John here and in I Jo. 1:6 and there it is concerned with light and darkness and moral behavior of believers. Hence, it is the same in John 3. = Believers moral behavior.

Therefore, the people in view in :21 are believers already that are to do the truth or works that are wrought in God in contrast to those believers who do not- by staying in the dark. The word for "manifested" (reveal, make visible to others, expose publicly) in :21 is the same as used in John 1:31,2:11, 3:21,17:6, 21:1x2, 21:14. It is also used in I John 1:2x :2, 3:2,5,8, 4:9.

Believers manifest God by the way they live. In I John this is in regards to fellowship. Doing works manifest that we are in fellowship with God as His children. (*Matt. 5:16) But then what does John have in mind by "works being wrought (worked) in God"?

2. The context in back of us is Nicodemus and in front of us is John the Baptist 3:22-36.

3. Nicodemus was afraid to come out in the open or in the light. Jesus knew his heart (2:24) This is similar to the fear seen in 12:42 concerning the Religious leaders. But finally, we see Nicodemus come out in the light 19:38. He comes with Joseph of Arimathea- a secret disciple of Jesus to claim the body of Jesus. (Public Spotlight!)

4. John the Baptist understood who Jesus was. (1:33-34). John the Baptist has been seen as one who comes out into the light and who does the works of God specifically seen as he proclaims Jesus as the Christ and himself as lower in importance. 1:19-21, 26-27, 30.

5. Notice - 3:22-36

John the Baptists concern is that the person of Jesus be elevated, far above himself. John also is concerned that his work be that which honors the bridegroom. John is the helper of the bridegroom (the light of the world) and John is in the light setting the stage for Jesus the bridegroom. Hence, John the Baptist is to be seen as the model of "coming to the light", "confessing Christ", "doing the truth", and as a result people will see and say that his works are "worked in God". Nicodemus is not yet ready to be trusted (2:23) but he will be! John 19. Jesus is warning him to consider these truths and come out in the light.

Conclusion:

Jesus at the end of his interview initiated by Nicodemus the Pharisee but ended by Jesus the Messiah warns him about the evil of hiding in the dark and that he must come out into the light. The readers of the 4th gospel are to understand as Nicodemus one day

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understood, that believers are to come out into the public, (into the light) and do their deeds and confess Christ. This is how we are to live as disciples in the world and this is evidence that we are abiding in Christ as people see our works wrought in God. (Matt 5:16) Just like John the Baptist! 1:33-34. Are you like Nicodemus or John the Baptist?

Personal Application Time P.A.T.

Our **Relationship** with God is by one act of faith to receive the gift of eternal life. We are Born again. (Justification Jo 1-12 eternal life by belief)

Our **Fellowship** with God now that we are in the family is by abiding and obeying God's word. (Sanctification John 13-17 upper room discourse- abide and obey)

I John 2:15 Beloved, do not love the world or the things of the world for if you love the world the love of the father is not in you.

1. Are you courageous or a coward concerning your allegiance to Christ?
This may become more of an issue in America for the church as governmental edicts, executive orders and new laws that refute the constitution become the new norm.
Jeremiah 12:5 "If you have run with footmen and they have tired you out then how can you compete with horses? If you fall down in a land of peace how will you do in the thicket of Jordan?"

Free speech, Freedom of religion and religious expression.
Issues of "Hate Speech" & "Violent Speech"

2. What makes you timid? How will you overcome it?
Fear of what people think? Focus on what the Lord will think.

Lack of knowledge? Lack of skill? Learn and Watch Others-Mentors

3. What gives you strength?
The Scriptures....The Savior....The Spirit

Eph 6:12 "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers against the powers against the world forces of this darkness against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places."

I John 5:19 "The whole world lies in the power of the evil one"

But always remember:

"Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." I John 4:4