

A NIGHT OF SURPRISES

JOHN 3

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FOCUS SENTENCE

John 3 gives us an account of a surprising nighttime encounter between Jesus and a leading Pharisee, one that leads to the most quoted passage in the Bible, and ends with a humble reflection on Jesus as the only way to salvation.

INTRODUCTION

I. A NIGHT OF SURPRISES

1. The visit itself is surprising. We are not privy to the motivation for this visit.
2. Nicodemus visited Jesus at night...two potential reasons:
 - A. The sheer difficulty in approaching Jesus.
 - B. More likely – the “furtive” approach, due to Nicodemus’ reputation.
3. Nicodemus greeted Jesus as “Rabbi”. This was nothing less than a true show of respect.
4. Jesus answers him –
 - A. Unless you are BORN AGAIN...
 - B. ...you won’t see...the Kingdom of God.
5. Nicodemus was stunned. He would have been surprised that the Kingdom would arrive – and not be consummated. Another related surprise – Nicodemus would have assumed that, due to his *status*, he would have already “qualified” for the Kingdom.
6. But - the FIRST PART of the Lord’s statement really set him back. “Unless one is born again.” Nicodemus apparently had no clue.
7. YOU - THE TEACHER OF ISRAEL – AND YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND?...

“The **THE** in the original Greek may imply that Nicodemus was the leading theologian of his day.”

~ Bruce Milne

8. Jesus referenced the wind. Jesus is using a meteorological example to show Nicodemus that the new birth is not granted on the basis of your effort. Our new birth is from...GOD.
9. Nicodemus - sense of *plural* testimony – (verse 2) representing more than his own views, by saying “WE know that you are a teacher from God...”

Jesus now uses “we” as well as He groups His knowledge, and viewpoint – with that of God the Father Himself, and the Holy Spirit.

II. THE COMING OF THE LIGHT OF GOD

What Jesus uttered to Nicodemus – that He would be lifted up (on Calvary), and offer life to those who believe in Him....sets up the most quoted verse in the Bible. John 3:16
Jesus uttered – “For God so loved the world...”

In these 6 opening words are more amazing wonders, more declarations of good news than we can ever imagine.

1. First, Jesus shows the **DEPTH** of God’s great love. He **SO** loved. Jesus is again referencing two things here:
 - A. First, this is a direct pointer to the INCARNATION.
 - B. Second, another reference to giving up His life on the Cross.

“If the depth of love is measured by the value of its gift, then God’s love could not be greater, for his love-gift is his most precious possession – his only, eternally beloved Son. He could not love more.”

~ Bruce Milne

2. Secondly, we see the **SCOPE** of God’s love...THE WORLD.

Nicodemus, and all of the reader’s of John’s letter would know that God had a special affection for Israel.

But the love of God is much wider in scope. His love embraces the world. Men, Women, Children....JEWS – and GENTILES. The World.

3. Though it was dark outside - this nighttime conversation has now opened up for us all the truth about the **LIGHT OF THE WORLD**.

III. COMMENTARY FROM ANOTHER JOHN – JOHN THE BAPTIST

1. John displayed great humility in essentially saying, “Look – a man can only give from what he has been given.”
2. In a raw personal moment – John acknowledges that it was time for a transition.
3. In verses 31-36, John brings yet another emphasis to the fact that belief in this Jesus is the **ONLY** way to salvation.

CLOSING

It is an interesting picture – a surprise meeting under the cloak of darkness would be the setting for such a proclamation of LIGHT.

The last of those two mentions is found in John 19, following the crucifixion of Jesus – when Nicodemus comes, and at his own expense, provides the embalming spices for Jesus’ body. The total weight of these spices was over 100 lbs. Scholars have noted that such a large amount of resources would not only be extremely expensive, but the sheer amount of materials used would only be seen in royal funerals, when a king would be prepared for burial.

How true that was. Not just any king either...but *the King* of Kings.