

Chapter 3

- v. 1 **Nicodemus** — Nicodemus was a religious teacher and leader with a “seminary degree.” This was the best type of man to prove John 2:25 – every man needs the new birth.
- v. 2 **By night** — He comes to Jesus at night because he is in the dark spiritually and has no understanding of the new birth.
The temple cleansing and the miracles of John 2:23 must have had a powerful affect. Notice the double discourse in this chapter:
- | Nicodemus | Jesus |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| We know (v. 2) | We speak (v. 11) |
| Teacher (v. 2) | Master (v. 10) |
| No man (v. 2) | No man (v. 13) |
| Except (v. 2) | Except (v. 3) |
| Jesus answered (v. 3) | Nicodemus answered (v. 9) |
- v. 3 Notice how Jesus responds to the heart of the matter. He was not flattered by Nicodemus’ compliments. Jesus was not polite to religious leaders. Unlike today’s methods of evangelism, Jesus put urgency into His soul winning. It was not come to Christ for happiness, but be saved to escape hell.
Born again — An odd response to Nicodemus’ comments. “Born once die twice, born twice die once.” Every man is born a child of the devil outside paradise since Genesis 3.
Kingdom of God — Seeing it comes later (Luke 19:11).
- v. 5 **Water** — This speaks of the physical birth, not baptism. Water does not always mean baptism and baptism does not always include water (Romans 6:3, 4; 1 Corinthians 12:13).
Enter — We enter the kingdom of God at salvation, it just isn’t visible yet (Romans 14:17). This explains 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13; Ephesians 2:6. If you’re born again, this is the closest you’ll get to Hell. If you’re not born again, this is the closest you’ll get to Heaven.
- v. 6 **Flesh** — The water is defined as flesh, the Spirit as spirit. A spiritual birth cannot be done by physical water on a physical being.
- v. 7 **Ye must** — Jesus doesn’t request the new birth, He commands it. You don’t have to understand it to obey. Notice it is ye plural, a command to all.
- v. 8 **Wind** — The Spirit is likened to the wind, you can’t see it, only the effects of it. No one can see the spiritual birth take place.
- v. 9 There’s a difference between asking how can versus how shall. Nicodemus is confused, later convicted (John 7:50, 51), and finally confesses (John 19:39, 40).

- v. 10 Jesus knew Nicodemus should know some things from the Old Testament like Psalm 22 (crucifixion); Isaiah 53 (Messiah); Ezekiel 37 (dry bones/wind). See also John 5:39.
- v. 11 **We** — A response to verse 2 and a Trinity reference.
- v. 12 This is good advice for people like the JW's who don't understand the Trinity.
- v. 13 **No man** — Meaning by their own power like Christ did. Enoch was translated, Elijah was taken up, and Paul was caught up. Satan was cast down after his "I will" statements.
Notice the wording here is past tense as in verse 16. These events are as good as done. God views things outside of time. See Isaiah 53:5.
Which is in heaven — Jesus is down here and up there at the same time. Other versions eliminate this phrase. They cannot explain it.
- v. 14 **Serpent in the wilderness** — See Numbers 21:6-9.
This is the crucifixion where Jesus' soul was corrupted and went to hell. See Psalm 22:1, 6; Isaiah 53:10-12; Mark 14:34; Galatians 3:13; 2 Corinthians 5:21.
- v. 15 **Believeth** — This is present tense. No condition or election.
- v. 16 **Loved** — This is where you must go to get the love of God, back to Calvary. God does not love the lost person in the present tense — See Romans 5:8; John 17:9; Galatians 1:4; Ephesians 2:2, 3, 12; 1 John 2:15.
Begotten — Other versions eliminate this. The Greek word is *Monogene* and only the first half of the word is translated. God has many sons, but only one begotten. See Hebrews 1:5,6; Genesis 5:4; Judges 8:30.
Should not — meaning will not — See Mark 10:32; John 13:11.
- v. 17 **Not** — The world was condemned already.
- v. 18 **Already** — The only condemnation of a man is the rejection of Jesus Christ.
- v. 19 **Light** — This light is Christ from Chapter 1.
Deeds were evil — Christ rejectors are not good people. They loved darkness and rejected light. Notice how evil increase at night.
- v. 21 **Truth** — If you have nothing to hide, you will come to the light.
- v. 22 The disciples did the baptizing in Christ's name (John 4:1, 2).
- v. 23 **Much water** — There's no effusion or aspersion, just immersion.

- v. 25 **Purifying** — Notice how purifying is connected with the Jews and baptism. They may have been confused about Jesus' discussion with Nicodemus on the water birth. This may explain 1 Peter 3:21.
- v. 27 **Nothing** — We can't even breathe, or drink water unless God allowed it.
- v. 29 Baptist briders have a problem here. John is not part of the bride.
- v. 30 Notice the order — let Him increase and we'll decrease. Decreasing ourselves is not possible.
- v. 31 **Above all** — Christ versus man.
- v. 32 No man who speaks of the earth will receive His testimony.
- v. 33 Here we see that some will receive it.
- v. 34 Since Jesus is the Holy Ghost, no measure of the Spirit is necessary. Being filled with the Spirit is letting the Spirit get more control of you. You have all of Him.
- v. 36 **Abideth** — Notice the present tense. The believer has life, the unbeliever has wrath. This wrath is a sentence to Hell and the Lake of Fire. This message should never be watered down because it's true. Here John points people to Christ, not baptism (verse 26).

Kingdom of Heaven / Kingdom of God

Matthew 3:2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Matthew 3:2 is the first mention of the kingdom of heaven. The term is used 33 times, all in the book of Matthew. Once again, we see the kingdom emphasis to the Jew in this gospel.

The question arises, are the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God the same thing? This is especially confusing when parallel passages are used to describe the same events, but citing a different kingdom. For example:

Matthew 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

***Mark 1:14 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,
15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.***

Jesus claimed they were both at hand. Other references reveal that both kingdoms are explained in parables, likened to a mustard seed and little children, are for the poor in spirit, and are difficult for the rich man to enter.

The kingdoms however are not the same. What appears then to be a contradiction can be simply answered. When the kingdom of heaven is here on earth, so will be the kingdom of God, they are merged. Jesus is King over both kingdoms, one represents His deity (Son of God) and one His humanity and lineage (Son of Man/Son of David).

The kingdom of God is spiritual and cannot be seen outwardly:

***Luke 17:20 And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:
21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.***

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

The kingdom of heaven is the literal, physical reign of Christ on a physical earth. This kingdom is primarily for the nation of Israel:

Matthew 11:12 *And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*

(A spiritual kingdom cannot suffer violence).

John 18:36 *Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.*

Matthew 6:10 *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

Acts 1:6 *When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*

7 *And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.*

8 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

The kingdom of heaven will include the kingdom of God because they are merged. (At this time, the kingdoms of the world will be present also. This is the third kingdom now ruled by Satan which he offered to Christ).

Matthew 4:8 *Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;*

9 *And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.*

2 Corinthians 4:4 *In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

Ephesians 2:2 *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*

Revelation 11:15 *And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.*

Remember, to enter the kingdom of God, you must be born again, but will be included in the Millennial reign where the kingdom of heaven is:

Revelation 19:14 *And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.*

Revelation 20:6 *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*

Those not born again must endure the Tribulation, etc. and be ushered into the kingdom of heaven. They will co-exist with those of us who came through the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is for the Church, the kingdom of heaven is for Israel. This is why the kingdom of heaven is not used outside Matthew's gospel. The Kingdom of God is seen throughout the book of Acts and the rest of the New Testament. It is clearly a spiritual kingdom that flesh and blood cannot inherit:

1 Corinthians 15:50 *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.*

Paul preached this at the end of his ministry:

Acts 20:20 *And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house,*
21 *Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*
25 *And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.*

If the two kingdoms were exactly the same, physical people, the physical world, the earth, etc. could not enter it (John 3). The physical earth is in the physical heavens and has its own kingdom.

To help clarify, it appears to be about how one enters each kingdom, even though they will later co-exist. Once again, we see the importance of the proper place of the Church and Israel.