

# “HE DWELT AMONG US”

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN LESSON 4 Chapter 3

*“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” John 3:16*

Can we experience all that God has for us by being religious and knowing the scriptures? Many have tried. Many are still trying. In **John, chapter 3** we will meet a man named Nicodemus who was surprised at the answer that Jesus gave to him. *“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” John 3:3.*

Begin this day of study and every day with prayer, asking God to teach you by His Holy Spirit.

### DAY #1

Read **John, chapter 3**. Now read the chapter a second time, looking for all the important facts. As you read through this chapter, you will see that it can be divided into two main sections. Find the division, and give a title to each section. The title can be as simple as just the names of the main character or characters. Or the title can re-cap in a few words the action, story or lesson.

**Fact Finding:** When looking for the key facts, it is helpful to ask yourself the following questions although you will not find an answer to each in every verse:

1. Who are the main characters in this passage? Who is speaking? About whom or what is he speaking?
2. What action or event is taking place?
3. What is being said?
4. Where is this occurring?
5. When did this happen?
6. How or why did this occur? (Be careful at this stage to only give the "why" as stated in the text.)

Give a brief title to this section:

**DAY #2     Read John 3:1-3.     Jesus' interview with Nicodemus**

Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a teacher, and a ruler of the Jews (review the background information on Pharisees from lesson #2). He was also a member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council. The Sanhedrin consisted of 70 to 72 members who were responsible for religious decisions and, under the Romans, civil rule. It was the majority of these rulers who hired Judas to betray Jesus (**Matthew 26:3-4** and **Matthew 26:14-15**) and who put Jesus on trial and brought Him before Pilate (**Luke 22:66-71, 23:1-2**). But if we read through the gospels carefully, we will see that there was a minority who occasionally spoke out as a voice of reason and restraint (**John 7:44-51**).

- 1) **John 3:1-2** introduces Nicodemus. From our previous studies, we can see that the Jewish Religious leadership was not happy with the teachings and actions of Jesus. Considering Nicodemus' position, why do you think he came at night to speak with Jesus?
  
- 2) Considering the opinion of his peers, what could you say that is *positive* about Nicodemus' actions even though he came to Jesus at night?
  
- 3) Nicodemus didn't see the whole picture of Jesus' identity, but he was willing to acknowledge what he *did* see. What two conclusions did he make about Jesus in **John 3:2**?
  
- 4) Nicodemus had dedicated his life to the study of the Word of God as revealed in the Old Testament and as interpreted by Rabbis down through the centuries. He knew and obeyed the law to the extreme. He held a leadership position in guiding others. But it appears that he sensed in Jesus a dynamic power and direct connection to God that he lacked.

As you read **John 3:3**, take note that Jesus starts out with the adamant words "most assuredly" (New King James Version). Jesus wanted him to know that what He was about to say was absolutely **true** and **important**. In this verse, Jesus states a fact that gives us insight into the difference between being *religious* and *truly knowing God*.

- A. What was the very clear statement Jesus made in **verse 3**? Explain what this means.
  
- B. In light of this, are there exceptions or other ways to know and understand God? Describe any insights you might have regarding this.
  
- 5) The kingdom of God is the sphere of God's absolute rule in which He exercises dominion and royal authority. This earth is the scene of almost universal rebellion against God, however He will someday return to rule. Until that time, God calls upon men to submit voluntarily to His rule and dominion. The primary evidence of this submission is belief in God and His Word. Belief in God is in turn evidenced by obedience to God. State what you learn from these verses about the benefits and responsibilities we have:
  - A. **Romans 8:5-8**

B. **I Corinthians 2:12, 13**

C. **I Corinthians 2:15, 16**

6) Read **John 1:12, 13** and **Romans 8:15, 16** carefully, then answer the following:

A. How do you become born again?

B. Whose child are you when you become born again? Take a moment to grasp the meaning of your answer and share the blessings you receive.

**DAY #3 Read John 3:4-13**

1) In **John 3:4**, we can see that Nicodemus is *naturally* struggling with the second birth concept. In **verse 5**, Jesus assures him that the spiritual birth is necessary to enter the kingdom of God. After reading **John 3:6,7** and **I Corinthians 15:50**, explain in your own words the spiritual truth you learn.

2) Read **John 3:7-8**. There are many things in the natural realm that we don't really understand like wind, thunder and earthquakes. However we see their effect. In the same way, the work of the Spirit is invisible and mysterious like the blowing of the wind. The unsaved person can go to church or read the Bible, but not get much out of it.

A. **I Corinthians 2:14** gives us insight into this. Comment on what is stated in this verse. You might also give a personal example.

B. \*Personal\* After reading **II Corinthians 5:17**, explain how the new birth has made changes in your own life. If you have not experienced the new birth, stop and pray now that the Lord will receive you by faith into His wonderful family and give you His spirit to live within you.

3) Read **John 3:9-13**. In **John 3:9**, we see that Nicodemus still does not understand. Is it possible that he is struggling with the authority from which Jesus is speaking?

A. In **verse 11**, Jesus uses the pronouns "We" and "Our." Of Whom is He speaking? Also see **John 8:17-18**.

B. Read **John 3:12, 13** and **Job 11:7-9**. \*Quote\* “Divine wisdom belongs to the Son of Man, Jesus. He has not had to go up to heaven to acquire it, but He has come down from heaven to impart it.” F.F. Bruce. Describe the wonder of the fact that Jesus has opened the door of “heavenly things” to us when we become born of the Spirit.

4) Read **John 3:14-15**. **Verse 14** compares the serpent that Moses held up to Jesus. Read **Numbers 21:5-9**. The people sinned and God provided a remedy.

A. Briefly recap the story.

B. What is the similarity of Christ being lifted up on the cross and the serpent being lifted up in the wilderness?

**DAY #4 Read John 3:15-21**

**John 3:16** is one of the dearest and most cherished verses in the Bible. It clearly presents the "Good News" of the gospel. Let's take a closer look at this profound statement of God's love as expounded by Martin Luther in what he called “the Gospel in miniature.”

God	⇒	The greatest Lover.
so loved	⇒	The greatest degree.
the world	⇒	The greatest number.
that He gave	⇒	The greatest act.
His only begotten Son	⇒	The greatest gift.
that whosoever	⇒	The greatest invitation.
believes in Him	⇒	The simplest condition.
should not perish	⇒	The greatest deliverance.
but	⇒	The greatest difference.
have	⇒	The greatest certainty.
everlasting life	⇒	The greatest possession.

1) **John 3:16** was written as a love letter from God to you. Write this verse out and in place of the pronouns write your name: For God so loved (your name) .....that He gave to (your name)....etc.

2) Read **Romans 5:8**.

A. What does God demonstrate through Jesus?

B. Does this verse show us that we deserve or that we can earn this great love? Explain why or why not in your own words, as you would share with someone who does not yet know Christ.

***Salvation is not something we achieve, it is something we receive.***

- 3) So often people view God as the "Big Traffic Cop in the Sky." They think He is just out to catch them sinning so He can punish them. How does **John 3:17** give a correct view of God's intentions? This is an important verse to commit to memory.
  
- 4) Contrary to how some choose to portray God as the one responsible for condemning the lost, **John 3:18-20** reveals where the real responsibility lay. In your own words explain why some people are under condemnation.
  
- 5) When we are born again, we choose to live our lives in the light as stated in **John 3:21**. What do the following verses instruct us in this regard?
  - A. **Ephesians 5:8**
  
  - B. **I John 1:7**
  
  - C. **Philippians 2:14-16a.**

**DAY # 5 Read John 3:22-36**

- 1) In **verse 24** we read "John had not yet been thrown in prison." John had a very important "*preparing the way*" ministry which involved being very frank about sin and the need to repent. Sin has never been a popular subject. Read about the tragic response of Herod the tetrarch (the governor of Galilee) when he was confronted by John for adultery. (**Mark 6:17-29**)
  - A. As you read this sad account, describe the tangled web woven by sin that entrapped Herod because he chose to *not repent*.
  
  - B. CHOICES! The substance of any life is the end result of ....*choices*. Record the account of Herod as he was influenced again by others and made a tragic choice as stated in **Luke 23:8-11**. Share any insights you have as you read this.
- 2) Two lives couldn't be more opposite, Herod's and John the Baptist's! **John 3:29-30** could be quoted as John's life theme. Joyful submission to serving as God calls! Share how following John's example of **verse 30** could affect you if you make it your goal every day.

3) John the Baptist, in his witness, keeps pointing to Jesus and the authority given to Him from God the Father. When we share our faith, we need to share what God has to say, not just what we think. Then when someone accepts the Lord, they have believed *Him*, not us.

A. How does **John 3:33-34** state this truth.

B. Briefly describe the gospel as stated in **verses 35 and 36**.

## DAY #6     Applications

Isn't this exciting? You now know more about Jesus than you have ever known before! When sharing with a non Christian, you can open to the third chapter of John and share! But before we can share the Word of God with others, let's always be eager to yield to its cleansing work in our own lives.

Let us look forward to this final stage in our study of applying God's Word personally. Go back over **John, chapter 3**. Pray and ask the Lord to show you what this portion of scripture teaches you that you can apply to your life. Write out four applications. Writing them in the form of a question is sometimes helpful. "Do I .....? Will I.....? How can I ....."?"

1.

2.

3.

4.

After going over your applications, commit your growth to *Him*! He gave you your new birth in Him. And like a loving Father, *He* will nurture you and care for you. Just pray and ask Him.

***" For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus." Philippians 1:6***