

Famous Chapter 3's in the Bible

John 3: The Discussion

What's up with this chapter?

Wow this famous chapter just became clearer. It's so important to read and re-read the Bible. This is special writing. If it's from man, it's genius. If it's from God then this is truly amazing. Jesus is teaching and traveling along the countryside. John is also teaching. He too is traveling along the countryside. Both men know each other. Both men are speaking the same message. This chapter is famous for another reason: John 3:16. Yes, it is famous. Yet, the message of this chapter goes well beyond one verse.

I have belonged to a group. I knew what they were about. I was told one day that another group was just like us. We had enough similarities that we could function together. I tried to belong to both groups. What I found is that we were not the same at all. We both believed surface stuff. Beyond the surface was two very different groups. I say this because chapter 3 of John begins with a man named Nicodemus. He believes in God. He can tell that Jesus believes in God too. This chapter drives Nicodemus under the surface talk. John 3:16 might be famous but this one verse is the surface talk of Christianity as Nicodemus and many others have discovered.

It's not to belittle the meaning of John 3:16. It's just that there is so much more deeper meanings being played out surrounding this verse. Jesus is asked by Nicodemus about baptism and being born again. I did not realize that Jesus and his followers were baptizing people. I just never heard that before. Jesus is saying that there is more to baptizing than just doing it or saying you did it.

Secondly is the other side of 3:16. We have John being questioned about the actions of Jesus. I guess we all read the Bible for different reason. We get different understandings from it. I never realized that chapter 3 was about John and Jesus. The cool part is John. He affirms what Jesus is doing and saying. It's interesting that Nicodemus is telling Jesus he just does not understand Jesus teachings. At verse 25 we have a Jew asking John about purification. Baptism was about purifying oneself for God or to be clean and holy. This Jew is asking John questions because he just does not get the teachings on this new baptism thing. New baptism? Yes, Jesus and John are promoting two baptisms. One of flesh and one of spirit. There are a ton of parallels in this chapter that are cool. Next week let's get into the answers to these teachings.

John 3. What makes it famous?

Ok, let's get John 3:16 out of the way. The reason this chapter is famous is this verse. It says **“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”** This verse is a memory verse. For some reason, many of us can remember this one. because it's famous? Maybe, but it might be that it's the truth. Without believing that God needed to sacrifice his Son to redeem us, you can't enter heaven. Why? That seems rash. If you read the rest of this chapter then you might get the picture.

Nicodemus says he understands that Jesus is from God by the miracles he does. Jesus then goes on telling the poor man that he needs to be born from above to enter heaven. Huh? Why did Jesus go a different direction without acknowledging Nicodemus's observations? Because Nicodemus says he sees God in Jesus miracles. Jesus says nobody sees the kingdom

unless they have the spirit. What makes this chapter truly famous? It's that we see a famous verse. We see miracles. Yet, do we see God by his Spirit or through our own eyes?

How do I know that is what this chapter is really about? Well, it comes back to the discussion. Jesus points out that the only way to heaven is by understanding through the Spirit. After verse 11, Jesus mentions that being baptized by water is purifying the flesh. We see that and we get that. Being baptized of the Spirit is different. That is why Jesus can testify to spiritual heavenly Kingdom things. Nicodemus knows the laws and traditions of the Jewish religion. He has not yet been introduced to how God sees the world from heavens view.

This all does come back to John 3:16. That verse is forever attached to animal sacrifice in the Old Testament. To be square with God over sin was to sacrifice a perfect animal. Jesus became that perfect sacrifice that God used once and for all so that we could always be square with him. The purifying baptism and traditions of the past we being replaced by Jesus. He was the only way to God now.

We see this played out in the second half of this chapter. A Jew asks John about purification. John tells the man that Jesus is the way. I bet this Jew had heard what Jesus said. He did not believe it so he asked John. John affirmed Jesus by saying he must decrease as a water baptizer. Jesus must increase as a spiritual baptizer. I bet they had wondered if John was the Messiah. They wondered if this water baptism was the way to heaven. John and Jesus bust that notion.

So, we have a famous verse. Jesus and John give a different interpretation on getting to heaven. They say that a second baptism must occur. The interesting part is the Spirit. This Holy Spirit was slightly known and talked about in religious history. This Spirit was not thought of as

important or influential in the kingdom of God. In a way, the Holy Spirit was metaphorical for God's essence or presence. I think Jesus is preparing these people for the coming of the Holy Spirit. I want to tie a few things together. Let's do that next time.

What we can learn?

It's all about the Spirit. In a way, the Spirit of God ties Jesus and the Father in heaven together. To know Jesus is to have the Spirit within you. To know the Father in Heaven is to have the Spirit teach you. This Spirit knows what Jesus knows. It searches the depth of God for answers to our questions. John 3 is famous for one verse but there still are 35 other verses that are very important. Maybe you should ask yourself "Why did Jesus talk about the Spirit and heaven in regards to baptism and purification"?

It's because of two Jewish men and their inability to understand Jesus. Nicodemus said that he understands Jesus comes from God. If you go to Matthew 12 we have the religious rulers questioning where Jesus comes from heaven or hell? I feel that why Nicodemus acknowledges where Jesus comes from. There had been rumors and discussions. Jesus turns the subject beyond religion and miracles. What is the reason for all this Spiritual understanding. It's the Holy Spirit of course.

You could say reborn if you want to change your thinking. I suppose you could rephrase that another way. The thought on baptism was to be clean. To begin again with a fresh body and mind. Jesus confuses Nicodemus by taking it a step further. I feel that the Jew talking to John had heard the conversation. He seems hung up on purification and who has authority to do this. John and Jesus both point to Jesus. This is crazy talk in the eyes of the Jewish people. You don't

say that you are God in those says. It was blasphemy. The only way to un-blasphemy these words is to change your perception of Jesus.

Jesus says that the Son of God will be sacrificed so all who believe can be in heaven. John says that this son came from heaven to bring us back with him. The problem is that only God can forgive sins. God is the one who purifies. God teaches things about heaven. For Nicodemus and the Jew this surely can't be Jesus, can it? That is the lesson learned in this chapter. Any chapter in the Bible is more than one verse. To have eternal life in heaven is to believe in the Son. Who do you say the son is? Is it head knowledge that you have or is it from the Spirit which is heart knowledge you gained from the Father in heaven. Which is it? John 3 goes a long way in telling us beyond 3:16.