

Bookends of the Gospels: Matthew 12 and John 3

Johns bookend

Right at the beginning of John 3 we open with Nicodemus saying he knows Jesus comes from God. Yet, within himself is confusion. If John 3 was attached to Matthew 12, the story would fit together pretty well. In Matthew 12 we have the religious leaders confused over Jesus. Is he of God or the devil? How can he do miracles. Why is he breaking the sabbath laws? In reality, why does this man Jesus know the Bible so well?

Then comes John 3. Nicodemus was one of the religious rulers. It says he came to him by night. I bet he did. So that the other rulers did not know. We forget sometimes that the story in Matthew is the story in John. Timelines vary. The stories view varies. It's possible Nicodemus was there in Matthew 12. In John 3 we get an answer to Matthew 12's questions.

Who has authority indeed? It's interesting that in John 3 they talked about the one who baptized Jesus said he was from God. John Spoke of another. Jesus told them he was the other. That person is also from God. In Matthew 12 Jesus says it's blasphemy to talk against the Spirit. In John 3 Jesus says the ones born from above and that comes from above have that Spirit. The Spirit of God.

John 3 answers Matthew 12's questions. Who is Jesus or by what authority. The Spirit of God is in the men who speak for God. Yet, Jesus says he speaks of heavenly things. He does miracles and many other Godly things. In John we are told that only those with God's Spirit can do those things. I think this is a great bookend to Matthew. The Matthew Gospel builds a case for the Christ. The John gospel tells us by whom this Christ was sent.

What's it all mean?

If we just had John 3:16 it might be controversial. God sent his one Son? Anyone could say that they are God's Son. Yet, if you add the direction and questions in Matthew about the Christ savior, then it's deeper. God made promises of a man, savior, redeemer, and Christ. It's interesting that in Ruth we have gleaning of the fields and a kinsman redeemer. In Matthew 12 we see that being played out. Jesus is gleaning people and grains of wheat. He is also the kinsman to King David. The promised heir to Israel.

John 3 says he is found. He has God's Spirit. He does God things. He speaks for God. Its prophesy fulfilled. The Christ is here. John spoke of him. John is the one paving the way to Jesus. He baptizes with water but Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit from above. The religious rulers were confused on who, where, what, and when. So was Nicodemus. Jesus says follow the Spirit of God and you will find the man of God or Son of God.

It's interesting that Matthew 12 says something greater than us is here. It's something greater than Satan. John 3 says to be born from above is greater than being born from below. Later in John 16 Jesus says he has overcome the world. Matthew and John are connected. They compliment each other. It's nonsense to say they do not belong together. The theme between them both is God sent his Son and Spirit to save fallen human kind. We are born twice by water and then Spirit to accomplish what God has set out to do. These two chapters are great bookends to a great story.

