

Study Guide for Feb. 3rd, 2008. Born from above! John 3:1-15

Introduction: Whom have you known or read about who went through a process of searching for truth – ultimately leading him or her to Christ? Where are you now?

Nicodemus: A man in process.

- 1) How is Nicodemus described? (vs. 1 and vs. 10)
- 2) Where might Nicodemus have fit into the social and religious strata of Jerusalem?
- 3) How does Nicodemus address Jesus? (vs. 2 in light of 2:23)
- 4) What does John further report about Nicodemus? (John 7:45-52 & 19:38-42)
- 5) Now pull together a brief profile of the man from what you've discovered.

I. The NECESSITY of a New Birth: (John 3:3-4)

- A. How does Jesus respond to Nicodemus' respectful address to him?
- B. What does Jesus mean when he states that it is impossible to see the Kingdom of God "unless one is born again?" (see also I John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18)
- C. Given Nicodemus question (vs. 4), how does he interpret Jesus statement?
- D. Why would Nicodemus, or someone today, find Jesus' statement hard to accept?

II. The NATURE of a New Birth: (John 3:5-8)

- A. How does Jesus in vs. 5 restate what he already claimed in vs. 3?
- B. Read Ezek. 36:24-29a. How does this prophecy help explain Jesus' call to be born of water and spirit?
- C. 'Flesh' (vs. 6) refers to human nature (see John 1:13-14). How then should we understand Jesus' words, "the Spirit gives birth to spirit"
- D. What physical image does Jesus use to describe this process? How is that helpful?

III. The NEWS of the possibility of a New Birth: (John 3:11-15)

- A. Why, according to Jesus (vs. 11 & 12), does Nicodemus not understand?
- B. Why is Jesus, the Son of Man (vs. 13) uniquely qualified to speak of heavenly things? (see in this light Prov. 30:4 and recall John 1:51)
- C. Read Numb. 21:4-9. How does this story illustrate Jesus' claim in vs. 14-15?
- D. What does Jesus mean when he says the Son of Man will be lifted up? (see John 12:31-33). In this light, what is the basis of our new life?