

**DAY ONE**

1. What thought from your reading of the commentary spoke to you? Was this new information?

**Read John 3:1-3**

2a. As Chapter 3 begins, Jesus remained in Jerusalem and was visited by Nicodemus. According to verse 1 in what way was Nicodemus described?

b. The Pharisees were an important Jewish faction in Israel noted for strict observance of rites and ceremonies of Mosaic law. Find and record a brief passage in one of the gospels in which Pharisees are described.

3. In verse 2 we read that Nicodemus sought Jesus out at night. Why might this be and/or what could darkness symbolize?

**THINK:** Can you relate the timing of Nicodemus' visit to a theme from the Introduction to the Gospel of John (John 1:5)? Look for John's use of double and even triple meanings of words throughout the gospel.

4. According to the last part of verse 2, Nicodemus said, "we know that you are a teacher from God ..." What reason did he give for knowing Jesus came from God?

5a. In verse 3 Jesus spoke to Nicodemus mysteriously: "Amen, amen I say to you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." Find the definition of "amen" and comment on the reason Jesus would begin His answer with "Amen, amen..."

**NOTE: With rare exception, the only person who says "Amen" in the Gospels is Jesus himself, at the beginning of his own statements to emphasize something important. In the Gospel of John, Jesus says "Amen, amen" a total of 25 times, beginning some of His most important statements. (Felix Just, <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Themes-Amen.htm>)**

b. The Greek word for "from above" could mean either "from above" or "again." This is an example of how John uses words with double meanings. How does each of these two definitions add to or change the meaning of Jesus' statement?

6. CONNECTION: In today's lesson Jesus was visited by Nicodemus who came to Him because he believed that Jesus was a teacher sent from God. Nicodemus was aware of miracles that Jesus had performed, and he believed God was with Jesus, and wanted to know more from the "Rabbi." Think of a teacher (or priest, or nun, or family friend) who has inspired you through their wisdom or actions to learn more about God or your faith, and share with your small group a bit about him or her and the way they drew you to faith.

Read and record Colossians 3:16 and pray thankfully for those people who lead you to Jesus Christ.

**DAY TWO**  
**Read John 3:4-8**

7. In yesterday's lesson Nicodemus called Jesus a "teacher from God," only seeing Him as a holy rabbi. Briefly explain how Nicodemus' questions from verse 4 show he misunderstood Jesus' statement about being born from above in verse 3.

8. In verse 5 Jesus further explained, "No one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit." These terms appear in the Old and New Testaments to represent spiritual renewing and cleansing. Read Ezekiel 36:25-27 and Titus 3:5 and record a few phrases which point to the spiritual washing of the soul through baptism and the Holy Spirit.

**Note: The sacrament of baptism calls down the Holy Spirit on the person baptized. It frees man from original sin and makes him a member of Christ and His church.**

9. In verse 6 Jesus again stressed the difference between physical and spiritual life. What did He say?

10. What phrase did Jesus repeat in verse 7?

11. Here is a riddle quoted from Stephen K. Ray's book St. John's Gospel. Can you solve it?  
"Born once, die twice. Born twice, die once."

12. CONNECTION: In today's verses Jesus speaks about what it takes to enter the kingdom of God: to be born of water and Spirit. In verse 8 Jesus described the working of the Spirit, saying: "The wind blows where it wills, and you can hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." Look out the window and look and listen for the wind. We know the wind is there by its sound and by its effect on what it touches. How do you know the Holy Spirit is present? Share some thoughts with your small group.

Read and record Job 32:8 and begin your prayer today, saying "Come Holy Spirit."

### **DAY THREE**

**Read John 3:9-15**

13a. Today's lesson continues the discussion between Nicodemus and Jesus regarding spiritual rebirth. Nicodemus showed his lack of understanding when he asked Jesus "How can this happen" (verse 9)? What was Jesus' answer and what do you think was His tone (verse 10)?

b. Why might Jesus be surprised at Nicodemus' lack of understanding?

14. In verses 11-12 Jesus questioned how Nicodemus could believe in heavenly things Jesus would tell him when he wouldn't accept His testimony about earthly things. What do you think Nicodemus lacked that one must have to believe in these heavenly things?

15. Continuing this reproof, Jesus told Nicodemus that only the Son of Man would be able to testify about heaven (verse 13). Who is the Son of Man?

16. In verse 13 Jesus used the words "gone up" (in some translations, "lifted up"), which could have several multilayered meanings. Share some thoughts on what "gone up" could represent.

17a. In verse 14 Jesus referred to Numbers 21:8-9. Read this passage and summarize what God commanded Moses to do and what it would accomplish.

b. For what reason must the Son of Man be lifted up (verse 15)?

18. CONNECTION: Today's passage shows that being powerful and well educated does not always lead to understanding and true faith. Like Nicodemus, some people know about God, but do not know Him. Christian faith is not just recognizing a truth or "knowing the words;" rather, it is accepting Christ as Savior, the Son of God and persevering in His truth. Have you tried to get someone to believe something you knew was the truth yet you had difficulty persuading them? Give an example and explain the methods that you used, and in what ways you feel you were successful.

Read and record Hebrews 11:1. (Good memory verse) Let this verse lead you into prayer.

#### **DAY FOUR**

**Read John 3:16-21**

19. Today's lesson begins with one of the most beloved and often quoted verses in scripture. Read and record John 3:16. (Good memory verse)

20. Those who believe in Jesus Christ will have eternal life (verse 16). Jesus wants our faith to be an active, living faith. From one of the verses below record a favorite direction for Christian living.

Matthew 24:13

James 2:26

21. According to verse 17, God did not send Jesus to condemn the world. Why, then, did God send Jesus?

22a. "Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned ..." For what reason (end of verse 18) are those who don't believe condemned?

b. Read verse 19 and explain in your own words why judgment has come into the world.

23a. Why does everyone who does wicked things hate and avoid the light according to the end of verse 20?

b. We are told in verse 21 that whoever lives the truth comes to the light. Read the second half of verse 21 and state why this occurs.

24. CONNECTION: Catholic theologian and convert Stephen K. Ray summarizes today's verses: "The light has come, but those who hide from the light and wallow in their darkness and sin cannot be saved by the light. They are doomed to temporal and eternal darkness. The one who escapes death and darkness is the one who steps into the light, allows his evil deeds to be washed away, and then practices the truth, showing that his deeds have been 'wrought in God'. The man does the good deeds, but they have been accomplished by the light and grace of God." Name some good deeds you have accomplished by the grace of God and to serve Him. (While it is hard to say nice things about yourself, remember that you are good through the light of God).

Read and record 1 Thessalonians 5:6 and write a prayer that you continue to seek and live in the light of God's truth.

#### **DAY FIVE**

**Read John 3:22-30**

25. After having described baptism and the keys to eternal life to Nicodemus, Jesus and His disciples went into Judea baptizing (verse 22). John the Baptist was also baptizing at Aenon near Salim (verse 23). John the Baptist's imprisonment is mentioned in verse 24. Complete the questions below to refresh your knowledge about this saintly prophet.

Luke 1:13 His parents names were \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

Luke 1:41-45 He leaped in his mother's womb when he heard the voice of \_\_\_\_\_.

Luke 1:76 He will go before the \_\_\_\_\_ to prepare \_\_\_\_\_.

Matt 14:3-4 \_\_\_\_\_ arrested John the Baptist and put him into prison.

Matt 14:10 In prison he was \_\_\_\_\_.

26. A dispute arose between the disciples of John and a Jew about ceremonial washings (verse 25). While we are not told what the dispute involved, from your knowledge of the New Testament describe what could it be about.

27. In verse 26 we read that the disciples of John the Baptist questioned him as to why everyone was coming to Jesus (about whom John had testified) for baptism. In your own words, summarize how John responded to them in verses 27-28.

28. Verse 29 uses expressions associated with weddings. If the “bride” is the Church, who do you think the “bridegroom” and his “best man” are?

29. How did John the Baptist see their respective roles changing in verse 30?

30. CONNECTION: In today’s lesson we were reminded that God called John the Baptist to prepare the way for Jesus. His beautiful statement of joy at “the Bridegroom’s” voice shows us that John gladly put Jesus ahead of himself. Every day we have an opportunity to put another person ahead of ourselves. It can be as small as rearranging our schedules to accommodate a loved one or as large as giving our life to save a stranger. Ironically, it is through putting others first that we receive true joy. Give a recent example of how, like John the Baptist, you found great joy in putting someone else first.

Read the following poem entitled "The Blessing of Unanswered Prayers" and pray to become more selfless and reliant on God's divine providence.

I asked for strength that I might achieve; I was made weak that I might learn humbly to obey. I asked for health that I might do greater things; I was given infirmity that I might do better things. I asked for riches that I might be happy; I was given poverty that I might be wise. I asked for power that I might have the praise of men; I was given weakness that I might feel the need of God. I asked for all things that I might enjoy life; I was given life that I might enjoy all things. I got nothing that I had asked for, but everything that I had hoped for. Almost despite myself my unspoken prayers were answered; I am, among all men, most richly blessed. *Prayer of an Unknown Confederate Soldier*

**DAY SIX**

**Read John 3:31-36**

**NOTE: While it is unclear who is speaking in verses 31-36, they reflect back on both Jesus' teachings to Nicodemus and the final witness of John the Baptist.**

31. In verse 31 to whom do you think the “one who comes from above” and the “one who is of the earth” refer?

32. According to verse 32, what is Jesus' testimony and how do people respond to it?

33a. How do we certify that God is trustworthy according to verse 33?

b. What do you think "certifies that God is trustworthy" means?

34. The loving unity between the Father and the Son is described in verses 34 and 35. What do you learn about their relationship?

35. In verse 36 we are assured that believers shall have eternal life. What will happen to the one who disobeys the Son?

36. CONNECTION: Deuteronomy 30:15-20 expands on verse 36 of today's lesson. Read the passage and select one of the choices with which you are often faced. How has making the right choice brought blessings to your life?

End today's lesson by saying the prayer that Jesus gave us.

Read Lesson 3 John 3:1-36 in the *Meditation and Commentary on the Gospel of John* by Rev. Alfred McBride, O. Praem. The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study acknowledges that scripture quotations in this study are from the New American Bible, Revised Edition (NABRE) © 2010, 1991, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC. All Rights Reserved. Used by permission.

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