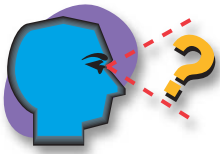


John



Responses to the Questions

NOTE: BE SURE TO ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS YOURSELF BEFORE READING THE ANSWERS IN ORDER TO MAKE THE MOST OF THIS STUDY.

Read John 3:1-36

1. Night is always an image of oppression and evil in John's gospel. In John 11:9-11, Jesus states that anyone who walks by night does not have "light" in him, thus he stumbles. As we've seen elsewhere in John's gospel, Jesus is the "Light" (cf. John 1:6-13). In stating Nicodemus came "by night," the Evangelist is suggesting even though Nicodemus says, "we know you are a teacher come from God," he does not truly know Jesus, or have him in his heart. Nicodemus' action of coming "by night" also demonstrates the oppression the Temple elite have imposed on those who find Jesus and his message appealing.
2. Nicodemus believes Jesus is saying a man must re-enter his mother's womb and be born again naturally.
3. Jesus is speaking of baptism and the regeneration by the Spirit. Jesus is not speaking of natural birth, but supernatural birth—i.e., birth from above. The Spirit hovers over the waters of baptism as he did over the water in the creation account in Genesis 1:2. The Spirit, through the water, creates, or in the case of baptism, re-creates. Jesus is promising new life in the Spirit—that is, supernatural (eternal) life—to all who are baptized, i.e., born again.
4. Jesus is pointing out that Nicodemus has extensive knowledge of Old Testament revelation and should be capable of understanding what Jesus is saying.
5. In the story told in Numbers 21:4-9, Israel complains against God and claims that he led them into the wilderness precisely to betray and murder them. In response to their claims, God sends serpents (images of Satan) to bite them as a judgment since they have—in effect—charged him with Satanic intentions. When the people came to Moses to repent, God told Moses to hoist a bronze serpent on a pole. He promised that anyone who looked upon the bronze serpent while being bitten would live. In verses 14 and 15 of John's gospel, Jesus likens himself to the bronze serpent. People must look upon the Son of Man lifted up on the Cross—if they are to live. The image of the bronze serpent, while promising salvation, warns the Temple elite that their rejection of Jesus will lead them to blaspheme God as Israel blasphemed him.
6. Out of love. Perish means die, or go to Hell. Save us from eternal damnation. He did not send Jesus to condemn the world.



Responses to the Questions (cont.)

7. CCC No.1037 refers to God's desire for everyone to be saved and enjoy eternal life. He condemns no one; man condemns himself by refusing to believe in the Son of God who offers life to all people.
8. Jesus' disciples are baptizing. No. Sacramental baptism is not inaugurated until Jesus pours out his Spirit after his death and resurrection.
9. Our Father in heaven.
10. The Evangelist's recording of John the Baptist's remarks here is not accidental, but crucial to understanding Christ. The Baptist's remarks are deliberately placed here in the narrative, following the story of the Wedding at Cana, in order to make clear that the wedding and the miracle are images pointing to Christ, who is The True Bridegroom.
11. Belief in Jesus Christ. No. A state of sin that, if persisted in, leads to eternal experience of the wrath of God.