

Worksheet 68: John 3:-21

3 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ²This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

³Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

⁴Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

⁵Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.⁷Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' ⁸The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

⁹Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?"

¹⁰Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? ¹¹Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. ¹²If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? ¹³No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. ¹⁴And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁶For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

¹⁸"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. ²¹But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

ACTIVITY

Please answer the following questions from the text.

1. Why does Jesus change subject in verse 3? What does Nicodemus not yet know or understand?
2. In verses 5-8 Jesus links his teaching to baptism although baptism is not mentioned explicitly. How do we know that baptism is the reference? What is the connection between baptism and being “born again” – more literally: “born from above.”
3. This is the account in the Old Testament of the raised up serpent: - (Number 21:4-9)

⁴ Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. ⁵ And the people spoke against God and against Moses: “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread.” ⁶ So the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.

⁷ Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord that He take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people.

⁸ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.” ⁹ So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

QUESTION: What connections can you see to the death and resurrection of Christ and our salvation. (Note: the impaled serpent is both a symbol of the medical profession and the liturgical staff carried by a bishop).

4. Verse 16 occurs in the anaphora of the Divine Liturgy. (Ask if you don’t know what the “anaphora” is). Read verse 17 as well. Why are these verses so important for our Christian lives?

5. Verses 18:21 Condemnation only follows when we do not live in the Light, (recall the references to the Light of Christ in John 1). Salvation is becoming “light” as we live in the Light. The Orthodox also call this “theosis” or deification.

How can I make sure that more and more I “live in the Light”?

What help does God give me through His Church to make this happen?