**John 3: How to enter the Kingdom**

**A lesson for the teacher of Israel - 3:1-21**

**John 3:1-2**

* **Connection between chs. 2 and 3 = “man”**
* **Jesus “knew what was in a (any) man”**
* **Nic honors Jesus, but doesn’t acknowledge He was the Christ .**

**3:3-4**

* **Jesus tries to lead Nic to a better conclusion about who He is**
* **“Again” can = “from above”. Obviously, Nic missed that connection.**
* **Nic’s question demands a “no” answer in the original; “can’t happen”**

**3:5**

* **Jesus repeats the demand in v. 3 with slightly different wording**
* **Whatever “born again” means in 3:3, it parallels being “born of water and the Spirit” in v. 5, Jesus simply dropping the word “again” or “from above”**
* **Whatever this is, entering the Kingdom depends on it.**
* **Nic. would understand this as the Messianic Kingdom (1:59-51).**
* **“Water” Christian baptism didn’t exist yet, in fact in 1:25-27, water baptism is minimized. How can it be critical when it is excluded in 3:14-16, 18, 36; 4:10; 5:24; 6:28-40, 47; 11:25-27 and 20:30-31?**
* **“Spirit in both Greek (NT) and Hebrew (OT) can mean wind, breath, or spirit.**
* **Combined with water here, Nic probably heard “wind”, both of which come from the heavens or “from above”.**
* **AI search ass’t. “Ruach is the Hebrew word for spirit, breath, or wind, often associated with the essence of life and the presence of God. It is used in the Bible to describe the Holy Spirit and signifies both a physical and spiritual force.”**
* **“The teacher or Israel” should have noticed the connection with Ezek. 36:22-29 and 37:1-4.**

**3:6-8**

* **Physical birth vs. birth by the Spirit/spiritual birth is distinguished**
* **The first “you” is singular; the second is plural in the original.**
* **The original suggests that both Nic and all others need to be born again.**
* **Like the wind, spiritual birth cannot be observed.**
* **Jesus is helping Nic to determine whether the idea is “wind” vs. the Spirit, and reminding him of Ez. 37**

**3:9-10**

* **Nic is still puzzled and draws a rebuke from Jesus; How could a teacher of Israel not only teach these things, but experience them himself?**
* **He was in no position to teach others in that case**

**3:11-12**

* **“We” Jesus and John the B. testify of what they know. Nic. and others were unresponsive to their witness (1:19-28).**
* **Their testimony and Jesus’ signs should have been enough.**

**3:12-13**

* **The new birth was “earthly things”, and they didn’t believe. How would they understand higher truths?**
* **What Jesus would/could share was only from someone who has “come down from heaven” and would return (an obvious reference to Himself).**
* **This claim is assigned to the “Son of Man” (Dan. 7:13-14). Nic should have picked up this claim to being the Messiah, who “was” (is) in heaven, a reference to His preexistence.**

**3:14-15**

* **Jesus “lifting up” on the cross is the last event before His reference in v. 13 of His ascension, or return, to heaven.**
* **The serpent on the pole of Num. 22 brought healing to all who looked on it. So, Jesus brings life to all who believe in Him for life.**
* **Believing is as simple as “taking a look”, the first of many illustrations.**
* **Nic should have understood that faith is “seeing” that Jesus is the Christ.**

**3:16-18**

* **Explains vv. 14-15; begins with “for”**
* **The Father’s love for the world is so great that He gave His Son so that no one need ever perish in the Lake of fire, but have everlasting life.**
* **Jesus’ first coming was not to condemn, but to save.**
* **It is when we believe, not continues to believe, that God creates a permanent reality, life that never ends. The Greek perfect tense in 3:18 emphasizes this reality in that this is someone who is "in a state of not having believed."**

**3:19-21**

* **This is the first time Jesus mentions that** **sinful actions or attitudes can hinder believing. “Practices evil” = “Does evil”**
* **“Comes to the light” = “one who does the truth” (not “believes” 3:21)**
* **This is a believer, like John the B., not like Nic, who came at night. One comes to the light; is bearing testimony to or identifying with Christ.**