

### The Gospel of John John 3

**Memory Verse:** “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16 ESV).

#### Background Helps:

John 3 is one of the most familiar and important chapters in the Word of God. It contains the most widely known verse of the Bible, John 3:16, which is also our memory verse. May the Holy Spirit enable you to teach this lesson well!

John 3 has two main sections:

1. Jesus’ nighttime conversation with Nicodemus in Jerusalem (3:1-21). Interpreters differ as to whether the words of Jesus end at verse 15 or at verse 21, in which case verses 16-21 would be John’s commentary on what Jesus said. Either way, the teachings in the whole section are the inspired Word of God!
2. John the Baptist’s discussion with some of his (John’s) disciples in Aenon near Salim (most of 3:22-36). Again, interpreters differ as to whether the words of John (the Baptist) end at verse 30 or verse 36, in which case verses 31-36 would be John the apostle’s commentary on what John the Baptist said. Either way, the teachings in the whole section are the inspired Word of God!

#### Lesson Helps:

Similar to last week’s lesson, the teacher can choose to cover all or most of John 3 (suitable for adults and teens) or concentrate on just part of the chapter (suitable for children, as well as adults and teens). Following the first approach:

Possible lesson aim: My students will learn about God’s plan of salvation in John 3, so that they will believe in Jesus Christ. Notice again the evangelistic aim. Here’s a possible outline:

#### Introduction (Hook)

##### I. Divine Initiative in Salvation

###### A. The new birth of the Spirit (regeneration): John 3:1-8

Intro.: The new birth is what God does *in* us to save us, the *subjective* aspect of salvation. Notice:

1. The necessity of the new birth (3:3, 5, 7)
2. The nature of the new birth: spiritual (3:4-6)
3. The agent in the new birth: the Spirit (3:5-6, 8).

(Note: Jesus uses illustrations from the natural world to convey spiritual truth. We should follow his example! How is the new, spiritual birth like physical birth? How is the work of the Spirit like the wind [v. 8]?)

###### B. The sacrifice of the Son (atonement): John 3:13-17

Intro.: The sacrifice of Christ is what God did *for* us to save us, the *objective* aspect of salvation

1. The sacrifice of the Son stated (3:16-17)
2. The sacrifice of the Son illustrated (3:14-15). See Numbers 21:4-9.

## II. Human Response in Salvation

- A. Belief (3:15-16, 18-21, 36). Notice the alternative to belief: not believing in the Son (3:18), not coming to the light (3:20), not obeying the Son (3:36).
- B. Baptism (3:22-26)

Concl.: Will you believe in the Son and be baptized? Give opportunity for students to make decisions.

In children's classes use the more focused approach, concentrating on the dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus. Using the same lesson aim as above, you could:

1. Dramatize the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus, followed by a discussion of what it means to be born again (see outline above)
2. Review Jesus' teaching in John 3:14-18
  - a. Tell the story which Jesus uses as an illustration in Numbers 21:4-9, relating it to the death of Christ on the cross
  - b. Review the memory verse in detail, John 3:16 (see below)
  - c. Urge your students to believe in Jesus (and be baptized!)

Here are a few questions that can be used in studying John 3:16 (display the verse prominently in your room):

1. What is God's attitude toward the world?
2. How did God show his love to the world?
3. Who is Jesus?
4. What does it mean that God "gave" his Son?
5. Who is the outcome for those who do *not* believe in God's Son? What happens to those who do believe?
6. What does it mean to "believe"?
7. Do you believe in God's Son?

### Home Assignment:

 Read: John 4

 Memorize: John 4:24