

1. Vv. 1-2. Nicodemus came at night as a secret admirer.

His admiration/faith was based on miraculous 'signs' - an inadequate basis for true faith, but one which could lead to a real trust in Jesus (Jn. 7:45-52; 19:38-42).

2. Vv. 3-8. Jesus points out the need for:

i. a radical 'new birth' ('again' or from 'above' - divine action) to become a new person, ('believing' in Jesus 3:15, 1:12-13; Acts 2).

ii. the Spirit (8) to bring this radical change (Eph. 2:1-10; Tit.3:5).

3. V. 9. Nicodemus questions (like many since him) the possibility of this radical change.

4. Vv. 10-15. Jesus in turn questions Nicodemus as to whether his doubts are based on ignorance or unbelief.

i. Jesus recognises that his mission, as the one who has come from God, is to suffer and die. 'The Son of man must be lifted up' (i.e. on the cross, vs. 14). ii. Jesus must die to remove the penalty of sin and make fellowship with God possible--By believing in him people can receive God's forgiveness and love and the gift of new eternal life.

5. V.15. Believing in Jesus means a knowing him personally.

believing in Him - as Saviour who dies for us

trusting Him - as the bearer of God's love, forgiveness, new life

following Him - as Lord who guides and directs our lives

accepting through him - the new life God offers made possible through the death of Jesus and the empowering of the Spirit.

6. Vs. 16 'For God so loved the world...' (also Rm. 5:8)

God's motivation - 'Love for the world'.

God's action - 'gave His one and only Son' to die for us.

God's purpose - forgiveness, and new eternal life.

7. Vs. 17-21. People's lives reveal their beliefs. Those who reject 'the light' (Jesus), will be seen in their evil acts. Those who 'live by the truth' (Jesus), will show by their actions that they are true believers in Jesus, by the enabling power of God, ('in God')

8. Human response:

Believe/trust and repent (Acts 2:37-39). God promises to make us new people by forgiving us and giving us new eternal, life through His Spirit (Eph. 2). This is good news for all people, the world.

Reflection/Response: Have you experienced this new birth? Discuss how to share this promise of new life now with our friends. How does the promise of eternal life impact on our life now? BB