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### Rice Memorial MBC

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### **God's Saving Love in Christ**

Definitions in **bold letters** are from **Strong's** Exhaustive Concordance  
Other definitions are from **Webster's** Dictionary, 1828 Edition  
or Roget's Thesaurus – **April 9, 2017**

## **John 3:1-16**

**Introduction:** **Dwight L. Moody** was one of the greatest **evangelists** of the nineteenth century. He was led to Christ in Boston by a **Sunday school teacher** named **Edward Kimball**. After moving to Chicago, Moody became a successful businessman and put his efforts into Sunday school for **deprived children**.

After he had started the **Illinois Street Independent Church**, Moody came into contact with a young man named Henry Moorhouse while on preaching tour in Dublin, Ireland. Moorhouse practically invited himself to preach for Moody when he visited Chicago. Moody tried to put him off but finally allowed him to preach. After Moody heard him personally, he invited him to preach every night for a week because he was so IMPRESSED.

For seven nights in a row, Moorhouse preached on **John 3:16**, emphasizing **God's LOVE** for **SINNERS**. Moody had always presented God's **HATRED** of **sin** and **sinner**s, so these messages were **eye-opening experiences** for him that CHANGED his **entire perspective** on PREACHING. (Source: *The Bible Expositor and Illuminator, Union Press Publication-Christian Life Series*)

**John 3:1**, There was a **man** of the **Pharisees**, named **Nicodemus**, a **RULER** of the **Jews**...

**NOTE:** One of the "**Sanhedrin**," or **great council** of the **nation**. He is twice mentioned after this as being friendly to our Saviour; in the first instance as advocating his cause, and defending him against the unjust suspicion of the Jews John 7:50, and in the second instance as one who came to aid in embalming his body, John 19:39. It will be recollected that the design of **John in writing** this gospel was to **SHOW** that Jesus (Yahshua) was **the Messiah**. To do this he here adduces (presents) the testimony of one of the **RULERS** of the Jews, who early became convinced of it, and who **retained** the **belief** of it until the **death** of **Jesus**. (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bnb/john-3.html>)

**John 3:2**, The same came to Jesus by **NIGHT**, and said unto him, **Rabbi (master [teacher])**, we **KNOW (understand)**, that thou art a **teacher** come **FROM God (the supreme [highest] Divinity)**: for no man can **do these miracles** that thou doest, **except God** **BE WITH him**.

**Thought 1.** Nicodemus knew that the Jews had **AGREED** that anyone who believed on Jesus as the Christ would be **PUT OUT** of the synagogue. So, he came at night to see him.

**John 9:22**, These words spake his parents, because **they FEARED** the **Jews**: for the **Jews** had **AGREED** already, that if any man did **CONFESS** that **HE** was **Christ**, he should be **PUT OUT** of the **synagogue**.

**John 19:38-39**, And after this **Joseph** of Arimathaea, being a **disciple** of **Jesus**, but **SECRETLY** for **FEAR** of the **JEWS**, besought Pilate that he might take away the

body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also **Nicodemus**, which at the first came to **Jesus** by **night**...

**John 3:3**, *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man BE born again (from above, anew)**, he cannot **SEE (know, perceive)** the kingdom of God.*

**NOTE:** Nicodemus, according to the general sense of the nation, thought that when the MESSIAH came, and his KINGDOM was SET UP, they should all share in it, without any more ado; they being the **descendants of Abraham**, and having him for their **father**: but Christ assures him, that he must be **"born again"**; in distinction from, and opposition to his **FIRST birth by nature**; in which he was vile, polluted... a **transgressor from the womb**, and **by nature a CHILD of wrath**; ...for the Jews have a frequent saying ... that **"one that is made a proselyte, "is LIKE a child NEW BORN".'**

Which they understand, NOT in a spiritual, but in a civil sense....., &c. And by this phrase our Lord signifies, that **NO MAN**, either as a man, or as a **son of Abraham**, or as a **proselyte** to the Jewish religion, can have any **TRUE knowledge of**, or **RIGHT** unto, the enjoyment of the kingdom of God, **UNLESS** he is **born again**; or **regenerated**... and quickened by the **Spirit of God**; ...becomes a partaker of the **divine nature**; ... a **NEW creature**... (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/john-3.html>)

**NOTE:** It is NOT merely true that one cannot ENTER God's kingdom without the **new birth**; he cannot even SEE it! The requirement here stated by Jesus was actually a **demand** that **Nicodemus FORSAKE ALL RELIANCE upon the LAW of Moses**, and upon the elaborate ritual and traditionalism of the Pharisees, and enter upon a totally new way of LIFE. (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/john-3.html>)

**1 Corinthians 2:14**, But the **natural (unregenerate) man** receiveth NOT the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: **neither can he KNOW them**, because **they are spiritually discerned (scrutinize [examine closely], SEEN)**.

**John 3:4**, *Nicodemus saith unto him, HOW can a **man be born** when he is **old**? Can he enter the **second time** into his **mother's womb**, and **be BORN**?*

**NOTE:** ...Nicodemus clearly does not understand Jesus or the truth about the new birth. b. In His description of **new birth**, Jesus recalls a familiar theme from Old Testament promises of the New Covenant (Deuteronomy 30:1-6, Jer. 23:1-8, 31:31-34, 32:37-41).

**Ezekiel 37:12-14**, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will **open** your **graves**, and cause you to **come up** out of your **graves**, and **BRING** you into the land of Israel. And ye shall **KNOW** that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up out of your **graves**, And shall put **MY spirit IN you**, and **YE shall LIVE**, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I **the Lord** (Yahweh) have **spoken it**, and **performed it**, saith the Lord.

These passages essentially make **THREE promises** in the **New Covenant**:

o The regathering of Israel. o The cleansing and spiritual transformation of God's people. o The reign of the Messiah over Israel and the whole world. c. In Jesus' day, the common **TEACHING** among the Jewish people was that the first **TWO** aspects of the **New Covenant had been fulfilled**. ...All they waited for was the **reign of the Messiah**.

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/john-3.html>)

**John 3:5**, *Jesus answered Verily, Verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be BORN of WATER and of the SPIRIT**, he cannot **ENTER INTO** the kingdom of God.*

**Thought 1.** What's meant by "BORN of WATER?" Well, we need to understand that the ENTIRE rebirth pertains to "the spirit" and God's "spiritual family", helped by nothing

physical. As we know, John's "baptism" was with PHYSICAL water. As scripture says, only ONE baptism SAVES! And that's the "baptism (WASHING) by the Holy Spirit.

**Acts 1:5**, And (*Jesus*), being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should NOT depart from Jerusalem, but **WAIT** for the **promise** of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly **baptized WASH** with **water...** but ye shall be **baptized WASH** with the **Holy Ghost** NOT many days hence.

**Ephesians 4:4-5**, There **IS** one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in ONE hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, **ONE baptism** (great sanctification [act of making holy {PURE: CLEAN in heart}])...

**Thought 2.** AFTER a person is "born again": saved, if they have time, prior to leaving their body and going to be with Jesus: dying, they SHOULD be baptized in physical water.

**1 John 5:1**, Whosoever **BELIEVETH** that Jesus is the Christ **IS** **BORN** of God...

**Acts 8:37-38**, And Philip said, If thou **believest** with ALL thine **heart**, thou mayest. And he answered and said, **I BELIEVE** that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and **they went down** BOTH into the **WATER**, both Philip and the eunuch; and he **baptized him**.

**Acts 10:46-48**, Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid **WATER**, that these should **NOT be baptized**, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to **be BAPTIZED** in the **name (authority)** of the Lord.

**Thought 3.** Another important truth is Acts 1:5 says we are FIRST WASHED and BORN into the kingdom. Next,, we're FILLED by the Holy Ghost for WORK in the kingdom. It's the SECOND experience with the Spirit. That being true, that means the apostles did NOT receive the Holy Ghost in John 20:21-22. Remember, Acts 1:5 says, they'd be "washed" not many days hence (from this TIME): the time he last spoke to them prior to being taken up.

**John 20:21-22**, Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, **HE BREATHED on THEM**, and saith unto them, **Receive ye** the **Holy Ghost**...

**Thought 4.** Three days after being BORN again, Saul was FILLED by the Spirit for WORK.

**Acts 9:17**, And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, **Brother Saul**, (*He was born again on the Damascus road*) the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and **be FILLED** with the **Holy Ghost**.

**Titus 3:4-5**, But after that the kindness and LOVE of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he **SAVED us**, by the **WASHING** of **regeneration (SPIRITUAL rebirth)**, and **renewing** (making new again; reviving [restoring to LIFE]) of the Holy Ghost...

**Thought 5.** Now, after all of these scriptures and truths, someone says, "Well, according to Mark 16, Jesus said a person must believe AND be BAPTIZED in WATER to be SAVED." Okay, let's look at Mark 16. And remember, in scripture there are NO contradictions.

**Mark 16:15-16**, And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that **believeth** **AND** is **baptized** **SHALL BE SAVED**...

**AND defined 2532, defined** **SO THEN**, therefore [for this reason ].

**Thought 6.** So, the conclusion is: “He that **“BELIEVETH for this reason, is baptized IS SAVED.”** God’s way is when a person believes, they’re saved. This conclusion harmonizes with the other scriptures about being saved.

**John 3:6,** *That which is **born** of the **flesh** is **FLESH (the body, or the symbol of what is EXTERNAL);** and that which is **BORN** of the Spirit **is SPIRIT.***

**Though 1.** This just confirms what was stated earlier in our reasoning about being saved.

**John 3:7-8,** *Marvel NOT that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The **wind bloweth** where it listeth, and thou **hearest** the **sound** thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: **SO IS** every one that is **BORN** of the Spirit.*

**NOTE: .The wind blows...** Jesus’ idea to Nicodemus is “You don’t understand everything about the WIND, but you see its effects. That is just how it is with the birth of the Spirit.” Jesus wanted Nicodemus to **know that HE didn’t have to UNDERSTAND everything about the new birth BEFORE** he EXPERIENCED it.

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/john-3.html>)

**John 3:9-10,** *Nicodemus answered and said unto him, **HOW** can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a **master (instructor, teacher)** of Israel, and **knowest NOT** these things?*

**NOTE:** Nicodemus is confused. He is **so set** in his **thinking** that the **new birth** has already happened to him and all of faithful Israel, that he has a hard time thinking out of that “box.” Jesus needs to keep explaining.

b. **...you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?** Jesus chides Nicodemus for NOT being aware of the need and the promise of the new birth, because these are plainly laid out in the Old Testament. Nicodemus knew these passages well, but believed that they had been fulfilled in regard to the new birth. But he should have known better!

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/john-3.html>)

**John 3:11-12,** *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We **speak** that we **do KNOW,** and **testify** that we have **SEEN;** and ye receive NOT our witness. If I have TOLD you **earthly** things, and ye **believe NOT,** **HOW** shall ye **believe,** IF I tell you of **heavenly** things?*

**NOTE: We speak** - Jesus here speaks in the plural number, including himself and those engaged with him in preaching the gospel. Nicodemus had said John 3:2, “we know that thou art,” etc., including himself and those with whom he acted. Jesus in reply said, we, who are engaged in spreading the **new doctrines** about which you have come to inquire, speak what we know. We do not deliver doctrines which we do NOT practically understand.

**If I have told you earthly things** - Things which occur on earth. Not sensual or worldly things, for Jesus had said nothing of these; but he had told him of **operations** of the **Spirit** which **had occurred “on earth,”** whose effects were visible, and which “MIGHT” be, therefore, BELIEVED. These were the plainest and most obvious of the doctrines of religion.

**How shall ye believe - Heavenly things** - Things pertaining to the government of God and his doings in the heavens; things which are **removed from human view...**

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bnb/john-3.html>)

**John 3:13,** *And **NO MAN** hath **ascended up to heaven,** but he that **came down** from heaven, even the Son of man which is **IN (by [ through the act or agency {action} off]) heaven.***

**NOTE: ...no man hath ascended into heavens** - This does NOT mean that no one had gone to heaven or had been saved, for **Enoch** and **Elijah** had been borne (CARRIED) there (Gen. 5:24; compare Heb. 11:5; 2 Kings 2:11); and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and others were there...

**But he that came down ...** - The Lord Jesus. He is represented as coming down, because, being equal with God, he took upon himself **our NATURE**, John 1:14; Philippians 2:6-7. He is represented as **“SENT” by the Father**, John 3:17, John 3:34; Galatians 4:4; 1 John 4:9-10. (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bnb/john-3.html>)

**John 1:14**, And **the Word** was **MADE flesh (a human being)**, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld HIS glory, the glory as of the **ONLY BEGOTTEN** of the Father),...

**Thought 1.** **‘which is IN (by [ through the act or agency {action} of]) heaven.** This is telling us that his coming here was from heaven’s action: his Father SENT him! And everything he SAID and DID, as human, was TAUGHT to him by his Father, as he listened.

**Luke 2:52** ...Jesus **increased** in **WISDOM** and stature, and in favor with God and man.

**John 8:28**, Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I DO nothing **OF myself**; but as **my Father** hath **TAUGHT ME**, I speak these things.

**John 3:14-15**, And **AS** (just like) *Moses lifted up the **serpent** in the wilderness, even so MUST the Son of man be **LIFTED UP**: That whosoever **BELIEVETH** in him should NOT perish, but have **eternal life**.*

**Thought 1.** We must not forget that everything in the Old Testament points to Jesus in some way. Now, let’s go to Numbers 21 to see this account of the serpent being lifted up.

**Numbers 21:5-9**, And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to DIE in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. And the Lord **sent (appoint) fiery (poisonous) serpents** among the people, and they **BIT** the people; and MUCH people of Israel DIED. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have **sinned**, for we have spoken **against** the Lord, and against thee; **pray** unto the Lord, that he TAKE AWAY the serpents from us. And Moses **prayed** for the people.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a **fiery SERPENT**, and set it upon a **pole**: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he **looketh (GAZE) upon it, shall LIVE.**

...Moses **made a serpent of brass** ...put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a **serpent** had bitten any man, when he **BEHELD** the **serpent** of brass, **he LIVED.**

**Thought 2.** Most Christians are familiar with the fact Jesus is “the LAMB of God that taketh away the SIN of the world.” (John 1:29) Moses was to make a SNAKE and put it on a pole, pointing to Jesus’ crucifixion! What does the snake represent? The answer lies in the fact Jesus was to TASTE DEATH for all humans. God was pointing to the **SPIRITUAL DEATH** that Adam experienced when he disobeyed: eating the forbidden FRUIT. That death is God: his NATURE, LEAVING Adam’s spirit, and him receiving Satan’s nature. It was PASSED to all born from his seed! When Jesus was MADE to be SIN, he sensed that his Father had left his spirit, causing him to first TASTE spiritual death and then taste physical death. This means when God left Jesus’ spirit, his nature changed from God’s nature: the LAMB, to that of “that old SERPENT, called the Devil, and Satan.” (Rev. 12:9)

**Hebrews 2:9**, But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels (*a man*) for the **suffering of DEATH**, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should **TASTE DEATH** for every man.

**Mark 15:34**, And at the **ninth** hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is,

being interpreted, **My God, my God, why hast thou FORSAKEN ME?**

**2 Corinthians 5:21**, For he (*God*) hath **MADE HIM to BE SIN for us**, who knew no sin; that **WE** might be **made** the **righteousness** of God **IN** him.

**Isaiah 53:6**, ALL we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to His own way; and the LORD hath **laid ON him** the **iniquity** of us **ALL**.

**Thought 3.** God raised Jesus spiritually **FIRST**, then, his body was raised and reunited with his spirit. He was the first human to be **BORN AGAIN** from being spiritually dead! He was the first of the new creatures! (2 Cor. 5:17)

**Acts 2:32**, This **Jesus** hath **God raised up**, whereof we all are witnesses.

**Colossians 1:18**, And he (*Jesus*) is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the **FIRSTBORN** from the **dead**; that in **ALL** things he might have the **preeminence (to be FIRST)**.

**Thought 4.** Last of all, did you notice, in order to live, the people had no **WORK** to do? This incident in Numbers 21 makes very clear what it means to “believe.” God was pointing to salvation after Jesus’ resurrection where we are saved by grace through **FAITH**: LOOKING to Christ’s **WORK** on the cross. We believe, and so, we **LIVE**.

**John 3:16**, For God **so LOVED the WORLD**, that he **GAVE** his only **BEGOTTEN** Son, that whosoever **BELIEVETH** **IN** him should **NOT perish**, but have **everlasting life**.

**Believeth defined 4100, to have faith (in or with respect to, a person), i.e. credit; by impli., to ENTRUST (especially one's spiritual well-being to Christ).**

**Thought 1.** Remember now, this believing is **JUST LIKE** what the people did that believed Moses and **LOOKED AT** the brass serpent on the pole and **LIVED**.

**1 John 5:1**, Whosoever **BELIEVETH** that **Jesus** is the **Christ** **IS BORN** of **God...**

**Acts 10:42-44** ...he commanded us to preach unto the people... testify... that through his **name (authority)** whosoever **BELIEVETH** in him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the **Holy Ghost FELL on ALL** them which **HEARD** the **word**.

**Thought 2.** Last of all, since a person is **SAVED** the moment they **BELIEVE**, it’s **NOT** necessary to **PRAY** for them to receive Jesus and become God’s child. There are **NO SCRIPTURES** where someone prayed for a person to receive Jesus in their heart! The truth is when we **BELIEVED**, we received Jesus and we received eternal LIFE!

**1 John 5:10-12**, He that **believeth** on the Son of God hath the **witness** in himself: he that believeth **NOT** God hath made (determine) him a **liar**; because he believeth **NOT** the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God **HATH GIVEN** to US **eternal LIFE**, and this **life** is in his **Son**. He that hath the Son hath **LIFE**; and he that hath NOT the Son of God hath **NOT LIFE**.

**John 3:17-21**, For God **sent** **NOT** his Son into the world to **condemn** the **WORLD**; but that the world through him might BE saved. He that **believeth on him** is **NOT** condemned: but he that believeth **NOT** is **condemned already**, Because he hath **NOT believed** in the **name** of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men **loved darkness** rather than **light**, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth **cometh to the light**, that **his deeds** may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.