

Summary sheet 6 - John 2 vs 23-3vs36 (Part A -2vs23-3vs15)

GOAL of the 1-2-1 study

Realise that only God makes entry to the kingdom possible

Context – how does this passage fit in?

In John 2.1-25 we saw that Jesus is the Messiah come to bring in the 'Messianic age', aka the kingdom of God, the eternal new creation prophesied in places like Isaiah 25:6-8. But we were taken aback by the clash at the temple showing that Jesus is the divine judge who won't tolerate sin. This raised two questions – **HOW does someone enter the Messianic kingdom?** & **WHO enters?** This passage mainly answers the **HOW?** And chapter 4 mainly answers the **WHO?** We're starting to see some of the ideas from the Executive Summary (eg 1.5-13 - what Jesus has come to do and why we need to believe in him to have life) unpacked.

Impact on us

Helping us be clear that no human can enter God's kingdom on their own merits or credentials but that the necessary new start of 'new birth' only comes through God's work, in his time, received by faith in Jesus.

How John writes to make his point

Jesus teaches in this passage that entry to God's kingdom is only possible through God's work of spiritual rebirth. This is enabled by the Spirit as people believe in Jesus. The fact this teaching is really important is emphasised in a number of ways – eg Jesus saying 3 times "Truly, truly"; repetition of key ideas like 'born', 'Spirit', 'witness'; John the Baptist's authentication of Jesus by saying something very similar to Jesus in v22-36; and the shock of Israel's 'teacher' Nicodemus being on the outside of the Kingdom.

Structure

2vs23-3vs3: No one can enter without rebirth

3vs4-8: Rebirth is only possible through God's work by his Spirit

3vs9-21: Rebirth (new life) can only happen through belief in Jesus

>because only Jesus has come from heaven and he, God's Son, has been sent so people can have life not condemnation

>but vs19-21 many people reject Jesus because they prefer the darkness

3vs22-36: John the Baptist says the same thing as Jesus, providing authentication

John's references to the OT and why they matter – vs 2.23-3.15

- **Rebirth/Regeneration** Jesus' insists that rebirth by water (ie being spiritually cleansed/purified) and the Spirit is essential for entry to the kingdom and in doing so alludes to passages like Ezekiel 36. In Ezekiel 36vs16-20 God teaches his people that sin prevents Israel being God's people. But in Ezekiel 36vs25-27, God makes clear that one day he will solve this problem of sin by doing what only he can do - washing/cleansing people of sin and giving them new obedient hearts by putting his Spirit within them.

- **Serpent in the wilderness** In Numbers 21vs4-9 God miraculously and mercifully delivered his people from his wrath at their sin by providing a bronze snake on top of a pole. This foreshadowed Jesus being risen up on the Cross to rescue people from God's wrath and provide rebirth. It was something they couldn't do themselves but was easy to do – they just had to look/believe.

Some questions – vs 2.23-3.15

Opener: What kind of responses would you expect to get from a cross section of people in the City if you asked them, "How does a person become a Christian?"

Considering the text1: What can we find out from 2.23 – 3.2 about why Nicodemus came to Jesus this night and what was on his mind?

Considering the text2: What do the 3 parts of Jesus' answer to Nicodemus' questions beginning with "Truly, truly" (v3; v5-8; v11-21) tell us about a) the state of humanity; b) what Jesus has come to do; and c) how he will do it? How do you think Nicodemus felt about this?

OT sharpener: how does Numbers 21:4-9 help us better understand what Jesus has come to do?

One to keep chewing on: How would you explain from this passage how a person enters the kingdom of God?