

WEEK 2 || *JOHN 3*

THE CROSS EXAMINATION

Sometimes it's possible to be almost right about Jesus, and yet still completely wrong. Nicodemus, a leading Jewish teacher, is trying to make his mind up about Jesus (though the fact that he comes to Jesus at night hints that he doesn't really want to be seen.)

Let's untangle the threads as we work through this complex encounter and form our own views on Jesus.



NICODEMUS JUDGES JESUS

Read through John 3

1. How do Jesus and Nicodemus describe each other (v2, v10)? From what we saw last week, is this description of Jesus enough?

2. There's been a general acceptance in western culture that Jesus is (at the very least) a "great religious teacher." What's missing in this view? Is it still held, or is that changing?

3. "... who has come from God" forms the second half of Nicodemus's assessment. Scan through the chapter and find any other statements about the origin of Jesus. Why is it important?

... WHICH JUDGES HIM

At this early stage of his mission Jesus talks in riddles and double meanings. The key double meaning in this passage comes in the statement in vv 3 and 7. There's a play on words, because the same Greek word means both "again" and "from above". We're used to talking about being "born again", and that's certainly the way Nicodemus takes it. But Jesus is actually more interested in talking about ultimate origins... because as we saw in week 1 *he's the one* who was born from above!

4. Read verse 3 (with "from above" replacing "again"), then verse 7. Is it possible Jesus is talking about himself here? (Does his explanation in verse 11 to 13 help? What about verses 31-32?)

5. "Testimony" is a key word in John's gospel. Witnesses are being called to give their testimony in deciding who Jesus really is. Summarise Jesus' testimony about himself in this chapter.

6. From verse 10, what verdict does Jesus deliver on Nicodemus?

WHAT'S YOUR VERDICT?

7. From verses 16 to 17, for what purpose did God send his Son into the world?
8. What's the world's verdict on Jesus? What are the consequences for those who don't believe? (v18-19)
9. Being 'just a teacher' doesn't make the grade. Jesus is much more than that. What are the consequences for missing the point of the coming of Jesus according to 3:36?
10. Is your view of Jesus big enough? How would you know if it wasn't?

CONCLUSION

Seeing Jesus as 'just a good teacher' doesn't really do justice to his much grander claims of who he really is. Though Nicodemus doesn't understand yet, Jesus is the one who has indeed come from the Father; keep reading in John's gospel and people keep arguing about where Jesus has come from. Though it is eventually revealed, for now, like the wind, nobody really knows where this one who is born of the Spirit comes from, or is going to.

Remember, Jesus claims that your verdict on him will actually shape the verdict God comes to on you! Grapple with these things through the week.