



### Coffeeville First Baptist Church

By  
**Craig Baker,**  
Pastor

While Philippians is one of my favorite books of the Bible, John is by far my favorite Biblical author. I think it is because John was just an average guy like most of us. The Apostle Paul's writings are wonderful, but Paul was an educated man who could sometimes write in a way that is difficult for even the most astute theologians and Biblical scholars to understand or agree on. In contrast to Paul, John was just straightforward about things in his letters and his gospel. He did not use a lot of metaphors and word plays. He just told it like it is.

In his gospel, John primarily focused on seven signs of Jesus and some things that must happen. Most are about Jesus and the sacrifice He would make on the cross, but John records three musts of the Christian life. As we begin the year considering our commitment to Jesus and His church, over the next three weeks, we will consider the three things John tells us must happen in the life of a Christian.

The first must of the Christian life is found in John 3:1-10. In this passage, we are told of Nicodemus who was an intelligent, well-educated man, a Pharisee and member the Sanhedrin. Despite holding one of the highest positions in the Jewish nation, Nicodemus was clearly impressed by Jesus. He addressed Jesus as Rabbi which was a term of honor and endearment

reserved for greatly respected teachers. Nicodemus also stated he had seen Jesus perform signs or miracles and was confident Jesus was sent by God. The meeting with Nicodemus occurred during Jesus' first trip to Jerusalem, and John tells us in chapter 2 that after arriving in Jerusalem, Jesus drove the money changers and merchants out of the temple, turning over tables and driving them out with a whip. We are told Jesus also performed signs, miracles, in Jerusalem, and those signs led many to believe in Him. We do not know what Nicodemus had heard Jesus teach or the signs he witnessed Jesus perform, but he was convinced there was something special about Jesus. Many of his fellow Pharisees and Sanhedrin members disagreed. They thought Jesus was a radical, false teacher who was making people questions the Pharisees authority and leading people to rebel against the established Jewish religion. Nicodemus slipped out into the night to meet with Jesus to find out what he could about him. Nicodemus told Jesus, "We know..." so it is obvious Nicodemus had been talking to some of the other Pharisees about Jesus, and they wanted answers to their questions of who Jesus really was and what He was trying to accomplish. I sometimes wonder why Nicodemus was the only one of the Pharisees who went to meet with Jesus that night, but that is a question for another time. Nicodemus basically

said to Jesus, "We been watching you and have decided that there is something special about you. God is with you, but we cannot figure out what is going on here. Can you imagine Nicodemus' reaction when Jesus does not confirm what Nicodemus said about him or give any other information about Himself but replied, "Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

We can get a sense of the frustration and confusion that Nicodemus felt in his reply to Jesus. He said, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" No doubt just like most of us would be, Nicodemus was thinking, "Jesus, that's one of the craziest things I've ever heard. I'm a grown man. There is no way I can be born again. That's impossible."

Jesus does not waiver from His statement and in fact, reiterates it by saying, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." The problem Nicodemus, the Pharisees, and most all the Jews had was when it came to their relationship with God, they placed great importance on their family heritage. They believed their place in God's kingdom was based on them being born a Jew, and therefore they were automatically a part of God's kingdom. Because Nicodemus could boast in being a descendent of Abraham, he was confident that he had a place in God's kingdom, but Jesus tells him, "Nicodemus, you have it all wrong. Sure, you must be born of water, you must be born physically the first time, but it's not who you were born as physically that saves you. It's who you are reborn as spiritually." (Cont'd. on page 14)



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