John 3:1-21

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[0:00] Well, as I noted last Sunday, the first half of this chapter is a summary. I don't think it's all the detail. It's a summary of a conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus, who was a prominent ruler and teacher among the Jews. After witnessing a few of Jesus's miracles in Jerusalem, we see that at the end of chapter two, after seeing them or witnessing them or at least hearing of them, Nicodemus arranged for this low-key, perhaps secret meeting to take place where he could learn about the source of Jesus's power. Because after all, it's not every day that someone comes to town who has the ability to heal the sick and teaches with the kind of authority with which Jesus taught, and Nicodemus, being one who was in pursuit of God in this moment, needed to have this conversation.

I believe that he was searching. He's trying to figure out who exactly is Jesus, how is it that he can do these things, and why does that matter, or what implication or application does that have to me personally? I think that's why Nicodemus is coming to Jesus in these moments. And as we saw just a moment ago, as we read through it, Jesus wasted no time with Nicodemus, at least in the summary that's given to us. There's no pleasantries listed here for us. He doesn't even really address what Nicodemus says in the very beginning. Nicodemus says, we know that you must be from God, because who else could do the things that you're doing? And then immediately, what we find in the summary, at least, is Jesus cuts right to the point, and he says, unless you're born again, you can't see the kingdom of God.
He doesn't even address at all Nicodemus' statement, or at least not plainly in the beginning. Nicodemus, being one of the Pharisees, as you know, did not consider himself to be a desperate sinner as other men. The Pharisees believed that God would grant eternal life on the basis of their lineage and their commitment to the law, and they were very much dedicated to those things. Nicodemus probably, as far as comparing men to men, Nicodemus probably was as good of a Jew as you could be. Probably very similar to the way Paul described himself before coming to Christ, a Jew of the Jews and an Israelite of all Israelites. Nicodemus perhaps would have certainly fit that description. Even Jesus later says, are you the teacher in Israel? He's not just any rabbi. He's well-respected.
He belongs to the Sanhedrin. If anybody was going to earn eternal life, if that was possible, Nicodemus was one. It's not that they were uncommitted people. They were actually very dedicated people.
[2:57] Their problem was they didn't see themselves as sinners, as wicked in and of themselves. And so they believed that God would grant them eternal life on the basis of their Jewish lineage and their commitment to the law. But in the midst of that conversation, Jesus drops this bomb on Nicodemus.

And he says, unless you experience a rebirth, a spiritual new birth, you will never see the kingdom of God.
And he says it directly in verse 7. He repeats himself in verse 7. He says, do not marvel that I've said to you, you must be born again. And the you there in verse 7 is plural in Greek. He's not just talking about Nicodemus.
He's talking about everybody. All of the Sanhedrin, all of the Pharisees, everybody must be born again in order to see the kingdom. And as we study through John chapter 3, you begin to piece it together because it is a bit enigmatic, isn't it? It's a little strange to figure out what exactly was Jesus saying and what does this new birth mean and all of these kinds of things. And we begin to see in the chapter that being born again, this new birth is synonymous in John 3 with repentance of sin and faith in Christ Jesus. The repentance of sin is somewhat shadowy. We find it really in verse 5. Jesus says, truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the

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kingdom of God. And I don't think that when Jesus says born of water, I don't think he's talking about our natural birth. And I don't think that he's talking about baptism either. I think he's using this as an allusion to the washing away, the cleansing of sin that comes through repentance, perhaps even an allusion to what John was preaching. Nicodemus would have been familiar with that at this particular time in biblical history. He would have understood that in this cleansing away. And I think there's an allusion there to repentance. But then as we get to verses 15 and 16 and 17 and 18, we see overwhelmingly this new birth being synonymous with faith, faith specifically in Jesus Christ. But then we see that these things, repentance and faith, are actually an individual's response to the gracious work of God's spirit in their life. So then as we dig into this chapter, it's not that faith and repentance produce the new birth. They don't cause the new birth.
They're actually responses to the new birth. And we see that in verse 8. Jesus gives this really helpful illustration. The wind blows where it wishes. You hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. And then he says, so it is with every person who is born of the spirit, the spirit of God. So like the wind, you can see the effects of God's spirit at work in a person's life. [6:28] Though you cannot see the spirit himself. He's like the wind. You can step outside and you can feel it on you. You can see it as it rustles the leaves that have fallen from the trees over the last several months. You can see what the wind does. You can see the effects of its work, though you cannot see it, though you cannot understand its movements fully. You don't know where it's coming from and where it's going. And Jesus says, that's how my spirit is at work in our lives. You can't really fully understand its movements. You don't know where it's coming from and where it's going. You can't see the spirit itself. But what you see is the effects of the spirit's work in a person's life when he comes in and he produces this regenerative work, this new birth, and a person is born again.

And what immediately is seen as the result of that is repentance from sin and faith in Jesus Christ. That's the lesson that Jesus is teaching Nicodemus. That salvation is not something you do. Salvation is something God does in us. It's his grace. And this is really where Nicodemus had a struggle. Look at verse 9. Nicodemus said to him, how can these things be?
How, Jesus, is that possible? Now, Nicodemus was a smart man. He doesn't get where he is politically and religiously and all of those things. He's the teacher of Israel, Jesus says. He doesn't get there without being very intelligent. I don't think that he's misunderstanding Jesus's analogy about being born again. In fact, I even think when Nicodemus responds to Jesus and says, can a man enter into, can an old man enter into his mother's womb again? I think he's just responding to Jesus in the same words that Jesus is using. I think he's using his words to match Jesus's analogy. And he's essentially saying what you're saying isn't possible. Like, it can't just be that. That can't be all there is to this eternal life and kingdom of God. And I think that his response here in verse 9 actually indicates that he does indeed understand the lesson, but he was unwilling to accept it, at least at this moment. And he says, not explain that to me further. He says, I don't think that's possible. I don't think you're right about that. How can that be? So believing that his obedience to the law would gain him eternal life, Nicodemus couldn't see how it was possible for salvation to be entirely by God's grace apart from his own human effort. I think that's what's at play here in this passage. And then in verses 10 through 12, Jesus rebukes the hardness of Nicodemus's heart. We'll look at that a little more in a moment. But then he goes on to wonderfully explain how salvation by grace through faith is possible. And that's what verses 9 through 21 are.
[9:56] Jesus gives this lesson to Nicodemus about being born again. Nicodemus says, how's that even possible? And Jesus says, let me tell you how it's possible. And that's what unfolds. And here's the summary of it.

The answer to Nicodemus's question, how is this possible? How can these things be? Is found only in the person and work of Jesus. It's only found in Jesus. He can't understand it apart from him. And Jesus essentially is standing before him saying, Nicodemus, I came, I am here so that this can be possible.
Just look to me, listen to me. And then he begins to explain it. And so what I want to do is I want to take the same basic structure that we used last week in verse 16. And I want to explore a little bit more in this broader perspective of how Jesus answered Nicodemus. And I'm going to try to tie that back into Christmas and the Christmas story once again as well. Okay, so we're going to look a little further at the identity of Jesus as the gift of God. We are going to see an illustration that Jesus gives about the call of God to faith. And then we'll, we'll finish it with asking the question of God's love. If

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his love is so great, why do so many people reject it? Because we find that answer in this passage as well. Okay. So, so let's look through it just quickly together. The first thing is identifying the gift of God, identifying the gift of God. And we're going to find this in verse 13 in just, just a moment. So last week, looking at verse 16, we found that the greatest gift ever given was a person, God's only begotten son, John writes. And in fact, the gift of Jesus we discovered is actually the theme of the entire Bible. So after sin brings in suffering and death, God promises that he will send a deliverer to rescue his people. And then we find that the old Testament is full of all of these pictures, like the sacrificial system of reminding of God's promise that he will send a perfect lamb that will atone for the sins of man. And then when we get into the new Testament, we learn that this deliverer who is the gift of John 3 16 is none other than Jesus of Nazareth. So let's look at verse 13 now. And I want to see in this text, how Jesus is actually making that claim that he is that gift. Okay. Verse 13, Jesus says this weird thing. No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven. And then he adds in the title, the son of man. So no one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven. So Jesus had simplified this gospel mission for Nicodemus by explaining it in the earthly terms of the new birth. But Nicodemus didn't want to accept what Jesus was saying. So in verses 10 to 12, Jesus mildly rebukes him. Look, look with me at verse 10. Jesus answered, are you the teacher of Israel? And yet you do not understand these things? You don't see how this can be?

Nicodemus verse 11. Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and bear witness to what we've seen, but you do not receive our testimony. Well, who's the we there? I don't think that he's referring to his disciples yet. We don't really know much about them at this point in John's gospel, at least. I think Jesus is referring perhaps to the Old Testament prophets, the ones that Nicodemus was very familiar with, the ones that Nicodemus would have known, all of these prophecies as he would have studied them himself. But all of those prophecies, Nicodemus had not interpreted right. [14:08] And Jesus is saying, we speak of the things that we know. We speak of the things that we've seen and that God has made us aware of. And yet you do not, you do not accept those things in verse 12.

He says, if I've told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you of heavenly things? So Nicodemus wouldn't accept the most fundamental truths explained in the simplest of terms. He would never come to grips with the deeper heavenly realities for which he was seeking.

And Jesus's point in verse 13 was that a man's understanding is only as good as his source of information. A man's understanding is only as good as his source of information. Nicodemus was trying to find all these answers, but he was trying to find them in all the wrong places. And Jesus says, Nicodemus, no man has ascended into heaven so as to learn all of these things and bring them back to communicate to you. But Jesus stood before Nicodemus as the one from heaven who knew these realities, who knew all of these things, had the full knowledge of salvation and had the authority to share it. And Nicodemus is saying, just listen to me, listen to me. None of these men know. I know.

I know. And there's three things about Jesus's identity. I think that's revealed in this one verse. And the first one we see is son of God, son of God. The clear implication of Jesus's statement is that he is the one who came from heaven. He's not talking in an abstraction here. He's not talking about some person that is out there that you might be able to gain this knowledge from. He's saying clearly to Nicodemus, no, I have come from heaven. I have come. But Jesus wasn't just any being from heaven. In verse 16, as we studied last week, he referred to himself as God's only son. He wasn't an angel that was delivering a message as others had done in the scriptures. Jesus was claiming to be God, claiming to be one with the father. Last week, we looked at this from Philippians 2.

I want you to actually look at this again, except from Matthew chapter one. In fact, turn with me there. It's just a few pages over from where you are. In Matthew chapter one, and I want you to see in the Christmas narrative, the reality of Jesus as the son of God, the son of God. Matthew chapter one, let's start reading at verse 12 and just be patient with me for a second.

[17:11] There's a reason why I want to read all of these names. Okay. Verse 12. After the deportation to Babylon, Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel.

Shealtiel, the father of Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel, the father of Abiad. Abiad, the father of Eliakim. And Eliakim, the father of Azor. Azor, the father of Zadok. Zadok, the father of Achim. Achim, the

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father of Eliad.
And Eliad, the father of Eleazar. And Eleazar, the father of Mathen. And Mathen, the father of Jacob. And this is the one I want you to see. And Jacob, the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Christ.
Now, do you notice the difference between the way that Matthew describes the direct lineage of Jesus versus everybody else in this paragraph? Really, everybody else in the chapter. Over and over, Matthew says, this man begat this man.
And this man begat this man. And so on and so forth. Until he gets all the way down to Joseph. And he says, Jacob begat Joseph, who did not begat Jesus, Matthew says.
[18:35] Joseph was just the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born. Do you see what Matthew is doing? He's going out of his way here to emphasize the fact that Jesus is not the son of Joseph.

And then he goes on. We see it again in verse 18. Skip down to that now. Now, the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, it's an important emphasis, she was found to be with child from the Holy Ghost.
And her husband, Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.
She will bear a son. You shall call his name Jesus. He will save his people from their sins. And all of this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet.
Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son. And they shall call his name Emmanuel, which means God is with us.
[19:50] And when Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him. He took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son and he called his name Jesus.

Now, I want you to see all of this here. Six different times, beginning of verse 16, in the lineage verse, and then when we get to verse 18 through 25.
Six different times, Matthew emphasizes the fact that Jesus was not the son of Joseph, and that Mary was a virgin when he was born. He's the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary.
Before they came together, verse 18. With child from the Holy Ghost, verse 18. That which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit, verse 20. Verse 23, behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son.
And then you could add in an extra one. They call his name Emmanuel, which is God is with us. Verse 25, knew her not until she had given birth to a son. That is an intimacy, sexually speaking.
[20:50] Matthew goes out of his way in this birth narrative to say, Jesus is from God. Jesus is the son of God. He wasn't a regular man who was endowed with divine qualities.

It wasn't that Jesus was born like everyone else is born, and then all of a sudden God said, okay, I'm going to make this man my divine figure. That's not how this happened. Jesus has always been.
And the testimony of the scripture is that the Messiah that would come would not just be ordinary like us, even though he is an ordinary man, but that he is God in the flesh.
Jesus' explicit claim in the scriptures is that he himself is God. He's one with the Father, a part of the Trinity.
But then if Jesus had been born of Joseph, and this is so important, if he had been born of Joseph, he couldn't be our Savior. Because if he was born of Joseph, that means Jesus was in Adam.
[22:02] And every person that's in Adam has a nature of sin and rebellion that must be redeemed. And the Bible is abundantly clear that Jesus was not in Adam.

He had no sin. He's the son of God. And we have the hint of that in verse 13 in John chapter 3 when he looks at Nicodemus and he says, listen, no one has ascended into heaven to gain this knowledge except he who has come from heaven.
And Nicodemus, that's me. That's me. I'm the son of God. But it's not just son of God. We see another identifying marker in verse 13. We see son of man.
Of course, we've talked about this a lot in Mark's gospel, so I'm not going to spend a lot of time here. But we know this was Jesus' favorite designation for himself. In the four gospels, he uses it 81 times at least for himself.

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Son of man, it's important. And we think this is Jesus connecting himself to the Daniel 7 figure, the Messiah who would rule over all things that God Almighty would give over to him.
[23:16] Not only did Jesus plainly tell Nicodemus that he was the son of God from heaven, but he plainly tells him, I am the Messiah, Nicodemus. I'm the one, the one you've been hoping for, that you've been looking for.

That's me. It's a bold claim. It's a bold claim that he's made. But he's not just the son of God. He's not just the son of man. In verse 13, he's the source of truth.
He's the source of truth. His whole purpose in revealing his identity to Nicodemus was so that Nicodemus would trust his word.
Because Jesus is the son of God, and because he is the son of man, he is the ultimate and final source of truth.
And his point was not only that his word can be believed, but that it must be believed. And so he tells Nicodemus, no man can give you this except the one who has come from heaven, the son of God and the son of man, the source of all truth.
[24:23] If you really want to know about eternal life, Nicodemus, look at me. Listen to me. I have that knowledge, and I want to share it with you if you will just listen and if you will open your heart.

And of course, Hebrews tells us this. Long ago at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days, he has spoken to us by his son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.
And of course, we know Jesus' own claim. In John 14, Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life.
No man comes to the Father except through me. I'm the way, the truth. If you want truth, you have to look at Jesus.
There's no other way to know it. And I just want to remind you, and I know it's a few of us, and I know all of your testimonies, and I know you love the Lord, and I hope I'm not boring you.
[25:32] Maybe I'm arming you with something you can take to the family dinners this week if you have some more of those to go to. It's not possible to be indifferent to Jesus.

It's not possible. He can't have been merely a good teacher or a prophet or a moral example. If he was only a teacher, then what he taught was lies.
And if he was only a prophet, then you must insist that he was a false prophet. And if you think of him only as a moral example for us to follow, then your idea of morality is hugely perverted.
He's either God or he isn't. He's either the Savior or he isn't. He's either the truth or he isn't.
And when it comes to our response to him, we either believe and follow him wholly or we deny and reject him completely.
[26:39] And there's too many people that we know in the context in which we live in a Christianity-saturated culture like ours. There are too many people that are indifferent to Jesus.

They're trying to be indifferent to him. And you can't be. You can't be. You either follow him wholly or you deny him completely. There's no middle ground there. And I think John 3 is just another example of that.
So we see identifying the gift of God. Secondly, let's look at illustrating the call of God. Illustrating the call of God. So in verse 16, the call of God was that sinners are to believe in Jesus Christ for eternal life.
And there's urgency to that call in verse 16. Because as we continue to follow through, it says, whoever does not believe is condemned already.
We stand condemned. So there's urgency to this call. This salvation is made available. Jesus is on this rescue mission.
[27:45] And we learned last week that every person is dead in their trespasses and sin. We desperately need rescue. And Jesus is the promised Savior sent to save us.

But his gift must be received by faith. But then Jesus illustrates this call so helpfully in verses 14 and 15. And this is what we cut out last week that we want to spend our time on today.
Verse 14, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.
Remember, these verses are Jesus' response to Nicodemus' question in verse 9. How are these things possible? And Jesus begins by essentially saying, one must believe in who I am.

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The Son of God, Son of Man, source of truth. You have to believe in who I am. And then he follows that up with, and you need to understand and believe what I've come to do. Except he uses this illustration.
[28:50] It comes from Numbers 21. In fact, why don't you turn there with me in the Old Testament. Numbers chapter 21. Perhaps you remember the story maybe from Sunday school, growing up, or just from your own reading.

Numbers chapter 21. And look with me at verse 4. Of course, this is just another example of the many times that the nation of Israel had complained and whined and turned in rebellion from the Lord.
And we find this story in verse 4. Numbers 21, verse 4. From Mount Hor, they set out by the way to the Red Sea to go around the land of Edom.
And the people became impatient on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses. Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?
For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food. The worthless food, I'm assuming here, is a reference to the manna that God had sent.
[30:02] The heavenly food that was at one time to the Israelites so wonderful, and now they think it's wonderfully terrible, and they don't want it anymore, and they're complaining. It reminds me that, you know, all the kids sang that song last week, Sing We the Song of Emmanuel, and it's got that phrase in it, lift your voices and now proclaim.

And Andy and Amy told me last week that when he gets confused, what she sings there, every time she sings that song is lift your voices and now complain. And that's really what it was like for the Israelites.
Every time they lifted their voices underneath Moses' leadership, it was to complain about something. And here they're complaining again about the provision of God. They would rather go back to Egypt than follow God in the wilderness.
Verse 6, Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people so that many people of Israel died. And the people came to Moses and said, We have sinned.
We've spoken against the Lord and against you. Pray to the Lord that he may take away the serpents from us. So Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to Moses, Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.
[31:16] So Moses made a bronze serpent, set it on a pole, and if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

Do you remember this story? The story is symbolic of man's rebellion against God. Just as Israel spoke against God in this passage, so have each of us turned against him in our sin and pride.
But sin always carries unavoidable consequences because God in his justice must judge it. He must judge sin.
And with the nation of Israel, he sent these fiery serpents really to devour them. Many scholars believe they're called fiery serpents because perhaps their venom produced a fever, a burning fever that ultimately led to death.
death. And these serpents are emblems of death and sin. Whoever was bitten by one was without any hope at all.
[32:30] There's nothing they could do to escape the grim reality of death once one of these snakes had gotten a hold of them. But though the people faced the divine wrath of God, he provided a way of escape.

He provided a way for them to be healed. And he tells Moses, make a snake, put it on a pole, and set it in the middle of the camp. And anyone who's bitten, if they will just look at what I have provided, if they will just cast themselves on my provision, they will be fully healed.
But it took the gaze of faith for each of those people. Jesus left no doubt in John 3 what the application of this event is. It was a type of what he had come to do for us.
And the details are remarkably precise. Just as the bronze serpent was suspended between heaven and earth, so would Jesus eventually, when he made it to Jerusalem for his crucifixion, be suspended on a pole, on a cross between heaven and earth.
Even the fact that Moses made this out of bronze is significant instead of using an actual snake. It's significant because Jesus wasn't a real sinner that was put on a cross, but he was made to be sin for us.

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[33:52] And as he is hanging on the cross, he bears our sin. He bears our wrath. And we can't miss the role of faith in the healing. The bitten people were as good as dead unless they looked to God's grace in this, his provision.

There was no other way for them to receive healing. They had to look at God's provision for life. But to look to God's provision meant they had to abandon all their other hopes of remedies.
Perhaps they had gathered whatever hope they could and medicinal things or whatever process they could go through to get rid of this fever, but none of those things were going to work. The only way they were going to get healing was to look at what God had provided in the serpent that was hanging on the pole.
But in order to do that, they had to abandon all their other hopes. And is that not exactly what salvation is for us? There's no other way by which we can be saved than through faith in God's gracious provision.
And to receive eternal life, you need only look to Jesus. But to look to Jesus means that we must abandon all other potential remedies.
[35:03] Because none of the other ones work. We come to him and him alone. And we gaze at the gracious provision of our God, our Savior, hanging, bearing our sins on the cross.

And Kent Hughes is so encouraging here. He says, no matter how horribly they were bitten, no matter how many times they had been bitten, or how sick they were, the opportunity for salvation was there.
Even the most degraded and miserable sinner who looks to Christ will be saved. And that's why our Lord used this wonderful illustration.
So we've seen the gift of God, that's Christ. We see the call of God, look to Christ in faith, Jesus illustrates that for us. And remember, he's answering Nicodemus' question.
Finally, we see ignoring the love of God. Ignoring the love of God. So as we emphasized last week, it wasn't a sense of obligation that motivated God to give his son for our sins, but he gave his son according to the riches of his everlasting love.
[36:15] God loves the world. Jesus died for the sins of the world. And all who come to Christ in faith will receive this precious gift of eternal life.

God loves the love. But that begs the question, if that's true, why then do so many people reject it? Why do so many people deny this incredible love? And the answer is in verse 19. this is the judgment.
The light has come into the world and people love the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light lest his works should be exposed.
Why do people deny the love of God? Because they love their sin more. Because they love the darkness.
[37:22] Notice the contrast between loves. Verse 16 has the love of God. He loves the world so much. This world that he has created that he gives his only son in order that we might have eternal life.

But on the other hand the object of our love is the very sin that makes our salvation necessary. In our hearts we want our sin more than we want life.
Which is exactly why a new birth is necessary. John often refers to Jesus as the light in his gospel. In this context Jesus is the light that exposes how sinful we truly are. And we don't like that. When we come to Christ we cannot come without acknowledging our wretchedness our inability to do this on our own.
And instead of coming to him to be exposed we'd prefer to remain in the darkness. we see this all around us. We sing about this.
[38:41] At Christmas hark the herald angels sing. Hail the heaven born prince of peace. Hail the son of righteousness light and life to all he brings.

Mild he lays his glory by. Born that man no more may die. Born to raise the sons of earth. Born to give them second birth.
It's this wretchedness and love of the darkness that has so infiltrated our hearts that we would never cry out to God on our own. That's why Jesus tells Nicodemus you need the wind to blow.
You need a new birth. You need the grace of God to change your heart. We see this in the Christmas story evidently in the person of King Herod right.

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He knows based on the testimony of the Magi and on the testimony of the chief priest and the scribes that revealed to him the prophecies of the Old Testament that if this really was the King of the Jews this is the one this is the Messiah he's the one yet what did Herod do with that information he sought to kill him he sought to kill him why because he loved the darkness more than the light and we see this in people around us a couple of nights ago a Christmas Eve night we were at my parents house and somebody had turned on a new show that has Will Smith going around the world and looking at all these natural things like volcanoes and stuff like that and of course that I don't know if you do this but anytime somebody pops up on TV that's famous we usually try to figure out what do they really believe you know and somebody says I wonder if he's a Christian and so my brother in law
[40:34] RJ started looking online to see if he could find what kind of information about Will Smith and what Will Smith believes and apparently based on what he had found he grew up as a Christian and even in a Baptist church of sorts and but as he got older he decided that he believes that there's a God but that he hates organized religion which is really just another way of saying I don't want anyone to tell me what to do I want to do it myself and make up my own mind about how I'm going to live my life and he said what I want to do is I want to find all of these religions and I want to find the things that I like the most about these different religions and I want to bring them together and that's really what my faith is so God is there God is there I don't want to deny that but I'm going to get the best things out of all of these other things that's just another way of saying I don't really know if God is there but if he is and if he's good I'm sure that he will reward nice people who really do their best and try their hardest but it's not really about subscribing to a person or a thing so I'm just going to grab all of these little things what is that all about that's about loving the darkness in

Jesus has come the light but men love the darkness rather than the light because their hearts are evil because in them there is depravity and sinfulness and a nature that must be redeemed and they grasp at everything possible except for the one thing that can actually help them they refuse the provision that God has given in order to pursue their own things and God says listen Jesus says listen you've got to be born again and look verse 21 we'll finish with this but whoever does what is true comes to the light so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God so lest we arrogantly think too much of ourselves as if we did what was necessary and the others didn't we were smarter than them or we were more capable than them we're reminded here in verse 21 that coming to the light actually reveals
God's work in us the wind has blown and its effects are visible in us and this is a result of God's grace isn't it isn't that why we worship him and we thank him because of his grace so maybe this week if you gather with family once again perhaps for extended Christmas gatherings or maybe maybe for your New Year's gathering if you do something like that maybe maybe a good question to ask is in is the wind blowing in your life today do you hear his voice is he calling believe him follow him

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