**![MC900300900[1]]()St. Joseph Missionary Baptist Church**

**Wed Night Bible Study**

**JOHN 3:9-15**

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**TEACHING HEAVENLY THINGS TO EARTHLY CREATURES**

(Parabolic Teaching)

***John 3:9-15 (NLT)
9  “How are these things possible?” Nicodemus asked.
10  Jesus replied, “You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don’t understand these things?
11  I assure you, we tell you what we know and have seen, and yet you won’t believe our testimony.
12  But if you don’t believe me when I tell you about earthly things, how can you possibly believe if I tell you about heavenly things?
13  No one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the Son of Man has come down from heaven.
14  And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,
15  so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.***

[**3:9-10**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+3%3A9-10)**. Nicodemus asked... how** this spiritual transformation takes place. **Jesus** answered that Nicodemus, as the **teacher** of Israel, ought to know. The Old Testament prophets spoke of the new Age with its working of the Spirit ([Isa. 32:15](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Isa+32%3A15); [Ezek. 36:25-27](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Eze+36%3A25-27); [Joel 2:28-29](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Joel+2%3A28-29)). The nation's outstanding teacher ought to **understand** how God by His sovereign grace can give someone a new heart ([1 Sam. 10:6](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+10%3A6); [Jer. 31:33](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jer+31%3A33)).

[**3:11**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+3%3A11)**.** But Nicodemus was ignorant of the realm of which Jesus spoke. He represented the nation's unbelief and lack of knowledge. Jesus, like the prophets, spoke to the nation about divine themes but the Jews rejected His witness. "Witness" (or **testimony**; *martyrian*) is a common word in John's Gospel.

[**3:12**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+3%3A12)**.** Since Nicodemus could not grasp the basic teaching of regeneration which Jesus presented in **earthly** analogies, how could he understand and **believe** the more abstract **heavenly** matters such as the Trinity, the Incarnation, and Jesus' coming glorification?

[**3:13**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+3%3A13)**. No one has ever gone into heaven** and then come back to earth, able to give clear teaching about divine matters. The one exception is Jesus who is **the Son of Man** (cf. [1:50-51](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+1%3A50-51); [Dan. 7:13](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Da+7%3A13); [Matt. 26:64](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Mt+26%3A64)). He is the "Ladder" between heaven and earth with access to both realms. He "descended" in the Incarnation (coming to live in a fleshly body) and "ascended" in the Ascension (returning to live in a glorified body). He also was in **heaven** before the Incarnation, and therefore knows the divine mysteries.

**[3:14-15](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+3%3A14-15).** The thought of elevation to heaven ([v. 13](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+3%3A13)) leads to the thought of Jesus being **lifted up** (cf. [8:28](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+8%3A28); [12:32](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+12%3A32)). **Moses** raised a bronze **snake** on a pole as a cure for a punishment due to disobedience (cf. [Num. 21:4-9](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Nu+21%3A4-9)). **So** Jesus would **be lifted up** on a cross for people's sin, so **that** a look of faith gives **eternal life** to those doomed to die.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.