

"Jesus and Nicodemus"

John 3:1-21

Introduction: Last week in our study of John we finished chapter 2 and we looked at the last 3 verses of the chapter.

Notice John 2:23-25

We considered the people who had believed in His name. Jesus did not commit Himself to these individuals because John tells us He knew their hearts. We discussed last week how there are many people who believe in the name of Jesus, but they are not saved. Their faith is not saving faith. We can see this in Matthew 7.

Matthew 7:21-23

²¹ *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

²² *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?*

²³ *And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

When a person's faith is saving faith, their lives are changed because the moment we are saved we are born again and we are given the Spirit of God. Salvation changes a person from the inside out because when salvation takes place, we are given the heart of Jesus Christ. When someone says they are saved but their lives have never changed we can determine that they are deceived and the faith which they have is not saving faith. As we continue in our study this evening we have come to a most blessed portion of Scripture as we shall listen to a detailed conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus concerning the new birth.

➤ **Ye must be born again!**

Notice John 3:1

Here we are introduced to Nicodemus, and this verse helps us to know a great deal about the man. First of all, we see that Nicodemus was a Pharisee. The title "Pharisee" means "separated one" and the idea is that those who were Pharisees had separated themselves

from an ordinary lifestyle. Each Pharisee had taken a pledge that they would live by the thousands of commands of the scribes. Their focus was all on the outward appearance and obedience to rules but not on the purity of the heart. We are also told that Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews. This means he was a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin.

Nicodemus is the clear picture of the religious man. He was consumed with keeping the Law as well as all the commands of the scribes. He held a place of authority among the religious leaders, and he was consumed with convincing the general population that he was above them in his walk. But the man was lost as we shall see. There is another man in the Bible that is also a picture of the religious man and he too is lost.

Genesis 4:1-5

And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.

² And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

³ And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

⁴ And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

⁵ But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

Cain believed in God, he came to the right place, he brought an offering, but he did not see the need for a blood sacrifice therefore he was lost. He brought the works of his hands. Just like Nicodemus he trusted in his works to please God.

Notice John 3:2

This verse helps us to understand that God was working in the life of Nicodemus.

John 6:44

⁴⁴ No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

God was drawing him to Jesus and Nicodemus was following the call. We see in this verse that he came by night. There are 2 possible reasons as to why he came at this time. It could have been that he did not want any of the other members of the Sanhedrin to know he was interested in what Jesus was teaching. It could have been that he came at night so that he could have time alone with Jesus after the crowds had dispersed. One thing we can be sure of is Nicodemus came in the dark which is a picture of where he was spiritually. He knew about Jesus, He believed that Jesus had power from God, but he was lost in sin. All the religion he had in his life and the position in the Sanhedrin still left him searching for more and it left him spiritually bankrupt. The fact that Nicodemus came by night this then became a way to identify him.

John 7:45-52

⁴⁵ *Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him?*

⁴⁶ *The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.*

⁴⁷ *Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?*

⁴⁸ *Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?*

⁴⁹ *But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.*

⁵⁰ *Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,)*

⁵¹ *Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?*

⁵² *They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.*

John 19:38-40

³⁸ *And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus.*

³⁹ *And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.*

⁴⁰ Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

Notice John 3:3

Jesus did not engage in small talk with Nicodemus but instead He went right to the point. This conversation is completely different than the conversation in John 4 with the woman at the well. Our Lord's Words are more direct and pointed here. Why is this? Because here in John 3 Jesus is speaking to a teacher of the Scriptures. Nicodemus was to be a student of the Old Testament, but he was like all the other religious leaders in that they were consumed with the scribe's commandments which resulted in legalism.

James 3:1

My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

The Bible makes it very clear that those who are teachers will be held to a higher level of accountability. That is what we see here with Nicodemus. Should he have known of the new birth? Yes, for it is recorded in the Old Testament.

Ezekiel 11:17-21

¹⁷ Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.

¹⁸ And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence.

¹⁹ And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:

²⁰ That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

²¹ But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord GOD.

Ezekiel 36:24-27

²⁴ For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.

²⁵ Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

²⁶ A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

²⁷ And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

These passages find their ultimate fulfillment in the Kingdom, but the new birth is essential for anyone to be saved. Why was there a need for a new birth? Because in our physical/first birth we are born into sin and for that reason we are born spiritually dead.

Ephesians 2:1-5

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

² Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

³ Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

⁵ Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

When we accepted Jesus Christ the Spirit of God caused us to be born again. This is a literal birth that has taken place. Now we are spiritually alive. Notice the thoughts from physical birth that illustrate the spiritual birth.

There are a few ways that physical birth can be used to illustrate spiritual birth.

1. Physical birth provides life - A babies have life because they are born! Likewise, spiritual birth provides a person with spiritual life, 1 John 5:12.

2. *Physical birth only happens once - Physically speaking, you can only be born one time! (Ill. All the mothers said: Amen!) Spiritually, the same thing is true! Your spiritual birth is a one time for all time experience. It cannot be undone and it cannot be repeated!*

3. *Physical birth takes place because of the suffering of another - A mother enters the very jaws of death to bring life into this world. Jesus entered the cruel jaws of death so that you might be born again. The new birth rests squarely upon the pain and suffering of another!*

4. *Physical birth gives the infant a brand-new start - No baby is born with a past! They have no past, only a future! So it is with the new birth. When you get saved, you get a brand-new start. Your past is wiped away, and a new, clean future lies in front of you!*

Conclusion:

If a person is not born again there is no hope for eternity. You need to be born again to have your sins forgiven and forgotten. If a person is not born again their sin remains on their account and it remains unpaid for. The payment for your sin will be eternal separation from God.

Revelation 20:11-15

¹¹ *And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.*

¹² *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*

¹³ *And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.*

¹⁴ *And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*

¹⁵ *And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*