

"Jesus and Nicodemus"

John 3

Introduction: Today we are stepping away from Our study in 2 Kings. If you have been here on Wednesday nights the message that we're going to look at today will be somewhat of a review to you because we have studied this portion of scripture on Wednesday evenings. Today I want to look in detail of a conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus. This is the most detailed portion of scripture that you will find dealing with the new birth. Jesus explains to Nicodemus in this text before us how a person is born again and he explains the need to be born again as we shall see.

Who is Nicodemus?

Notice John 3:1-2

Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews, he was a Pharisee. It is believed that he was the top ruler of the Jews, so he was the THE religious leader of his day. We are told in this text that he came to Jesus by night. There are several ways to consider this one of the ways that I want to look at it is that he came in the darkness. He came in the darkness because Nicodemus was a man that was lost, he was religious, but he was lost. He knew about God, but he did not know God he had no relationship with God. He is a picture of many people in our world today they are extremely religious; they carry a Bible, they go to church, they pray, they serve in the church, they give money to the church, but they have never been saved. Nicodemus was that very kind of a man. Nicodemus followed the commandments of the Pharisees. He was a very legalistic man. He believed that the way to God was by living a life that was pleasing to God. Nicodemus was all about the exterior. He did not understand that man's problem is on the inside it is a problem of the heart. Nicodemus came to Jesus because he was drawn by the Spirit of God. He came to Jesus because there was an emptiness within him. The religion that Nicodemus was wrapped up in was not a satisfying religion. There was something missing and he knew it. He did not know what it was, but he knew that he had within him an emptiness and he desired to have that void filled.

Application:

I need to just let you know that religion will not save you. There are many people in hell who were religious.

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.

➤ **The Need to be Born Again**

Notice John 3:3-7

Jesus went directly to the greatest need that Nicodemus had, and it was to be born again. Nicodemus could not understand the New Birth even though it was taught in the Old Testament. He should have known that a man needed to be born again but the legalism had blinded him to the Truth. He was so focused on pleasing God by works that he completely missed that a man **MUST** be born again.

Application:

Each and every one of us need to be born again. This is your greatest need.

Ephesians 2:1-3

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.

Jesus explained that a man must be born of WATER and the SPIRIT. There are many different thoughts on what is meant by the water here. It could refer to the Word of God because a man must hear the Word of God in order to be saved.

Notice John 3:6 again.

Here is a very important verse. Jesus made it very clear that we cannot bring about a spiritual birth in the power of the flesh. The flesh can only produce that which is flesh. We need a spiritual new birth and therefore it is impossible for us to bring about a new birth with our strength.

➤ **Blinded by Sin**

Notice John 3:8-12

In verse 8 Jesus compares the Spirit with the wind. We cannot see the wind; we cannot see where it comes from or where it goes but we can certainly see the effects of the wind. The same is true of the Spirit. We cannot see the Spirit, but we can see the effects of the Spirit in a person's life when they are born again.

2 Corinthians 5:17

¹⁷ Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Nicodemus could not understand the spiritual Truth of the new birth because he was blinded to the Truth.

1 Corinthians 2:12-14

¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

¹³ Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

¹⁴ But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Notice John 3:13

This verse seems to be out of place, but it is not. It is a verse that is extremely important in this text. Jesus is telling Nicodemus that He was in the presence of God when the decisions were made. Therefore, Jesus is telling Nicodemus that the new birth is the only way to be forgiven of the sin he had committed.

Application:

We must understand that God is the One who has been offended and therefore He is the One who determines the way of forgiveness. We do not get to determine the way of forgiveness. The Pharisees did not get to determine the way. Nicodemus did not get to determine the way. God is the One who has determined the way because He was the One offended and Jesus had declared that the way of forgiveness is by being BORN AGAIN.

➤ **The Old Testament Picture and the Application.**

Notice John 3:14a.

This is a reference to Numbers 21.

Numbers 21:4-9

⁴ And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.

⁵ And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

⁶ And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.

⁷ Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.

⁸ And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.

⁹ And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

The people of Israel had sinned against God and He determined that there was one way to survive the snake bite. It was by looking to the brazen serpent and believing. There was no other way.

Application:

This is a picture of the cross.

The serpent is raised up because the serpent represents sin. When Jesus hung on the cross, He became sin for us.

2 Corinthians 5:21

²¹ For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

The brass speaks of judgment. When Jesus hung upon the cross, He took the judgment that should have been ours.

Matthew 27:46

⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Getting back to the point; this was the only way for the people to be healed.

Notice John 3:14 again.

Don't miss the Word "MUST". Jesus is saying that just as the serpent had to be raised up because that was the way of healing, in the same way MUST the Son of man be raised up on the cross because that is the way in which God determined that sin would be forgiven.

Notice John 3:15

When we believe that Jesus is the Sacrifice who died for us and that He is the Way in which God made for our forgiveness then we are forgiven. It is not by works that we are saved it is by faith in Jesus Christ.

I am sure there were some in Numbers 21 who refused to believe and so they died. Just like people today refuse to believe in Jesus and they die in their sins and they go to hell.

Notice John 3:16

Here we see several points.

1. The Greatest Love.
2. The Greatest Gift.
3. The Greatest Simplicity.
4. The Greatest Security.
5. The Greatest Possession.

Conclusion:

There is only ONE WAY to be forgiven and that is by faith in Jesus Christ. Believing He was your Sacrifice who paid for your sins.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

² By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

³ For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

⁴ And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

John 14:6

⁶ Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.