

"Jesus and Nicodemus"

John 3:1-21

Part 3

Introduction: Last week in our study of John we were still listening as Jesus taught Nicodemus about being born again. We stopped on two important verses.

Notice John 3:6-7

These two verses contain very important information concerning man's salvation. First of all, in verse 6 we were able to see that the flesh can only produce flesh. In other words, the new birth is a spiritual birth therefore it is impossible in the power of the flesh to be born again. Religion will not do it, church attendance will not do it, good works will not do it. We can only be born again by the work of the Holy Spirit, and this only happens when we place our faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. There is absolutely no possible way for any person to bring about the new birth in their own power. We must be born again for there is no other way. There is no other path to God. Apart from being born again a man or woman has no hope.

In verse 7 Jesus says something that all people need to hear. He tells Nicodemus that a sinner **MUST** be born again. This is the only way to have eternal life. This is the only way to heaven. Eternal life is only possible by the new birth. Eternal life is not about reformation, but it is about transformation from the inside out.

➤ **The New Birth**

➤ **Part 2**

Notice John 3:8

Here in this verse John will now compare the work of the Spirit with the wind. It is interesting that the word for "wind" is the same word used for "Spirit." The work of the Spirit is much like the wind.

✓ **We have no control over the wind.**

The same is true of the Spirit. Before we were saved, He came into our lives and He brought conviction. He placed thoughts in our mind that we had no control over. He was working and we had no power to stop Him. The wind is the same way. We cannot stop the wind, nor can we control when it blows or where it blows.

✓ **We can see the effects of the wind.**

The same is true of the Holy Spirit. We cannot see Him, but we can see the effects He has upon the lives of people around us and even in our own lives. When we are saved, He will lead us into a life that is far different than how we used to be. He brings about a new creation. The words we speak are not the same. The desires of the heart are not the same. The places we go are different. People see the effects of the Spirit, but they do not see the Spirit. Just as no one can see the wind.

Notice the words of John Phillips.

"The laws of both (WIND AND SPIRIT) are known only to a very small degree. Both are invisible. Both can be sensed, and the presence of both is revealed in their effects. The action of the Spirit on the soul of sinner and saint is comparable to the action of the wind in the natural world. As the branches of a tree betray the passing of the wind, so do a person's thoughts, words, and deeds reveal that an invisible force has influenced him or her. The wind can blow gently or with gale force. It can bring rain, tempest, and storm, or it can drive the clouds away. The wind of the Spirit was blowing into the soul of Nicodemus that night, but it was not at his beck and call. He had better bow before its gentle influence before it departed, perhaps forever. It is imperative that when the Holy Spirit is visiting a soul, in convicting, converting, regenerating, and renewing power, the soul respond while yet it can. IS THE SPIRIT BLOWING IN YOUR HEART DEAR READER? YIELD TO HIS SOVEREIGN WORK."

The Spirit may be working in your life and with that you need to understand that He can stop just as He started, just like the wind.

Genesis 6:1-3

And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,

² *That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.*

³ *And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.*

God made it known in Noah's day that there would come a time when the Holy Spirit would no longer strive with men and therefore, they would be given over to their sinful ways and would die in their sin.

Notice John 3:9-10

These verses are very telling. Nicodemus could not grasp the Truth of the new birth. Why? Because of his legalism. He was so consumed with the rules and the rituals that he and the scribes were following that he was blinded to the Truth of God's Word.

Application:

This is what happens under legalism. People who are deep into legalism will hold tightly to their rules and regulations and they will refuse to acknowledge the Truth of the Bible. Even when they are confronted with the Truth they refuse to acknowledge that what they have believed for many years was not correct. I have heard people say, "This is what I have always believed, and this is what my parents believed." They will turn away from the Bible, and they will follow their family traditions or certain rules that their church has set in place. We see this in Nicodemus. He was so entrenched in the legalism that the Truth was hard for him to accept. Notice the words of another.

"Sadly, Nicodemus serves as a clear example of the numbing effect that external, legalistic religion has on a person's spiritual perception—even to the point of obscuring the revelation of God."

Notice John 3:10 again.

The word "A" can also be translated "THE" which would mean that Nicodemus was THE top teacher among the religious leaders. This verse is a rebuke for Nicodemus. He should have known the Truth of the new birth.

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.

Application:

This is a warning to all of us today. Just because someone holds a position in a church does not mean that their theology is correct. We must all be like the Bereans in the book of Acts.

Acts 17:10-11

¹⁰ And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.

¹¹ These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

Notice John 3:11

This is the third time Jesus uses the double "verily" which tells us the importance of what He said here. In this verse Jesus declares to Nicodemus that He is an eyewitness to what He is speaking of. We need to notice also that He uses the word "WE" and "OUR." So, who is Jesus speaking of? Some say He is talking about John the Baptist. I believe it is a reference to the Trinity because Jesus is talking about the new birth and His ability to see it. So, it would be the Trinity that was testifying of the new birth. Nicodemus would not receive the Truth which he was presented with. Why?

Notice John 3:12

Here we see why he would not receive them. It was because he lacked faith in the Truth of the Word of God. He was not living by faith and for that reason Nicodemus was walking in the dark.

Application:

It is FAITH that brings about the new birth and without faith we cannot please God.

Hebrews 11:1-6

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

² For by it the elders obtained a good report.

³ Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

⁴ By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

⁵ By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

⁶ But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

It is by the Spirit through faith and faith alone that we are born again.

Ephesians 2:8-9

⁸ For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast.

The faith that God requires is a faith that is exercised by a person who has come to understand that they are without hope and headed for an eternity without God. They know that they have no means of saving themselves. This faith is not just a casual faith. There are many people who believe that Jesus died upon the cross for the sins of the world. But a saving faith is that which truly desires to be forgiven and is broken because they have sinned against a righteous God.

Acts 16:29-33

²⁹ Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,

³⁰ And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

³¹ And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

³² And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

³³ And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

Here we see that the jailer exercised true saving faith and his life was changed. He ministered to the needs of Paul and Silas, and he desired to identify with Jesus in baptism. The works here did not save him, but the works proved his faith was saving faith.

Notice John 3:12 again.

There is something else in this verse that we need to see. Jesus had told Nicodemus of earthly things. What were the earthly things? He told him of the new birth that takes place here on earth. It is a miracle, but it is a miracle that happens here on earth when a sinner places their faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Jesus told Nicodemus that if he did not believe in the new birth then he would not be able to believe in heavenly things.

Application:

The point that Jesus is making here is that if a person is not born again then there will be no understanding of spiritual things. It is impossible to understand spiritual Truth if a person is not born again. We **MUST** have spiritual life to understand spiritual 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.***

Conclusion:

Notice John 3:13

Jesus spoke these Words and John placed them here to show all of us that Jesus has the authority to teach Nicodemus and all of us the Truth. He is from heaven and He is the source of all Truth.

John 1:18

¹⁸ No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.