

## Walking with Jesus Part 3

### John 3

**1** Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. **2** He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.”

**3** Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”

**4** “How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!”

**5** Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. **6** Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

### Vs. 1

Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council.

3 Things we know about this man:

1. He was a Pharisee - A Very Devoted Religious Man
2. He was a Member of the Jewish Council - He was a member of the Sanhedrin - He was a man of Influence as was regarded in a political sense as a leader
3. He had a Greek Name - Coming from Greek Culture he was most likely a very educated man.

### Vs. 2

He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.”

Couple of Thoughts:

- 1st thought is maybe Nicodemus was (as a Pharisee & member of the Sanhedrin) afraid of being seen with Jesus.
- Another thought is as an educated, religious man he sought to have meaningful conversation with Jesus.
- Jesus passed through the crowd, He did miracles, He spoke openly to the crowd but Nicodemus wanted to have up close.
- Nicodemus wanted meaningful conversation with Jesus, so he sought to meet with Jesus away from the crowd

Isn't that true of us today...

It's great to go to Church and Jesus did Church everywhere he went...

But there is opportunity to be close to Jesus...

Opportunity to ask him Questions...

Opportunity to hear directly from Him when we take time to meet with him in the secret place...

- Ok imagine we are with Jesus
- We're sitting around the campfire after a long day of ministry
- This prominent man walks up
- He speaks very warm and kindly words to Jesus
- He says “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.”
- The Jesus says these words to him

### **Vs 3**

Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”

- It seems that Jesus is being very direct.
- Jesus speaks of something that is found moving forward through out the NT.
- There was this idea among ancient Jewish beliefs that for a Gentile to come into Judaism he had to be Born Again.
- Now Jesus looks at this distinct Jewish man, this Pharisee, this Jewish Ruler of in the eyes and says to him. Unless You Nicodemus are born again you cannot enter or see the Kingdom of God.

Jesus' reply to Nicodemus shattered the Jewish assumption that their racial identity assured them a place in God's Kingdom.

It was taught widely among the Jews at that time that since they descended from Abraham, they were automatically assured of heaven. In fact, some Rabbis taught that Abraham stood watch at the gate of hell, just to make sure that none of his descendants accidentally wandered in there. Jesus clearly said that without this – that **unless one is born again** – he cannot enter or **see the kingdom of God**.

Moral or religious reform isn't enough. One must be **born again**.

The Greek word **again** is also means:

anew

over again

from above.

So it could read like this: “no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born (over again, anew, from above.)”

#### **Vs. 4-6**

**4** “How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!”

**5** Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. **6** Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

- Still some believe that Jesus is referring to Water Baptism and this is proof that Water Baptism is required for Salvation.
- Some believe that Jesus could have been giving Nicodemus an OT reference speaking of the water and the Spirit.

### **Ezekiel 36:25**

**25** I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. **26** I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. **27** And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

The water is symbolic of the word...

### **Ephesians 5:26**

to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,

I believe that Jesus is speaking clearly to this Rabbi about what he should already know.

- This is a work of the Spirit.
- This has nothing to do with old Jewish beliefs of being born again in the flesh.
- There is no second round of the womb.
- You are born once of the Flesh, then there is a second experience of being born of the Holy Spirit.
- This is the work of the Spirit.

### **Vs. 6**

6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

**Story: Henry Ironside 1876-1951**

Pastor, Preacher, Bible Commentator

Ironside Pastored Moody Church in Chicago from 1929-1948

One time he was Preaching in the Streets of San Francisco.

Proclaiming the Good News of Jesus.

A Man approached him who was a very famous atheist

He challenged Ironside to a public debate

Ironside thought about it and accepted on one condition.

This man has to bring 2 people with him:

1. A Man who was utterly ruined by addiction either alcohol or drugs. Who was not able to brake free until he had an encounter with the power of Atheism.
2. A Woman who was a prostitute, who was morally degraded and caught up in a world of bondage and who was set free by the power of Atheism.

Ironside said I tell you what if you bring 2 people who's lives have been transformed by the power of Atheism I will bring 100 who's lives have been transformed by the power of Jesus Christ.

The Atheist smiled.

He handed slip of paper with the conditions back to Ironside .

He smiled and respectfully declined.

True Story

**Vs. 7,8**

7 You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'

8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

- We may not know were it comes from or where it's going

- You don't need to know everything there is about the spirit to benefit from the working of the Spirit.

9 "How can this be?" Nicodemus asked.

10 "You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? 11 Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. 12 I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? 13 No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man.

### **Vs. 14-16**

14 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him."

16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

I must admit every time I read this it struck me as odd:

Jesus illustrates his work on the cross by the bronze snake that Moses lifted up in Numbers 21

In Numbers 21 the people had been complaining against the Lord and Moses so God sent poisonous snakes to bite the people and many died. The people repented and asked Moses to pray that the snakes would leave. So God told Moses to make a Bronze snake and anyone who was bitten could look at the bronze snake and live.

When I think of a serpent I think of:

Sin and Rebellion

With the work of Satan in the Garden and the fall of man

But notice what the serpent was of - It was made of Bronze  
Bronze is a metal that is associated with Judgement because it is manufactured in fire

The Altar was made of Bronze because things would be judged there.

So the picture of the bronze snake is a picture of sin but sin that has been judged.

This is a perfect representation of Jesus on the Cross  
Jesus bore the sins of the world on that cross before God and he took the judgement that we deserved.

Paul words the work of Jesus on the Cross very accurately and eloquently when he said in

**2 Corinthians 5:21**

“For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

Jesus became in a sense that bronze serpent lifted up in the wilderness that who ever would look upon it, they would live...

So he says right after this

**Vs. 15-18**

15 that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.”

16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.