

"A BRAND NEW LIFE" - John 3:9-21

NKJV- *"Nicodemus answered and said to Him, 'How can these things be?' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. 'He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.'"*

- I. The **TRUTH** From Heaven (v.9-13)
- II. The **SACRIFICE** of Blood (v.14-17)
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I. The **TRUTH** From Heaven (v.9-13)

Nicodemus answered and said to Him, 'How can these things be?' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from Heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in Heaven.'"

- Nicodemus was confused by the words of Jesus, regarding the **NEW BIRTH**, because most of the Jewish teachers of his day thought that IT **ALREADY HAPPENED** to the worshippers in Israel! They didn't pay attention to the parts of the Old Testament that announced that day was coming when the Lord would start a **NEW COVENANT** with mankind:
 - **Ezekiel 36:24-27(NLT):** *"...I will gather you up from all the nations and bring you home again to your land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. Your filth will be washed away, and you will no longer worship idols. And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. And I will put my Spirit in you..."*
- At this stage of the discussion, Nicodemus does not understand Christ, and is therefore very **SKEPTICAL**. Likewise, there are many **SKEPTICS** today that choose to not believe in Christianity, claiming that there is no **EVIDENCE** or **PROOF** to support it's claims and teaching.
- However, as Jesus said here, it is the **TRUTH OF GOD** sent down from **HEAVEN** to guide, and help, and save mankind! We **KNOW** for certain that the Christian faith is true, that it comes from Heaven, and gives us the **TRUTH** about God:
 - We know this through the great many evidences that God has left for us in this world, that show us **POWERFUL PROOF** and **OBJECTIVE EVIDENCE** that Christianity is indeed from God! That is indeed the **TRUTH** from Heaven, as Jesus declared to Nicodemus:
 - **Bible Prophecy..**
 - **Bible History..**
 - **Biblical Archaeology..**
 - **Biblical Miracles..**
 - **Christian Philosophy..**
 - **Modern Biology..**
 - *There's an old legend about a man who was walking a certain path... eventually he got lost, wandered off the path and got stranded, fell into a bog of quicksand and was drowning in the quicksand, and he cried out for help. Finally, Confucius walked by and noticed him and said, "Hmm. Confucius say it is evident that men should stay out of such places." And he walked off, leaving the man still struggling. After a few more minutes, Buddha walked by. He stroked his chin and he said, "Let this man's suffering be an example for the rest of mankind." And he walked away. Later on, Mohammed walked by and saw the man struggling and said, "If God wills. Whatever is the will of Allah," and he walked by. But then finally Jesus walked by, put out His hand and said, "Grab hold. I'll save you." Now that is Christianity---it's God bursting into our world, reaching down from heaven to save mankind.*

II. The **SACRIFICE** of Blood (v.14-17)

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."

- Jesus tries to help Nicodemus understand, that the **NEW BIRTH** is possible only because He is willing to lay down His own life as the perfect **SACRIFICE** of **BLOOD**.
- In **NUMBERS 21**, which Jesus referred to here, the children of Israel were wandering through the wilderness gripping and complaining about everything. Even when God miraculously gave them **MANNA**, bread from heaven, they still complained! Miraculously, for 40 years, wherever they went, God supplied them with fresh bread from Heaven.
- However, they eventually woke up one day and said: "Our soul hates this worthless bread!" It was **MANNA**. Well you know, you can only do so much with manna. I mean you cook manna, **BAMANNAB**read, and **MANNACOTTI**, and a few other dishes, but you've kind of exhausted the cookbook after a few days. But it kept coming and they complained.
- So God, in judgment, sent venomous snakes that bit people and caused a fever, a burning, and caused thousands of them to die. However, God in His mercy said, "Moses, I'm going to tell you what to do that will save people from death. Take up a brass **POLE** and a brass **SERPENT**, put it together, and **LIFT IT UP**, lift it up in the **WILDERNESS**, and tell people to **LOOK** at it. If they look at it, they'll be **CURED** and **SAVED**."
 - **Isaiah 45:21-22 (NLT)**: "...there is no other God but me, a righteous God and Savior. There is none but me. **Let all the world look to me for salvation!** For I am God; there is no other..."
- "**MUST**" - The Cross was a divine imperative. Jesus **HAD** to die!! Why? Two simple reasons, two simple words. Number one, **JUSTICE MUST BE SERVED**. **JUSTICE**. The Bible says in the Old Testament, "without the shedding of blood there's no remission of sins." You know why that is? Because sin is so bad, even though we might not think so, God thinks so; it's so bad, that only the shedding of blood, innocent blood, could ever atone for it. And so, for God to be just, He has to punish sin. And He's either going to require our blood or the blood of a substitute which He did through His Son Jesus Christ. Here's a second word and reason, not just justice, love. **LOVE**. **GOD INFINITELY LOVED THE ENTIRE WORLD**. It was love that drove Jesus to the Cross.
- **PILGRIM'S PROGRESS** is a classic Christian book. It's a story of a man called Christian; he's the pilgrim on the journey from his hometown, the city of Destruction, on the way to the Celestial City. And he's carrying a backpack, it's called the Law, he can't keep it---it's a burden to him. Wherever he goes, it's just burdening him down like Nicodemus. Here's the part in the story I want to read to you: "I saw in my dream that just as Christian came up to the cross, his burden loosed from his shoulders, fell from off his back, and began to tumble until it came to the mouth of the tomb where it fell in and I saw it no more. Then was Christian glad and lightsome and said with a merry heart, 'He has given me rest by His sorrow and He has given me life by His death.'" That's the key thought here. Life by His death.
- Before we move on, **REALIZE** just how much **JESUS LOVES YOU**. I want you to know that Jesus Christ would do anything to get you to heaven. In fact, He did everything He could. Stepping out of heaven, coming to the earth, robed in a man's body, suffered the rejection of people and death on a cross, to get you to HEAVEN.
- Why is the **NEW BIRTH** Necessary??
 - Mankind is **SEPARATED** fr. God.- **Isa 59:1-2 (AMP)**: "The Lord's hand is not shortened at all, that it cannot save, nor His ear dull with deafness, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear."
 - Mankind is **AT WAR** w/ God.- **Rom 5:10 (AMP)**: "...while we were **enemies** we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son..."
 - Mankind is **DEAD** to God.- **Eph 2:1,5 (NLT)**: Once you were **dead** because of your disobedience and your many sins...even though we were **dead** because of our sins, he gave us **life**..."

III. The **BELIEF** in Christ (v.18)

"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

- **What does it truly mean to "**BELIEVE**" in Jesus Christ??** (98x in John)

- This is the Greek word "**pisteuo**" which means "to **trust**, to place your **confidence** into something, to place your **assurance** upon something, to believe that something is real and true, to place your **life completely into the hands** of another person - Jesus Christ."
- Saving Faith is **NOT** just "**mental agreement**" or "**intellectual acknowledgement**" about Jesus. True biblical **FAITH** in Jesus, is placing all of your **CONFIDENCE** into Him, and **TRUSTING** Jesus with "the clutching intensity of a drowning man."

IV. The **LOVE** of Darkness (v.19-21)

"And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

- **Jesus did not come to **CONDEMN**- Mankind was **CONDEMNED ALREADY!!!****

- To not **SURRENDER** to Jesus, is to **REBEL** against Jesus!
- To not **TRUST** Him, is to **DENY** Him!
- To not **RECEIVE** His gift, is to **REJECT** Him, and His great love for you!

- **Each of us gets to decide our own **DESTINY!!****

- Like the man that went to a great art museum....
- Jesus is **NOT** on trial.... **WE ARE!!**

- "Long ago, there was a tribe in a dark, cold cavern. They cave dwellers would huddle together and cry against the chill. Loud and long, they waited. It was all they did. It was all they knew to do. The sounds in the caves were mournful but the people didn't know it for they had never known joy. The spirit in the cave was death but the people didn't know it for they had never known life. But then one day they heard a different voice. 'I have heard your cries,' it announced. 'I have felt your chill and seen your darkness. I have come to help.' The cave people grew quiet. They had never heard this voice. Hope sounded strange to their ears. 'How can we know you've come to help?' 'Trust me,' he said. 'I have what you need.' The cave people peered through the darkness at the figure of the stranger. He was stacking something and then stooping and stacking more. 'What are you doing?' one cried nervously. The stranger didn't answer. 'What are you making?' one shouted even louder. Still no response. 'Tell us,' demanded a third. The visitor stood and spoke in the direction of the voices, 'I have what you need.' With that, he turned to the pile at his feet and lit it. Wood ignited, flames erupted, and light filled the cavern. The cave people turned away in fear. 'Put it out!' they cried. 'It hurts to see it.' Light always hurts before it helps, he answered. Step closer, the pain will soon pass.' 'Not I,' declared a voice. 'Nor I,' agreed a second. 'Only a fool would risk exposing his eyes to such a light.' The stranger stood next to the fire. 'Would you prefer the darkness?' he asked. 'Would you prefer the cold? Don't consult your fears. Take a step of faith.' For a long time, no one spoke. The people hovered in groups, covering their eyes. The fire builder stood next to the fire. 'It's warm here,' he invited. 'He's right,' one from behind him announced. 'It is warmer.' The stranger turned and saw a figure slowly stepping toward the fire. 'I can open my eyes now,' she proclaimed. 'I can see!' 'Come closer,' invited the fire builder. She did. She stepped into the ring of light. 'It's so warm,' she extended her hands and sighed as the chill began to pass. 'Come, everyone, feel the warmth,' she invited. 'Silence, woman!' cried one of the cave dwellers. 'Dare you lead us into your folly? Leave us! Leave us and take your light with you!' She turned to the stranger. 'Why won't they come?' He said, 'They choose the chill for though it's cold, it's what they know. They'd rather be cold than change.' 'And live in the dark?' she asked. 'Yes,' he said. 'And live in the dark.' The now warmed woman stood silent looking first at the dark and then at the man. 'Will you leave the fire?' he asked. She paused and she answered, 'I cannot. I cannot bear the cold.' But then she spoke again, 'But nor can I bear the thought of my people in darkness.' 'You don't have to,' he responded. Reaching into the fire and removing a stick, 'Carry this to your people. Tell them the light is here and tell them the light is warm. Tell them the light is for all who desire it."