

BibleSanity.org – Remote Bible Study

The Sermons, Parables, and Teachings of Jesus Christ

Session 3 – To Nicodemus, August 30, 2022

Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin (John 3:1, 7:50), potentially Nicodemus Ben Gorion¹, brother of Josephus, the historian. If so, he was one of the wealthiest men in Jerusalem. He provided myrrh and aloes for Jesus' entombment (John 19:38-39). Traditionally, he was baptized by Peter and expelled from the Sanhedrin and banished from Jerusalem.

Jesus to Nicodemus

John 3:1-2 Jesus (Rabbi, from God), Nicodemus, plural verb – representing a group – does not verbalize a question...

John 3:1-2 (KJV)

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

Nicodemus was looking for spiritual things from God.

- Looking for **Messiah** Isaiah 35:5-6, 61:1 (as we remember from Jesus' answer to John the Baptist)
- Looking for **'that' prophet** Deuteronomy 18:18-19
- Looking for **the new covenant** Jeremiah 31:31-34

Isaiah 35:5-6 – The Messiah (KJV)

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

Isaiah 61:1

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

Deuteronomy 18:18-19 – ‘that’ Prophet

I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 – The New Covenant

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

John 3:3

John 3:3 (KJV)

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

- **Jesus** – You must be born again
Focus change from Jesus to Nicodemus, individually, not as representative
(Because the spiritual kingdom is personal, always personal)

John 3:4 Nicodemus – I don't understand

- **Nicodemus** may have (should have) related spiritual birth to Ezekiel 36:26-27
 - But rather than guessing, he asks for an explanation, which **Jesus** gives...
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Ezekiel 36:26-27 (KJV)

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. 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.

John 3:4

Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

John 3:5-9 Jesus continues / expands his illustration

John 3:5-9 (KJV)

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water¹ and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth (chooses), and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit².

Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

Notes:

1 Water, as in, embryotic fluid, not a reference to water baptism, as Jesus self-interprets with the next sentence.

2 Spiritual like the wind – undeniable reality without full understanding?

John 3:10-13

John 3:10-13 (KJV)

Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

Proverbs 30:3-5 (Ref)

I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy. Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell? Every word of God is pure...

Jesus is claiming deity and messiahship (Proverbs 30:4, and by calling Himself the Son of Man, Daniel 7:13-14), next, He says He must be lifted up, but makes a surprising comparison.

John 3:14-15

John 3:14-15 (KJV)

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Numbers 21:5-9 (Ref)

And the people spake against God... And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned... And Moses prayed for the people.

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... and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

2 Corinthians 5:21(5:14-21) (Ref)

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.

Numbers 21:1-9 Is not God instituting idolatry, but the people had to acknowledge their sin by looking up to the symbol of God's chastisement, in comparison with looking up to Jesus (ref 2 Corinthians 5:21), this is a reminder of repentance which is inseparable from saving faith.

As Israelites had to look to the serpents, Nicodemus must TRUST Jesus

Nicodemus knows about righteousness by faith

- Abraham Genesis 15:1-6, he knew about Noah, Joshua & Caleb, David (as Hebrews 11:1-40) ...but Jesus made it personal!
- (History tells us he put his faith in Jesus Christ)

John 3:16-21 Jesus – Came to save, not to judge (this time!)

Vs 16-17 Declares that Jesus brings Salvation

Vs 18-21 Explains why the Jews are not already Saved

John 3:16-17 (KJV)

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

John 3:18-21

He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

ⁱ Unger's Bible Dictionary, 1988