

A True Seeker

John 3:1-17

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

9 Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?"

10 Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? 11 Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. 12 If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? 13 No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. 14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. 16 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. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. NKJV

John gives us a view of Jesus life and ministry that the other Gospel writers do not give. He give us Jesus' encounters with individuals.

Here in chapter 3 with have Nicodemus. In chapter 4 we have the meeting of the Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar. Also in chapter 4 is the healing of the nobleman's son. Then in chapter 5 we find the healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda. In chapter 8 we have the account of the woman caught in the act of adultery. Then in chapter 9 we have the healing of the blind man who was born blind. In chapter 11 we find Jesus' greatest miracle to that point. Jesus raises Lazarus who had been dead for 4 days.

From this we see that the ministry of Jesus was very personal. He was not always dealing with the multitudes but ministered to individuals in their need.

Now Nicodemus was a very interesting case. He is not a commoner, blind or sick. He is not poor or a sinner as they thought of those things in his day. So he is unusual among those who seek Jesus. He did not fit the profile of the multitudes that followed Jesus. He comes to Jesus amazed

at the miracles that Jesus was doing. But Jesus gets right to the heart of Nicodemus' problem but Nicodemus does not understand. Listen this morning as we try to sort out the issues in this seeker seeking Jesus.

I. Who was this Nicodemus?

A. He was a very religious Jew.

1. The Jews were God's special people.
2. They were the custodians of the oracles of God, His Word.
3. They worshiped on a regular basis.
4. But we notice from this passage that simply being a Jew or the child of a Christian does not assure us eternal life.

B. He was a ruler of the Jews, a teacher of Israel.

1. This meant that he was a member of the Sanhedrin.
 - a. This was a group of 70 men, composed of priests, elders and scribes.
 - b. Nicodemus was not a priest but a scribe or lawyer as they were often called.
 - c. The scribes were considered to be authorities on the interpretation of the Old Testament.
2. As a member of the Sanhedrin, he would have been present as the leaders later schemed to arrest Jesus.
 - a. John 7:50-51 50 Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, 51 "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?" NKJV

C. He was a good moral man.

1. His whole standing in his society was based on his ability to abstain from all appearances of evil.
2. If anyone would make it to heaven on their own works, Nicodemus would make it.
3. What a tragedy that a man who lived honestly, prayed, helped others and did many other things and yet without Jesus there was no hope of heaven.
4. Although he was a good moral man, he is not good enough for God.

D. Notice Nicodemus' confession.

1. "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can

do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

2. He respects Jesus with the title Rabbi.
3. He concludes that Jesus was come from God for no one could do the signs that Jesus did unless God was with Him.
 - a. Something had caught his attention.
 - b. He was not like the other rulers of Israel, he was a seeker.
 - c. The others were still blinded by Satan, to refuse the light that God was shining upon them.
 - d. 2 Tim 2:26 that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will. NKJV
 - e. Eph 4:17-19 17 This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; 19 who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. NKJV
 - f. John 12:39-40 39 Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: 40 "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, Lest they should see with their eyes, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them." NKJV

II. How did Jesus handle this seeker?

- A. He gives him the truth that Nicodemus must be born again.
 1. V-3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."
 2. John 8:31-32 31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." NKJV
- B. He does not answer the question that Nicodemus really has, who are you Jesus, are you the Messiah?
 1. Nicodemus' biggest problem was that their idea of the Messiah was not the Messiah who He came to be.

III. What tells us that he was a true seeker?

- A. Before you can find out who Jesus is you have to desire to know Him.

IV. Did he finally find what he sought?

- A. It was a long hard trip for Nicodemus.
 - 1. John 19:39-41 39 And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. 40 Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. NKJV
- B. He had to unlearn much of what he had learned.
- C. He had to truly be born again.

Are you willing to admit that? Are you willing to be open with God? He already knows everything about us, there is nothing hidden from Him.

I remember a person that I cared for very much once asking me, “Do we really need to be born again?” I just turned her to John 3:3, to the words of Jesus.

Nicodemus came seeking the Messiah. He had found Him even though Jesus was the Messiah He was looking for. Yet Nicodemus hung in there and eventually he found the real Jesus.

Deut 4:29

and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.

NKJV

2 Chron 15:3-5

3 For a long time Israel has been without the true God, without a teaching priest, and without law; 4 but when in their trouble they turned to the Lord God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found by them.

NKJV

Isa 55:6-7

6 Seek the Lord while He may be found,

Call upon Him while He is near.

7 Let the wicked forsake his way,

And the unrighteous man his thoughts;

Let him return to the Lord,

And He will have mercy on him;

And to our God,

For He will abundantly pardon. NKJV