

NICODEMUS

TEXT: John 3:1-15

INTRODUCTION:

A. A Pharisee and a "ruler of the Jews," mentioned only by John.

B. He appears three times in John's Gospel.

- (1) Taught the doctrine of the New Birth by Christ at Jerusalem (John 3:1-15),
- (2) Defended Him before the Sanhedrin (John 7:50-52)
- (3) Assisted at His burial (John 19:39-42).

I. THE INTERVIEW:

A. John 2:23 says: *"Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did."*

B. Apparently Nicodemus and others on the Sanhedrin council had been impressed as well:

- 1) John 3:2 *"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"* (John 3:2).
- 2) Notice the plural "we" likely referring to the council.
- 3) Notice the title "Rabbi" A term used by the Jews of their religious teachers as a title of respect (from International Standard Bible Encyclopedia).

II. WHAT JESUS TAUGHT NICODEMUS:

A. A lesson about the new birth

- 1) *"Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God"* (verse 3).
- 2) Nicodemus is thinking of birth in the physical sense so Jesus' response causes considerable confusion (verse 4).
- 3) But Jesus, deals with his confusion only by repeating His previous statement (verse 5).
- 4) He then proceeded to give further explanation (6-8).
- 5) The re-birth is not outward but inward, it is not of the body but of the soul (verse 6).
- 6) Just as no one knows where the wind comes from or where it goes, yet all can feel its effects who come under its influence, so is it with the rebirth.
- 7) Only those who have experienced it themselves, are qualified to judge either of its reality or of its effects (verses 7,8).
- 8) Nicodemus was still struggling with this concept (verse 9).
- 9) Jesus expressed surprise that one who professed to be a teacher of spiritual things didn't understand these things (10-12)!

B. A lesson about from where Jesus came (13).

C. A lesson about what He hoped to accomplish by coming (14-15).

- 1) Complete with Old Testament example from (numbers 21:9).
- 2) The people were delivered from certain death when the serpent was raised up onto the pole.
- 3) People are now delivered from Spiritual death because Jesus was raised up onto the cross.

D. A lesson about what motivated His coming to earth (16-17).

E. A simple explanation of who is and who is not condemned (18).

F. A lesson in the contrast between "light and darkness" (19-21)

- 1) Jesus was the "light"
- 2) But men rejected and hated Him because they loved being evil! (19)

- 3) Evil deeds are often done in darkness.
- 4) One who is seriously searching for the truth "comes to the light" (21).

II. THE DEFENSE:

- A. The interview, though apparently fruitless at the time, was not without its effect upon Nicodemus.
- B. At the Feast of Tabernacles, when the Sanhedrin was enraged at Christ's proclamation of Himself as the "living water" (John 7:37-38), Nicodemus was emboldened to stand up in His defense.
 - 1) He made no personal testimony of his faith in Christ.
 - 2) But sought rather to defend Him on a point of Jewish law (John 7:50-52; compare Ex 23:1; Deut 1:16-17; 17:6; 19:15).

III. THE BURIAL:

- A. By this open act of reverence Nicodemus at last made public profession of him being of the follower of Christ.
- B. His wealth enabled him to provide the "mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds," with which the body of Jesus was embalmed (John 19:39 ff).

IV. LESSONS LEARNED:

- A. Anybody can come to Jesus.
 - 1) Rich (100lbs of spices)
 - 2) Powerful (Sanhedrin)
 - 3) Well educated
 - 4) Jewish by religion.
- B. One can be religious and still be lost!
 - 1) Nicodemus was a very religious man!
 - 2) But he didn't have a clue as to how to get into the Kingdom!
 - 3) Matthew 7:21-23
 - 4) Acts 10:1-2, 11;14
 - 5) Ethiopian Nobleman (Acts 8:36-37).
- C. Salvation is the same for all (Acts 2:39; Galatians 3:26-27).
- D. God shows no partiality: (Acts 10:34-35)
- E. One cannot be saved without the new birth promised by Jesus (3:3-5).

CONCLUSION:

1. Nicodemus is a type of the "well-instructed and thoughtful Jew who looked for the consummation of national hope to follow in the line along which he had himself gone, as being a continuation and not a new beginning" (Westcott).
2. Great lessons from the Master Teacher!