

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

FEBRUARY 12TH, 2023 // GOSPEL OF JOHN

CREDENTIALS (JOHN 3:1-8)

WHO IS NICODEMUS?

Nicodemus had all the credentials of the time. He was a Pharisee, a member of the Jewish ruling council (Sanhedrin), and the teacher of Israel.

- **Pharisees had a zeal to obey God's law. There are 613 commandments they pledged to obey in front of three witnesses.**

WHY AT NIGHT?

Nicodemus came at night to honor Jesus by not challenging his authority in front of the crowds. He shows this honor by greeting Jesus with the name of Rabbi.

- **The meeting with Jesus was no accident. Nicodemus intentionally sought Jesus out and made a point to be with Him. Do we intentionally seek Jesus, or are we allowing chance meetings?**

THE WRONG QUESTION

Nicodemus was coming to Jesus to clarify who Jesus was and the signs He had performed. We can look at his first statement as a type of question: **"Are you here to bring the Kingdom of God?"**

- **Jesus, as usual, flips everything on its head and goes deeper, showing Nic that he was asking the wrong question. The only way to see this Kingdom is to be born again.**

THE WRONG BIRTH

Nic didn't understand the type of birth that Jesus intended. **He thought the birth of his lineage was appropriate to get him to Heaven.** If Jesus had said every Gentile needed to be born again, Nic would have understood.

- The Jews were waiting on three promises of the New Covenant: the **Gathering of Israel, spiritual transformation, and the Messiah.**
- **We can also confuse our standing with God because we are doing "religious things." Human effort will only produce human results.**
- We must be cleansed and spiritually reborn to enter the Kingdom of God. **We do not have to understand how the Spirit transforms us to experience it,** just like we don't have to understand the wind before it can be experienced.

DO YOU NOT KNOW? (JOHN 3:9-15)

THE TEACHER OF ISRAEL

Nicodemus is confounded and confused. He was sure that the new birth had already happened to him and Israel. It was hard to wrap his mind around them needing a new one.

- **Knowledge is not salvation. Nic knew the scriptures but failed to see the truth inside them. The only way we can truly understand is through Christ.**

JESUS HAS ALL AUTHORITY

Nicodemus started to notice that with all his study and knowledge, he was not a peer Rabbi with Jesus but only a student. Jesus was the true teacher.

- **Because of this authority of Jesus, we can put our wholehearted trust in Him, believing every word and committing everything to Him. The Spirit will then blow into our lives, toppling every doubt and planting seeds of faith.**

THE BRONZE SNAKE

Numbers 21 tells the story of the Israelites and the plague of snakes God sent to punish them for their rebellious attitudes.

- **The serpent was a sign of their sin, and bronze was associated with judgment because it was formed in fire. The bronze serpent is a picture of sin judged and dealt with, so healing could come.**

CHRIST IS LIFTED FOR US!

The Israelites were saved not by doing anything alone but by trusting that looking at a bronze serpent would save them. **How many suffered because it seemed foolish to them?**

- Just as Christ has been lifted for us, many look at the cross and see foolishness; instead of being saved, they suffer from the poison of their sin.

THE SIMPLE GOSPEL (JOHN 3:16-21)

LOVE THROUGH ACTION

God proved His love to the world in a real tangible way by **acting on it**, giving His one and only Son. His love is sacrificial and not self-centered, reaching out and drawing us in.

- **God doesn't love us because we have been made His children. He loved us before we were ever saved, hostile to Him, and in love with our sin.**

THE RESULT OF BELIEF

Jesus was sent to save and not condemn, so whoever believes is not condemned! This phrase is in the present tense, which means it is effective now!

- **It is easy for us as Christians to feel the weight of sin and guilt and begin condemning ourselves. Satan wants us to forget the work of the cross so he can make us ineffective Christians.**
- Because of God's justice, there is a second half to this. All sin, including our sin, regardless of how much or how little we have done it, bears the penalty of death. Because of this, the world is already condemned.
- How can God be all-loving if He has already condemned the world? **This judgment results from the refusal to accept God's gift, revealing the darkness in people's hearts.**

LIVING IN THE LIGHT

John brings back this same conflict between light and darkness he introduced in chapter 1. Jesus came as the light to expose darkness so we can become more conformed to His image.

- **As His light is shined on our darkness, it will either cause us to run and hide, or we will be drawn to the light.** If we choose to move toward His light, we will become more and more aware of our sin.

BEING CHRISTIAN ISN'T ENOUGH

- Do we have a zeal for the Bible?
- **It is not enough to know about Christ. We have to be known by Him.**
- **We must be born into his family to be a part of His Kingdom.**

CHRIST IS ENOUGH

- Christ has full authority!
- **It is because of the love of God the Father that he gave us His one and only Son!**
- **He is the bronze serpent that was raised for all to see. Through this, he carried the burden of all of our sin to be judged once and for all.**

OUR RESPONSE

- Are we going to look at Christ and the cross in foolishness?
- **What wrong questions are we asking?**
- **Are we intentionally seeking out a relationship with Christ or are we allowing chance meetings?**