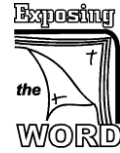




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7- Verifying to Nicodemus 3:1-21

Often we become so familiar with particular stories that it is difficult to see them fresh and new. We feel we have heard them a million times. We even can become so familiar with particular scriptures that instead of reading it when we come to it we simply play the audio version of our mind and move past it. This section is one of such familiarity, after all who has not heard of Nicodemus and quoted John 3:16 many times. Still let's look at this with new eyes and new ears to hear the story again of Nicodemus.

I- A Visit by Night:

Joh 3:1-2 *There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2 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.*

The Bible records the night time visit of a man named Nicodemus. He was a member of the ruling council called the Sanhedrin. The NIV says, "Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council."

Of the 70 members of this ruling council only three appear in a favorable light in relation to Jesus. Here with Nicodemus and also Joseph of Arimathea (*John 19:38*) and Rabbi Gamaliel (*Acts 5:34-39; 22:3*)

Nicodemus became a follower of Jesus as evidenced by *Joh 7:50-51* *Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) 51 Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?*

Here he admonishes the Jews for passing judgment before they have heard Jesus.

Then in *Joh 19:39-40* *And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. 40 Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.* He along with Joseph of Arimathea takes the body of Jesus for burial.

Many speculation have been attached to his night time visit. Some say he may have been worried about being seen with Jesus in daylight. Some say that it was so that he could have a quiet talk and not be interrupted by the crowds of the day. Who knows. The important thing is he came. He also made a statement that showed that he had began to recognize the signs that were accompanying the ministry of Jesus. He uses the word "we" here and that probably included some of the others, maybe Joseph of Arimathea, and others of the Sanhedrin.

II- Mystery of Two Births

John 3:3 *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. 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? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*



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Jesus is not recorded as responding to the statement, He simply tells him the greatest need he had, to be born from above.

Nicodemus did not understand and asked how it was possible. He understood it to be a physical rebirthing, Jesus was speaking of the spiritual new birth.

Born of water and spirit has been interpreted many ways by many people. One is water is a natural birth and above is spiritual birth. Some say the water is a symbol of the Holy Spirit others the Word of God. Some say the water is making reference back to the message of John as he spoke of repentance and baptism. Regardless of which or how many it may be the undeniable teaching is that we must be second born, not of natural means, but a spiritual supernatural rebirth.

III- Mystery of the Wind

John 3:7-8 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, 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 Spirit.

John records the words of Jesus as He used the analogy of the wind blowing. We cannot see the wind but we can feel it as it goes by, we can see it affects, we hear its sound but it is not seeable. Jesus acquaints the work of the Holy Spirit as being like the wind. It is a mystery that unless you have felt it, saw its results and heard testimony concerning it you cannot see it.

IV- How Can These Things Be?

John 3:9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

Nicodemus asks the question of wonder about how it could be. Nicodemus should, as a scholar of the Old Testament, have been acquainted with the teaching of Ezekiel about a new heart and new spirit.

Eze 18:31 Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

Eze 36:26 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.

V- Lifting Up of Christ

John 3:10-14 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? 11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. 12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? 13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. 14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

The phrase in verse thirteen is an interesting one indeed. No man has gone into heaven except him how had come down from there. He is not talking about the sky or outer space but the abode of God. Jesus has been called the ladder between heaven and earth. We know He descended from heaven in the incarnation as a child and descended after the resurrection. However if you study the Old Testament you will find that most scholars believe that Christ had many pre-Bethlehem appearance before He was born in Bethlehem. He descended and ascended many times before His birth.

Jesus also ties in an event that happened in the time of the wilderness wandering.

The story is found in *Num 21:4-9 And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way*



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of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. 5 And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. 6 And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. 7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. 8 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. 9 And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

Jesus was certainly speaking of being lifted up on the cross that would soon take place. Jesus would say later in *John 12:32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*

VI- Greatest Love Known to Man
John 3:15-16 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16 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.

Perhaps the greatest single verse in the Bible is John 3:16. It has been memorized, memorialized, bronzed, plaqued and believed. The promise in verse 15 is that if we believe we will not perish. The truth from which our eternal hope springs is in the

truth that God loves us and wants what is best for us. He wants to undo what Adam did and make it possible for us to spend eternity with Him. Us even loving Him is rooted in Him loving us. Notice *1 John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.*

VII- A Matter of Faith

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 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.

All of this is bound up by faith. Christ did not come to condemn the world but to free it from sin. If we believe, not just in some religion or denomination or leader but if we believe in Jesus we are not condemned but if we do not believe in Jesus we are condemned already. Man does not have to do anything to be lost, he already is. He stays lost by refusing to believe on Jesus.

VIII- Lovers of Darkness:

Why do men not flock to God and this good news? Because they love sin, even though they are dead in it they love it. *John 3:19-21 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. 21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.*

So the question is have you been born from above, the second birth, reborn, saved or whatever word we use to describe it. Simply have you come to Jesus because salvation is in Him and Him alone?