

Food for thought from the Gospel of John

3 – 3 Truth Hidden in Plain Sight!

John 3:1-8

We have covered these verses already. But they are so important for understanding the next five verses (vs. 9-13 – verses that are often glossed-over). We needed to read them again, so that we can better ponder Nicodemus' response and the concerns that Christ shared with him. Nicodemus represents people who are religious - people who are knowledgeable, involved, committed, and stuck in their ways. In Nicodemus' case, he seems to be conflicted. He wants to like Jesus. He feels an attraction to His ministry. But he is not making a public commitment to Jesus... not yet. That would rock the boat. So, Nicodemus is probing.

“Is there a way to add a little Jesus to what I’ve already got. Certainly, He could help the other Pharisees and the rest of the people of Israel, if I could incorporate Jesus with what we were doing. Jesus could fix things up.”

What Nicodemus got from Jesus was a “broadside” of bright light that offers no shadows in which to hide. Jesus told Nicodemus that it is the new birth or nothing. The flesh is in a terrible position. We cannot stagger into God's favor by trying to improve the flesh. There must be a death to self. There must be a second birth / a spiritual, heavenly happening that makes us a new creation inside our hearts and minds. This new birth is not self-induced. It is not a product of religious rites and rules. It is a work of God's Spirit. When God's Spirit reveals this to you, you will then seek God and ask Him for this grace. Scripture will take on new meaning, when the author of Scripture comes into your heart and mind.

John 3:9-10

Now we enter into the Mystery of Christ and the confusion of Nicodemus.

John 3:9 is the last recorded statement that Nicodemus made to Jesus. As in John 3:4, it is a question. The entire conversation, Nicodemus did not understand what Jesus was saying. It was new and strange to Him.

In **John 3:10**, Jesus challenged him that he should have known something about new birth and the work of God's Spirit. Since Nicodemus was considered “**the**” master/ teacher of Israel, he should have had some familiarity. Here are some sample ideas from Scripture:

References to water and the Spirit (John 3:5) used to describe spiritual cleansing and renewal:

- Isaiah 4:4; 32:15; 44:3
- Joel 2:28-29
- Zechariah 13:1

Promises to Israel of a new birth:

- Jeremiah 31:31-34
- Ezekiel 11:18-20; 36:24-27; 37:1-14
- Note: The mystery of the Gentiles being included into this covenant is a subject that we cannot handle here. See Ephesians 2:11-22; 3:1-12.

The Old Testament Scriptures were intended to reveal Salvation. But Israel's failure was to use the Scriptures to create their own righteousness and thereby blind themselves to the righteousness of God by faith in Jesus Christ:

- II Timothy 3:15-17 cp. Romans 10:1-4; John 5:36-40
- Luke 24:44-48 cp. Philippians 3:1-9.
- I Timothy 1:3-16 cp. II Timothy 3:16-17; Romans 16:25-27

Conclusion: We are so busy with our own agenda, or the agendas of others, that Scripture is hidden, right under our own nose. We fail to see God's true character and intentions. We fail to see Jesus Christ, who is more than a teacher and healer. He is the essential, indispensable Savior – God's perfect Man and Man's perfect God!