

The Book of John -19

Introduction: As we closed the last lesson, we looked at the first ten verses of John 3. These first ten verses show us, The World's Greatest Tragedy. In **verse 1**, we are introduced to Nicodemus. In **verse 2**, we see how Nicodemus started this conversation with the Lord. What follows is the Lord's reply helping Nicodemus to understand the necessity of being born again. After **verse number 5**, the Lord exposes the truth to Nicodemus by declaring the fact of the new birth. Notice with me **verse 6**.

John 3:6 *"6 That which is **born of the flesh is flesh**; and that which is **born of the Spirit is spirit**."*

Born of the flesh ---> is flesh.
Born of the Spirit --->is spirit.

Here the Lord gives a similitude that we can easily understand. We are born into this world in the flesh. Every human alive understands and can grasp this example. This is seen in the fundamental law of kinds. It is found in **Genesis 1** and expressly speaks against the lie of evolution.

"Cats do not become dogs, and monkeys do not become men. Each creature reproduces according to its kind." - John Philips.

Thus, we discover that Adam could only produce after His kind.

Genesis 5:3 *"3 And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, **and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image**; and called his name Seth:"*

Fallen man can only produce a fallen man.

I think Paul expressed it aptly when he stated in **Romans 7:18**.

*"18 For I know that in me (that is, **in my flesh**,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not."*

John 3:7 *"7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."*

We may be found as Nicodemus expressing doubt mixed with surprise, "How can these things be?" Was there no evidence or allusion to the work of the Holy Spirit concerning redemption in the Old Testament? Listen to these words in **Ezekiel 36:25-27**.

"25 Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your

filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 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. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.”

This passage in Ezekiel deals with the Nation of Israel and looks to a time when they shall be changed, but it illustrates the truth of God’s plan of redemption and the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration.

This is spoken of by Jeremiah as well in **Jeremiah 31:33** *“33, But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, And write it in their hearts; And will be their God, And they shall be my people.”*

We see further in **verse 8** how the Lord gives a second earthly example for us to understand truth.

John 3:8 *“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.”*

The second similitude explains the **unseen work** of the Holy Spirit. The wind:

1. Operates according to its own course. (We do not know how it works.)
2. Produces some effects that can be noticed.
3. Produces some effects that can not be visibly seen.

Likewise, the Holy Spirit:

1. Operates according to His will. (We may not know how He works exactly, but we do know, according to God’s Word, that He does.)
2. Produces some effects in the believer that are manifested.
3. Is unseen.

In Greek and Biblical Hebrew, the word for Spirit signifies wind/breath (Greek- pneuma/Hebrew- ruach). This explanation is given in response to Nicodemus’ exclamation in **verse 9**.

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

This is being declared, *“Ye must be born again....”*

I am thankful that in this passage, the Lord continues this conversation. He does not stop

after Nicodemus expresses his amazement and disbelief.

It demonstrates two things,

- (1) That the Lord is so gracious and longsuffering toward us.
- (2) That God desires for men to be saved.

Notice what the Lord states in **verse 10**.

John 3:10 *“10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?”*

Nicodemus' career is put up against this basic revelation of truth. Are you a teacher of God's Holy Word and do not know these things? In **verses 11-15**, the Lord will give Nicodemus some insight concerning Himself and the Old Testament Scriptures. The interpreters of the law missed the many types, pictures, and intimations that God gave concerning His only begotten Son and redemption. He begins with His emphatic words, “Verily, Verily...” or truly, truly.

John 3:11 *“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.”*

This statement thrusts us back to the head of the conversation where Nicodemus identifies with the religious rulers. You will remember Nicodemus stated, “**we know** that thou art a teacher come from God: **for no man can do these miracles** [we have seen] that thou doest, except God be with him.” - Emphasis mine

John Phillips stated, “Jesus placed before Nicodemus eternal verities, unwavering certainty, uncompromising assurance...The Lord was not setting before Nicodemus some fine philosophy, the fruit of reasoning and high-sounding speculation. He was setting before him hard facts, the kind facts an eyewitness could present.”

Notice with me the following three verses:

John 3:12-15 *“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: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”*

I like what Merrill Tenney stated concerning this passage, “God's mysteries are not the heritage of the learned, the moral, or the religious simply because of learning, morality, or religion; they are the heritage of the spiritually transformed.”

His inquiry was for Christ to tell Him more. I am reminded of the Lord's words found in **John 16:7-12**.

*“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. **I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.**”*

Paul similarly spoke to the spiritual young Christians at Corinth using similar language.

I Corinthians 3:2 *“I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto **ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.**”*

The Lord then assured Nicodemus of who He is; He states, (v13) *And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.”*

The first of the three clauses states, *“...no man hath ascended up to heaven....”*

The second builds upon the first and states, *“but he that came down from heaven...”*

And **the third** reveals the Lord's identity, *“even the Son of man which is in heaven.”*

The Lord is uniquely qualified to **speak authoritatively of heavenly things** because of who He is. He it is whose abode is in heaven and hath both ascended and descended from Heaven. The Lord continues by **moving to the Scriptures** to aid Nicodemus in understanding.

John 3:14 *“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:”*

The Old Testament passage that the Lord references here in **verse 14** is found in **Number chapter 21**.

You can imagine when this event occurred and even here in our text that the people looked upon this account not understanding all of its implications as the Lord was teaching Nicodemus. You see the Lord Jesus Christ as the Light which lighteth every man that entereth in the world would shed more light on this event.

Again, in His commentary, John Philips stated, “The full truth of that probably did not

dawn on Nicodemus until Christ was nailed to the cross—perhaps it was then that he cast his doubts and difficulties aside and put his lot in with the Lord.”

Sinning people were bitten by fiery serpents of judgment. According to verses **8-9 of Numbers 21**, all they had to do was **Look and Live**.

I want you to see the final statement of the World's Greatest Truth.

John 3:15 *“15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”*

Look and Live! Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...
(Acts 16:31)