

Nicodemus Series – Part 1

June 12th, 2005

Nicodemus

1). Joh 3:1 ¶ *There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "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." 3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8 "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit." 9 Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?" 10 Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?*

2). Nicodemus is a Pharisee, a primary or chief ruler of the Jews, the teacher of Israel.

a). It is from people like Nicodemus that the nation was taught the things of God. What they taught would directly impact the nation's spiritual condition and spiritual understanding. The nation would be the product of what they had been taught.

b). Jesus pointed out - Mt 23:2 *"The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat."* – they were and saw themselves as the guardians of the Law.

c). However Jesus also said this about them concerning their teaching of the scriptures - Mt 15:4 *"For God commanded, saying, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' 5 "But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God" -- 6 'then he need not honor his father or mother.' Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. 7 "Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 8 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And*

honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. 9 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."

d). In effect they had changed what God had said by focusing on man made traditions, making the Word of God of marginal importance.

3). This is really no different to what took place within the church at the beginning of the dispensation and is prevalent throughout Christendom today.

Ac 20:29 "For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 "Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. 'teaching as doctrines the commandments of men'

2Pe 2:1 ¶ But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.

Tit 1:15 To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.16 They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

a). All these references are to Christians and to those who have influence over the flock – we are looking at leaders. Those who have the same kind of influence as Nicodemus. The majority of the flock will always go where the shepherds lead.

4). Interesting to note that Nicodemus = victory over the people.

5). He comes to Jesus with the intent of talking about the signs – note the eight signs/miracles recorded in John's gospel. Each sign pointing specifically to existing Kingdom truth.

"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."

a). Explain this

b). Jesus response appears to be totally disconnected, but really strikes to the very heart of the issue. - *3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

6). Let's remember the message that began with John the Baptist

Mt 3:1 ¶ *In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" 3 For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: "The voice of one crying **in the wilderness**: (Think back to the first generation of Israel – the wilderness placed them the other side of Egypt with the land of promise out ahead) 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.'"*

a). That Jesus preached - Mt 4:17 *From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

b). The message Jesus sent the disciples to preach - Mt 10:7 *"And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'*

7). Now what one sin had characterized the Children of Israel that had been responsible for their failure to enter the land with Moses and plagued them throughout their history?

Heb 3:16 *For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? 17 Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*

a). Unbelief producing disobedience – they continually refused to believe God in respect of the land, their inheritance in the land and His purpose for them. This disobedience led to judgment resulting in captivity. A deliverer for the nation would be raised calling the people to repentance and upon that repentance they would be delivered from captivity – the cycle.

8). Now here is Jesus, at the appointed time, (Israel is in captivity to the Roman Empire and Daniel's 70 week prophecy is rapidly coming to its completion) drawing attention to the heavenly portion of the kingdom. Which could only be offered to the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob. Performing signs specifically to that effect.

a). The nation needed to repent, to change their minds in respect of their unbelief, and believe what God had said, changing their lives accordingly. Their Deliverer is present and upon their national repentance He would deliver them from the captivity of Rome and establish them in both the heavenly and earthly realms of the Kingdom

b). Remember God's promises to Abraham:

Ge 22:17 *"blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.*

Ge 26:4 *"And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed;*

c). Acceptance of the heavenly part of the kingdom would have automatically restored the earthly part. 'the heavens do rule'

9). Just as God spoke to the first generation of Israel at Mt.Sinai in respect of earthly Kingdom living

Ex 19:3 *And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 4 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. 5 'Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. 6 'And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."*

So we find God, in the person of Jesus, speaking in respect of heavenly kingdom living.

Mt 5:1 ¶ *And seeing the multitudes, **He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him.** 2 Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: 3 ¶ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

10). The signs Jesus performed testifying of the King and His Kingdom could only be seen by those who were born again for the nation of Israel alone – there would be no point in showing them to the lost. Nicodemus, as a custodian of the Word, as the teacher of Israel, should have known this. And should have understood what Jesus said next - *"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*

a). The reason he should have known is clear as we compare scripture with scripture.

Joh 5:46 *"For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. 47 "But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"*

De 18:18 *'I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.*

Lu 24:25 *Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!*

Da 9:24 *"Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.*

10 *Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?*

11). The conclusion of the whole matter is sad yet predictable.

a). Ten of the twelve tribal leaders from the first generation of Israel refused to believe what God had said about giving them the land as they stood at the entrance to the land at kadesh Barnea. What they spoke impacted the whole nation – bringing about this result.

b). Nu 14:1 ¶ *So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. 2 And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! 3 "Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" 4 So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt."*

c). Egypt lay behind them, the good land flowing with milk and honey was before them. God was physically in their midst yet they would not believe. - Heb 4:2 *For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.*

d). At Christ's first advent again we find the nation's leaders in unbelief refusing to understand what their scriptures plainly taught. Again their words impacted the whole nation. Egypt still lay behind them, the kingdom of the heavens was before them and God, in the person of Jesus, their deliverer, 'the Most Holy, was in their midst demonstrating the power of the Spirit.

e). Joh 19:15 *But they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!"*

f). What Stephen said: Ac 7:51 ¶ *"You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. 52 "Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, 53 "who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it."*

g). With the crucifixion of Messiah the prophetic clock for Israel stopped 7 years short of the conclusion of Daniel's 70 weeks. And at this point that prophesied by John the Baptist comes into play.

h). Lu 3:8 *"Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.*

12). For us then - Heb 3:7 ¶ *Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice, 8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness, 9 Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years. 10 Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.' 11 So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'" 12 **Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;** 13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, 15 while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." 16 For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? 17 Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*

13). Preach the conclusion