

Nicodemus - Part Four

July 3rd, 2005

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?*

a). We have seen over the weeks that Nicodemus comes to Jesus to find clarification concerning the signs Jesus is performing.

b). Each of the signs recorded in John's gospel points individually and collectively to the identity of the One performing them. Making not only His message but also His purpose abundantly clear

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

2). Rather than addressing Nicodemus' in the way that he would have wished, Jesus draws on that which Nicodemus should have known and understood as 'the teacher of Israel'. He draws on the scriptures and particularly here on the writings of Moses

a). Lu 24:27 *And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.*

b). Joh 5:46 *"For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me.*

3). Let us remember that Jesus comes to a redeemed people to deliver them from Gentile bondage and lead them into the heavenly realm of the

Kingdom conditioned upon their repentance. And this is the focus the Lord has in His conversation with Nicodemus.

a). Nicodemus response ‘How can these things be?’ is a clear indication that nothing had changed in the hearts of the people from that first generation that came out of Egypt.

b). In fact what happened at Kadesh Barnea and what happened with the crucifixion are remarkably similar and both are extremely instructive for us. - 1Co 10:6 ¶ *Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. 7 And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." 8 Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; 9 nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; 10 nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*

4). Immediately following the Passover in Exodus 12 the nation was instructed to keep the feast of unleavened bread. - Ex 12:15 *'Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.*

a). Let's remember – on the night of the Passover Israel as a nation was born and the nation was adopted as God's firstborn son.

Ex 4:22 *"Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: "Israel is My son, My firstborn.*

b). The purpose for the nation's birth and adoption lay out ahead in the land of their calling, in relation to their inheritance within a theocracy at the head of the nations.

c). Their formation and adoption was for no other reason than this.

d). In order to fulfill that purpose though they were required to remove the leaven from their midst

e). Leaven = corruption and evil, always associated with the allures of this world and the god of this world.

f). The leavening process had already begun in Israel through their association with Egypt – a type of the world in whose sway they are.

g). And our scripture is very clear – if the leaven was not dealt with that person would be ‘cut off from Israel’ – Not God.

h). The fact that the whole first generation was cut off from Israel – dying in the wilderness – is clear testimony that the leaven was not dealt with.

5). Hebrews 3:19 clearly tells us, in relation to that fact –
Heb 3:19 *So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*
(unfaithfulness)

6). The question then is how did the leaven result in the nation's unfaithfulness? What is the connection?

7). We can see this in the nation's attitude to the Manna God provided and their subsequent rejection of the land God was giving them.

8). God had provided Manna for them to eat which contained all that they required to sustain them on their journey to the land. In the Manna God had provided everything they needed in the way of nourishment and nutrients to keep them strong and healthy. But because of the leavening process and its connection with Egypt they longed for something else.

a). Nu 11:5 *"We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; 6 "but now our whole being is dried up; there is nothing at all except this manna before our eyes!"*

b). They longed for the food they had in Egypt, a picture of wanting to feed their carnal appetite. They were looking back to that they should have left behind. Remember the Promised Land was a land flowing with milk and honey.

c). Because they longed for the food of Egypt they tried to change the Manna God gave them to make it more like that they longed for.

d). Nu 11:8 *The people went about and gathered it, ground it on millstones or beat it in the mortar, cooked it in pans, and made cakes of it; and its taste was like the taste of pastry prepared with oil.*

e). Rather than receiving what God had provided for them they changed it in an attempt to make it more palatable for them and in so doing created something that was bland and sickly.

9). Just a short while later in Numbers 14, at Kadesh Barnea, we find the rejection of the Manna climaxing in the rejection of the land, the leavening process having become complete - Nu 14:4 *So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt."*

a). They longingly looked back to the food they had in Egypt and then longingly looked back to the land of Egypt itself. In both instances they were longingly looking back to things of the world, the flesh and the devil. All associated with the working of the leaven, which they had been told to remove. Lu 9:62 *But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."*

Ge 19:26 ¶ *But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.*

Lu 17:32 *"Remember Lot's wife.*

10). Now in Nicodemus' day we find that which is typified by the Manna, the Lord Jesus Christ – the Word made flesh – present amongst the people again. Again providing everything that they would need to take them into the heavenly land that Jesus came to offer and to provide for them age lasting life.

a). Joh 6:48 *"I am the bread of life. 49 "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 "This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. 51 "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." 52 The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" 53 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. 54 "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 "For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. 56 "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. 57 "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. 58 "This is the bread which came down from heaven-- not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever." 59 These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.*

b). God had already said, 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.*

c). Jesus told them, Joh 14:24 *"He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.*

d). And what was the response to His words? Mr 14:64 *"You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.*

e). And just as they rejected that typified by the Manna so they also rejected the Kingdom of the Heavens, looking rather to side with the god of this world - 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). And what had Jesus warned His disciples? Mt 16:11 *"How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? --but to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." 12 Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.*

g). The working of the leavening process, connection and association with the world, the flesh and the devil.

11). Now what about us? 11 *Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.*

12). Just as Israel was separated from Egypt by the death and shed blood of the paschal lambs, so we have been separated from the world by the death and shed blood of the Lamb of God. And in Christ - 1Pe 2:9 *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*

a). Israel's purpose lay out ahead – ours lays out ahead

b). Firstborn son in a theocracy – firstborn son in a theocracy

c). Rule the earth at the head of the nations with God in their midst – from the heavens over the nations with God's Son

d). The provision of the Manna – the provision of the word – everything for the sustaining and nourishing of our spirit during our spiritual journey - Lu 4:4 *But Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'"*

I/ God gave life to us at the point of our new birth by breathing into us His Spirit and we are to continually take in that life giving breath through the word (Tim 3:16 – all scripture is God breathed)

Ii/ This is not just a reference to scripture per se, but to the complete, unadulterated, uncompromized word – the whole counsel of God – even when it is hard to swallow.

Iii/ Anything less than this will not provide the strength, vitality and nourishment we need to arrive at our destination.

Iv/ Jas 1:21 *Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.* Nothing else can do it!

e). Keeping the feast of unleavened bread – Keeping the feast of unleavened bread

f). 1Co 5:6b *Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 7 ¶ Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. 8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

13). Keeping the Feast of unleavened bread as given in our scripture is not teaching that we are to live a completely sinless life. It is impossible for Christians to live apart from sin as long as we presently live in ‘the body of this death’

a). This is the reason for the High Priestly ministry of Christ at present in the heavenly tabernacle. He is ministering today on the basis of His shed blood on the mercy seat, on behalf of Christians who sin. We receive forgiveness through confession of these sins again on the basis of the shed blood of Christ which keeps on cleansing us from all sin.

b). We Keep the Feast today in a twofold manner - 1Th 5:22 *Abstain from every form of evil.* – we must abstain from every appearance of evil on the one hand – and - 1Jo 1:7 *But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 ¶ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.* – confessing our sin when overtaken by evil on the other.

c). This is the way we keep leaven out of our life and thereby Keep the Feast.

d). If we do not deal with the leavening process we will be drawn back to the food of the world

14). Secular Sundae / Hollywood Burger / Soap Dogs / Pornography Pizza
Political Pasta / Christian Krispy Kreme

15). The last is probably the most dangerous

a). Just like Israel the Manna from above, the word of God, has been ground, beaten and cooked in order to make it more palatable.

b). We process it like every other food making sure that the whole grain of the Kingdom is taken out so that it looks like anything else the world has to offer. - Mt 23:15 *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves."*

c). Its not just milk – it's fat free, taste free, nourishment free producing sickly, anemic Christians who are overcome before they ever engage the enemy, content to wallow in the flesh pots of Egypt.

d). Parallel with bread making - White bread

16). That which has been done with the scriptures resembles the living word, but it is not the living word. Only that which God has breathed is alive.

a). Heb 4:12 *For the word of God is living and powerful,*

b). Joh 6:63 *"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life."*

c). 2Pe 1:20 *knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,*

And it is all about the King and His coming Kingdom.

17). If we reject the word because it is too hard to chew, we will reject the One who is the Word and the One who sent Him. In so doing we will be cut off from the land of our calling and our inheritance.

a). Mt 7:14 *"Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."*

18). Isn't it interesting to note that we are commanded not to eat leavened bread and in Matthew 13 talking of the word of the Kingdom Jesus tells us Mt 13:33 *Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."*

a). And where does leaven work best? At a lukewarm temperature.

b). Re 3:16 *"So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth."* – Exactly the condition we find the majority of the church at the time of the rapture.

c). The first generation of Israel did not deal with the leavening process and as a result rejected the Manna and the land of their calling – in

essence turning away from the reason for their redemption. Aligning themselves with Egypt and the god of this world

d). Nicodemus generation refused to deal with the leavening process and as a result rejected that which the Manna typified – the Bread of life, the word made flesh. And in a tragic irony they rejected their own scriptures. They rejected the reason for their calling, preferring to align themselves with Rome and the god of this world.

e). And seemingly the majority of Christendom has refused to deal with the leavening process, seeking instead to change the Bread of Life to more readily fit their appetite consuming daily that which has been contaminated by the leaven associated with the god of this world and in so doing reject the One who died for them and the very purpose of their redemption.

19). The question is will we deal with the leavening process as scripture instructs us and eat with rejoicing and thanksgiving our daily bread or will we turn our hearts back to the food of the world? What will your diet be?