

**Nicodemus - Part 5**  
July 10<sup>th</sup>, 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?*

2). We have seen that the Lord's conversation with Nicodemus is centered on entrance into or exclusion from the Kingdom of the Heavens. The very thing Jesus had come to offer to His brother Israel. And we have also seen that the Lord goes straight to that which is the foundation of this offer – the scriptures – alluding to the recorded history of Israel from the writings of Moses.

a). This is not surprising as the scriptures contain both the unconditional covenant made with Abraham when the Kingdom is given to his descendants and the conditional covenant made with Israel at Sinai showing their responsibility in receiving the promises.

b). It is only God's word that contains the complete truth concerning this kingdom and entrance into it.

c). According to our scripture, entrance is made possible, by a continuing work of the Holy Spirit, subsequent to eternal salvation, that involves death, burial and resurrection – 'unless one is born of water' – then living in the power of resurrection, following the leading of the Spirit – 'unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.'

d). Ex 13:21 *And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night.* – We should note that the Lord at this point is leading them in only one direction – to the land of promise and their inheritance.

e). In Romans we find the same thing - Ro 8:14 *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.* – Only sons can rule in the house of God and only those who are led by the Spirit are sons.

f). And now as then, the Spirit is leading in one direction, to the land of our calling – not with a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire, but that which these picture, the Spirit of God which is the word of God – ‘all scripture is God breathed’ – ‘My words are Spirit and they are life’

3). Although the nation of Israel followed the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire in a literal sense they did not follow in the spirit.

a). We will remember from last week, after Passover - Ex 12:14 *'So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance. 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.* – The word of God, which is the breath of God, which is the Spirit of God was leading them to remove all that was evil and corrupt from their midst, which was there because of their association with Egypt. Israel kept the letter of this command but failed to deal with that which the leaven pictured – the sin in their lives.

b). 2Co 3:6b ¶ *for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*

c). The end result – 1<sup>st</sup> generation – rejection of the Manna / rejection of the land / rejection of the reason for their redemption – cut off from their inheritance

Nicodemus’ generation did exactly the same – cut off from their inheritance

4). Now God has given us this conversation with Nicodemus and the history of Israel so that the Holy Spirit can instruct us and thereby lead us to the land of our calling and our inheritance. - 1Co 10:11 *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.*

5). Now we know from Hebrews - Heb 3:19 *So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.* And earlier in this same chapter there is a warning written for us - Heb 3:12 *Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;*

a). This is not rejecting God or denying our eternal salvation – rather it is refusing to be faithful to that which God has commanded us in respect of our entry into the Kingdom of Heaven instead turning back to the things of this world.

6). And God has commanded us just as He commanded them - 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.*

a). Failure to keep the feast, failing to do what the Spirit teaches through it will have the same result for us – cut off from our inheritance.

b). We also saw last week that in order for us to keep this feast we need to deal with the leaven in our lives in a twofold manner and it is the first of these - 1Th 5:22 *Abstain from every form of evil.* That we will deal with today

c). 1Th 5:23 ¶ *Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

d). Abstaining from evil – dealing with sin has a direct consequence on our entrance into or exclusion from, the Kingdom.

e). Psalm 24 says it this way - Ps 24:3 ¶ *Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully. 5 He shall receive blessing from the LORD, And righteousness from the God of his salvation. 6 This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, Who seek Your face.*

f). Is it your prayer today to ascend into the hill of the Lord and stand in His Holy place? - SONG – ‘Give Us Clean Hands’

7). Now by its very definition all sin is evil and is rooted in unbelief – unfaithfulness to what God has said. Is there an evil heart fo unbelief in any of us? So to abstain from every evil we would need to abstain from every sin.

8). Let us understand something in respect of sin. Sin and death are Siamese twins – joined at the hip and cannot be separated. - Ro 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death,*

Ro 8:13 *For if you live according to the flesh you will die;*

a). But note something in the second half of our Romans 6 scripture Ro 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* – The work of Christ on the cross has dealt with our sin in respect of eternity completely. With regards to our eternal salvation sin is no longer an issue. We have for eternity been removed from eternal death and entered into eternal life. It is a free gift and this never enters into judgment.

b). However note the second half of Romans 8:13 - Ro 8:13 *For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*

c). Life and death in this scripture are clearly not eternal in their scope. Only the saved can function by the Spirit. ‘Sons’ v14 = rulership

d). Again look at what is written to Christians - Ga 5:19 *Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

e). Clearly then sin in our lives will be judged in relation to our inheritance and if not dealt with will cause us to lose that which we have been promised

f). Pe 1:4 ... *an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,*

g). Sin in relation to eternity God has dealt with. Sin in relation to the Kingdom is our responsibility. 1Co 11:31 *For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.*

h). 1Pe 2:11 *Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,* (Teach this – ‘work out your own salvation’)

i). Because of the way sin impacts our inheritance we can see why we should abstain from every form of evil

9). If we are to abstain from every evil it would be good to know what scripture says about how and why we sin.

10). Scripture teaches that right before every sin there is something that we must pass through which is not of itself sin and if we would deal with this something first, we would not sin. It is temptation.

a). Jas 1:14 *But each one is tempted* – Illustration (3 people – 2 to be the doorway and 1 sin)

b). Mt 4:1 ¶ *Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.* Temptation of itself is not sin, but it is the doorway to sin through which we must pass or turn away.

11). 1Co 10:13 *No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*

a). Notice that temptation seeks to overtake us. It would be good to note that sin is predatory. Ge 4:7 *"If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."* – Temptation is the lure that draws us in.

b). Note our temptations aren't unique they are 'common to man' (Teach this)

c). God never abandons us in our temptations because He is faithful

d). God never permits the temptation to go beyond what we are able (Teach this – what we as individuals are able – it's not the same for everyone, but GOD does not permit anyone to be tempted beyond what they are able.)

e). For every temptation GOD will also make 'the way of escape'  
i/ It is articular 'the way' – the way of escape for us as individuals within a particular temptation.

f). Note 'the way of escape' does not remove us from the temptation it makes it possible for us to be 'able to bear it' – literally to be underneath it - to go through it for however long that is.

g). By way of encouragement - Jas 1:12 *Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*

h). This is the enormity of the love and mercy God has for us in that He sovereignly controls our temptation to sin so that we can endure, so that we can be approved and receive the crown of life.

12). Let us never be confused about this and if we have believed a lie concerning temptation let us choose to replace it with the truth.

13). Well if what we have just studied is true, and it is,, how is it that we are overtaken by temptation and sin? Are you ready for the answer?

Jas 1:13 ¶ *Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. 16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.*

a). Note God is not the source of any evil temptation  
b). Every temptation seeks to deceive us  
c). Every temptation only becomes a temptation when we are drawn away (Teach this).

d). Note what it is that draws us away and entices us – ‘our own desires’ – we give in to temptation because we want to. The devil never made us do it. We sin because we want to and usually we then rationalize our action by blaming something or someone else for our choice – this is a lie.

I/ Example about the money.

Ii/ We have something much more precious than a million dollars – to be heir of the world and coheir with Christ. The salvation of our soul – what price tag would you put on that?

e). Note the process in v15.

f). The death it brings forth is not in relation to eternity, but to the kingdom. 1Co 6:9 ¶ *Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived.*

g). Eph 4:22 *that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.*

h). 1Jo 2:16 *For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world.*

*17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.* – And in the context of our message today, the will of God is that we purge out the old leaven.

14). Let’s connect back to a previous message - Ga 4:30 *Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."*

15). Just as Jesus took Nicodemus to the scriptures to show him what he should have known about entrance to the kingdom – so He has done the same for us. Let us never again blame a circumstance, a situation or another person for our sin. We own it.

a). Let us remember before every sin comes temptation and according to scripture we can handle it. If we don't it is because we reject the word of God that says otherwise wanting to follow instead our own lusts and desires. Do not be deceived my beloved brethren.

16). What if despite this we still sin? Which we do. Come back next week.