

Nicodemus: He Needed to be Born Again

➤ **I. NICODEMUS WAS A PHARISEE, YET HE NEEDED TO BE BORN AGAIN**

- There were three different sects of the Jews: the Essenes, the Sadducees and the Pharisees.
- **1. The Essenes believed in more or less a monastic life.**
 - They escaped defilement by forming colonies by themselves.
 - Each colony had its own synagogue, a common dining hall, an assembly room, and provisions for daily bathing in running water.
 - When a person became a member of this sect, he gave to it all that he possessed.
 - Money was almost unnecessary.
This sect also abstained from wedlock, their morality was high, and their lives were clean.
- **2. The Sadducees on the other hand were the liberals of their day.**
 - a) They did not believe in the resurrection of the dead or future retribution.
 - b) They believed that the soul died with the body.
 - c) They did not believe in the existence of angels and spirits.
 - d) They believed in fatalism, contending that all our actions are in our own power and God is not concerned in our doing good or not doing wrong.
- **3. The Pharisees believed in the doctrine of foreordination.**
 - a) They was the straightest, strictest sect of the Jews.
 - b) They were the strongest in religious character.
 - c) They were the best people in the nation.
 - d) They believed in the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body and the existence of spirits.
 - e) They believed in punishment and rewards in the future life.
 - f) They believed in conformance to the law and that God's grace was only promised to the doers of the law. In other words, their religion was external.

- The latter was the group to which Nicodemus belonged. He was a strict Pharisee.
- Notice he was of the best religious sect, and yet Jesus said. "Ye must be born again." (John 3:1-7)
- **II. NICODEMUS WAS A RULER OF THE JEWS, YET HE NEEDED TO BE BORN AGAIN.**
 - Nicodemus was not only a ruler, but he was also an extremely wealthy man and is reputed to have been so rich that he could have supported all of the inhabitants of Jerusalem for ten years.
 - In spite of this fact, Jesus said, "Ye must be born again."
- **III. NICODEMUS WAS A "HEAD BELIEVER."**
 - *"The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." (John 3:2)*
 - Nicodemus believed in Jesus.
 - He believed all the right things intellectually.
 - His head was in the right place, but there is no mention of his heart.
 - He had intellectual assent without the assent of a heart yielded in faith.
 - Therefore, Jesus said, "Ye must be born again."
- **IV. HE WAS A TEACHER.**
 - *"Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" (John 3:10)*
 - The word "master" here means "teacher."
 - He was a Bible teacher.
 - He knew the Scripture.
 - He was nationally famous and regarded as a leading light in the cultural and religious life of his day.
 - Yet Jesus said, "Ye must be born again."
- **V. HE TRIED TO BE A SECRET FOLLOWER YET JESUS SAID YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN."**
 - You will notice in John 3:2 that he came to Jesus by night.
 - Hence, we take it for granted that he had no desire at all to become a disciple of Christ openly, for baptism and circumcision, which were the initiating ordinances of the Jews, were never administered in the nighttime.
 - If any person were baptized at night it was not accepted.
 - So we readily understand that Nicodemus had no interest in conversion openly.
- **VI. HE EVEN SPOKE A GOOD WORD FOR CHRIST AND STILL JESUS SAID "YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN."**

- ***"Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth? They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." (John 7:50-52)***
- Jesus was being tried by the Sanhedrin.
- Nicodemus defended Him, and as far as Nicodemus was concerned, saved His life, but this did not suffice.
- He still had to be born again!
- **VII. NICODEMUS PREPARED THE LORD'S BODY FOR BURIAL**
 - ***"And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury." (John 19:39, 40)***
 - Though he did that for Jesus, the new birth was still necessary.
 - **1) He brought a mixture of 100 pounds of myrrh and aloes.**
 - One hundred pounds of aloes was reportedly enough to embalm 200 people.
 - The amount of embalming material that was used also determined the importance the embalmer placed on the person who had died.
 - For example, Gamaliel was embalmed with 80 pounds, which is enough to embalm 160 people.
 - He was a man of the law and a great man of Israel.
 - So Nicodemus was saying that he had great respect for Christ, and yet he needed to be born again.
 - **2) Nicodemus wound the body of Christ in linen clothes after the manner of the Jews.**
 - These were long strips of linen a few inches in breadth which were used to wrap the body and legs of the dead, especially those who were embalmed, that the embalming materials might be kept in contact with the flesh.
 - In other words, Nicodemus had great respect for Christ and gave Him protection,

admiration, even head knowledge. Yet he needed to be born again.

➤ **CONCLUSION:**

- If a man with all these religious, moral, and secular qualifications could not go to heaven without being born again, certainly none of us can go to Heaven without the new birth!
- Not a man walking on the face of this earth has the qualifications that Nicodemus had, so everyone must be born again.