

Jesus and Nicodemus

C. Jesus and Nicodemus – John 2:23-3:21

1. John 2:23 – Jesus' sign miracles verified the message of His Messiah ship, resulting in many believing in Him for salvation.
 - a. John 2:23a – John's Gospel clearly states that simple faith in Jesus Christ is sufficient for salvation.
 - b. John 2:23b – In Jewish culture, *name* referred to a person's internal essence, to who he was and his significance.

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- c. John 2:23c – Believing in the name of Jesus Christ is accepting the biblical testimony that He is the Son of God who paid the penalty for sin on the cross and that God the Father verified that payment as satisfactory by raising Him from the dead.

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2. John 2:24 – At this time, Christ did not *entrust* (commit) His ministry to these believers, His disciples.
 - a. The word *entrust* can mean to assign a responsibility or put into someone's care.

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- b. This verse does not infer that Jesus doubted the faith of those who had believed but that He knew the hearts and thoughts of all people. (Compare Peter in John 1:42 and Nathanael in John 1:47) These men weren't yet spiritually mature enough to lead His ministry.

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3. John 2:25 - Jesus allowed His signs to testify for Him. His own witness, the witness of the Father, and the sign witnesses were sufficient to proclaim His ministry and Messiah ship. John 8:18-19

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4. John 3:1 – Nicodemus, a Pharisee who served on the Sanhedrin, the ruling body of Israel, was an important man who trusted his privileged birth as an Israelite to make him acceptable to God. He had been taught all his life that all genetic Jews went to heaven.

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5. John 3:2 – Jesus' message and sign miracles had impressed Nicodemus.
6. John 3:3 – Immediately, Jesus addressed the real issue behind Nicodemus' questions concerning righteousness and the Kingdom of God.
- 7. A SHORT DOCTRINE ON REGENERATION**
 - a. Regeneration refers to the ministry of God the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation. Titus 3:5

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- b. In regeneration, a person is spiritually born again by God's power. 1 Peter 1:3
- c. Regeneration denotes God's salvation work in man totally apart from man's merit or work. John 1:13

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- d. Just as a human being is born once physically and cannot become unborn, so regeneration happens only once in each believer's life and cannot be undone or canceled. Regeneration insures he is permanently saved. 1 Peter 1:23
- e. At the moment of believing in Christ, the regenerate person passes from spiritual death into spiritual life. John 5:24

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- 1) In the Garden of Eden, God announced to Adam that the penalty for disobedience was spiritual death.
Genesis 2:17
- 2) The moment Adam ate the forbidden fruit; he was separated from God in spiritual death. Genesis 3:6
- 3) Now, every human being is excluded from the presence of holy God at birth. Exodus 19:8-13

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- 4) God took the initiative in giving man a way back to Him, Jesus Christ.
- 5) Regeneration is God's complete work and not a cooperative act with us.

Salvation Ministries of the Holy Spirit

Convicting

John 16:7-11

Regenerating

Titus 3:5

Pneumatology

Regenerating of the Holy Spirit

Regeneration is the term for the spiritual birth that occurs at the moment a person believes in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Pneumatology

Regenerating of the Holy Spirit



God announced the penalty for disobedience – *Genesis 2:17*.



Adam was separated from God the moment he ate the fruit – *Genesis 3:6*.



Pneumatology

Regenerating of the Holy Spirit



Man is now excluded from
the presence of God.



*Exodus 19:8-13;
20:18-19*

Pneumatology

Regenerating of the Holy Spirit

God the Holy Spirit regenerates a person at the moment of believing the Gospel message – *John 1:13; 3:5; 1 Peter 1:23.*

Regeneration is a complete act of God and not a cooperative effort between God and man.

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8. John 3:4a – Nicodemus' question showed he did not understand Jesus.
 - a. John 3:4b – Jesus used a concept familiar to Nicodemus because the Pharisees taught six ways to be born again.
 - 1) When a Gentile converted to Judaism, he was considered born again.
 - 2) When a king was crowned, he was declared born again.

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- 3) When a male child of 12 or 13 had his *BARMITZPHA* and became a son of the commandment and responsible to obey the Law, he was considered born again.
- 4) When a man married, he was considered born again.
- 5) When a man was ordained a rabbi after long years of academic training, he was said to be born again.

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6) When a person became a *Roshesheva* (the head of the Jewish academy), he was considered born again. Jesus called Nicodemus the *teacher of Israel* so he may have held this esteemed position.

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- b. John 3:4c – In Nicodemus' mind, he had no need to be born again because he had already been born again in every possible way according to his culture.

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9. John 3:5a – To help Nicodemus understand, Jesus moved from the known to the unknown.
10. John 3:5b – Using the Old Testament, Nicodemus' area of expertise, Jesus explained the correct way to be born again.

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- a. Ezekiel taught that the rebirth of national Israel into the Kingdom required more than simply being born into the genetic line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; therefore, Nicodemus should have understood. Ezekiel 36:25-27
- b. Jesus took the known concept of being born again (regenerated) and applied it to Nicodemus' need to believe in Messiah for salvation. Titus 3:5

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11. John 3:6 – Nicodemus assumed that being a descendant of Abraham (flesh) automatically ensured his entrance into the Kingdom, but Jesus explained his need for a spiritual birth.

- a. Nicodemus trusted in the wrong birth(physical) and the wrong family (Abraham's).
- b. Nicodemus trusted in his natural (physical) birth, not in a spiritual new birth.

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12. John 3:7 – Jesus saw Nicodemus' amazement and probable rejection of His words because they did not fit Nicodemus' reason or experience.

13. John 3:8a – Jesus changed His analogy and used the wind, which probably was blowing at that moment, to illustrate the invisible movement of the Spirit.

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- a. Even though no one has ever seen the wind, everyone sees its effects; therefore, no one denies its existence or great power.
- b. Nicodemus, a teacher of Israel, should have understood Jesus' comparison of the wind to the Holy Spirit because Ezekiel 37:1-14 taught that the wind (the Holy Spirit) would blow life into Israel's dead bones.

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14. John 3:8b – Just as man does not fully understand the wind, so he is unable to fully understand the Holy Spirit's work in regeneration. Eternity won't be sufficient to understand!

15. John 3:9 – Nicodemus foolishly questioned the possibility of spiritual regeneration.

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16. John 3:10 – Jesus' exasperated response showed that Nicodemus should have already grasped this Truth from his extensive study of the Old Testament.

- a. Ezekiel 37:4-10 used wind to symbolize the Spirit of God working to give new birth to the dead nation Israel.
- b. Prior to the establishment of the Kingdom, the nation Israel must be born again.

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17. John 3:11-12 – Jesus rebuked Nicodemus for not believing His message.

18. John 3:13 – A claim to deity: God the Son, Jesus Christ, who came down from Heaven, is the only One who has ever left Heaven to be born a man. John 8:23

19. John 3:14a – The Lord referred to the events of Numbers 21:5-9.

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- a. John 3:14b – In John’s writings, to *lift up* (Greek: *HUPSOO*) refers to the cross. John 8:28, 12:32, 34
- b. When Israel wandered in the wilderness, those bitten by snakes only needed to look at the bronze serpent on the pole to be delivered from death. Numbers 21:8

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20. John 3:15 – To believe God's Word and then look at the serpent on the pole for deliverance is equivalent to simply trusting in Jesus Christ for salvation. Acts 16:31

21. John 3:16 – Usually, when Jesus spoke of the Father, He used the term *Father*, not *God*; therefore, we deduce that John 3:16-21 is John's commentary on the Lord's statements and not a direct quote.

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- a. John 3:16a – *For God so loved the world...*
The adverb translated *for* (Greek: *HOUTOS*) refers to the degree, extent, or manner of doing something; therefore, a more accurate translation is *in this way*, *God so loved the world...*
- b. John 3:16b – God *gave* (Greek: *DIDOMI*) speaks of God's grace in providing salvation in Christ.

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- c. John 3:16c – *Only-begotten* (Greek: *MONOGENES*) means uniquely born. John used this term in verses 16 and 18 to describe the distinctiveness of Jesus. He was both man and God and was born sinless because He was born of a virgin.
- d. John 3:16d – The result of God's giving His *one and only* Son is that anyone who wants to believe in Christ can believe in Him and receive life eternal.

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22. John 3:17 – God's purpose in sending Jesus into the world was to save all mankind.

23. John 3:18 – The world is under condemnation as a result of Adam's sin.
Romans 5:12

24. John 3:19 – People deserve judgment because the Light came, and they rejected Him.

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- a. Light usually brings either rejoicing or recoiling. e.g. moth or cockroach
- b. Knowledge of Jesus Christ, the Light of the world, forces people to make a decision, either to believe in Him or reject Him.

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25. John 3:20 – Those who reject Jesus love darkness rather than the Light and remain under condemnation.

26. John 3:21 – God uses the believer who lives by the truth to produce spiritual fruit.

27. Summary

- a. In cleansing the temple, Jesus was confident because He knew God the Father's word. We, too, must know God's Word so we can boldly declare and obey it.

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- b. Follow Jesus' example of giving the Gospel by first prayerfully preparing to give it and then giving it patiently in as many ways as necessary to make it understood.

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28.A QUICK OVERVIEW OF GOD'S LOVE

- a. God's love initiates or takes action. In John 3:16, God took the initiative in seeking fallen man. Genesis 3:8
- b. God's love is active, not passive. God chooses to pursue mankind because He wants all to be saved. 2 Corinthians 5:18-21

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- c. God's love is humble. Though equal to God the Father, Christ was submissive to the Father's will even to the point of death on the cross. Philippians 2:2-8
- d. God's love is intense. He was determined to provide salvation to all. Romans 1:16
- e. God's love is loyal. *Chesed*, the Old Testament (Hebrew) word for love, means steadfast, loyal loving-kindness.

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- f. God's love is consecrated or based on His holy standard. Christ gave us His love for God's glory.
- g. God's love is dedicated. Despite the anguish, rejection, and hostility He constantly faced, Jesus focused His life and death on reconciling the world to God. Hebrews 12:2-3

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h. God's love is devoted. Christ gave His life for us. Romans 5:8. To give time, attention, and self entirely to an activity or person is true love. John 15:13