

SNAPSHOT NUMBER TWO
The Conversation with Nicodemus
John 3:1-21

Key Verse 3:7 "Do not begin to wonder that I said to you you must be born again."

TEXT

- v. 1 But there was a man of the Pharisees Nicodemus his name, an official of the Jews.
- v. 2 This one came to him at night and said to him, "Rabbi, we are knowing that from God you have come a teacher. For no one is able to do these signs which you are doing except God be with him."
- v. 3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I am saying to you except a man be born again, he is not able to see the kingdom of God."
- v. 4 Nicodemus is saying to him, "How is a man able to be born being an old man? He is not able a second time to enter the womb of his mother and be born, is he?"
- v. 5 "Most assuredly I am saying to you, except a man be born of water and spirit he is not able to enter into the kingdom of God.
- v. 6 That which has been born of the flesh is flesh and that which has been of the spirit is spirit.
- v. 7 Do not begin to wonder that I said to you you must be born again.
- v. 8 The wind is blowing where it is desiring to blow and you are hearing the sound of it. But you are not knowing from where it is coming and where it is going. So is everyone who has been born of the spirit."
- v. 9 Nicodemus answered and said to him, "How are these things able to come to pass?"
- v.10 Jesus answered and said to him, "You are the teacher of Israel and these things you are not knowing?
- v.11 Most assuredly I am saying to you that which we are knowing we are speaking and that which we have seen, we are bearing witness; and our witness you are not receiving.
- v.12 If I told you earthly things and you are not believing, how will you believe if I tell you of heavenly things.
- v.13 And no one has ascended into heaven except he who came down from heaven, the Son of Man.
- v.14 And just as Moses lifted the snake in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up.
- v.15 In order that everyone who is believing in him may be having life eternal.
- v.16 For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son in order that everyone who is believing in him may be having life eternal.
- v.16 For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son in order that everyone who is believing in him may not perish but may be having life eternal.
- v.17 For God did not send his son into the world in order that he might be judging the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Dear Lord,

So far today, God, I've done all right. I haven't gossiped, haven't lost my temper, haven't been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish, or over-indulgent. I'm really glad about that.

BUT, in a few minutes, God, I'm going to get out of bed and from then on I'm probably going to need a lot of help.

AMEN

Cornelius
Acts 10: 33
"I sent for you right
away, and you have
been good enough to
come. All of us are here
in the presence of the
Lord God, so that we can
hear what he has
to say."



Being a Christian is like being a pumpkin. God lifts you up, takes you in, and washes all the dirt off of you. He opens you up, touches you deep inside and scoops out all the yucky stuff-- including the seeds of doubt, hate, greed, etc. Then He carves you a new smiling face and puts His light inside you to shine for all the world to see. This was passed on to me from another pumpkin. Now, it is your turn to pass it to a pumpkin. I liked this enough to send it to all the pumpkins in my patch. Happy Fall

Excited: Last week — Job
Jane + I hit double Figures
Keep The Fire!

Intro.

- ① How many Christians are less than a year old here this morning?
- ② How many have reached Puberty?
- ③ How many have given Birth?
- ④ How many think they are impotent or in menopause?

The Obstetrics + paediatrics wards at the ^{FAITH Hide-away} Bethel hospital are in need of patients !!

We were born to reproduce.

Nothing is more sad than a sterile environment !!

- v.18 He who is believing in him is not being judged. He who is not believing has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.
- v.19 Now this is the judgment that the light has come into the world and men loved rather the darkness than the light for their works were evil.
- v.20 For everyone who is practicing evil is hating the light and is not coming to the light in order that his works should not be exposed.
- v.21 But he who is doing the truth is coming to the light in order that his works might be manifested to have been accomplished by God.

EXPOSITION

① "They have no wine"
 ② "whatever she says to you do it."
 ③ "you have saved the best till now."

In this second snapshot of the Saviour we come to one of the most crucial passages in the whole of the Bible. Actually contained in this one small passage is the whole Bible message in miniature form. If we only had this passage, we would have an adequate understanding of eternal life.

In the passage, we are going to be considering the story of a man who found that although he had everything like wealth, fame, power, friends, religion, in other words everything that a man could ever want, there was still something missing in his life. (No wine!)

Back in chapter 2:23-25 we read, "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast day many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them because he knew all men and needed not that any should testify of man for he knew what was in man."

Jesus did know the hearts of men and here was a man who wasn't coming just for the sensational or spectacular but because he had a real need. He had a real question about Jesus Christ.

I have divided the passage into five sections. First of all, we see the encounter in verses 1-7. Secondly, the example in verse 8. The exposure in verses 9-15. The evidence in verses 16-18, and the end in verses 19-21.

Set the Stage at John's House.

Verse One: "But there was a man of the Pharisees Nicodemus his name, an official of the Jews."

When we give attention to this first verse, there are a couple of terms that need to be defined. First of all, this man was a member of the Pharisees. These men were very religious. They felt they had to observe every part of the law and by so doing they would be acceptable in the sight of God. You never find more than 6,000 in this brotherhood at any one time, and they took a vow before three witnesses that they would spend all of their lives keeping every detail of the law.

Secondly we will notice in this first verse that Nicodemus was an official of the Jews. He was not only very religious, but he was also a member of the Jewish sanhedrin. This was like a supreme court and there was 70 men in this group. This was Cardinal Nick or Bishop Demas if you please. He was probably very well known in the city.

We can conclude from this first verse several things. First of all, he is a man who learned that in strict religious observance you do not

I.
The Encounter
1-7

find all the answers to the complexities of life. Secondly I believe we find a man who found that wealth, fame, popularity, and authority did not likewise contain this secret to successful living. And third, I believe we have found a man who is hungering for reality and additional health in spiritual matters seen in the fact that he is coming to Jesus.

Verse Two: "This one came to him at night and said to him, "Rabbi, we are knowing that from God you have come a teacher. For no one is able to do these signs which you are doing except God be with him."

As Nicodemus begins the encounter with the following words: "Rabbi (or teacher), we are knowing that from God you have come a teacher." Nicodemus at this point is only willing to acknowledge the fact that Jesus is a teacher, not a prophet or Messiah or Son of God.

If Jesus Christ is not who he said he was, then he ceases to be a good teacher.

The reason Nicodemus addresses Jesus in this way is given in the last statement in verse 2: "For no one is able to do these signs which you are doing except God be with him."

In essence what Nicodemus is saying is that we have been watching the things that you have been doing and the only way we can explain it is that it is coming from God. The power involved in changing water into wine has to come from God himself.

In summary of verse 2, Nicodemus is saying we know that you have come from God to teach us something and now it is our desire to know what it is that you are endeavoring to teach us. What message from God do you have for us.

Verse Three: "Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I am saying to you except a man be born again, he is not able to see the Kingdom of God."
Here is the message.

In response to the statement of Nicodemus in verse two, Jesus presents a new astounding truth that immediately gets the attention of Nicodemus. The truth is a man must be born again or he is not able to see the kingdom of God.

All of these miracles and signs which can be seen point to the primary importance of an inward miracle of the new birth that all must experience before having eternal life. Why spend your time changing water into wine at a wedding? Why feed the multitudes with a little kids lunch? Why resurrect a dead Lazarus from the grave? All of these are only pictures of what happened when a person experiences the new birth. The new birth is naturally the greatest miracle of them all.

Jesus in essence is saying "Nicodemus, you can have all of the wealth, the fame, the religion, the friends, and everything else. But none of that counts unless a man is born again. For he is not able to see the kingdom of God.

Verse Four: "Nicodemus is saying to him, "How is a man able to be born being an old man? He is not able a second time to enter the womb of his mother and be born, is he?"

It is quite obvious at this point that Nicodemus does not have spiritual things in mind. He is thinking strictly from a physical or from a human point of view. Because he is doing this, in our minds eye we can see the reaction on the face of Nicodemus. Here he is quite an old man who had all the honors of life and now somebody comes along and says that he has to start all over again. He has to be born again. The whole philosophy of the life of Nicodemus is spelled out in the fact that if he were good enough, if he were moral enough, if he kept the law, if he lived by legalistic standards. He could then by that kind of practice gain acceptance into the presence of God. And now Jesus comes along and says that the only way to gain acceptance in the presence of God is by experiencing a new birth. old man set in his ways.

- In this fourth verse, Nicodemus raises two questions, and they both point to the physical. I'm sure that Nicodemus felt that when it came to the matters of religion he was an authority and that he had all the answers. And yet here we have the paradox of a religious man seeking after God.
- The first question is "how is a man able to be born being an old man?" Thinking strickly from a human or physical point of view, he is wondering where you find the fountain of youth. Where you reverse the wheels of time so that once again you become as a little child. *No Re-wind buttons on the V.C.R. of life*
- His second question leads up on this when he says "he is not able a second time to enter the womb of his mother and be born, is he?" This is a very legitimate question because of some of the miracles that had already transpired and the things that had taken place to this point that Nicodemus had heard about in Jesus' ministry. If Jesus could change water into wine, he could certainly likewise take an old man and make him into a little child once again.
- Verse Five: "Most assuredly I am saying to you, except a man be born of water and spirit he is not able to enter into the kingdom of God."

We need to play this particular verse against verse 3. Except a man be born again in verse 3 and here except a man be born of water and spirit in verse 5. In verse 3 he is not able to see the kingdom of God and here in verse 5 he is not able to enter the kingdom of God.

There are many and varied interpretations of what it means to be born of water and spirit.

- I believe that by the terms water and spirit, there are two possibilities.
- First, Jesus is making reference to the two births that every individual must experience before entering into the kingdom of God. First of all, there is a physical birth by water, which all of us experience in being born into this life. This is the physical birth that Nicodemus is talking about back in verse 4. And then secondly, there is a spiritual birth which takes place when I by faith allow Jesus Christ to come into my life and be my Saviour.

There is also a second possibility. The instruments of the new birth are the water of the word of God applied by the spirit of God to our lives in order for the new birth to take place.

Ephesians 5:25,26 says, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."

Psalm 119:9, "Wherewith all shall a young man cleanse his way by taking heed thereto according to thy word." The truth that is taught here is that the Holy Spirit, that great convictor and giver of life takes the word of God and applies it to our hearts.

II Peter 1:4, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature."

I Peter 1:23 "Being born again not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible by the word of God which lives and abides forever. "

Verse Six: "That which has been born of the flesh is flesh and that which has been of the spirit is spirit."

Nicodemus, there are two realms. There is the material and the spiritual. That which has been born of the flesh is flesh, or that which has been born of water. And that which has been born of the spirit is spirit.

There is a dividing line here. You are concerned about the physical and the fleshly. I am concerned about that which spiritual and supernatural.

The flesh is the flesh and you will never change it.

John 1:12. " But as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God even to them that believe on his name, which were born not of blood nor the will of the flesh nor the will of man, but of God." Your physical birth was brought about by the will of your parents and your spiritual birth is brought about by God himself. Before you experience the new birth, you become pregnant with the very life of God. It is the placing of the seed, the new divine nature, within the heart of the individual. It is Christ coming into the life that causes one to experience the new birth. It is not merely the reading about Christ or knowing more of Christ but the having of Christ formed within us that really will save our souls.

✱✱ Not all the outward forms on earth nor rights that God hath given. Nor will of man nor blood nor birth can raise a soul to heaven. It is the sovereign will of God alone that creates us heirs of grace. Born in the image of his son a new peculiar race.

Verse Seven: "Do not begin to wonder that I said to you you must be born again."

As Jesus concludes this first part of the encounter with Nicodemus, he gives to us one of those absolute necessities of life. It is a truth that cannot be put aside. It is a divine imperative. "You must be born again." There is nothing in the world that can take the place of experiencing the new birth, and only those who have experienced the new birth can be certain of eternal life.

I John 5:11,12 "And this is the record that God has given to us eternal life. This life is in his son. He that hath the son hath life and he that hath not the son of God hath not life."

II Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creation. Old things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new."

What does it mean to be born again? First of all, I believe it means a new work has been performed in our lives. It is not our work, but his work. It is much like our physical birth. We had actually very little to do about it, but to make the right move and our mother and the physician brought us into the world. If we make the right move toward God in faith, trusting and believing in the promises which he has made recognizing our need of his son it is God who performs the new birth. Secondly, I believe it involves a new capacity. For having experienced the new birth, I have the new divine nature or new capacity to live life that is pleasing to the Lord as I am willing to be submissive and dependent upon his spirit to live out that life in me. And third, I believe it involves a new destiny. Once I have the son I have life and not to have the son I do not have life. It is the destiny of spending eternity in the presence of God.

Ephesians 2:8,9 "For by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves. It is a gift of God not of work, lest any man should boast."

Verse Eight: "The wind is blowing where it is desiring to blow and you are hearing the sound of it. But you are not knowing from where it is coming and where it is going. So is everyone who has been born of the Spirit."

Now that we have had the opening of the encounter between these two in their dialogue the Lord Jesus is going to give an example of what it means to be born again. The instrument that God the Father uses in the giving of this life.

In this verse, the Lord Jesus likens the spirit to the blowing of the wind. This is the same thought that we get in Acts 2 beginning with verse 1 "And when the day of Pentecost was now come they were all together in one place and suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind. And it filled all the house where they were sitting. This is the coming of the promised spirit upon his followers as he was preparing to leave them, yet told them that the spirit of truth was going to come and would be available for power to enable them to live the life that would be productive for the Lord Jesus.

Nicodemus, it is not what you do. It is what the Spirit of God does in your life that makes the difference. You cannot see the wind, but you can feel the power of it. You can see the results of the wind but you cannot see the wind itself. You cannot see the Holy Spirit, but you can see his power at work in changing lives.

Nicodemus, if you are going to know anything of this new birth, it is going to be the Spirit of God not anything you can do in the flesh to perform it.

It is very suggestive that the Lord would use the illustration of the wind as to the ministry of the Spirit of God in its unpredictable movements. It behoves us to be reminded of that verse in Isaiah 55:6 which says: "But seek ye the Lord while he may be found. Call ye upon him while it is near." It is the spirit of God that does the work of regeneration or giving of life. And if the spirit of God is speaking to you you would do well to respond and not harden your hearts. The writer to the book of Hebrews repeats this command three different times in chapter 3 and 4 of his writing. In verse 8 of chapter 3 "Do not harden your hearts as when they provoked me." Chapter 3:15 "Today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as when they provoked me."

II
The example
v. 8

And chapter 4:7 "Today if you hear his voice do not harden your hearts."

The obvious question at this point is how does the Spirit act like a wind on the heart of a person who does not Christ? In John 16:7-11 we learn that it is the function of the Holy Spirit to convict us or convince us of sin of righteousness and of judgment. First of all of sin by showing us that we should have been the ones that should have been on the cross not Christ.

O God in Heaven the guilt is mine. I crucified your son divine. My sins were put on you. I put you there, I'm responsible for the cross.

And then the function of the Spirit is to not only convince us of sin but of righteousness. "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." Or with Peter thou art the Christ, the son of the Living God. Or the centurian truly this was the son of God. And thirdly of judgment. Standing at the cross convinces me of judgment. Hebrews 10:31, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." It is our sin, his righteousness and the certainty of judgment that precipitates the decision to allow Jesus Christ to become our Saviour. It is sort of like the illustration of someone who is caught speeding. First of all, the officer says you are speeding. That is the sin. The righteousness is the 55 mile an hour sign. The judgment is the ticket. Sin equals what I have been doing. Righteousness equals what I should have done and judgment equals the consequences.

Hob 2:3
How shall we escape

- ① Sin
- ② Right.
- ③ Judgment

III
Exposure
9-15

Verse Nine: "Nicodemus answered and said to him, "How are these things able to come to pass?"

In verses 9-15 we are going to see the Lord Jesus expose the heart of Nicodemus. When the spirit of God begins his convicting work there is generally one of three responses to this function of the Holy Spirit. First of all a person gets very cocky. After all, I'm the master of my fate, I can handle it. There is nothing that life has done to me to this point that I've not been able to handle so I'm sure when it comes to this matter of being made right with God if I just do the best I can I know that when I get there certainly a loving God is not going to reject me. So one becomes terribly independent or cocky in his attitude about spiritual things. The second possibility is that of confusion. There are doubts because you are not real sure about your position as to whether or not you have ever really experienced the new birth and then the third response is the proper response and that is to be convinced. To be convinced of your need and to independence express your desire for Christ to become your Saviour.

conviction + Confession

When the Spirit of God is doing this convicting work in our lives, we sometimes feel like David when he said in Psalm 139:7 "Whither shall I go from thy spirit or whither shall I flee from thy presence." There is that desire to run away from the reality of the situation that is before us. Or to try to hide or try to declare our independence from God himself.

In this ninth verse, we now come to the next question of Nicodemus back in verse 4 he was raising the questions "how is a man able to be born being an old man" and "he not able a second time to enter the womb of his mother and be born is he?" And now he is raising the question "how are these things able to come to pass?"

②

③

This all looks so confusing, so impossible. I can't believe it. How are these things able to come to pass. Nicodemus is honest here in the sense that he is fully aware that he is unable to deny the results of this, he just wants to understand the process.

- Verse Ten: "Jesus answered and said to him, 'You are the teacher of Israel and these things you are not knowing?'"
- You are a leader in religious activity and you don't know the basics?
- Verse Eleven: "Most assuredly I am saying to you that which we are knowing we are speaking and that which we have seen, we are bearing witness; and our witness you are not receiving."

Here Jesus identifies himself with his followers when he says that which we are knowing, we are speaking. This is played in contrast to what Nicodemus says back in verse 2, "Rabbi, we are knowing that from God you have come a teacher." Now Jesus said the things that we are saying to you are things which we are knowing, and that which we have seen, we are bearing witness.

I John 1:3 "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you that you also may have fellowship with us and truly our fellowship is with the father and with his son, Jesus Christ."

Now the Lord Jesus does the work of exposing the heart of Nicodemus and those who are representing the present opposition to the ministry of Christ. In the statement: our witness you are not receiving.

**

God looks on the heart

The things that I am talking about are a reality and you are not receiving them. I am sure that Nicodemus if he could be talked to at this particular point would say honestly that he felt a whole lot like King Agrippa in the book of Acts after Paul had presented the claims of Christ to him he said: almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." The Spirit of God is doing his convicting work upon the heart of Nicodemus. It is naturally very difficult for a person in his position and with his stature to be humbled to the point of recognizing that he has a need that he cannot take care of himself.

- Verse Twelve: "If I told you earthly things and you are not believing, how will you believe if I tell you of heavenly things."

Here Jesus asks his own question "How"? If I tell you of the realities of things which you can see and you won't believe, how will you believe if I tell you of heavenly things which you cannot see? One is reminded of the experience of Thomas with the Lord Jesus when finally the Lord Jesus revealed himself to Thomas then saith he to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger and see my hands and reach hither thy hand and put it into my side and be not faithless but believing." Thomas answered and said unto him, "My Lord and my God." Jesus saith unto him "because thou hast seen me, thou has believed. Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed."

Verse Thirteen: "And no one has ascended into heaven except he who came down from heaven, the Son of Man."

No one has gone up to heaven and been back down to tell you about it. Only Jesus Christ. I'm talking about things that I have experienced.

Verse Fourteen: "And just as Moses lifted the snake in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up."

Here the Lord Jesus makes reference to an Old Testament story from Numbers chapter 21 beginning with verse 6: "And Jehovah sent firey serpents among the people and they bit the people and much people of Israel died. And the people came to Moses and said we have sinned because we have spoken against Jehovah and against the friend of Jehovah that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. Jehovah said unto Moses make thee a firey serpent and set it upon a standard and it shall come to pass that everyone who is bitten when he seeth it shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass and set it upon the standard and it came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked unto the serpent of brass, he lived.

In our minds eye we can see Moses pointing to the serpent on the pole and saying "Look and Live." And yet how many refused to do something and ridiculous as a result sealed their own faith. The picture here is a picture of Jesus Christ on another pole---the cross of Calvary. And he took the sting of God's wrath for my sin. And when I looked at Jesus Christ in simple faith, I too experience life eternal.

Verse Fifteen: "In order that everyone who is believing in him may be having life eternal."

The whole purpose in Jesus Christ being lifted up upon a cross is to redeem fallen man. It is to put man into position where he can have life eternal. The single basis for salvation is believing in him.

Verse Sixteen: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son in order that everyone who is believing in him may not perish but may be having life eternal."

① Encounter, ② Example, ③ Exposure

In verses 16-18 we now have the evidence which needs to be given in order that an intelligent decision might be reached. Why did God send forth his son made of a woman made unto the Law to redeem them that were under the Law? Because God so loved the world. God so loved us that he was willing to give his son as a sacrifice for our sin.

God has revealed his heart of love for man in three beautiful pictures. First, in the original creation. I am lonely, I am going to make me a man. He made us to have communion and fellowship with us. Secondly, he revealed it by his willing death upon the cross. "Greater love hath no man than this that he lay down his life for his friend." Romans 5:8 "But God commended his love toward us and though while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." And the greatest manifestation of his love is yet to be seen in the fact that he is not going to remain separated from us much longer, but he is going to be coming again to take us to be with himself.

IV
The Evidence
v. 16-18

I John 4:10, "Here in is love. Not that we love God, but that he loved us and sent his son to be the satisfaction for our sins."

He suffered in our stead, he saved his people thus. The curse that fell upon his head was due by right to us. The storm that bowed his blessed head is hushed forever now, and rest divine is mine instead while glory crowns his brow.

The reason God gave his son is expressed in the purpose of the next phrase. "In order that everyone who is believing in him negatively may not perish, but positively may be having life eternal. The words perish and life carry us back to the previous illustration. Those who refuse to look to the serpent on the pole perished and those who looked experienced life. And so it is mankind is divided by those who refuse to look to Jesus Christ for eternal life and those who will look and experience life eternal.

Verse Seventeen: "For God did not send his son into the world in order that he might be judging the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him." Lu. 19:10

It was not God's purpose to send his son into the world to be judging the world. That is going to happen in yet a future time when he comes in justice or judgment. The reason he is coming in his first coming, the reason he is here in flesh and blood is in order that he might purchase man by his own sacrificial death upon the cross in order that the world might be saved through him. By man back to a relationship.

II Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

The salvation of the world is made available through him that is Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Because God saw that the wickedness of the world was great in the time of Noah, he judged the world by means of the flood. For Noah and his sons and their wives, the ark became the means of rescue from the judgment of God. So it is today that Jesus Christ becomes the means of rescue from impending judgment.

John 5:24 "Verily, verily I say unto you he that hears my word and believes on him that sent me has everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation but is passed from death unto life."

Verse Eighteen: "He who is believing in him is not being judged. He who is not believing has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

First of all we read in this eighteenth verse "he who is believing in him is not being judged." Judgment for the child of God is already passed, because Jesus Christ has born the penalty and judgment for our sin upon a cross of Calvary. On him almighty vengeance fell that would have sunk a world to hell. He bore it for a chosen race and thus becomes our hiding place. It was Isaiah the prophet in Isaiah 53 that predicted what was going to happen when he said, "Surely he Christ hath born our griefs and carried our sorrows. Yet we did esteem him stricken smitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions he was bruised for our iniquities and the chastisement of our peace was upon him and with

his stripes we are healed.

II Corinthians 5:21, "He made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

The 18th verse goes on to say he who is not believing has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

John 3:36 says "He that believes on the Son has eternal life but he that ~~obeys~~ ^{Believes} not the Son shall not see ~~light~~ ^{life} but the wrath of God abides on him." There is only one sin that can ultimately condemn a soul for eternity and that sin is recorded here in this 18th verse. He who is not believing has been judged already. It is the sin of unbelief. There is a little track that has been published and the track says on the cover when you look at it, "What must I do to be lost." And when you open it it is completely blank and the message there is quite obvious that you don't have to do anything. Actually only those who do take steps of receiving Jesus Christ are going to experience eternal life. To experience eternal judgment and separation from God a person needs to do nothing. Jesus likens life to the broad road and the narrow road. All one needs to do is just allow it to go on automatic pilot down the broad road to destruction. Proverbs 14:12 "There is way which seems right unto a man but the end there of are the ways of death."

Verse Nineteen: "Now this is the judgment that the light has come into the world and men loved rather the darkness than the light for their works were evil."

We come now to the end of the encounter with Nicodemus and the only alternative that God has when we spurn the gift of his son is to exercise his justice. Judgment is the only response that can be given in the face of our rejection of his love. God doesn't want to judge, but if we leave him no alternative his justice requires that it be done. When one begins to read the Scripture we find that God has always judged sin. Genesis 6:5 "And God saw the wickedness of man was great upon the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." As a result, he sends the flood. In Genesis 19 because of the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah he sends fire and brimstone to completely the cities in the flame. In Numbers 21 he sent the firey serpents. On the cross of Calvary he judged sin once for all as Christ was made sin for us. And yet in the future there is going to be a time of judgment. II Thessalonians 1:8-9 says "Bringing judgment on those who do not wish to know God and who refuse to submit to his plan to same them through our Lord Jesus Christ. They will be punished in everlasting hell forever shut away from the face of the Lord never to see the glory of his power." The bulk, the major bulk, of the book of Revelation describes this coming judgment in Revelation 6-19. Hebrews 10:31 tells us it is a fearful thing to fall in the hands of the living God. What is the basis for this judgment as we look at verse 19? Light has come into the world and men loved rather the darkness than the light for their works were evil. Since Jesus Christ is the light of the world to be without him means to walk in darkness. When a person walks in the security of darkness he does not see things as they really are. The darkness makes him comfortable, everything is okay. He can't see what is just ahead. And as a result goes along living in a state of false security.

Blank Track!!

The End
v. 19-21

TOPIC	REF #	TEXT
Judgment	581-09	<p>Dry mouth. Moist palms. Pulse pounding like a marching-band bass drum. Eyes darting over your shoulder. Heart vaulting into your throat. You know the feeling. You know the moment. You know exactly what it's like to see the flashing lights of the highway patrol in your rearview mirror.</p> <p>Response #1? Prayer life spikes. "Oh, Lord." "God help me." "Jesus, have mercy on me a sinner." Policemen have stirred more prayers than a thousand pulpits.</p> <p>Our requests are unanimous, predictable, and selfish. "Let there be a wreck down the highway." "See the kid driving the red truck, God? Send the officer after him." But he doesn't. Your back window fills with red and white strobes, floodlights, and flashing headlights, and as you pull to the side of the road, response #2 kicks in. Upward prayers become backward thoughts. <i>What did I do? How fast was I going? Whose dog did I hit?</i></p> <p>The highway patrol's version of Arnold Schwarzenegger fills your side mirror. Don't dare open your door. The second you do, his hand will Marshal Dillon its way to his holster, and he'll tell you to "stay in the car, please." Your best option is to return to prayer. Only God can help you now.</p> <p>We dread such moments. Remember when the teacher took you outside the classroom? When your dad heard you climbing in the bedroom window past midnight? When my oldest daughter was small, I caught her in a misdemeanor. Anticipating my reaction, she told me, "My bottom tickles." We have a word for such moments. Judgment.</p> <p>Payback. The evidence is in. The truth is out. And the policeman is standing at your door. No one likes the thought of judgment.</p> <p>pp. 143-4</p>



Hurricane Reveals God's Message

Keywords: God, omnipotence of; God, power of; God, works of; Hearing God; Invitation; Listening; Omnipotence of God; Presence of God; Warnings; Word of God

Filters: Weekly Updates, Stories

References: Job 38:1 [\[link\]](#); Psalm 29:3-5 [\[link\]](#); Isaiah 30:30 [\[link\]](#); Hebrews 4:7 [\[link\]](#); Hebrews 12:25-29 [\[link\]](#)

Tone: Mixed/Neutral

Many signs and billboards in the path of Hurricane Charley were no match for the violent storm.

However, one billboard resisted the hurricane's 100-mile per hour winds. While the billboard still stands, the advertisement that was there when Hurricane Charley hit was peeled back to reveal an earlier message.

When the sun rose the next morning on Sand Lake Road in Orlando the words on the billboard clearly read: "We need to talk. God."

For a picture of the billboard—click [here](#).

Citation: Jared Smith, Lake Forest, Illinois

© 2004 PreachingToday.com & Christianity Today International

II Corinthians 4:4 "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto us."

Verse Twenty: "For everyone who is practicing evil is hating the light and is not coming to the light in order that his works should not be exposed."

In the process of coming to the light we find that many of these things are exposed and are terribly painful to own up to. You will notice in this 20th verse that the one who is practicing evil is hating the light. And not only is he hating it he is not coming to it. Because he realizes that his works would be exposed in the process. He would rather enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season than to suffer with the children of God. There are a lot of Christians like this too who would rather walk out of fellowship with the father and hide and be comfortable rather than deal with the impotent fruitless lives that need divine surgery.

David tells us in Psalm 139:23,24 "Search me O God and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts and see if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting."

Verse Twenty One: "But he who is doing the truth is coming to the light in order that his works might be manifested to have been accomplished by God."

A person who is walking truthfully is willing to come to the light so that his works could be manifested. He doesn't have anything to hide—nothing to be afraid of. He's walked morally and uprightly in every situation to his knowledge and so he's not afraid to come to the light in order that his works might be manifested to have been accomplished by God. Real peace comes into the heart when there is not anything to hide.

CONCLUSION:

John 12:48 "He that rejects me and receives not my words has one that judges him. The word that I have spoken the same shall judge him in the last day."

Nicodemus, you must be born again. It is the spirit of God who performs this new birth.

In answer to this encounter I believe that Nicodemus did experience the new birth because we read in John 7:50 "Nicodemus saith unto them he that came to Jesus by night doth our law judge any man before it hear him and know what he does and then in John 19:39 "There came also Nicodemus which at the first came to Jesus by night and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes about 100 pound weight then took they the body of Jesus and wound it in linen clothes with spices as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Everybody else had left even the disciples, but Nicodemus, the man who came first in the cloak of darkness, we find at the last at the cross in the light. willing to openly identify himself with Jesus Christ.

Revelation 22:17 "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Hebrews 2:3 "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation."

Deuteronomy 30:19 "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death blessing and cursing; therefore, choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."

- Believe your instruments no matter how you feel.
- It's not what you do but who you know that determines your destiny!



Baseball Pitcher Schilling Sustained by God

Keywords: Acknowledging God; Confessing Christ; Competition; Dependence on God; Exaltation of God; Glorifying God; Help from God; Help, divine; Praise; Prayer; Sports; Strength; Testimony; Winning and Losing

Filters: Famous People, Sports, Popular Culture, Free Illustrations, Weekly Updates, Stories

References: Psalm 66:16 ; Psalm 118:14 ; Isaiah 40:31 ; Jeremiah 9:23-24 ; 1 Corinthians 1:31 ; 1 Timothy 1:12 ; 2 Timothy 4:17 

Tone: Positive

In the first game of the best-of-seven, 2004 American League Championship Series between baseball's New York Yankees and Boston Red Sox, Boston's ace pitcher Curt Schilling was in pain. An ankle injury kept him from being able to plant his foot and throw the ball with his usual skill. Schilling was removed from the game after allowing six runs in just three innings. Teammates feared Schilling's injury would end his season and their hopes to get to the World Series.

But in the sixth game against the Yankees, Schilling surprisingly took the mound again. Facing elimination if they lost, the Red Sox watched Schilling throw an amazing seven innings in which he only gave up four hits and one run. Every time the TV camera focused on Schilling's ankle, viewers could see blood seep through his sock. Doctors had stitched his ankle tendon into place to allow him to pitch. The Red Sox won the game, and afterwards a FOX Sports reporter asked him about his performance.

Schilling answered, "Seven years ago I became a Christian, and tonight God did something amazing for me. I tried to be as tough as I could, and do it my way Game 1, and I think we all saw how that turned out. Tonight it was all God. I knew that I wasn't going to be able to do this alone. And I prayed as hard as I could. I didn't pray to get a win or to make great pitches. I just prayed for the strength to go out there tonight and compete, and he gave me that. I can't explain to you what a feeling it was to be out there and to feel what I felt."

Citation: Drew Zahn, Stratford, Iowa; sources: *FOX Sports* coverage of the 2004 ALCS (10-19-04); "Curt Schilling Postgame Quotes," www.Boston.Redsox.mlb.com (10-20-04)

Lessons For John 3:1-21

8 LESSONS

#1 Nicodemus is a man hungering for reality and a relationship.

#2 A man born once dies twice and a man born twice dies once and it's not a big deal.

#3 There are no Re-wind buttons on the V.C.R. of life.

#4 To be born again is a divine imperative.

#5 The Spirit of God convicts us of sin, righteousness & judgment.

#6 Jesus Christ was made sin for us when He died upon the cross.

#7 Believing in Him is to have eternal life.

#8 It's not what you do but who you know that determines your destiny.

CHUCK, I DON'T THINK YOU WILL UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M SAYING ABOUT God until you are willing to face yourself honestly and squarely. This is the first step." Tom reached to the corner table and picked up a small paperback book. I read the title: *Mere Christianity* by C. S. Lewis.

"I suggest you take this with you and read it while you are on vacation." Tom started to hand it to me, then paused. "Let me read you one chapter."

I leaned back, still on the defensive, my mind and emotions whirling.

There is one vice of which no man in the world is free; which every one in the world loathes when he sees it in someone else; and of which hardly any people, except Christians, ever imagine that they are guilty themselves. I have heard people admit that they are bad-tempered, or that they cannot keep their heads about girls or drink, or even that they are cowards. I do not think I have ever heard anyone who was not a Christian accuse

himself of this vice There is no fault which we are more unconscious of in ourselves. And the more we have it ourselves, the more we dislike it in others.

The vice I am talking of is Pride or Self-Conceit Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind.

As he read, I could feel a flush coming into my face and a curious burning sensation that made the night seem even warmer. Lewis's words seemed to pound straight at me.

. . . it is Pride which has been the chief cause of misery in every nation and every family since the world began. Other vices may sometimes bring people together: you may find good fellowship and jokes and friendliness among drunken people or unchaste people. But Pride always means enmity—it is enmity. And not only enmity between man and man, but enmity to God.

In God you come up against something which is in every respect immeasurably superior to yourself. Unless you know God as that—and, therefore, know yourself as nothing in comparison—you do not know God at all. As long as you are proud you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people: and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you.

Suddenly I felt naked and unclean, my bravado defenses gone. I was exposed, unprotected, for Lewis's words were describing me. As he continued, one passage in particular seemed to sum up what had happened to all of us at the White House:

For Pride is spiritual cancer: it eats up the very possibility of love, or contentment, or even common sense.

Tom finished the chapter on pride and shut the book. I mumbled something noncommittal to the effect that "I'll look forward to reading that." But Lewis's torpedo had hit me amidships. I think Phillips knew it as he stared into my eyes. That one chapter ripped through the protective armor in which I had unknowingly encased myself for forty-two years. Of course, I had not known God. *How could I?* I had been concerned with myself. *I had done this and that, I had achieved, I had succeeded and I had given God none of the credit, never once thanking Him for any of His gifts to me. I had never thought of anything being "immeasurably superior" to myself, or if I had in fleeting moments thought about the infinite power of God, I had not related Him to my life. In those brief moments while Tom read, I saw myself as I never had before. And the picture was ugly,*

"How about it, Chuck?" Tom's question jarred me out of my trance. I knew precisely what he meant. Was I ready to make the leap of faith as he had in New York, to "accept" Christ?

"Tom, you've shaken me up. I'll admit that. That chapter describes me. But I can't tell you I'm ready to make the kind of commitment you did. I've got to be certain. I've got to learn a lot more, be sure all my reservations are satisfied. I've got a lot of intellectual hang-ups to get past."

For a moment Tom looked disappointed, then he smiled. "I understand, I understand."

"You see," I continued, "I saw men turn to God in the Marine Corps; I did once myself. Then afterwards it's all forgotten and everything is back to normal. Foxhole religion is just a way of using God. How can I make a commitment now? My whole world is crashing down around me. How can I be sure I'm not just running for shelter and that when the crisis is over I'll forget it? I've got to answer all the intellectual arguments first and if I can do that, I'll be sure."

"I understand," Tom repeated quietly.

I was relieved he did, yet deep inside of me something wanted to tell Tom to press on. He was making so much sense, the first time anyone ever had in talking about God.

But Tom did not press on. He handed me his copy of *Mere Christianity*. "Once you've read this, you might want to read the Book of John in the Bible." I scribbled notes of the key passages he quoted. "Also there's a man in Washington you should meet," he continued, "name of Doug Coe. He gets people together for Christian fellowship—prayer breakfasts and things like that. I'll ask him to contact you."

Tom then reached for his Bible and read a few of his favorite psalms. The comforting words were like a cold soothing ointment. For the first time in my life, familiar verses I'd heard chanted lifelessly in church came alive. "Trust in the Lord," I remember Tom reading, and I wanted to, right that moment I wanted to—if only I knew how, if only I could be sure.

"Would you like to pray together, Chuck?" Tom asked, closing his Bible and putting it on the table beside him.

Startled, I emerged from my deep thoughts. "Sure—I guess I would—Fine." I'd never prayed with anyone before except when someone said grace before a meal. Tom bowed his head, folded his hands, and leaned forward on the edge of his seat. "Lord," he began, "we pray for Chuck and his family, that You might open his heart and show him the light and the way . . ."

As Tom prayed, something began to flow into me—a kind of

October 29
Friday

WORKING IN THE HARVEST

READ:
Matthew 9:35-10:4

Pray the Lord of the
harvest to send out
laborers into His
harvest.
—Matthew 9:38

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:
■ Jeremiah 18-19
■ 2 Timothy 3

While D. L. Moody was attending a convention in Indianapolis on mass evangelism, he did more than just talk about it. He asked a friend, who was a gifted musician, to meet him on a street corner at 6 o'clock one evening. The man stood on a box and sang a song. When a crowd gathered, Moody spoke briefly and then invited the people to follow him to the nearby convention hall.

Soon the auditorium was filled with spiritually hungry people, and he preached to them. When the convention attendees began to arrive, Moody stopped preaching and said, "Now we must close, as the brethren of the convention want to discuss the topic, 'How to reach the masses.'"

When Jesus saw the masses, He was "moved with compassion" for them (Matthew 9:36). He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful . . . Pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers" (vv.37-38). And He sent them out to preach the good news of His kingdom (10:1).

It is estimated that only 10 percent of the world's population of 6.3 billion are believers in Jesus Christ. And more than 25 percent have never heard of Jesus' love even once.

As His disciples today, let's not just talk about the need—let's pray and go. —Anne Cetas

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Do you want to reach others with the good news of Jesus but lack the confidence to do so? Read How Can I Break The Silence? at www.discoveryseries.org/q0706

The next person you meet may be your mission field.

I need you to do two things for me:

- ① Be sure and vote Tuesday if you haven't
- ② On Wednesday morning transfer all this passion for a presidential election to winning the lost for Christ. If I get half the e-mails I have been receiving telling me of souls being saved, Heaven ^{Heaven} would get crowded pretty quick!

energy. Then came a wave of emotion which nearly brought tears. I fought them back. It sounded as if Tom were speaking directly and personally to God, almost as if He were sitting beside us. The only prayers I'd ever heard were formal and stereotyped, sprinkled with *Thees* and *Thous*.

When he finished, there was a long silence. I knew he expected me to pray but I didn't know what to say and was too self-conscious to try. We walked to the kitchen together where Gert was still at the big table, reading. I thanked her and Tom for their hospitality.

"Come back, won't you?" she said. Her smile convinced me she meant it.

"Take care of yourself, Chuck, and let me know what you think of that book, will you?" With that, Tom put his hand on my shoulder and grinned. "I'll see you soon."

I didn't say much; I was afraid my voice would crack, but I had the strong feeling that I *would* see him soon. And I couldn't wait to read his little book.

Outside in the darkness, the iron grip I'd kept on my emotions began to relax. Tears welled up in my eyes as I groped in the darkness for the right key to start my car. Angrily I brushed them away and started the engine. "What kind of weakness is this?" I said to nobody.

The tears spilled over and suddenly I knew I had to go back into the house and pray with Tom. I turned off the motor, got out of the car. As I did, the kitchen light went out, then the light in the dining room. Through the hall window I saw Tom stand aside as Gert started up the stairs ahead of him. Now the hall was in darkness. It was too late. I stood for a moment staring at the darkened house, only one light burning now in an upstairs bedroom. Why hadn't I prayed when he gave me the chance? I wanted to so badly. Now I was alone, really alone.

As I drove out of Tom's driveway, the tears were flowing uncontrollably. There were no streetlights, no moonlight. The car headlights were flooding illumination before my eyes, but I was crying so hard it was like trying to swim underwater. I pulled to the side of the road not more than a hundred yards from the entrance to Tom's driveway, the tires sinking into soft mounds of pine needles.

I remember hoping that Tom and Gert wouldn't hear my sobbing, the only sound other than the chirping of crickets that penetrated the still of the night. With my face cupped in my hands, head leaning

forward against the wheel, I forgot about machismo, about pretenses, about fears of being weak. And as I did, I began to experience a wonderful feeling of being released. Then came the strange sensation that water was not only running down my cheeks, but surging through my whole body as well, cleansing and cooling as it went. They weren't tears of sadness and remorse, nor of joy—but somehow, tears of relief.

And then I prayed my first real prayer. "God, I don't know how to find You, but I'm going to try! I'm not much the way I am now, but somehow I want to give myself to You." I didn't know how to say more, so I repeated over and over the words: *Take me*.

I had not "accepted" Christ—I still didn't know who He was. My mind told me it was important to find that out first, to be sure that I knew what I was doing, that I meant it and would stay with it. Only, that night, something inside me was urging me to surrender—to what or to whom I did not know.

I stayed there in the car, wet-eyed, praying, thinking, for perhaps half an hour, perhaps longer, alone in the quiet of the dark night. Yet for the first time in my life I was not alone at all.



ILLUSTRATION

Bride Chooses Humorous Mantra for Her Wedding

Send to printer

Topics: Anxiety; Brides; Change; Commitment; Fear; Husbands; Love; Love, romantic; Marriage; New life; New man; New Things; Spouses; Vows; Weddings; Wives

Filters: Humor; Marriage & Sex; Stories

References: [Genesis 2:24](#) , [Proverbs 18:22](#) , [1 Corinthians 7:1-7](#) , [Ephesians 5:21-33](#) , [1 Peter 3:1-7](#)

Tone: Neutral/Mixed

A young bride to be was very nervous on the day before her wedding, so she went to speak with her minister. "I'm afraid I might not make it through the ceremony properly," she confessed.

The minister assured her that everything would be fine: "When you enter the church tomorrow and the processional begins, you will be walking down the same aisle you've walked many times before. Concentrate on that aisle. When you get halfway down the aisle, you'll see the altar, where you and your family have worshiped for many years. Concentrate on that altar. Then, when you're almost to the altar, you will see your groom, the one you love. Concentrate on him."

The bride was relieved, and left to prepare for her big moment. The next day, she walked down the aisle with her chin up and eyes bright—a beautiful, confident bride. But those along the center were a bit surprised to hear her muttering over and over: "Aisle, altar, him. Aisle, altar, him."

Submitted by J. R. Love, Rushton, Louisiana

[▲ back to top](#)

[Home](#) | [My Account](#) | [Help & Info](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact Us](#)

© 2007 PreachingToday.com & Christianity Today International