

John 3:9–15

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?”

¹¹ Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness.

¹² If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

¹³ No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.

¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

¹⁵ that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

"Born Again" **John 3:9-15**

INTRO:

In our studies thus far, we have seen how Nicodemus, an influential theological conservative and renowned OT Bible teacher, came to Jesus by night seeking an answer to the emptiness of his soul. No sooner does Nicodemus begin his approach to the Lord Jesus, than the Lord answers the question on Nicodemus' heart. ***“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God’”(v. 3).*** Yes, Nicodemus had everything. **(1)** He had wealth. **(2)** He had political clout, and **(3)** theological insight. **(4)** He even had fame as one who could teach the Word of God. Yet, despite all of this, he lacked one thing that he really needed to be accepted by God. He lacked the New Birth. He had never been born again.

Last time we were together, we learned what the New Birth was. Let me briefly review what we learned. First, we learned that the New Birth is a second birth. It is not something we have by virtue of our first birth. Second, we learned the New Birth is a miracle birth. We are born again only as God works in us to enable us to believe. Third, the New Birth is a life changing experience. Once we are saved, everything in our lives changes. **2 Corinthians 5:17** is true in us! Nicodemus listened to all this the Lord told him with surprise. This was all a major shock to his Pharisaic system. Today, we will

study the next part of the conversation. Nicodemus still couldn't understand. Jesus told him how He knew these things and how both Nicodemus and we can be born again.

I. THE PROBLEM WITH THE ONE LISTENING (v. 9, 10)

II. THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THE ONE WITNESSING (v. 11-13)

III. THE MEANS THROUGH WHICH WE CAN BE BORN AGAIN (v. 14, 15)

I. THE PROBLEM WITH THE ONE LISTENING (v. 9, 10)

“Nicodemus answered and said to Him, ‘How can these things be?’ ¹⁰Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?’”(John 3:9-10)

A. We begin again with Nicodemus' response to the Lord's statements about the New Birth. ***“How can these things be?”*** Nicodemus did not call into question the reality of the New Birth. He was amazed that these things could be true and he had never understood them.

B. Our Lord Jesus responded in **verse 10**. To Nicodemus this was radical stuff, yet in reality it shouldn't have been. Our Lord is pointing out that Nicodemus should have understood these things because they had already been revealed. The Old Testament repeatedly pointed to this reality of a transformation of the individual from the inside out. For example, in **Jeremiah 31:31-33**, the LORD told us through Jeremiah about the New Covenant He would establish with His people.

“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

C. Nicodemus, being a recognized authority on the Old Testament Scriptures, surely should have known about this truth.

1. Nicodemus had a problem. His parents raised him to think differently. He had been taught from his birth that just being born into a Jewish home and of Jewish parents merited him eternal life. If he simply was careful not to violate the “traditions of the elders,” the so-called “oral law,” he would make it in the end.

2. If Nicodemus was ever going to reach out in faith and embrace the Lord Jesus as his Savior and experience the New Birth, he had to let go of all he had been taught before and look again at what the Scriptures said. For Nicodemus it was a matter of understanding all that he had taught for years as “the teacher of Israel” was wrong. This was not an easy thing to do. Yet, when one comes face to face with truth, he is a fool to hold on to his error! It also meant that he would have to

let go of everything that he had trusted in before to save him. Remember the Apostle Paul in **Philippians 3:4-7**.

“I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.”

II. THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THE ONE WITNESSING (v. 11-13)

“Truly, truly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.” (John 3:11–13)

A. In **verse 11** Jesus asserted His personal qualifications as a witness of the New Birth. He did this by making two statements with a question sandwiched between. First, Jesus said He is qualified to witness to this because He knew these things first hand. This is His third, ***“Truly, truly, I say unto you,”*** statement (v. 11). Jesus is not speaking of things that He does not know, nor is He telling about anything that He has not seen. The plural here probably means that He, the Lord Jesus, is simply joining His voice with the witnesses in the Old Testament of the reality of the New Birth! So, Nicodemus needed to know the witness that he was hearing was reliable.

B. Jesus is also qualified to witness because He is the only One Who has ever come from heaven to tell of heavenly things.

“No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.” (v. 13).

1. Several years ago I had a man who was a cultist tell me this verse proves that no one ever goes to heaven. Please note this is not what this verse says at all. Prior to this two men were translated to be with God, Enoch and Elijah. If they are not with God in heaven, where are they? This verse actually says no one has gone up to heaven and, by implication, has come back to tell about what God is like and about spiritual things. Only the Lord Jesus, Who came down from heaven, has done that!

2. What does this mean? It means that Jesus simply claimed what John wrote about Him in **John 1:18**.

“No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.”

Jesus was, in fact, God in human flesh. Unless Nicodemus believed this, he could never experience the New Birth. Jesus said **John 8:23-24**,

“And He said to them, ‘You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I AM, you will die in your sins.’”

III. THE MEANS THROUGH WHICH WE CAN BE BORN AGAIN (v. 14, 15)

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:14–15)

A. Finally, being born again meant that Nicodemus had to understand the means of the New Birth. The means of the New Birth is faith in the Christ Who would die for Nicodemus’ sin and ours.

1. Jesus described this means through an Old Testament event. He reminded Nicodemus about the brazen serpent Moses lifted up in the wilderness.

Numbers 21:4-9 tells the story. The Children of Israel richly deserved the judgment of the fiery serpents. God being incredibly gracious provided them this way out of the judgment.

2. The point was that those who were bitten only had to look in faith at the serpent, believing what God said. Deliverance from death came through faith and faith alone.

B. In a similar way, **verse 14**, *“the Son of Man must also be lifted up.”* Our Lord spoke of the cross. Jesus used this phrase to describe His death on Calvary several times in John’s Gospel. The cross is the essential element which Nicodemus needed to comprehend. Nicodemus needed to put his faith in the Lord Jesus Who was going to die as the payment for our sin!

Have you and I recognized these realities in our lives? If we are to be saved, we, too, must deal with these issues in our lives.

1. We must put away all other things we are trusting in for our salvation.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

2. We must recognize who Jesus is. He is God in human flesh, Who came to save us from our sins. **Romans 10:9** says,

“If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

3. Finally, we must put our trust in Him and Him alone for salvation. Look at **verse 15** again. All those who believe receive eternal life.

Hymn #189 Calvary Covers It All