

Sermon Outline
The Rev. Dr. S. Edd Cathey
Jesus and the New Birth
January 31, 2016

Sermon Text: John 2:23-25 and 3:1-15

Background

The Pharisees generally revered the scriptures and carefully tried to keep the cleanliness rituals and rules. They hated the Roman occupation and longed for the “golden age” of Israel.

The Sadducees generally were religious liberals. They did not really believe the Scriptures but they liked the tradition and the prestige of Judaism. They were complicit with the Roman occupation.

The believers who were not Believers

2:23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, *many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing* [24] But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people [25] and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.

This leads directly on to Jesus being visited one night by one of these Pharisees who was attracted to him and his deeds/signs.

[3:1] Now 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 him, “Truly, truly, 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, “Truly, truly, 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 its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

What Jesus is announcing to Nicodemus is that the time has now come for the New Covenant.

[9] Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" [10] Jesus answered him, "***Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things?***"

Ezekiel 36:24-26 and 37:1-6

"Heart of Stone" and "Heart of Flesh."

Jesus is the "heart of flesh!" The WORD made flesh! The new heart of God's true Israel! The new temple!

Who is the Messiah, the Bridegroom, the Heart of Flesh for a New Israel, the New Temple that will be raised? **Who?**

He is the one speaking to Nicodemus saying:

[11] Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony.

He is the one who tells you heavenly things: New Birth, New life, Wedding, Union!

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

He is the one who bridges heaven and earth, as he says:

[13] No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.

He is the one who will be lifted up like the Bronze Serpent affixed to a pole in the wilderness.

Numbers 21:6-9

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

The gift of faith is God's part.

Believing is the human part:

[15] that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

John 19:38-40