

Known Yet Unknown
John 2:23-3:15

Making Coffee

A chauvinistic husband and his godly wife were preparing to have breakfast when the wife asked, "why do I always have to make the coffee?"

The husband answered, "because you're the wife, that's your job."

The wife replied, "well, the Bible doesn't say it's the woman's job to make the coffee, it's the man's!"

Taken back by this, the husband demands to see where in the Bible it states that he should be the one to make the coffee.

"Well, here it is", the godly woman replied, "Hebrews!"

The sad thing is that many people only know little of God's Word... They actually think things like... *God Helps those who help themselves... or money is the root of all evil... or cleanliness is next to godliness... or even hate the sin, love the sinner...* are in the bible

Here we have the account of Jesus and Nicodemus talking. Nicodemus was coming to Jesus with what he knew, but Jesus realized that there was something he NEEDED to know.

Have you ever had someone change the subject on you?

My mother and grandmother could do this... I think we ought to paint it black.

Lets look at an example of a needed conversation changer in scripture.

I. **An Unasked Question.** V. 3:1-3

A. **Authority Noticed.**

1. Nicodemus came to Jesus because he was sick of his own efforts failing. He was tired of trying to live by the law himself... he saw in the law a weakness! Paul himself saw this and expressed it in Galatians 4:9. He had tried to live by the law, and knew that he was unable to fulfill the law in it's entirety. He had an understanding that according to the law he had to be perfect. He had NEVER seen someone successful at this.
 - a) Nicodemus comes to Jesus because he saw something different.
 - b) We too are to be different! Now I understand that Jesus is perfect, and we ourselves are not perfect. However, Nicodemus saw in Jesus something attractive. According to II Corinthians 5:20, we are to be an ambassador. A U.S. Ambassador represents the President of the United States. When he speaks to foreign leaders, he speaks on behalf of the President.

As Christians, we are to be ambassadors of Christ! What we say, how we act,

- where we go... If someone were to examine our lives, what would they say about Jesus? What kind of representation of the Savior are we making to the world?
2. As Nicodemus observed Jesus, he realized that Jesus had the answers he was seeking. Being a ruler of the Jews, and a Pharisee, Nicodemus would have known the Old Testament writings better than most... He saw in Jesus a way for an answer.
 - a) Would we know enough about God's Word to be able to tell truth from heresy

When a "preacher" says things like:

Here's what I want you to get here. **If Jesus came as God, then why did God have to anoint Him?** If Jesus – see God's already been anointed. If Jesus came as God, then why did God have to anoint Him? **Jesus came as a man, that's why it was legal to anoint him. God doesn't need anointing,** He is anointing. Jesus came as a man, and at age 30 God is now getting ready to demonstrate to us, **and give us an example of what a man, with the anointing, can do.** — Creflo Dollar

Or...

"This book will expose the sins of the fathers and the vicious abuse of the Jewish people. In Defense of Israel will shake Christian theology. **It scripturally proves that the Jewish people as a whole did not reject Jesus as Messiah. It will also prove that Jesus did not come to earth to be the Messiah.** It will prove that there was a Calvary conspiracy between Rome, the high priest, and Herod to execute Jesus as an insurrectionist too dangerous to live. **Since Jesus refused by word and deed to claim to be the Messiah,** how can the Jews be blamed for rejecting what was never offered? Read this shocking expose, In Defense of Israel"—John Hagee

- b) We must be studied enough to be able to recognize Truth when it arrives on the scene... Jesus said I am the Truth... but Nicodemus saw this on his own.

B. Sovereignty Recognized.

1. The Talmud mentions a Nicodemus ben Gotten, who was also called Bonai, a disciple of Jesus, of great wealth and piety, who survived the destruction of Jerusalem, and therein lost nil his fortune. The hint that he was an old man in this year renders his survival till A.D. 70 improbable, but not impossible by any means. The identification is not complete. The Talmud does not speak of him as a Sanhedrist, though it gives curious details, which imply that he must have been a priest in the temple, and had the charge of providing the water supply for the pilgrims.
2. Nicodemus comes to Jesus and makes an observation. You are from God... Jesus, however knew what his real question was. Look back at 2:24-25 with me... Jesus KNEW what was in the hearts of man.

II. Educated foolishness. (Vs. 4-10 Specifically 4&9)

A. A mind so full...

1. People try to appear as knowing more than they really do. This is what Nicodemus was doing... He comes to Jesus and begins to flatter him with what he knows about him... We know you came from God...You are doing great things...
2. Jesus stops him in his tracks by changing the subject... Kind of left field isn't it? How do you go from "We know you come from God..." to "You must be born again"?

B. A heart so empty

1. We think we know so much! I know Jesus died for me... I know that Jesus is God's Son... I know that Jesus is the only way to heaven... I know that Jesus loves me... I know that Jesus offers abundant life... I know that without him I am destined for hell... I know that Jesus forgives... I KNOW!!! DO YOU!?!?!?

ILLUSTRATION:

At our former church, we had this old white van. It was a bomb! Every once in a while, the shifter would get stuck, and it wouldn't go over far enough for the key to start it. I would get people calling me all the time telling me that the van was broke down. I would tell them how to start it, and everything would be ok. Sometimes, they would say... I have tried everything, but it still won't start... They didn't know the van like I did.

2. Many people will miss heaven by 12 inches... We have so much head knowledge but no heart knowledge. Ask yourself. Do you truly know Jesus? I am not asking if we know who he is... I am not even asking if we know what he has done... I am asking if we intimately and honestly KNOW Him.
 - a) Do you experience the Peace of God?
 - b) Do you hunger for the things of God?
 - c) Do you desire to please Him?
 - d) Does sin in your life bother you?
 - e) Does it bother you to see people lost and going to hell?
 - f) Do you love him so much that you are willing to submit your will to his?
 - g) DO YOU KNOW MY LORD?
3. Nicodemus, in his learned state was so educated that he could not simply ask Jesus an honest question... But thanks be to God, who when we don't even know ourselves what to ask or how to ask it, knows what is in our hearts and helps us to articulate our desires.

~ This to me is another evidence that God will always reveal himself to those who are honestly seeking Him. It is written in the hearts of man to worship. God is seen in nature, and those who honestly seek to know God will find him.

III. **The Lifted Answer** (Vs. 11-15 SP. 14)

A. **A gentle reminder**

1. Jesus then takes Nicodemus back to Numbers... As Moses lifted up the serpent... Numbers 21:8... The snake wasn't what saved their lives... their believing God and trusting HIS PROVISION is what saved them.

ILLUSTRATION:

Imagine being bitten by a rattlesnake. What would you say if someone said to look at a stick with a snake on it. You don't need anti-venom... you don't need medicine... you don't need a doctor... just look at that stick over yonder, and you will be healed! What?!?!?!?

2. "Believing" corresponds with "looking" in the narrative of [Num 21:1-35](#). Whosoever "looked, lived." Such looking was an **act of faith in the promise of Jehovah**; the otherwise despairing, dying glance of poisoned men was a type of the possibility of a universal salvation for sin-envenomed, devil-bitten, perishing men. Let them believe, and there is life. Let them understand the meaning of the Son of man thus exhausting the curse, and enduring in love the burden and penalty of human

transgression, and they have straightway a life that is spiritual, fundamentally and radically new, a life heavenly and eternal.

- a) YOU NEED NOT DO ANYTHING! IT HAS BEEN DONE FOR YOU AT THE CROSS! It is reminiscent of Naaman dipping 7 times. His servant girl asked him... "If Elisha told you to do something great, would you not have done it?"
- b) So many are working to be good enough, or give enough, or even suffer enough in order to be right with God... But Jesus reminds Nicodemus that just as it was a matter of looking at the serpent, so is it a matter for us today of looking at Jesus's Death on the cross!

B. Dynamic Depiction.

1. Numbers

- a) The problem in Numbers 21 was the bite of the snake... Every time the Israelites were bitten, death was soon to follow. There was no cure in sight.
- b) God, told Moses to make an image of the snake, and place it on the pole. The only cure available was for these men to look upon the snake, and be healed.

2. John

- a) Mankind is cursed... poisoned by sin. Death is soon to follow... However, Jesus became the very curse for us... II Corinthians 5:21 says "For He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin;"

When Christ hung on that tree, he became the very curse for us. Galatians 3:13 tells us that Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

- b) HOWEVER, just as the dying man could look at that snake... the very thing that poisoned him... and be healed, we too look to the one who became that curse for us! By looking to Christ, we live! II Cor 5:21 finishes... "that we might be made the righteous of God in him." when we look upon the cross we are healed!

3. As Jesus talked with Nicodemus about being born again, he let him know without a doubt... To be born again, you must believe that I am He, who can deliver you from the death you so deserve. Believe in me.

Conclusion:

Have you come to God?

Do you truly know God?

I am not talking about knowing who he is... I am talking about actually knowing God.

To know him is to love him. To desire him. To desire his will for your life. To hunger after him!

Do you know His Word well enough to spot error? When these so called preachers open their mouths, can you spy out their misuse of scripture?

Ask yourself today, how well do you KNOW him?