

3

Jesus Teaches Nicodemus

Now a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a Jewish leader, came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one could perform the miracles that you do unless God is with him.”

Jesus replied, “I’m telling you the truth: Unless a person is born again, they cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Nicodemus replied, “How can a person be born when they’re old? *Surely* they cannot enter their mother’s womb a second time to be born *again!*”

Jesus replied, “I’m telling you the truth: Unless one is born of *both* water and the Spirit, they cannot enter the kingdom of God. What is born from the flesh is flesh, and what is born from the Spirit is spirit. So don’t be amazed that I told you,^a ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows wherever it pleases, and you hear the sound of it, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

Nicodemus asked, “How can these things be?”

“You’re a teacher of Israel,” Jesus replied, “and you don’t understand these things? I’m telling you the truth: We speak about what we know, and we testify about what we’ve seen, but you *people* still don’t accept our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? No one has ever ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, the Son of Man must be lifted up so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.”

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten^b Son so that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe has been condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of God’s only begotten Son.

This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil *deeds* hates the light and will not come to the light so that their deeds will not be exposed. But those who do what is true^c come to the light so that their deeds will be clearly seen as having been done in God.

a This is a plural “you” in Greek, meaning that Jesus had said this sometime previously to a group of whom Nicodemus was one member.

b “Only begotten” could be translated as “one and only” here and two sentences later. The Greek word, *monogene*, is a combination of *mono* (i.e., one, unique) and *genos* (i.e., of its kind).

c “True”: that which is in agreement with God’s truth.

John Testifies About Jesus Again

After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them and was baptizing.^a Now John *the Baptist* was also baptizing near Salim at Aenon, because there was plenty of water and people were coming to be baptized (for John had not yet been thrown into prison).

A dispute developed between John's disciples and a Jew over ceremonial washing. They came to John and said, "Rabbi, the man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan—the one you testified about—look, he's baptizing and everyone is going to him."

John replied, "No one can receive anything unless it has been given to them from heaven. You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, 'I am not the Messiah but have been sent ahead of him.' The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The bridegroom's best man stands by and listens for him and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. So this is my joy, and it is complete. He must become greater, and I must become less."

The one who comes from above is above all. The one who is from the earth is of the earth and speaks *as one* from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. He testifies about what he has seen and heard, yet no one accepts his testimony. Anyone who has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives his Spirit without limit. The Father loves the Son and has placed all things under his authority. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them.

4

Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself was not baptizing, but his disciples *were*), he left Judea and headed back once more to Galilee.

Now he had to go through Samaria.^b At about noon he came to a Samaritan town called Sychar, near Jacob's well and the field Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jesus, tired from the journey, sat down by the well, and his disciples went into town to buy food.

When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink."

She said to him, "How is it that you, being a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

Jesus replied, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is asking you to 'give me a drink,' you would have asked him *for a drink*, and he would have given you living water."^c

a While people saw this as Jesus baptizing, the disciples did the actual baptizing. See chapter 4.

b "Had to go through": Because at the time it was normal to travel to Galilee without going through Samaria, Jesus must have had a compelling reason to go through Samaria. See "Samaritan" in the glossary.

c "Living water": flowing (therefore, self-replenishing) water.

“Sir,” the woman said, “you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get this living water? You’re not greater than our ancestor Jacob, are you? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.”

Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks the water I will give them will never thirst again, for the water I give them will become in them a fountain of water springing up to eternal life.”

The woman requested, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t be thirsty and have to come here to draw water.”

He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.”

She replied, “I have no husband.”

Jesus said, “You spoke honestly *when you said*, ‘I have no husband,’ for you’ve had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. You told the truth.”

“Sir,” she said, “I see that you’re a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain (*i.e.*, *Mount Gerizim*), but you *Jews* say that Jerusalem is the place where people must worship.”

Jesus replied, “Believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You *Samaritans* worship what you don’t know about, and we Jews worship what we know *to be true*, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming—and now is—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is looking for people who will worship him *that way*. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

The woman said, “I know that the Messiah, who is called Christ, is coming, and when he comes he will explain everything to us.”

Then Jesus declared, “I, the one who is speaking to you, am he.”

Just then his disciples returned and were shocked to find him talking with a *Samaritan* woman. But none of them asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?”

The woman left her water jar, went back to the town, and told the people, “Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could he be the Messiah?” Then they came out of the town and headed toward him.

Jesus’ Food

Meanwhile the disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat.”

But he told them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.”

So his disciples asked each other, “Did anyone bring him something to eat?”

Jesus explained, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me—and to complete his work. Don’t you have a saying: ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? Listen, I’m telling you now, look around you, and look at the fields! They’re ripe for harvest now, and the one who reaps is already receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life so that the one who sows and the one who reaps may rejoice together. For in this *instance* the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap what you haven’t worked for. Others have worked, and you have received the benefit of their labor.”

Many Samaritans Believe

Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me everything I ever did.” So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them. He stayed two days, and many more believed in him because of his words. They told the woman, “It’s no longer just because of what you said that we believe, for we’ve heard for ourselves and know that this *man* really is the Savior of the world.”

Jesus Heals the Official’s Son

After the two days, he left for Galilee. For Jesus himself had pointed out that a prophet has no honor in his own country. When he arrived in Galilee, he was welcomed because the Galileans had seen all the great things that he had done in Jerusalem at the *Passover* Festival, for they themselves had gone to the festival.

He returned to Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. A royal official at Capernaum, whose son lay sick, heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea. He went to him and asked him to come and heal his son, for he was near death.

Therefore Jesus replied, “Unless you *people* see signs and wonders, you won’t believe.”

The royal official said, “Sir, come down to *Capernaum* before my child dies.”

“Go *home*,” Jesus replied. “Your son will live.”

The man believed the words Jesus had told him and departed. While he was going down there, his slaves met him and told him that his boy was going to live. When he asked them what time his son began to get better, they told him, “The fever left him yesterday at 1:00 p.m.” Then the father realized that at that hour Jesus had told him, “Your son will live.” So he himself believed, and his whole household with him. This was the second *miraculous* sign that Jesus performed after coming from Judea to Galilee.

5

Jesus Heals on the Sabbath

After this there was a Jewish festival, so Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate, there was a pool with five covered porches called Bethesda (Aramaic for *House of Mercy*). A great number of sick, blind, lame, and paralyzed *people* lie in them [waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel of the Lord came down into the pool at certain times and stirred up the waters. Then, whoever stepped in first after the water was stirred was healed from whatever disease afflicted them.] A man was there who had been disabled for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and realized that he had already been there for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?”

The disabled man replied, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am going to *get in*, someone else steps down ahead of me.”

Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk!” Immediately the man was healed. He picked up his mat and began to walk.

Now that day was a Sabbath. So the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, "It's the Sabbath; you are not permitted to carry your mat."

But he replied, "The man who made me well told me, 'Pick up your mat and walk!'"

So they asked him, "Which man told you to pick it up and walk?"

The man who was healed didn't know who it was, for Jesus had slipped away while there was a crowd there.

Later, Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "Look, you've become well, so don't sin anymore so that nothing worse happens to you." The man went away and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had made him well.

Jesus Claims He Is Equal to God

Because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute him. So he told them, "My Father is working until now, and I *too* am working." For this reason, the Jewish leaders sought all the more to kill him, as he was not only breaking the Sabbath, but he also called God his own Father, thus making himself *out* to be equal to God.

So Jesus answered, "I'm telling you the truth: The Son can do nothing by himself unless he sees his Father doing it; for whatever he does, the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he does, and he will show him even greater works than these so that you will be amazed. For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whomever he wishes. Moreover, the Father does not pass judgment on anyone but has given *the responsibility for all such* judgment to the Son so that all people will honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, the one who sent him. I'm telling you the truth: Whoever hears what I say and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned but has crossed over from death to life.

"I'm telling you the truth: A time is coming, and is here now, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in himself, he has granted the Son also to have life in himself and authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Don't be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out; those who have done what is good *will rise* to a resurrection of eternal life. And those who have practiced what is evil *will rise* to a resurrection of judgment. By myself I can do nothing, so I judge only as I hear. My judgment is just, because I don't seek my will but the will of him who sent me.

Testimonies About Jesus

"If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid. There is another who testifies about me, and I know that his testimony about me is true. You have sent *a question* to John *the Baptist*, and he has testified to the truth. (Not that I receive human testimony, but I mention it that you may be saved.) He was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose to rejoice for a while in his light. I, however, have a testimony greater