



Gospel According to John

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Christ: His Salvation John 3

Christ's Salvation Explained to Nicodemus: *John 3:1-21*

Jesus Christ's Reasoning with Nicodemus: John 3:1-13

Nicodemus met privately with Jesus at night. It was not necessarily because he was afraid to be seen or noticed with Jesus. It may have been the best time for both to sit and talk. In a private meeting, he would be free to ask and consider questions concerning serious issues. Nicodemus was a Pharisee and they were ceremonial bigots that lived by tradition. Pharisees were strictly religious and held to a rigid moral code. They lived for the law but believed in a spiritual world and physical resurrection. Nicodemus was also a ruler of the Jews, a member of the Sanhedrin. This was the Great Council of the Nation and it consisted of rulers, scribes, and elders. Nicodemus was a morally good man.

Nicodemus approached Jesus with respect, addressing Him as Rabbi, a title given to great teachers and masters. Because of the miracles Jesus performed, Nicodemus was certain He was sent from God and he wanted to know more about Him. Being a strict Pharisee, Nicodemus probably expected the Messiah to establish His kingdom and was certain he would be a part of it. He was a good man but he remained without regeneration or salvation. Regeneration is an act of God the Holy Spirit, whereby a new spiritual life from above is given to man. It is an act of grace and like natural birth it occurs only once. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Jesus got straight to the point. He wanted Nicodemus to know that He was more than a teacher; He was the Messiah. It was important for Nicodemus to understand that Jesus was Christ, so that he could look to Him for salvation. Jesus told him salvation was required to see the Kingdom of God, which includes all of the saved on earth at any given time. (John 3:3-5; Matthew 11:11, 16:19, 18:16; Mark 10:13-15; Luke 16:16; Romans 14:17; Colossians 1:13) The kingdom is made up only of those that have been born again and is different than the Millennial Kingdom. (Daniel 2:44; Luke 19:11-27; Acts 1:6) The relationship is for life, at death the believer passes out of the Kingdom of God on earth and into 'His Heavenly Kingdom.' (2 Timothy 4:18) To even see this kingdom, one must be born again or born from above. Since we are dead in trespasses and sin we must be given a new life. (Romans 1:29-32; 3:10-20 Ephesians 2:1-9; 2 Corinthians 5:17) Nicodemus questioned being born again. He may have been confused, believing Jesus referred to physical birth. Perhaps he understood the teaching and was being sarcastic and witty. He may have thought it foolish to think a

The Sanhedrin

The Great Council of the Nation

It was the highest Jewish tribunal in the time of Christ. The Sanhedrin consisted of 71 members, led by the High Priest and composed of Chief Priests, Scribes, Rulers, and Elders.

The council had a large degree of independence. It upheld Jewish law and was the authority in most civil and some criminal matters in the nation. The Sanhedrin was empowered to arrest offenders and judge cases.

In the time of Christ, the Pharisees made up a large part of the council, due to the influence of Herod the Great. The Sanhedrin was abolished after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

dedicated Jewish leader was required to approach God like a stranger and start from the beginning.

Jesus continued and told him that one must be born of water and the Spirit to enter into the Kingdom of God. There are two aspects to salvation performed by the Spirit, cleansing and renewing. (Titus 3:5) The Old Testament teaches of a cleansing for purification. (Numbers 19:1-10, 17-19) A red heifer was burnt, with red cedar wood, and a scarlet thread. The ashes were mingled with clean water and the new solution was the water of purification. It was applied by dipping hyssop into the solution and sprinkling it upon the one to be cleansed. This cleansing was a type of the blood of Christ, which cleanses us from sin. (Hebrews 9:13-14, 10:4; 1 John 1:7) This is the cleansing element of salvation, born of water. The Spirit also

renews and imparts life. Salvation is required because the flesh is corrupt and produces unrighteousness. (Ephesians 2:3; Galatians 5:19-20) Because of our flesh, we are unable to enter the kingdom of God, it needs to be replaced and not remade or redone.

At this point, Nicodemus may have been confused. Jesus provided an illustration to help overcome his concerns. The wind blows where it wills. We cannot see the wind but we know the effects and believe it exists. The Spirit is like the wind. He moves without our notice and does what He wills. Even though He remains unseen, His works are known in our hearts. (Galatians 5:22-25) The Spirit's work of salvation is a miracle above and beyond our understanding, it should not be set aside simply because it cannot be comprehended. Jesus reprimanded his lack of faith. Nicodemus had enough to act on faith. He was a leader and teacher in Israel, yet he struggled with things clearly taught in the Old Testament. (Psalm 51:10, 16:1-11, 17:1-15; Ezekiel 11:19, 36:26) He was a ruler of Israel and familiar with the miracles of Jesus but remained in unbelief. Like many, he had correct doctrines but failed to understand them practically. Jesus challenged his faith, if he could not believe what he heard and saw he would not believe anything. Jesus knew and taught the things of God because He was from heaven. He was a direct messenger from God and greater than any man. (Hebrews 1:1-2) Jesus provided enough evidence for Nicodemus to act on faith.

Jesus Christ's Reasons for Coming into the World: John 3:14-21

Though Nicodemus struggled with faith, Jesus continued to teach him. Jesus explained salvation and proceeded to tell why He was sent from Heaven. Jesus was sent from God to be lifted up, similar to when



Moses lifted up the serpent. (Numbers 21:8-9) The Israelites sinned, were bitten by fiery serpents, and remained without a cure. Following God's direction, Moses placed a brass image of a serpent upon a pole and all that looked upon it were cured. In a similar fashion, Jesus was sent to hang between Heaven and Earth because men and women have sin without a cure. He provides life for all who look upon Him and believe. (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:23, 3:18 Romans 5:8; Galatians 3:12)

Jesus was sent as a gift to mankind. All may look to Christ and be cured of sin, for 'whomsoever believeth'. All are in danger of perishing, so all must believe on Christ to have everlasting life. (Acts 4:12; 2 Thessalonians 1:9) Jesus was a gift of love. God loved the world, so sent His Son and He will graciously save all that trust in His Son for salvation. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Jesus was sent so that sinners might be saved. He did not come to pronounce judgment upon mankind. The Messiah was promised to come as Saviour and Judge. Due to the prophecies, the Jews, and perhaps Nicodemus, were looking for the Messiah to establish His kingdom and rule as judge. What was unknown at the time, was that the Messiah would come as Saviour first and Judge second. Jesus came to lay down His life for sinners and provide atonement for sin.

(John 10:15-17) Jesus Christ will return and rule as judge. (Psalm 2:9; Psalm 45; Isaiah 11, 42) Those that believe on Jesus are not condemned, but are forgiven and receive eternal life because Jesus was condemned on their behalf. (Romans 8:1; Galatians 3:13) Unbelievers are already condemned because of their sinful nature, which produces sinful actions, and they are accountable for their sinful deeds. (Romans 5:12, 6:23) They are condemned already and remain without pardon because of unbelief.

The light has come into the world but sinners hate the light because the light magnifies or expresses their evil deeds, which are often done under the cover of darkness. (John 1:4; Matthew 4:16) Jesus Christ is light and He exposes sin and convicts sinners of their wickedness. By nature, sinners hate Jesus and the gospel of salvation due to their love of sin. Every sinner will be convinced of their sinful deeds, either in this world or after when they stand before God. (Philippians 2:9-10; Revelation 20:11-15)

The light is a blessing for those that do truth or right instead of wrong. They come to the light instead of hiding from it. (Proverbs 8:17; James 4:8) Their actions are exposed in the light and approved because they are worked in the will of God. All deserve to be condemned but God has provided salvation.

Place of Interest

Salim – It was known as a place where John the Baptist baptized. Salim was believed to have been located on the western bank of the Jordan River. It was near Aenon, which means fountain. Aenon was probably called this due to the waters in the area.

He will forgive and pardon those that believe on Jesus Christ. It appears that Nicodemus was convinced that Jesus was Christ. Nicodemus later defended Christ before His accusers. (John 7:50-51) Nicodemus would help prepare Jesus' body for burial. (John 19:39)

Christ's Salvation Understood by John the Baptist: *John 3:22-36*

Displayed Through His Ministry: John 3:22-24

When the Passover was finished, Jesus left Jerusalem and went to Judea with His disciples, where it is believed He remained for about six months. His disciples baptized people, under His authority, but Jesus baptized none. (John 4:2)

John the Baptist continued to baptize in Aenon near Salim on the western bank of the Jordan River, where there is much water. Because he immersed the people, much water was required to picture the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. (Romans 6:4-5; Colossians 2:12; Acts 8:38) His ministry was effective and many came to be baptized. John the Baptist served God until he was cast into prison; Herod would arrest, jail, and execute John. (Matthew 14:1-2; Mark 6:14-29) He continued to point people to God after Christ began His ministry.

Displayed Through His Message: John 3:25-36

There arose a question between John the Baptist's disciples and the Jews concerning purification. The exact question is unknown, but the subject concerned baptism, which represents salvation and regeneration. (Titus 3:5) Baptism was and is often misunderstood to be the actual act of

regeneration instead of an emblem of it. If baptism is required for salvation the thief on the cross is lost and so are all of the Old Testament saints. Even in the time of Christ, there were misunderstandings and incorrect teachings.

John's disciples went to him with their concern. Jesus had a large following and they wrongly believed He baptized many. (John 4:2) Apparently they wondered what would happen to John if all followed Christ. If that would occur, John would lose followers and popularity. John's followers would lose influence if their numbers dwindled. What appeared to come from sincere hearts may have been out of envy. Today there are many like John's followers, they love their pastor, church, and denomination more than they do Christ.

John understood he was greatly blessed and all he had was from God. To envy what others have been given from God is to question God's wisdom and direction. John always made it clear He was not the Christ and he challenged his followers to remember his teachings concerning Christ. John was the best man and not the groomsman. The groom had the highest honor and joy on the wedding day, while the best man assisted the groom and did all to exalt him. John knew he was unequal to Jesus because Jesus was the Messiah. So John was willing to decrease, so that Christ would increase. He proclaimed Christ and refused to exalt himself. He encouraged people to follow Christ and never sought to gain a following.

John knew Jesus was sent from above and that He spoke with authority. (Hebrews 1:4-14) Jesus testified and spoke of great things because He was from God and filled with the Spirit without measure. The prophets were directed and inspired by the

Spirit at certain times but Jesus was completely filled with the Spirit the entire time He was on earth. Jesus is the way of life and those that believe on Him have everlasting life. (John 14:6) Those that refuse to believe have no life but face the wrath of God because of their sin. The wrath of God abides on them now and will continue to abide on them if they persist in unbelief. They will never see life. John the Baptist never lost sight of Jesus Christ's authority and salvation. He faithfully pointed people to Jesus Christ until the day he was called home.

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