

- I) V1-8 INTRO: There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews
  - a) A man has come to Jesus who has been *properly* attracted by His signs
    - 1) This man's name is Nicodemus and he is introduced as a *Pharisee* and a *ruler* of the Jews
  
- II) NICODEMUS: Was a wealthy Jewish aristocrat as well as a member of the Sanhedrin
  - a) SANHEDRIN: The great council at Jerusalem, consisting of 71 members, (scribes, elders, prominent members of the high priestly families and the high priest, the president of the assembly).
    - 1) These men were commonly regarded as *rulers* among the Jews
    - 2) With this in mind, it is interesting that something drove him to meet privately with Jesus
  
- III) AS WE BEGIN: There is an obvious contrast being presented
  - a) FIRST: We have a wealthy religious aristocrat by the name of Nicodemus
    - 1) From all *outside* appearances, Nicodemus would appear to have everything under control
    - 2) He is educated, religious, seasoned with age, respected, influential and wealthy:
  
- IV) ON THE OTHER HAND: We have Jesus of Nazareth
  - a) He is young, unknown, uneducated by rabbinic standards, and questionable in His pedigree
    - 1) Under ordinary circumstances we would expect Jesus to be approaching Nicodemus
    - 2) YET: The opposite is true
  
- V) V2 THIS MAN: *Came to Jesus* by night and said to Him Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher
  - a) OBVIOUSLY: Something was keeping Nicodemus awake at night
    - 1) He had spiritual questions that he took directly to Jesus: This is very wise (Jer 33:3)
  
- VI) NOTICE: He said to Him *Rabbi*, we know that You are a teacher come from God
  - a) Notice how he says *we know that You are a teacher*
    - 1) Nicodemus represents a group who have become curious about Jesus' miracles
    - 2) Your signs have led us to this conclude that You have been sent by God
    - 3) Jn 5:36 The works which the Father has given Me to finish--the very works that I do--bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.
  
- VII) V3 JESUS ANSWERED: And said to him Most assuredly I say to you, unless one is born again
  - a) KEY: Jesus went to the heart of the matter
    - 1) If you are not born again, you will never be able to see the kingdom of God
    - 2) *SEE*: To know, to get knowledge of, understand, or perceive
    - 3) If you are not born from above, you will never understand the ways of God
  
- VIII) THOUGHT: If you know that I am from God, then this is what He requires of you
  - a) THE FACT IS: *Knowledge* requires *action* and faith requires obedience
    - 1) Jn 13:17 If you *know* these things, blessed are you if you *do* them.
    - 2) FACT: We too must *act* upon what we know
  
- IX) V4 NICODEMUS: Said to Him How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time
  - a) This is an age-old question: How can a person change their ways and have a new life?
    - 1) THOUGHT: A man is the sum total of all of his yesterdays: A product of a lifetime of shaping
    - 2) Time, heredity, culture, personal dreams and experiences have all made me what I am!
    - 3) How is it possible to have a completely new life?

- I) **V5-8 JESUS ANSWERED:** Most assuredly I say to you unless one is born of water and the Spirit
  - a) Here is the answer to your question: This is how you can receive a new life
    - 1) You must be born of *water* and the *Spirit*
  
- II) **WATER:** Could speak of natural birth
  - a) The obvious point would be that to be born of the Spirit requires you to first be born!
    - 1) Natural birth means a sinful nature: In Scripture, this is referred to as the flesh
    - 2) Ro 8:5-8 Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.
  
- III) **ALSO:** Water could be a backward look at John's baptism
  - a) The key element of John's baptism was that it was a baptism of repentance
    - 1) Mk 1:4 John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins
    - 2) POINT: To be born again by the Spirit of God, one must first be born and then must repent
  
- IV) **KEY:** Jesus taught us that this is how we enter into the Kingdom of God
  - a) God is offering us a brand new life, made possible by the power of His Holy Spirit
    - 1) It is not reformation through positive thinking and behavior modification
    - 2) It is not re-education through the memorization of certain facts intended to enlighten us
    - 3) It is not religion, which produces works righteousness and spiritual frustration
    - 4) It is not regret, which produces pangs of conscience, or a guilty conscience
    - 5) It is not simple resolution, which relies on my efforts to change on my own
  
- V) **JESUS SAID:** You must be born *again*
  - a) Why? Because before we come to Jesus, we are spiritually *dead*
    - 1) Eph 2:1 And you He made alive, *who were dead* in trespasses and sins
  
- VI) **V6-7 THAT WHICH:** Is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit
  - a) **SPIRITUAL LAW:** If our lives center on pleasing our own desires, we will never enter heaven
    - 1) Entrance is made possible through regeneration
    - 2) Jas 1:18 He chose to give us birth through the word of truth...
  
- VII) **V8 THE WIND:** Blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it but cannot tell where it comes
  - a) Nicodemus, even the natural creation has mysteries you cannot understand
    - 1) You do not actually see wind: you see only its manifestations
    - 2) Even so, those born of the Spirit have obvious evidence of an unseen power moving them
    - 3) You do not need external legalism, but a new power from above moving you to heaven
    - 4) 2 Co 5:17
  
- VIII) **V9 NICODEMUS:** Answered and said to Him "How can these things be?"
  - a) This concept of the work of the Holy Spirit is absolutely new to his way of thinking
    - 1) As a teacher he taught his disciples conditions required for entrance into the kingdom
    - 2) Keep God's commands, love God totally, follow Him daily, do His will, pray, abstain from evil
    - 3) BUT: What is this teaching Jesus is giving about being born again, being born of the Spirit?

- I) V10 JESUS ANSWERED: And said to Him Are you the teacher of Israel and do not know these things?
  - a) NOTICE: Jesus calls him *the teacher* of Israel (a man of great standing: a leading teacher)
    - 1) Yet this concept of being born of the Holy Spirit is entirely novel to him
  
- II) V11 MOST ASSUREDLY: I say to you We speak *what We know* and testify what *We have seen*
  - a) NICODEMUS: I am giving a personal testimony of how you can enter into the kingdom of God
    - 1) KEY: This certain knowledge can be relied on: These statements are absolute fact
  
- III) YET: You *do not receive* (are habitually rejecting) our witness
  - a) Even though you have stated that I am a teacher come from God, still you reject My message
    - 1) LIKE: The majority of people today who hear, but reject what the Gospel teaches
    - 2) FACT: In the US, people believe that basically everybody goes to Heaven
  
- IV) V12 IF: I have told you earthly things and you do not believe how will you believe if I tell you heavenly
  - a) Being born again is the foundation for understanding Spiritual things
    - 1) Jn 16:13 When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth
  
- V) V13 NO ONE: Has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is the Son of man
  - a) KEY: Man cannot *raise himself* to heaven that he might be able to understand its mysteries
    - 1) KEY: The mysteries of heaven are revealed to us by the One who is from Heaven: Jesus Christ
    - 2) WHO IS *IN* HEAVEN: May refer to Jesus being in Heaven when John wrote these words
  
- VI) V14-15 AND: As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the Son of Man be lifted up
  - a) When the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they began to be discouraged as they traveled
    - 1) As a result of their discouragement they began to grumble and complain
    - 2) Num 21:6 So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.
  
- VII) WHEN THIS BEGAN TO OCCUR: The people immediately changed their minds and confessed their sin
  - a) Num 21:7-9 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live. So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.
  
- VIII) WHAT SAVED THEM? Just looking at a serpent placed on a pole
  - a) NO: What saved them is that they looked past the serpent to the One who was their salvation
    - 1) POINT: Jesus will be lifted up on a cross: Those who look to Him in faith will live Spiritually
  
- IX) V16 FOR GOD SO LOVED: The world that He gave His only begotten Son
  - a) Here is the cornerstone of Christianity: God so loved the world that He gave
    - 1) No sacrifice was too great to make: God gave His dearly loved Son for us because of love
    - 2) The nails did not keep Jesus on the Cross: Love did
  
- X) V17-18 FOR: God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world
  - a) God did not send Jesus to condemn, but to save those who would believe Him
    - 1) The way to be saved is to simply believe what He has told you is true, to act on these things