

DEEP IN SCRIPTURE

Today's Scripture Text & Notes

February 15, 2006

Guest: Steve Ray

Topic: How does one become "born again"?

John 3:1-5

1: Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicode'mus, 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 anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

4: Nicode'mus 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."

INTRO: "Context, context, context!"

1. Underlying purpose of Gospel of John . . . (20:30-31)

*Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written **that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.***

2. . . . to answer the question:

"What must I do to have eternal life?"

2. But what does it *mean* "to have eternal life"?

- Includes life after death, but not just this . . .
- More specifically life with God after death, but not just this . . .
- "Have" is present tense verb!
 - Too often inaccurately interpreted as "eternal security"
 - Far too many verses emphasize "remaining, abiding, continuing, obeying, conquering, etc."; one can cease to "have . . ."
- "to have eternal life" = "abiding in Christ" = "have my spirit within you"

3. So what must one *DO* to attain this?

- **"Believe!"** . . . BUT WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? ENTAIL?
- Pharisees:
 - Believed in the resurrection of the dead / after life.
 - How? Strict observance of works of the Law;
 - BUT: Not accurate interpretation of Jewish tradition:

- OT: BOTH obedience AND conversion of heart.
 - Pharisees emphasized an imbalance: obedience
 - Paul was a Pharisee of Pharisees: over-compensated . . .
 - James: counter-compensated . . .
 - Context of the Gospel of John: (Other views in his culture)
 - Gnostics: Knowledge *alone*
 - Judaisers: Legal obedience *alone*
 - Followers of John the Baptist: John's baptism *alone*
 - Purpose of Gospel: 20:30-31 "Believe & have life"
4. Context of John 3:1-5
- 1:4-5 . . . "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."
 - 1:6-8 . . . In the B "to bear witness to the light, that all might believe thru him."
 - 1:9 . . . "The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world."
 - 1:11 . . . "He came to his own home & his own people received him not."
 - 1:12-13 . . . "But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."
 - 1:14-18 . . . the incarnation; Jesus as source of grace & truth.
 - 1:19-34 . . . In the B; Pharisees send "spies"
 - vs. 24, Q: "Why are you BAPTIZING is not the Christ . . .?"
 - vs. 26, A: "I baptize with WATER, but amg you stands one whom you do not KNOW."
 - Vs 33, "I myself did not KNOW him; but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'"
 - 1:35-51 First disciples
 - 2:1-12 . . . Wedding at Cana
 - vs 11: "This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana at Galilee, & manifested his glory; and his disciples believed in him."
 - 2:13-22 . . . Cleansing of the temple [Why here, so soon, in this Gospel?]
 - vs 16: "And he told those who sold the pigeons, 'Take these things away; you shall not make my Father's house a house of trade.'"
 - Jesus' Q: "Don't you see?! Don't you understand?!"
 - 3:1-15 A Pharisee comes to Jesus at night (we'll discuss in a moment)
 - 3:15-21 The author John expounds on the key topic of his Gospel!
 - 15: "whoever BELIEVES in him may HAVE ETERNAL LIFE."
 - 16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever BELIEVES IN HIM should not perish but HAVE ETERNAL LIFE."
 - 18: "He who BELIEVES IN HIM is not condemned; he who DOES NOT BELIEVE is condemned already, because he has not BELIEVED in the name of the only son of God."
 - 19: "And this is the judgment, that the LIGHT has come into the world, and men loved DARKNESS rather than LIGHT, because their deeds were evil.
 - 20: "For every one who does evil hates the LIGHT, and does not come to the LIGHT, lest his deeds should be exposed.

- 21: "But he who does what is true come to the LIGHT, that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been wrought in God."

[BREAK]

JOHN 3:1-5 HOW DOES ONE BECOME BORN AGAIN?

1: Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicode'mus, a ruler of the Jews.

- Why "a man of the Pharisees"?
- Why specific name, "Nicodemus"?
- Significance of "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."

- Why "by night"?
- Significance of "Rabbi, we know . . ."?
 - They recognize significance of signs!
 - Q: how will they respond?!

3: Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

- What?! What does this have to do with Nicodemus' comment?
- Significance of "Truly, truly, I say to you . . ."?
 - "See" = know, recognize, understand, experience
- "BORN ANEW"
 - "another" = anew, again, from above
- Do we know at this point what Jesus means?
- Significant of "unless" [ein me]?

4: Nicode'mus 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?"

- What is Nicodemus' problem?

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.

- Key parallels with vs 3:
 - "water and the Spirit" = "anew"
 - "enter" = "see"
- What is meant by "born of water and the Spirit"?

[see Steve Ray's notes . . .]