**John IV**

**Jesus and Nicodemus**

**Review:**

John: Jesus is revealed through his miracles and through his statements about himself.

Central Theme

Jesus is the Son of God who reveals the father, providing eternal life to all who believe in him

7 I AM statements

I AM the bread of life 6:35

I AM the light of the world 8:12,9:5

I AM the door (and the gate) 10:7

I AM the good shepherd 10:1,14

I AM the resurrection and the life 11:25

I AM the Way the Truth and the Life 14:6

I AM the true vine 15:1

7 signs **Miracles as signs** of who Jesus is

[knew the heart and thoughs of Nathanael 1:43-50]

Water to wine 2:1-11

Healing of official’s son 4:43-54

Healing at pool of Bethesda 5:1-5

Feeding of 5000 6:1-14

Walking on water 6:16-21

Healing the man born blind 9:1-12

Resurrection of Lazarus 11:1-44

[miraculous catch of fish John 21:1-13]

John 1:14 The Word became flesh. God became literally flesh.

The Creator/Sustainer, light and life of the world took on human flesh.

He came and tabernacled (HCSV “took up residence”) among us. In Jesus God pitched his tent among men.

How is Jesus different? V. 14b full of grace and truth v. 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

John 1:18 No one has seen God

But Jesus the unique one has made him known. Jesus is the one who makes God known.

Last week: John 1:35-51 Jesus calls Nathanael.

v. 37 Notice the first question Jesus asks in John. “What do you want?”

So…. What do you want? What do you want from Jesus? Let’s be clear.

Why are you here today? What are you hoping for?

Later, John 1:46 Philip says the same to Nathanael. “Come and see.”

John 1:47 Jesus read Nathanael’s mind.

v. 49 “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel.”

Theme of John: Revealing who Jesus is. Who is he?

Messiah

Rabbi/Teacher

Son of God

King of Israel (and we, are spiritual Israel)

John 2:1-12 Jesus in Cana: Water to Wine. The first of Jesus seven signs in John. The only one that was not a public one. Why did Jesus do this miracle?

1. Because his mother asked him to.

2. Because of the great symbolical significance of the Marriage feast (Isaiah 25:4-6), and of turning water (purification to the Jews) to wine (purification for our sins).

What does this miracle tell us about Jesus?

Why miracles? John 2:11 It

Reveals Jesus’ glory

Caused people to believe in Jesus

This week: Jesus and Nicodemus.

One of the unique things about the Gospel of John is that we have several long dialogues with unbelievers who are coming to belief. One of them is Nicodemus.

John wants you to put yourself in their sandals.

The interviews have a pattern:

Jesus makes an enigmatic statement which provokes thought

Confusion

Jesus explains the statement

Jesus identified

John 3 and 4 Personal interviews

John 3:1-12 The insider believes. (John 4 the outsider believes)

v. 1 Nicodemus is a member of the Sanhedrin—the ruling council of the Jews. He is a heavy hitter, both politically as a member of the Sanhedrin and religiously, as a Pharisee.

v. 2 Why does he come at night? Is he fearful of reprisals and peer pressure?

He calls Jesus Rabbi. He recognizes Jesus as a Teacher from God because of his miracles.

Is Nicodemus “open?” Yes.

In fact, Nicodemus became a follower of Jesus. John 7:50 Nicodemus who was one of their own number… John 19:39 Nicodemus, along with Joseph of Arimathea a secret disciple, took care of Jesus’ body.

Nicodemus is the “open” well-educated and influential non-believer.

Are there any other Nicodemus’s out there in Bakersfield? Are you willing to share with “sharp” influential, smart people?

Nicodemus’ attitude seems to be: Jesus, I am so glad to get some time with a fellow spiritual man. I am a Pharisee after all… You are young, I am older. We have a lot in common. Let me give you some advice.

Jesus turns this upside down in an instant.

v. 3 Jesus: You must be born again to be a citizen of the real kingdom of God (not of Israel, which is now in subjection to Rome)

v. 4 Nicodemus (like the woman at the well in Ch. 4) Confused and asks a question that shows he is clueless!!!

So, I have to go back into my mother’s womb. A bizarre image!!!

Nicodemus, although open, represents the spiritual blindness of the Pharisees.

Nicodemus doesn’t get it.

v. 5-6 Jesus: I am not talking about physical birth. I am talking about spiritual birth.

Or more accurately, spiritual rebirth.

Nicodemus, you come to me as a kind of spiritual equal.

You have no idea what you are talking about.

Your “birth” as a Jew was a physical one. That did not require faith at all. You have not even gotten started.

You must undergo at total and absolute transformation in order to enter the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus, despite your education, spiritually, you are like an infant or less than an infant!

Q: Have you personally had this total transformation—this new birth?

So… What are we talking about? What does this new birth entail?

v. 5. In case you did not get it, it involves water and Spirit.

v. 6 “Flesh gives birth to flesh.” In other words, there is a physical birth, but there is also a spiritual birth, and I am talking about the second!

v. 9 Spiritual birth? I have never heard about this. Please explain.

v. 10 Jesus Arrggghhh… seems a bit hard on Nicodemus. “Don’t you understand these things?” But he could have read Ezekiel 36:24-28.

Jesus is talking about water immersion baptism and the subsequent receiving of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:36-38. This is not rocket science.

v. 11 Bear witness to what we have seen. John the Baptist (and Jesus’ disciples) have been baptizing already for a while, and teaching about the coming of the Kingdom.

v. 12 earthly vs heavenly things. Jesus is saying that the teaching about being born again of the water and the Spirit to enter the Kingdom is pretty basic stuff for any sound Old Testament student.

Now, I am going on to talk about even deeper things. This is a stinging rebuke to Nicodemus.

John 3:13-21

v. 13 Now, I will deliver these newer and deeper truths, as I am the one who came down from heaven (unlike Moses)

Moses was great, but he only did physical things which are a foreshadow of the spiritual things.

v. 14 The solution to spiritual blindness? Look to Jesus. (Numbers 21:7-9)

Notice the parallels between Numbers 21:7-9 and the death of Jesus.

The people sin.

Snakes bite the people.

People saved by a snake, lifted on a pole.

Why a snake? 2 Cor 5:21 [on the cross] God made him who knew no sin to become sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God.

Irony… so the son of Man must be lifted up. Lifted up in more than one sense.

In order for us to be saved, Jesus must be lifted up on the cross.

In order for others to be saved, Jesus must be lifted up by us!!!

In order for us to be saved, Jesus must be lifted up from the grave.

In order for us to be saved, Jesus must be lifted up (ascend) to heaven.

The Son of God came from heaven and took on flesh so that those of us who live in the flesh can have access to heaven. We will be lifted up because Jesus was lifted up on the cross.

Lifted up:

a. The snake in the desert by Moses.

b. Jesus on the cross.

c. Jesus raised from the dead.

d. Jesus lifted up (ascended) to heaven.

e. Us lifting Jesus up as we share our faith in him.

f. So we, too will be lifted up, as Jesus was lifted up.

But this is a present reality, not only a future reality, as, in baptism, we are buried with Christ and also raised with Christ. Because he was lifted up, we are lifted up. (Romans 6:1-7)

John 3:16 Is this Jesus or is this John speaking at this point? NIV quotes end at v. 15.

To summarize so far, This is how much God loved us. He sent his son in the flesh to be lifted up on the cross. Why?

So that we could be lifted up—have eternal life.

v. 17 That is why Jesus came in the flesh—to save, not to judge.

Do not be deceived. Jesus can and will judge (John 5:27 The Father has given the Son authority to judge), but that is not why he came in the flesh.

v. 16-21 Stark contrasts!

Have you been born again by water and the Holy Spirit?

Have you been utterly transformed by Jesus?

v. 16 perish vs have eternal life

v. 18 condemned already vs not condemned

Those who have heard of Jesus and who choose not to come into the light are already condemned!!! Wow!!!

v. 19 Light vs Darkness

The world wants to preserve some grey area, but there is none.

v. 19 Do you love darkness? I hope not.

v. 20 Well, then, come into the light!!!! Light eliminates darkness.

What deed of darkness do you need to bring into the light? What have you been hiding?

As light kills bacteria, spiritual light kills spiritual darkness.

Find someone today (not tomorrow!!!) Get open. Throw off that Thanksgiving lethargy. Do not delay.

God is calling you today.

If you have not yet repented of your sins and been baptized into Christ, then you stand condemned, you are in the darkness you are not saved. You are not yet in the kingdom of God. You need to do something about that right away.

But if you are saved, but if you need to bring anything out into the light, do so today. Do not delay.

John 3:22-36 John the Baptist says, (v. 30) He must become greater; I must become less. v. 36 Whoever believes in the Son (of God) has eternal life, but whoever does not do what he says will not see life.

Next: Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well.

John 4 The outsider believes