

THE CHOSEN: Nicodemus (3)

*There was a Jewish Leader (*Lit. "a ruler of the Jews"*) named Nicodemus who belonged to the party of the Pharisee. One night he went to Jesus and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher sent by God. No one could perform the miracles (*Lit. "signs"*) that you do, unless God were with him....

*Jesus answered, "I am telling you the truth: no one can enter the Kingdom of God unless he is born again.... No one can enter the Kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit (*John 3:3,5*).

*As Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the desert, in the same way the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son so the everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life (*John 3:14-16*).

*One of the Pharisees there was Nicodemus, the man who had gone to see Jesus before. He said to the others, "According to our Law, we cannot condemn a man before hearing him and finding out what he has done" (*John 7:50-51*).

* Nicodemus, who at first had gone to see Jesus at night, went with Joseph taking with him about thirty kilograms of spices, a mixture of myrrh and aloes. The two men took Jesus' body and wrapped it in linen with the spices, according to the Jewish custom of preparing body for burial.... (*John 19:39-42*).

Video Spot: From Episode 7 of THE CHOSEN

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5fldru4OUAo>

From 36:01-46:18

Discussion Questions:

1) Have you watched some of Series One of *The Chosen*? Are you enjoying it? What have you learnt? What is your favourite scene?

2) Who was Nicodemus? What do the Gospels, *and the New Testament as a whole* tell us about him?

Read John 3:1-2, 10; 7:50-51; 19:32-42

3) What do we learn from our Bible reading in John, chapter three.... About the Kingdom of God and how it comes? About the importance of faith in Jesus?

Read John 3:2-8; 14-17

Why does Jesus relate the healing of the Israelites in the wilderness from snake bites to his coming death of the cross? *Read Numbers 21:4-9; John 3:14-15*

4) What extra insights have you gained about Nicodemus from watching *The Chosen*? Has it “driven you back to Scripture”, *as the writers hope*, in order to check out what is Biblical, and what has been imagined as a back story for Nicodemus?

5) What has our study of John 3:1-17, and the version of this in *The Chosen*, reminded you of? Of your need to come to Jesus, to listen to him, and to learn from him? Of how vitally important it is to have faith in Jesus and his death for us on the cross? Of how faith expresses itself in actions? *Comment on, and discuss each of these.*

Also read Ephesians 2:1-10 if you have time....

Quotes:

The following are quotes from Sunday's message on the theme, "Nicodemus, his story, and what it means for us":

*We are introduced to Nicodemus by John in chapter three of his gospel. John tells us:

There was a Jewish Leader (Lit. "a ruler of the Jews") named Nicodemus who belonged to the party of the Pharisees....

And later on, Jesus calls him "a great teacher of Israel". Literally, Jesus says to him:

"You are the teacher of Israel, and yet you don't know this?" (John 3:10).

So, in these couple of verses, we gain a picture of Nicodemus. Nicodemus in a very prominent Pharisee, *religious leader*, and someone who is highly respected as "a teacher" of the Jews.

The fascinating thing about Nicodemus is that he is willing to come to Jesus, someone who is regarded by most Jewish leaders as being a wandering preacher, and someone who is critical of the theology of the Pharisees.... Nicodemus is someone who has been startled by the miracles of Jesus....

***Jesus is saying that God's coming Kingdom, *His rule*, will not come about by God using force to chuck out the Roman invaders, but by God making people new, *through His Spirit in them*. That's how God's Kingdom will come (vv. 3-8) ...And God's Kingdom, *his rule in the hearts of minds of people through His Spirit in them*, will come about through faith in Jesus as God's Son, as *God's Messiah* (vv. 14-17).**

***We are not told here how Nicodemus responded to Jesus' message. Did he believe in Jesus as God's Son and the One through who God's Kingdom comes, or did he walk away from Jesus unaffected?**

Well, it seems that he didn't walk away unaffected from his meeting with Jesus. Later on in John's Gospel, we hear that Nicodemus 'sticks up for' Jesus, *defends Jesus* when other Pharisees were pouring scorn on Jesus (*John 7:50-51*). And then later in John's Gospel, we find out where Nicodemus' journey of faith ends: with Nicodemus helping Joseph of Arimathea to place the body of Jesus in a tomb, and he expresses his relationship with Jesus by spending a huge amount of his money on the burial of Jesus. (*John 19:39-42*).

***What are we reminded of in the story of Nicodemus in the Bible, and in this *The Chosen* series?**

Three things I think:

***Firstly through the Gospel of John, and through the imaginative interpretation of it in the You tube series, "*The Chosen*", we are reminded that to be part of God's Kingdom we need to come to Jesus, listen to him, and learn from him....**

***Secondly, we are reminded of how vitally important it is to have "faith" in Jesus, to "believe" in Jesus. That's what Jesus is emphasising in his conversation with Nicodemus: that just as the people of Israel were healed by looking up in faith at the serpent on a pole, *trusting that God would heal them of their snake bites*, so we will be healed and made whole by looking up in faith at Jesus, God's Son, suffering and dying on the cross for us, "for our sins" (*1 Cor. 15:3*).**

***And thirdly, we are reminded by our look at Nicodemus that faith expresses itself in actions. In the Gospel of John, Nicodemus' growing faith is seen in his defence of Jesus in John chapter seven, and most especially by him helping Joseph to bury the body of Jesus. As I said before, Nicodemus expresses his relationship with Jesus *and his growing faith in Jesus* by spending a huge amount of his money on the burial of Jesus....**