

A SECRET DISCIPLE
JOHN 3:14 / 12-1-19 / P.M.

I. WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT NICODEMUS?

A. Who was he?

1. His name was a common one in the first century.
2. He was a Pharisee and member of the Jewish Sanhedrin or High Religious Court—John 3:1.

B. What did he do?

1. He had a late-night conversation with Jesus (John 3:1-15).
 - a. He addressed Jesus in a respectful way—3:2.
 - i. He called Jesus Rabbi or Teacher, a respected term.
 - ii. He acknowledged that Jesus was a godly man.
 - iii. He further confessed Jesus performed miracles.
 - b. Jesus told him that just a “head” knowledge about him wasn’t enough—3:3.

The word translated “born again” has two meanings.

- i. It means “born a second time”.
 - ii. It also means “born from above” or a spiritual birth.
 - c. Nicodemus thought Jesus meant be “born a second time”—3:4.
 - d. Jesus explained he meant “born from above”. Then Jesus went on to tell Nicodemus about spiritual birth—3:5-6.
 - i. Water refers to physical birth or the first birth.
 - ii. Spirit refers to second birth or being born again.
 - e. Jesus further explained to Nicodemus the place faith plays in salvation and also predicted his crucifixion making spiritual birth and salvation possible—3:14-16.
 - f. Nicodemus disappears without any indication he believed what Jesus said or that he expressed personal faith in Jesus as the Messiah and Savior.

2. Later Nicodemus spoke up for Jesus before the Pharisees (John 7:50-52).
 - a. In verse fifty we learn two things about Nicodemus—7:50.
 - i. John identified him as the same man in John 3.
 - ii. John also tells us that Nicodemus was one of Jesus' followers, but secretly. John 7:48-49 confirms Nicodemus' faith in Jesus was not known to his fellow Pharisees.
 - b. Nicodemus spoke up saying Jesus deserved "Due Process" before he could be condemned—7:51-52.
 - c. Nicodemus again disappears after this encounter.
 3. Nicodemus is last seen after Jesus' crucifixion. (John 19:38-40).
 - a. He along with Joseph of Arimathea appeal to Pilate for the body of Jesus—19:38-39.
 - b. The spices Nicodemus brought were very expensive telling us that he was wealthy.
 - c. Joseph and Nicodemus probably had servants prepare Jesus' body for burial, otherwise they would not have been able to observe the Passover due to being considered spiritually unclean having touched a dead body—19:40.
 - d. Once again Nicodemus drops out of sight never to be heard from again.
- C. His strengths.
1. He was a religious man—Pharisee and Sanhedrin member.
 2. He eventually "came out" as a follower of Jesus at his burial.
 3. He was one of the few Jewish religious leaders who followed Jesus.
 4. He was not satisfied with the legalism of Judaism.
 5. He approached Jesus for answers even though he did so under the cover of darkness.
 6. He worked through his doubts toward faith in Jesus.
- D. His weaknesses.
1. He was afraid of what others would think about him.
 2. He kept his faith in Jesus secret until he couldn't any longer.

II. LESSONS FROM NICODEMUS.

1. Doubting isn't the same thing as disbelief.
2. God is patient with those who doubt.
3. Fear can keep us from standing up for Jesus or sharing our faith with others.
4. It's not enough to know about Christianity, we must know Christ.
5. No one is unreachable who wants to be saved.
6. It's not enough just to accept Jesus as a good man or miracle worker.
7. Salvation is by faith alone, not by being a good person—Eph. 2:8-9.
8. Jesus alone is the way of salvation—Acts 4:12.