

John 3:3ff.
Rome Ga.
November 9, 1986
July 21, 2013

REVIEW:

- I. Nicodemus as a Man
- II. Nicodemus as a Ruler
- III. Nicodemus as a Man Ruled

NEW:

- I. Understanding our Standing
- II. Understanding the Standard
- III. Understanding our New Standing
- IV. Understanding that we can't Understand

OPEN with DB Nov. 24 1982 " In one of his sermons, A.C. Dixon told of an incident that took place in Brooklyn, New York. A detective who had been looking for a local citizen finally tracked him down in a drugstore. As the man began to make his purchase, the officer laid his hand on the citizens shoulder and said, "**You're under arrest; come with me!**"

Stunned, the man demanded, "**what did I do?**"

The detective calmly replied, "**you know what you did. You escaped from the Albany penitentiary several years ago.** You went west, got married, and then came back here to live. We've been watching you since you returned." Quietly the man admitted, "that's true, but I was sure that you would never find me. **Before you take me in, could we stop by my house so that I can talk to my family?**" The officer agreed. When they got to his home, the man looked at his wife and asked, "**Haven't I been a kind husband and a good father? Haven't I worked hard to make a living?**" His wife answered " **of course you have, but why are you asking me these questions?**" Her husband then proceeded to explain what had happened and that he was now under arrest. He **apparently had hoped that his record as an exemplary husband and father would impress the officer.** Even so, he was still an escaped criminal. **Though he was "right" with his family, he was all wrong with the state of New York."**

I. UNDERSTANDING OUR STANDING VV.1-4

Gen. 5:3

Adam, "begat a son in HIS own image. Not in image of God"

Jn. 3:3b

Not "**may not, or shall not, but cannot**" - it is **impossible.**

You cannot train a **bird** to **crawl** for the same reason that you cannot **train a snake to fly.**

When a caterpillar flies, we do not say, "**what an accomplished caterpillar**" but **rather, it has been changed, it has a new nature and a new name- butterfly.** (or as in the original English-flutterby.)

That which is born of the flesh is flesh (v. 6). That's all it can be.

You can send it to church and make religious flesh out of it but it is still flesh, but you can't regenerate it.

Peter says "we are **MADE partakers** of the Divine nature and that is what makes us a child of God and if we are not the children of God then we are in fact, children of the Devil. >> see **Jn. 8:44. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.**

II. UNDERSTANDING THE STANDARD VV. 5-7

Some people think that a IMPROVED MIND will result in an IMPROVED MAN. EDUCATIONist in our country have tried for over 100 years to eradicate sin by educating people. And the worse that man gets the more they holler that education is the answer. How many times have we seen the following HEADLINE. "DRUG PROBLEM CAN BE SOLVED THROUGH MORE EDUCATION."

Some think that a change of ENVIRONMENT will result in a reformed individual. But if you take a **broken clock** out of the **kitchen** and hang it in the **garage, it will still be broken!**

Same is true with man, he is rotten down inside and a new leaf or new environment will make no difference. **MAN DOES NOT NEED AMELIORATION OR CIVILIZATION OR CULTIVATION BUT REGENERATION.**

It is not more **EDUCATION** or **new ENVIRONMENT** but a **NEW NATURE** that men need!

There is a great difference between a **MAN'S MORALITY** and a **CHRISTIAN'S RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

It is the Difference between **REFORMATION** AND **REGENERATION.**

George Whitfield. At age 16 he became deeply convicted of his sin. He tried everything to erase his guilt through religious activity. He wrote. "I fasted for 36 hours twice a week, I prayed formal prayers several times a day, and almost starved myself to death during lent but only felt more miserable. **Then by God's grace I met Charles Wesley who put a book in my hand which showed me from the scriptures that that I must be born again or be eternally lost...."**

Jesus didn't tell Nicodemus that he had to be a better man, get more education, move out of the city environment or turn over a new leaf. He did not expect Nicodemus to in some way generate within himself the ability to begin to ACT LIKE a different man, Jesus told him that he must BE a different man. **Not one born of the FLESH but one born of the SPIRIT. A COMPLETE REMAKING OF THE MAN, NOT BY MAN BUT BY GOD**

>>>>**John 1:12-13** said "But to as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the children of God, even to them who believe on his name.; 13 **Who were BORN, NOT OF BLOOD, NOR OF THE WILL OF THE FLESH, NOR OF THE WILL OF MAN, BUT OF GOD."**

READ **VERSE 5-6** HERE.

Joh 3:5 Jesus answered, **Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**

Joh 3:6 **That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.**

In his book entitled "A New Birth" **Bishop J. C. Ryle** pointed out that this change of heart which Jesus told Nicodemus that he needed, is spoken of in the Bible under many different titles.

John calls it being **BORN AGAIN** and sometimes **BEING BORN OF THE SPIRIT**.

In **I John 3:14** he calls it **PASSING FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE**.

Paul speaks of it as being **ALIVE FROM THE DEAD** in **Rm. 6:13**

and as being a **NEW CREATION** in **II Cor. 5:17**

and as a **resurrection together with Christ** in

EPH. 2:1.=AND YOU HATH HE MADE ALIVE WHO WERE DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND IN SINS"

In **Titus 3:5** he refers to it as **THE WASHING OF REGENERATION AND RENEWING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**.

And **Peter II Peter 1:4** refers to it as **BEING MADE PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE**. *(in D.B. July 9, 1978.)*

BUT WHICHEVER TERM YOU CHOOSE TO PRESENT IT TO MEN AS, BY ALL MEANS "JUST DO IT"

I. UNDERSTANDING OUR STANDING VV.1-4

II. UNDERSTANDING THE STANDARD VV. 5-7

III. UNDERSTANDING OUR NEW STANDING V. 8

(don't forget to mention change in Nicodemus)

v. 8 **How can I tell if I am Born again?** READ V.8

Joh 3:8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

But when we see the trees bend and the ships sails fill and the dust blow we know when the wind is blowing. **When the spirit of God moves in a man's life, the world will see the difference.** **I John 2:3-4.**

Word Play in v. 8. PNEUMA = wind and also Spirit. Both do what they want to. Man controls neither.

Cf. 1 Jn. 5:1 "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is **BORN OF GOD**; and everyone that loveth him that begot loveth him that is begotten of him."

I John 5:4 "**for whatever is born of God**, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

Yet to many today who name the name of Jesus are wholly overcome by the things of this world.

"**Ulysses** was coming back from his **siege of Troy**, he stopped at the **land of the Lotus eaters**. "He anchored his ships and sent **three men into the country** to learn something of the people who lived there.

The men were treated very hospitably and were given some of the Lotus plant to eat. **The effect of the food was so pleasing to the senses as to cause those who ate it to lose all thought of home and loved ones and wish only to stay in the land forever.**" Eventually the men had to be returned to the ship by force and tied beneath the benches of Ulysses ship as the company sailed away.

Many Christians today are lured by the cares and riches of this world to the point that they are no longer overcomers, they are overcome. They need someone stronger who has not tasted the fruit of this World to come and rescue them. For the unsaved it will be Christ and for the saved it will be through much prayer and action on the part of some strong saints of the Lord.

Paul says that "they who are Christ's have **crucified the flesh with it's passions and lust.**" THAT WHICH IS CRUCIFIED IS SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD.

We saw last week that **Nicodemus** began to show evidence of his changed life even **prior to the resurrection** where he comes to the defense of Jesus in chapter **7:50** ff. Then by the time that Christ was crucified, that Nicodemus is identified in Chapter **19:39** as "he who at the first came to Jesus by night..."

What happened to this self-righteous Jew of Israel. This leader of the community. This religious man who sought after God.

He was not made perfect by his obedience to Moses or his faith in the promise to Abraham but rather he fell into that category of MEN that Jesus spoke of in **2:23-24 and 3:1 and 3:3** where he says "except a man be born AGAIN he cannot see the Kingdom of God.

I John 2:29 "if ye know that He is Righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of Him." Simply believing the Bible is not enough. The devil and his hoards believe it to be as it is. You must practice what it says.... Now listen very carefully. This is a NEW BIRTH that is in view here. It is not an extension of some religious system. The only way to live a righteous life in the twentieth century is through the new birth. We are children of God through the new birth 1:12. "everyone who is living a righteous life is doing so because they are In Christ." There is no other name given under heaven whereby MEN may be saved

PETER, BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN Acts 4:12 ..."NEITHER IS THERE SALVATION IN ANY OTHER; FOR THERE IS NO OTHER NAME UNDER HEAVEN GIVEN AMONG MEN, WHEREBY WE MUST BE SAVED."

Jewish leaders of the day from the mouth of a Jew. They all need Jesus.

I. UNDERSTANDING OUR STANDING VV.1-4

II. UNDERSTANDING THE STANDARD VV. 5-7

III. UNDERSTANDING OUR NEW STANDING V. 8

IV. UNDERSTANDING THAT WE CAN'T UNDERSTAND. VV. 9-13

GOD DOES NOT REQUIRE US TO UNDERSTAND ALL THAT IS INVOLVED IN OUR SALVATION.

The statement in **Eph. 2:8-9** is not "for by Grace are you saved through **UNDERSTANDING**" but rather "for by grace are you saved through **FAITH**. And that not of yourselves it is the **gift of God.**"

HAVE YOU RECEIVED THE GIFT OF GOD? HAVE YOU BEEN BORN AGAIN? IF SO, DO YOU UNDERSTAND THAT YOU HAVE BEEN BOUGHT WITH A PRICE AND THAT YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN?

1Co 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are **not your own**?

1Co 6:20 **For ye are bought with a price:** therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.