

CHRISTIAN OUTREACH AND DEVELOPMENT INTERNATIONAL

Being Real with God

Digging Deeper

HIS BELIEF WAS NOT ENOUGH

Optional Studies #1

Knowing the background of this passage is essential. At the time of Christ, the Pharisees were one of the strongest religious entities of the faith, a sect of Jewish belief. They mainly were looking for the return of the Messiah. Pharisees were known to know the Old Testament forward and backward and could recite the first five books of the bible verbatim. Those on the Sanhedrin or the ruling counsel were known to visit the temple three times a day and pray seven times a day. They had a sincere belief and faith in God it was unquestioned. One of them on the Sanhedrin known as Nicodemus was on the ruling counsel of the Sanhedrin at the time. He was totally taken by the person of Christ. Take a look at his encounter with Jesus the Christ.

Note: Many believe he gave his life to Christ and became a true follower.

John 3:1-15 (NASB)

¹ Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews;

² this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God *as* a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

³ Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." ⁴ Nicodemus *said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" ⁵ Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶ "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ "Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

⁸ "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

⁹ Nicodemus said to Him, "How can these things be?"

¹⁰ Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?"

¹¹ "Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony. ¹² "If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?"

¹³ "No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man.

¹⁴ "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up;

¹⁵ so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.

⇒ What impact did the signs and miracles of Christ have on Nicodemus?

⇒ How can this be? Nicodemus had a sincere faith, he believed in God, loved God, knew the scriptures forward and backward yet Jesus said you must be born again. Can you explain? Is it possible many in our contemporary churches believe in God yet have not experienced Spiritual birth?

⇒ According to this passage will one truly understand what happens to them when they experience Spiritual birth? V:8

⇒ So in verse 15 how does this belief stated, differ from Nicodemus's belief?

⇒ How does the earthly temporal knowledge differ from the heavenly eternal knowledge? V:11

GAINING HEAVENLY KNOWLEDGE AND OPENING THE EYES OF OUR HEART

Ephesians 1:15-19 (NASB)

¹⁵ For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which *exists* among you and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶ do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention *of you* in my prayers; ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. ¹⁸ *I pray that* the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. *These are* in accordance with the working of the strength of His might

1 Corinthians 2:11-13 (NASB)

¹¹ For who among men knows the *thoughts* of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the *thoughts* of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, ¹³ which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*.

⇒ Can we experience another level of existence beyond the temporal realm?

Luke 8:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ And He said, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest *it is* in parables, so that SEEING THEY MAY NOT SEE, AND HEARING THEY MAY NOT UNDERSTAND.

⇒ How privileged are believers to see beyond their own realm?
