

10-2018

A Biographical Study of Nicodemus

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Recommended Citation

Willmington, Harold, "A Biographical Study of Nicodemus" (2018). *New Testament Biographies*. 15.
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Nicodemus

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

- I. The character of Nicodemus
 - A. He was a Jewish religious leader (John 3:1).
 - B. He was a member of the Pharisees (John 3:1).
 - C. He was a well-known teacher (John 3:10).
- II. The confession of Nicodemus—“The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him” (John 3:2).
- III. The concern of Nicodemus—He probably scheduled the meeting with Jesus to learn more about the new birth. This is indicated by Jesus’ opening statement: “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).
- IV. The confusion of Nicodemus
 - A. The ruler’s ignorance—“Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?” (John 3:4).
 1. His rank may have confused him (John 3:1).
 2. His religion may have confused him (John 3:1, 10).
 - B. The Redeemer’s illustrations—Jesus offered three illustrations to help Nicodemus understand the new birth.
 1. A physical illustration—“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6).
 2. A natural illustration—“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” (John 3:8).
 3. A scriptural illustration—“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up” (John 3:14).
- V. The chastisement of Nicodemus—“Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? . . . If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?” (John 3:10, 12).
- VI. The conversion of Nicodemus—The evidence strongly suggests that Nicodemus accepted Christ at this time, perhaps after hearing the most important verse in the Bible (John 3:16).
- VII. The courage of Nicodemus
 - A. He defended Jesus before the Sanhedrin—“Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth? They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet” (John 7:50-52).

- B. He helped prepare the body of Christ for burial—“And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight” (John 19:39).

STATISTICS

First mention: John 3:1

Final mention: John 19:39

Meaning of his name: “Victor over the people”

Frequency of his name: Referred to five times

Biblical books mentioning him: One book (John)

Occupation: Jewish religious leader

Important fact about his life: He came to Christ by night, asking about the new birth.