

Nicodemus

“After the Resurrection”



"Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?"

John 7:51

“The quote above was my question to the other members of the Sanhedrin when they were plotting to kill Jesus. But I’m getting ahead of my story! I was important, I thought! The Sanhedrin were the only ones who really knew the law. We had great power and were the only ones who could interpret the law to the other people. We also had a considerable amount of wealth, but we were human and some of us wondered about Jesus and whether or not he was the real Messiah we had all been waiting for.

“I had gone to speak to Jesus one night. Some think I went at night because the Sanhedrin had sent me to see what Jesus would say that the Sanhedrin could use to condemn him. Others felt I went at night because I was going behind the back of all the people and seeking something from him personally.

“The truth is I went to him at night because I feared for my life going to him in the daytime. Many of us who had come to believe that he was who he said he was were afraid. We knew what was going on behind his back and yet we believed that no one could do the miracles he had done except God be with him. I know now that he knew that I had really come seeking how I could be one of his followers and what was required of me.

“As soon as I acknowledged that I believed no one could do what he had done without being from God, he confronted me and said *‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.’* I had no idea what that meant and so I asked *‘How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?’*

“Jesus knew me much better than I thought he did. He knew I was a member of the group that thought they knew everything. I was a member of the Jewish ruling council who felt they could judge anyone without question. So he really sort of put me in my place by asking *‘Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can*

you believe if I tell you heavenly things?’

“As he continued talking he said something to me that has become one of the best known of all Scripture verses. He said *‘For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’* John 3:16 KJV

“Every morning we are born again. What we do today is what matters most.”

“Fortunately some other members of the Sanhedrin had come to believe that this Jesus was really the Son of God. At one of their meetings the Pharisees and the high priests sent the police to find him, but when they came back they didn’t take him back to the Pharisees. As the conversation turned to how they could get rid of this man who was turning people against them, I spoke up and asked *‘Does our Law decide about a man’s guilt without first listening to him and finding out what he is doing?’* ‘John 7:51c. But they cut me off and asked if I was now also campaigning for the Galilean. They didn’t think a prophet could ever come from Galilee. They continued to badger him over the next few days so they could try to catch him doing something wrong. They even asked him about

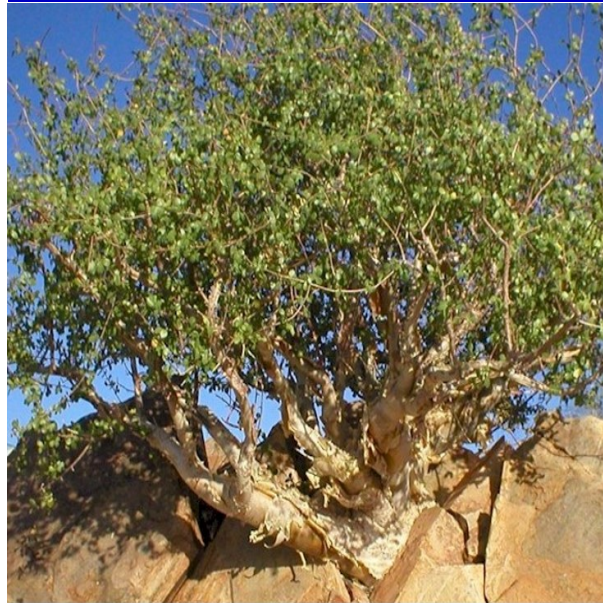
this Father he referred to meaning God. He replied with a question *'You're looking right at me and you don't see me. How do you expect to see the Father? If you knew me, you would at the same time know the Father.'* John 7:19 *The Message* I'm sure they were confused with this.

"Shortly after this conversation, the rulers did reach out and had Jesus arrested. They took him to Pilot and Pilot turned the decision over to the people and the people told Pilot to release Barabbas instead of Christ. What was I to do? I had no power over Pilot and so I stood and watched my Lord crucified. When Joseph of Arimathea, another member of the Sanhedrin spoke up and asked Pilot if he could have the body to take it to a grave he had had prepared for himself, I offered to go with him. At least I could provide the spices to prepare the body for burial. Joseph was so strong to ask for that privilege because the authorities were still afraid of what might happen.

"Why do we so often know we should speak up and yet we don't because of some selfish reason? I knew from the beginning when he talked with me that night that he knew so much about me and he told me exactly what I had to do to become one of his followers. I am thankful that I did speak up to the Pharisees and the high priests, but I don't think it helped anything. In fact, it may have just hurried the process because they realized that more and more people were becoming followers of Christ. To me it was impossible not to believe.

"I am thankful for Joseph. He wasn't afraid and his speaking out gave me the power to think I could at least go with him. But was I again riding on the coattails of someone else instead of taking a stand by myself for what I knew was right? I took the challenge to seek Christ in the middle of the evening. That was the most wonderful challenge of my life."

Challenges are what make
life interesting ~
Overcoming them is what
makes it meaningful



John 19:39 (KJV 1611)

*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.*

Prayer: Lord, so many times we do not speak about Your love and salvation when we should. Help us to know what is right and then to do it. Please help us to realize that You are always with us in times of goodness and in times of trial. Amen

1. Do we ever hesitate to take a stand and realize afterwards that we should have?
2. Why was Nicodemus in so much more danger than the regular person on the street?
3. We can only speculate, but why do we think that Joseph of Aramathaea was not afraid?
4. Why must we be born again? What does that mean?
5. Christ spoke very openly with Nicodemus and challenged him. Does he challenge us? How?

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