



Series: SEEING IS BELIEVING  
(Book Study Gospel of John)

Christ First Church  
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Sermon 10: Nic At Night (Part 2)  
(John 3: 1-21)

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**INTRO:** We are back in John chapter 3 today. Last week I started a sermon titled, "NIC AT NIGHT", This morning we will look at PART 2 of that sermon. Remember, we are listening in on a conversation between Jesus and a man named Nicodemus. Nicodemus was part of the religious group known as the Pharisees. He was also a member of a more elite group of men known as the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was the ruling body of the Jews. Think of them as a lower court who was allowed some authority by the Roman occupation to rule over matters of Jewish law and religion. Just being part of these two religious elite groups, give us insight into Nicodemus' life. First off, he would have been a man of exceptional knowledge. Secondly, he would have been highly respected in his sphere of influence. It is this man who came under the cover of darkness to speak to Jesus.

Last week we talked about two points: In vv 1-2 we sense this feeling of INTRIGUE as Nic makes his way to Jesus at night. He seemingly does not want others to know he is speaking with Jesus. He may have even had a rudimentary belief that Jesus could indeed be the Messiah that was promised to come, but because other Pharisees have already denounced Jesus, he may have been afraid of stating his possible belief. So, there's this overall feeling of something covert going on as he carries on a conversation with Christ. In vv 3-8 we have THE INSTRUCTION from Jesus to Nicodemous about how to get into the Kingdom of God. Obviously Nic wasn't understanding what Jesus had to say. So, in v 9, where we are picking up today, we see...

**III) THE INQUISITION:** vv 9-12 *"Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" 10 Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? 11 Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. 12 If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?"*

In these verses we see, what I believe is a sincere investigation on the part of Nicodemus to understand what Jesus is speaking of, when He says in v 3, and again in v 5, *"Unless a man is born again (that is, born from above, born of water and Spirit), he cannot see (he cannot enter) the Kingdom of God."* But Jesus does not give Nic the answer immediately. Instead, Jesus has a few questions of His own for Nicodemus.

**V 10** *"Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things?"*

You can almost hear a tone of sadness in the voice of Jesus as He ask this question that seems to capture the essence of what's wrong with Jewish life in His day. Those responsible for teaching the Word of truth to the people were themselves, ignorant of the meaning of scripture and what God desired of their lives. The same can be said of our time as well!

**III) THE INQUISITION:** vv 9-12 vv 11-12 *“Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. 12 If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?”*

Here in verse 11, we see the 4th “truly, truly” statement of Jesus in the book of John. It’s the 3rd we’ve seen in chapter 3. You will remember that TRULY is translated from the Greek word, AMEN. Amen, when used at the end of a sentence means, SO IT IS, or SO BE IT. But when “amen” is used at the beginning of a discourse, it means, of the truth, or truly or verily. 115 times we see this word used in this manner in scripture. John records for us 25 occasions when Jesus doubled up on the word, “amen, amen” or “truly, truly”. When doubled, it carries the strength of a superlative, meaning, MOST ASSUREDLY, or OF A SOLEMN TRUTH! It’s an overemphasis to ensure special attention is paid by the hearer. And then of course, Jesus added the words, “I SAY TO YOU”. “Truly, truly, I say to you...” I, God almighty, say to you.... This phrase is meant to drive home the fact that what’s about to be said is trustworthy, and should be heeded. These 25 statements are among the most important words spoken to man since the world began!

Here, in v 11 Jesus says, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony.*

The first thing we need to note here is the change in numbers from a singular notation to a plural, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen,* Marvin Vincent offers great insight to what’s happening here...

**Vincent** - After the use of the singular number in vv. 3, 5, 7, 12, the plural here is noteworthy. It is not merely rhetorical—“a plural of majesty”—but is explained by v 8, *“every one that is born of the Spirit.”* The new birth imparts a new vision. The man who is born of the Spirit has eternal life (v 36); and life eternal is to know God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent (17:3). *“You have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know (οἶδατε) all things”* (1 John 2:20). He who is born of water and of the Spirit sees the kingdom of God. This we, in v 11, therefore includes, with Jesus, all who are truly born anew of the Spirit. Jesus meets the “we know” of Nicodemus in v 2, referring to the class of which he belonged, with another “we know”, referring to another class, of which He was the head and representative.

But notice secondly what Jesus said after His truly, truly opening, *“we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony.”*

This is the very important point Jesus is wanting to make! **YOU DO NOT RECEIVE OUR TESTIMONY**

Jesus uses the plural form for YOU, meaning He’s not just talking about Nicodemus, but in fact, He’s speaking of everyone that rejects His testimony. Of His testimony, He says, *“we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen,”* This testimony was not speculative, but that which speaks of intimate knowledge, beyond a shadow of a doubt knowledge. The Greek word for KNOW here, means to know “absolutely”. It’s the knowledge of a satisfied conviction. It’s the same as saying, we absolutely know what we are talking about, but you refused to RECEIVE our testimony! The Greek word Lambano translated here as receive, means to take hold of, to take in one’s hand and heart. It implies an action which has to be taken. You have a choice to receive or not.

**III) THE INQUISITION:** vv 9-12 CONTINUE Earlier John recorded a sad summary of Jesus' ministry to Israel writing in John 1:11 "He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him." John will say in John 3:32 "He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony" What a sad testimony against the world. Now look at v 12.

**V 12** "If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?"

Jesus continues explaining to Nicodemus that there is still something lacking in his ability to understand spiritual things. The problem is not an intellectual one, it's a faith issue. Jesus, in essence, says, I'm speaking to you right now, about things that are elemental. I have given you earthly analogies in order to help you grasp what's being said, and yet you don't believe. You don't get it. Then Jesus says, if I spoke to you about heavenly things, it would blow your pea brain! I believe this statement to mean that there are things going on in the heavenlies, that if we were privy to them, it would just mind melt us! WOW, I can't wait to see it all, what about you?

So, we have seen THE INTRIGUE, THE INSTRUCTION, and THE INQUISITION. Now notice...

**IV) THE INTERVENTION:** vv 13-15 "No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. 14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life."

Intervene is defined as, "come between so as to prevent or alter a result or course of events."

Hebrews 1:2 tells us that God "in these last days has spoken to us in His Son". We read in John 6:33, 51, that Jesus is "the bread of God ... which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world". In John 6:38 Jesus declared, "I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." In John 6:62 Jesus asked, "What then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before?"

**Proverbs 30:4** "Who has ascended to heaven and come down? Who has gathered the wind in His hands? Who has bound up the waters in His cloak? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is the name of His Son— surely you know!" What a declarative statement as to who Jesus is!

**V 14** "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,"

**Numbers 21:5-9** "The people spoke against God and Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this miserable food." 6 The LORD sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. 7 So the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, because we have spoken against the LORD and you; intercede with the LORD, that He may remove the serpents from us." And Moses interceded for the people. 8 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he will live." 9 And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the pole; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived."

### III) THE INQUISITION: vv 9-12

**IV) THE INTERVENTION: vv 13-15 CONTINUE** Notice that Jesus goes back to the Scriptures, passages which Nicodemus likely knew by heart, and Jesus teaches the teacher truths that he would have never discovered on his own. He reveals to Nicodemus that the bronze serpent on the pole was a Biblical type of the Messiah, of Himself. (A type, in Scripture, is a person or thing in the Old Testament that foreshadows a person or thing in the New Testament.) And the bronze serpent was a type of Christ. What the serpent on the pole did for the Israelites, Jesus has done for all man kind!

Jesus has intervened on behalf of all who are lost and dying, those bitten by sin, certain to die from it's poison. BUT Jesus, by His own death on the cross, has taken away the STING of death that I should have known, and you too. It's through His INTERVENTION that we have the possibility of life today! BUT WE HAVE TO LOOK TO HIM!

**Numbers 21:8** *"Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he will live."*

**Hebrews 12:2** *"looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."*

My question for you today is, have you looked to Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins?

Look at the last verse, **vv 14-15** *"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life."*

**"Believes"** (Gr. *pisteuo*) means to consider something to be true and therefore worthy of one's trust. To accept as true, genuine, or real. To have a firm conviction as to the goodness, efficacy, or ability of something or someone. To consider to be true. To accept the word or evidence of. This belief is certainly belief in Jesus Christ, including confidence in the truthfulness of his teaching.

**"Eternal life"** - Ageless or endless life! This is the first of 15 references to eternal life in John's gospel. Eternal life refers not only to eternal quantity but divine quality of life. It can mean literally "life of the age to come" and refers therefore to resurrection, glorification and heavenly existence in perfect glory and holiness.

**CONCLUSION:** The question again is, have you looked to Jesus? Do you believe in Him as the Savior of the world, sent of God to die for your sins and mine? Do you desire to live with Him throughout eternity? That's the gift of life He offers you today! Will you look to Him?