

The Gospel of John

The Gospel of John

Lesson #24
The Journey
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The Gospel of John

- Nicodemus is listening and must surely be at least somewhat moved by the words of Jesus – he is probably confused as well.
- From his words to Jesus it is pretty obvious he wanted to know more about this one who could only be from God, but seemed to be saying things he never heard before.
- He had seen enough signs from Jesus – now he wants to know how it is that he seems to be an anomaly.

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The Gospel of John

The Bronze Serpent in the wilderness was a **TYPE** (a prophetic symbol) of Christ.

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- John 3:14 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.
- Num 21:8 Then the LORD told him, "Make a replica of a poisonous snake and attach it to a pole. All who are bitten will live if they simply look at it!" NLT
- Here we have a big advantage over Nicodemus – he knew of Numbers 21, but neither he nor anyone else had a clue about the analogy Jesus was making.

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- Just as the bronze serpent was "lifted up" on a wooden pole so too Jesus would be lifted up on a wooden cross.
- John 12:32 "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."
- Just as the snake bitten Jew would be healed instantly from the poison of the snakes, so too would sin bitten sinners of all time be instantly healed of the poison ushered into the world by the old serpent, the devil.

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John 3:14 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.

John 6:44 "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him."

John 12:32 "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."

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The Gospel of John

- This is the first hint we have from Jesus about how he would die ... **“so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.”**
- From our perspective, post cross, this is as obvious as the noses on our faces – “Son of Man”, “lifted up”, “whoever believes”, “may have eternal life”.
- But there is no record of Nicodemus shouting out, “I get it! I finally get it! Jesus is the Son of God, and he will save us through a death on a pole!

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- Actually, Nicodemus may well have been angered at these words of Jesus because they are very inclusive of something the Jews would dread.
- When Jesus says, **“whoever believes”** he was opening up salvation to the Gentiles – the very people that many Jews hated.
- Nicodemus would see this inclusive statement, **“whoever believes”** as blasphemy – God would not open up heaven to Gentiles. (or so they thought)

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- The gospel would expose the adherents of Judaism as the racists they were – they were fine going along thinking themselves superior to all others as God’s chosen people.
- They had been able to justify their hatred of Gentiles based on **“well this is how God feels”** – what a phony cloak of self-righteousness that was!
- Throughout their history they seemed to over play their hand – they took pride in being God’s elect people instead of being humbled by it.

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- Nicodemus may have recoiled at the idea of Gentiles being saved and entering the kingdom of God and he probably was.
- But he may also have recoiled at the second word in that phrase, **“whoever believes”**.
- Nicodemus was a Pharisee – they were the rule keepers and the regulation writers and thought the way to salvation was by keeping the law.

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- Judaism was not always a works religion, but over the centuries it was corrupted and became just a Jewish version of all other false religions.
- Look around the world and make note – all other religions and professed paths to God are based on something the one desiring to be saved has to do.
- Christianity is the polar opposite – we proclaim works accomplish nothing and that in order to be saved one must believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

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The difference between us and the average garden variety sinner is that we know what sin is and how sinful we are. We do not eschew sin because we are better than the lost, but because having been called out of darkness into the light we can see better.

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- If you believe that you are saved by faith alone apart from any good works you are part of a small company of people.
- It is a hard thought to shed that there must be something we can or must do to be saved – in fact our works are worse than useless with respect to our salvation.
- If it helps you organize your faith and your works think about this way – we are saved by grace alone through faith alone, but we will be judged by our works.

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**WE ARE SAVED BY
FAITH ALONE, BUT THE
FAITH THAT SAVES IS
NEVER ALONE**

MARTIN LUTHER
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Are we sufficiently humbled at God's saving of us, or do we still see reason, beyond grace, that God would choose to save us?

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- It is a trap of the enemy to have us think we are somehow, or some way, superior morally or intellectually to those around us who do not believe the gospel.
- If even for a moment we see some redeeming quality in ourselves we are far, far from the truth of the gospel of grace and we are in need of repentance.
- **Romans 5:6 For at just the right time, while we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.** BSB

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Never Lose the Wonder!!

And can it be that I should gain
 An int'rest in the Savior's blood?
 Died He for me, who caused His pain—
 For me, who Him to death pursued?
 Amazing love! How can it be,
 That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

Charles Wesley

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- Paul wrote what is below to the Jews because over the centuries they had developed an attitude of superiority that could be sniffed out from miles away.
- **Rom 2:24 For, as it is written, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."**
- Because of the haughtiness of the Jew, the Gentiles had come to mostly despise them as they cloaked their ungodly behaviors in a faux righteousness.

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God, forgive us for the times when we have caused your name to be despised by the unbelievers around us because of our behaviors. Forgive us for the times we've made the unbelieving feel dismissed as our equal when really "but for the grace of God there go I" is the truth.

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Questions?

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