

ONLY ONE THING WILL WORK

John 3:1-21

Introduction: There are countless who declare that they are Christians but Jesus says that not everybody who says so really is. The gospel of Jesus accepts no shallow or easy response for the gospel of Jesus demands everything a person is and has. It is very clear that Jesus turned away far more "prospect" than He accepted or who met His demands.

There was a rich, young ruler that came to Jesus, Zaccheus came to Jesus, and in this text, Nicodemus, a ruler, a Bible teacher comes to Jesus. What will a theologian as Nicodemus think about what Jesus has to say? How will Jesus treat this man?

I. RELIGION IN ITSELF IS USELESS

1. Nicodemus was a Bible teacher, Pharisee, ruler, member of the Sanhedrin court, a respectable man.
2. The teachings of Jesus were foreign to all that Nicodemus had been taught and knew.
3. Jesus told Nicodemus that he had to forget all his beliefs and start all over.
4. Jesus showed Nicodemus that it wasn't rituals and ceremonies or the law that would save him.

II. THE BIBLE REVEALS WHAT IS NEEDED

1. Nicodemus knew the "law," was obedient to it, yet he didn't know what Jesus was saying.
2. He didn't even know the Old Testament scriptures that Jesus was teaching which was "salvation comes by grace and faith and not by works."
3. What Jesus told him was that what was required to have salvation was not by rewards but were gifts from God.
4. Nicodemus in all his religious upbringing and living had forgotten that he was a sinner like everyone else.
5. Everybody seems to stumble over the simplicity of salvation and that's why there are so many other religions. Man adds what he would require if he were God.

III. BEING REGENERATED OR "BORN AGAIN" IS REQUIRED

1. Nicodemus knew the law, was obedient to it yet he still lacked salvation that Jesus talked about.
2. He told Jesus that he just didn't understand. Jesus told him it was because he didn't believe what Jesus was saying.

3. Being a Bible teacher and theologian, Nicodemus didn't want to admit that he was a sinner like everybody else and that he really needed anything else.
4. Jesus told Nicodemus that it had to be God's way or not at all, it was the only way.
5. Nicodemus was told he had to be "born again." No option, no other choice, no other way and it was something that only the Holy Spirit could do. No help from Nicodemus.

IV. REDEMPTION THAT JESUS SPOKE OF IS REAL

1. Jesus reminded Nicodemus of the serpents biting the Israelites in the wilderness.
2. How were the Israelites spared from death from the serpents bites? By faithful obedience after admitting they couldn't help themselves any longer. They had to do what God said.
3. Jesus was telling Nicodemus that he must do like sinful Israel and admit he had gone as far as he could and to do exactly what Jesus told him to do, act in faith to receive Jesus' salvation.

CONCLUSION:

1. To "believe" in Jesus is more than a passing glance. It is more than accepting the truth of who Jesus is or what He says. It is not just lip service.
2. The true test of saving faith is OBEDIENCE. If not obedient to all that Jesus says, then it is not saving faith.
3. Jesus is the ONLY source of salvation and those who do not believe are lost, no matter how religious or sincere one may be.
4. Every single person MUST be born again and that comes upon recognition of sin, confession of sin, repentance of sin and obedience in faith to all Jesus requires.
5. The Holy Spirit knows when one is sincere and indwells only those who are.
6. Did Nicodemus ever do things the right way?