“Why Jesus Came to Earth”

John 3:9-21
7-21-2024

Introduction: Verses 9 – 13

Nicodemus asked: “How can these things be?” (v. 9)
“How can a new birth take place?”

***What did Jesus do so we could be born again?**

I. He came to be <u>lifted up</u> on the cross to save men from the <u>curse</u> of sin *(Look to Jesus and live!)* (v. 14-15)

II. He came to bring the <u>love of God</u> to save men from the <u>condemnation</u> of sin *(Believe on Jesus and be saved!)* (v. 16-18)

III. He came as the <u>light</u> of the world to save men from the <u>darkness</u> of sin *(Come to the Light and see!)* (v. 19-21)

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v. 9
After hearing about the necessity to be “born again” (born a second time spiritually into the family of God), Nicodemus was perplexed, confused, bewildered as to how this new birth was to take place. His question was this: “How is it possible for such a new birth to take place? How can such a birth happen?”

v. 10
Jesus asks Nicodemus: “Are the THE (definite article) teacher of Israel and yet you do not know how such a spiritual birth can take place?”

Jesus implies that Nicodemus should have known. Based on the Old Testament Scriptures, he should have been aware of how such a transformation of life should take place.

Based on the Old Testament, Nicodemus should have known that regeneration was:

1) An act of God (not of human effort, merit, or works)
“I will put My Law in their inward parts. . . I will forgive their iniquity” (Jer. 31:33-34)

2) God giving people a new heart and a new spirit
Ezekiel 36:26-27
A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. [27] And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

3) Based on Messiah’s death (Is. 53)

v. 11
The phrase **“our witness”** evidently refers to the testimony of both John the Baptist and Jesus Christ.

v. 12
The Lord Jesus, who came from Heaven, could speak of things that went on in Heaven. Yet if people like Nicodemus cannot understand spiritual things like the New Birth—which occurs on earth—how could they ever grasp the celestial details of another sphere?

v. 13
Jesus could speak authoritatively about Heavenly things because He came from Heaven.

"No man hath ascended up to Heaven" – Although Enoch and Elijah went up to the heavens, they did not ascend for the purpose of gaining a message and coming back to tell it. The only One who was in Heaven and came down with a message from Heaven was Jesus Christ.

Note: The original Greek has the definite article "*the"* before the word "Heaven" which may refer not merely to the General Paradise but to the very Heaven of Heavens—even the throne of God. To this special abode, no one has ever ascended.

Proverbs 30:4
Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?

Acts 2:34
For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

Ephes. 4:9-10
(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? [10] He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

"Came down from Heaven" –

<u>Jesus Christ</u> testified of His own pre-existence.

Jesus said that He "came down from Heaven" (Jn. 6:33, 50; Note the Jew's reaction - v. 41, 42)
Jesus said: "Abraham rejoiced to see my day" (Jn. 8:56; cp. with Gen. 17:22, 18:22, 19:27).
Jesus said: "Before Abraham was, I am" (Jn. 8:58)
Jesus said that He was with the Father "before the world was" (Jn. 17:5, 24).

<u>The Apostles</u> declared Christ's pre-existence:

Jn. 1:1-3 - "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . All things were made by Him. . ."

I Cor. 10:4 - ". . . they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."

I Cor. 10:9 - ". . . let us not tempt Christ, as some of them [O.T. Israel] also tempted, and were destroyed of the serpents."

Phil. 2:5-7 V. 6 - "Who being [existing] in the form of God"

Col. 1:16-17 - "For by Him were all things created . . . and He is before all things . . ."

Note the humility of Christ as evident by the following changes He underwent in becoming man:

a. A change in His <u>dwelling-place</u>
(from the presence of the Father to the presence of men - Jn. 6:51)

b. A change in His <u>possessions</u>
(from riches to poverty - Luke 8:59; II Cor. 8:9)

c. A change in His <u>reputation</u> among men
(from glory to obscurity - Jn. 17:5; Phil. 2:6, 7)

d. A change in His <u>position</u>
(from equality with God [in authority] to servanthood - Mt. 20:26-28; Phil. 2:6, 7)

e. A change in His <u>form</u> (bodily appearance)
(from the form of God to the likeness of men - Phil. 2:6-8)

"Which is in Heaven" – Although this phrase is not in some manuscripts, it seems to be authentic as it is quoted by Hippolytus (170-236 AD) in Against Heresies of Noetus I:1:4.

Because Jesus is God and co-existent with God the Father, He can be on the earth as the Son of man and Son of God and still be in Heaven as God.

v. 13b
"It is frequently argued that one can easily understand why copyists might have found it difficult and left it out, but one cannot easily think of a good reason for inserting it—i.e. it is the "harder reading" which, all things being equal, is more likely original" (D.A. Carson, p. 203).

Verses 10 – 21 involve the Lord Jesus giving Nicodemus a discourse on why the "Son of man" or the "Son of God" came into the world. The emphasis in the context is on the repeated idea of His coming from Heaven into this world.

Note the following phrases emphasizing this fact:

V. 13 – "came down from Heaven"
v. 16 – "God...gave His only begotten Son" (implied as a gift from Heaven)
v. 17 – "God sent...His Son"
v. 19 – "Light is come into the world"

So the theme of vv. 10-21 answers two questions: Why did Jesus come into the world? And How does His coming relate to the New Birth?

In verses 14ff, Jesus answers Nicodemus' question as to how one is born again. Jesus explains how He came into the world to be the means by which people could receive regeneration, forgiveness of sin, and eternal life.

Nicodemus asked: "How can these things be?" (v. 9)
"How can a new birth take place?"

***What did Jesus do so we could be born again?**

I. He came to be <u>lifted up</u> on the cross to save men from the <u>curse</u> of sin *(Look to Jesus and live!)* (v. 14-15)

v. 14

Jesus, in speaking of the serpent that was lifted up, is referring to the incident of Numbers 21:5-9, where God sent vipers among the gripers of Israel, and they were bitten and began to die. So as to remedy this situation of death, God told Moses to make a brass (bronze) serpent, put it on a pole, and elevate it so that everyone who was bitten might look up to that pole and be healed. What God did for Old Testament Israel was a picture of what He would provide for the world.

"The solution to the 'serpent problem' was not in killing the serpents, making medicine, pretending they were not there, passing anti-serpent laws, or climbing the pole. The answer was in looking by faith at the uplifted serpent" (Wiersbe, p. 296).

Note the parallels between the brazen serpent and the Lord Jesus Christ:

1) Just as the serpent was placed on a wooden pole, so Jesus would be placed on a wooden cross

2) Just as the serpent was made of brass and brass was the metal used in connection with cleansing in the Temple Laver, so Jesus Christ (whose feet are as brass – Rev. 1:15) cleanses sinners

3) Just as the serpent was lifted up on a pole between earth and Heaven for people to see, so the cross was lifted up on Golgotha

John 12:32-33
And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.
[33] This he said, signifying what death he should die.

Cp. John 8:28
Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

4) Just as the serpent was a symbol of a curse (Gen. 3:14), so the Lord Jesus became a curse for our sin when He died (Gal. 3:13) on the cross

5) Just as the serpent had to be looked to in order for people to live, so the Lord Jesus must be looked to for eternal life.

v. 14

Everyone in the world has been bitten by sin (Rom. 3:10, 23; 6:23), and the remedy is not a human-produced vaccine. The cure is a simple look of faith upon Jesus.

Such a solution may sound simplistic and absurd, just as God's solution to Israel did. But it's the only remedy that works. Look to Him today!

Isaiah 45:22
Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.

"On January 6, 1850, a snowstorm almost crippled the city of Colchester, England, and a teenage boy was unable to get tot he church he usually attended. So he made his way to a nearby Primitive Methodist chapel, where an ill-prepared layman was substituting for an absent preacher. His text was Isaiah 45:22—"look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." For many months this young teenager had been miserable and under deep conviction; but though he had been reared in church (both his father and grandfather were preachers), he did not have the assurance of salvation.

"The unprepared substitute minister did not have much to say, so he kept repeating the text. 'A man need not go to college to learn to look,' he shouted. 'Anyone can look—a child can look!' About that time, he saw the visitor sitting to one side, and he pointed at him and said, 'Young man, you look very miserable. Young man, look to Jesus Christ!'

"The young man did look by faith, and that was how the great preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon was converted."

(Wiersbe, p. 296-297)

v. 15

Just as looking up to the brazen serpent brought deliverance from sure death, so looking up to Jesus Christ (by faith) brings deliverance from perishing and eternal life. The difference is that those who looked up among Israel had temporary life; whereas those who look to Jesus have eternal, never ending life

II. He came to bring the <u>love of God</u> to save men from the <u>condemnation</u> of sin *(Believe on Jesus and be saved!)* (v. 16-18)

v. 16

John 3:16 – "The Greatest Verse in the Bible" (by Elmer Towns)

"For God"	--	The greatest Being
"So"	--	The greatest degree
"Loved"	--	The greatest affection
"The world"	--	The greatest object of love
"That He gave"	--	The greatest act
"His only"	--	The greatest treasure
"Begotten"	--	The greatest relationship
"Son"	--	The greatest gift
"That whosoever"	--	The greatest company
"Believeth"	--	The greatest trust
"In Him"	--	The greatest object of faith
"Should not perish"	--	The greatest deliverance
"But have"	--	The greatest assurance
"Everlasting"	--	The greatest promise
"Life"	--	The greatest blessing

v. 17

Jesus did not come to condemn (judge) the world at His first coming, but will at His second coming.

2 Tim. 4:1

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

Rev. 19:11

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

Rev. 19:15

And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

v. 18

Condemnation comes to those who don't believe on Jesus Christ. The only unpardonable sin, which will condemn people for eternity, is the sin of unbelief.

You can either remain under judgment or you can receive deliverance. Everyone is in one of the two of these circumstances. The issue that determines which side you are on is found in the words **"believeth"** and **"believeth not."**

"Condemned already" – The unbeliever does not have to die to be judged, he is already under God's condemnation. As John 3:36 says: God's wrath is presently abiding on him.

III. He came as the <u>light</u> of the world to save men from the <u>darkness</u> of sin *(Come to the Light and see!)* (v. 19-21)

v. 19

Light entered the world in the person of Jesus Christ, as John 1:4-5 states:

> In him was life; and the life was the light of men. [5] And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

The basis for condemnation is that Light has come, and the Light of the Gospel is available, yet the light is rejected.

"Men loved darkness" – Just as Adam sought to hide from God after he sinned, so man has been hiding in the darkness ever since. Ever seeking to avoid Jesus Christ. They will come to religion and traditions of men and religious ritual, but not to the Son of God.

As cockroaches flee when the lights are turned on in the kitchen, so those who love evil flee when anyone brings up conversation regarding the Light of Jesus.

Joke: How many cockroaches does it take to change a light bulb? No one knows, because they all scatter as soon as the light comes on.

Sinful people prefer to live without a knowledge of God, without Jesus Christ, without the Bible, without anything connected to God's brilliant light.

v. 20

People don't want exposure. They don't want their sin exposed.

"It is not 'intellectual problems' that keep people from trusting Christ; it is the moral and spiritual blindness that keeps them loving the darkness and hating the light" (Wiersbe, p. 297)

v. 21

"Wrought in God" – People are not ashamed of that which God produces. His works are nothing to blush about. The only thing we should ever be ashamed of is sin.

Conclusion:

Nicodemus did eventually come to the light (John 19:38-42). Have you?