FAITH & DISCIPLESHIP IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

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NICODEMUS

In The Twilight Zone
NICODEMUS

- Became a disciple of Jesus
- Well-intentioned representative of ruling classes
- A fearful, secret believer
- Pathetic character lacking courage & conviction
- A typical unbeliever
NICODEMUS

- Identity
- Dialogue with Jesus (Jn 3)
- Argument with his colleagues (Jn 7)
- At Jesus’ burial (Jn 19)
IDENTITY OF NICODEMUS

- A Pharisee
  - Influence
  - Among the religious authorities

- "A leading Jew"
  - Member of the sunedrion (Sanhedrin)

- "A teacher in Israel"

- Advanced in age?
- Wealthy
NICODEMUS MEETS JESUS (Jn 3:1-15)

- Passage begins at Jn 2:23

- Nicodemus introduced (3:1-2a)
- Exchange 1: The Need for Rebirth (3:2b-3)
- Theological Reflection (3:16-21)
EXCHANGE 1:
THE NEED FOR REBIRTH

- "Rabbi, we know...."
  - Jesus is a teacher & miracle worker from God.

- "I tell you most solemnly" –
  - "Amen, Amen"
  - Rebirth needed
  - Anothen: “From above” or “again”
BECOMING A CHILD OF GOD

- Mk 10:15; Mt 18:13
- Jn 1:12-13

OT Texts:
- Exodus 4:22
- 2 Samuel 7:14
- Psalm 2:7
EXCHANGE 2: THE “HOW” OF REBIRTH

- Nicodemus’ understanding, like “the Jews” (2:20) is still at a “fleshly” level.

- Mk 1:15; 16:15; Mt 28:19
- Jn: repentance & faith are gifts of the Spirit (*pneuma*)

- OT:
  - Isaiah 32:15; Joel 2:2; Ezekiel 36:26
EXCHANGE 3:  
THE “HOW” OF REBIRTH

- Through mysteries of Jesus’ revelation & healing death

- Nicodemus fails to understand
  - "Amen, Amen…." (3:11)
  - Birth from above
  - “Lifting up” sayings (3:14; 8:28; 12:32)

- Result of rebirth from above: eternal life now!
THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION (3:16-21)

- “Gospel within the Gospel” (Luther)
- Abraham & Isaac
- Characters welcome or reject the light
- Nicodemus?

John 3:16

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, and whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life”
NICODEMUS & HIS COLLEAGUES (Jn 7:45-52)

- Secrecy?
- Sanhedrin unaware of sympathisers
- Nicodemus’ courage
- Hesitant to associate with Jesus openly
NICODEMUS & JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA (Jn 19:38-42)

- Joseph: a secret disciple

- Significance of Nicodemus’ involvement in Jesus’ burial?
CONCLUSION

- Clear & unclear picture of Nicodemus!

- Attracted by Jesus’ signs
  - Belief is lacking
  - Play on “at night”
  - “From below” & “from above”

- Jn 7: Still sympathetic to Jesus
  - Courage but secretive about belief
CONCLUSION

- Jn 19: Sympathetic but ambiguous
- Shows courage & risks
- Yet fear & secretive about beliefs
- No evidence of any form of confession or discipleship
- Attracted to the light, but remains in the shadows
NEXT WEEK

- Martha, Mary & Lazarus
- Jn 11:1-46
- Jn 12:1-11