

“Look And Live”
John 3:9-15

Introduction:

1. Let's Turn Back In Our Bibles:
 - To John 3 - Where - Thanks To John:
 - We Were Able To Eavesdrop:
 - Into The Conversation:
 - Between Jesus And A Pharisee:
 - Named Nicodemus:
 - Who “Came To Jesus By Night!”
2. And - In Spite Of:
 - His Position & Prestige:
 - In The Jewish Religion - And Even:
 - His Personal Pursuit:
 - After The Things Of God:
 - It Is Clear That:
 - He Was Still Troubled:
 - In His Soul!
 - He Was Wondering - Deep In His Heart:
 - What It Would Take:
 - For Him To See & Enter:
 - The Kingdom Of God!
3. Of Course - The Answer Of Jesus:
 - Caught Him Off Guard!
 - Because - In Three Different Ways:
 - Jesus Told Nicodemus:
 - “Ye Must Be Born Again!” (3:7)
 - Now - I Wonder:
 - If Nicodemus Had Chosen A Different Career Path:
 - When He Was Younger:
 - Would He Have Been Some Kind Of:
 - Engineer Or Mechanic!
 - The Kind Of Person:
 - That Is Detail-Oriented:
 - And Wants To Know **How**:
 - Everything Is Done!
4. You Probably Know Someone Like This!
 - Maybe You Even *Are* Someone Like This!
 - The Kind Of Person Who:
 - Wants To Know:
 - **How** A Car Can Get From Point A To Point B!
 - Instead Of The Person:
 - Who Is Just Content To Know:
 - **That** The Car Will Get From Point A To Point B!
5. I Wonder This:
 - Because Of How Nicodemus Responds To Jesus:
 - In 3:9 - “Nicodemus answered and said unto him, **How** can these things be?”
 - Or - “**How** Is It Possible For These Things To Happen?”
 - Nicodemus Wanted To Know:
 - The Details! The Process! The Way It All Worked!
 - But - He Forgot A Very Important Truth:
 - That He Would Have Learned When He Was Young!
 - From Deuteronomy 29:29 - “The secret things belong unto the LORD our God!”
 - And - Certainly - Being Born Again:
 - Would Qualify For One Of The Lord's “Secret Things!”
6. And So - Jesus Wants:
 - Nicodemus To Realize That:

- Instead Of Focusing On:
 - The **How** - He Needed To:
 - Rest In:
 - The **That!**
- And - Instead Of **Doing** Something:
 - He Needed To Learn:
 - To **Trust** Someone:
 - To Help Him With His Troubled Soul!
- Because - In 3:10-13:
 - Jesus Tells Nicodemus - And Us - That:

1. ***It Is Impossible:***

- To Understand & Pursue The Things Of God:
 - Without Being Born Again!
 - 3:10-13 - “Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? / Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. / If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? / And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven!”
 - In These Verses:
 - Its As If Jesus Wants To Dig The Hole Nicodemus Was Already In - Quite A Bit Deeper!
 - Even To The Point Of Rebuking Him:
 - For His Ignorance & Stubbornness!
 - But - Lest We Think That:
 - Jesus Only Has Nicodemus In His Sights:
 - At The End Of 3:11 - And Into:
 - 3:12-13 - He Changes The “You” From A Singular To A Plural!
 - From Nicodemus Alone, To Us All!
 - “Ye Receive Not Our Witness!”
 - “Ye Believe Not!”
 - “How Shall Ye Believe?”
 - “If I Tell You Of Heavenly Things!”
 - So - What Was True For Nicodemus:
 - Is Also True For Us:
 - If We Are Not Born Again!
 - According To 3:10 - It Is Impossible:
 - To **Know** The Truth:
 - Of The Gospel:
 - Without Being Born Again!
 - “Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?”
 - It Is Impossible To **Know** The Truth:
 - About The Kingdom Of God:
 - Without Being Born Again!
 - **Even If:**
 - You Are Like Nicodemus:
 - And Are A “Master” Or “Teacher” Of Israel!
 - So - Even Though Nicodemus Was:
 - An Instructor In The Things Of God:
 - To Others - He Was Actually:
 - Ignorant Of The Things Of God:
 - In His Heart!
 - Paul Describes This Problem:
 - In 1 Corinthians 2:14 - “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God!”
 - We Can Never Truly Know Or Understand:
 - Spiritual Truth:
 - Without Being Born Again!
 - Because - Apart From Christ:

- We Are Only “Natural Men!”
- Also - According To 3:11 - It Is Impossible:
 - To **Receive** The Truth:
 - Of The Gospel:
 - Without Being Born Again!
 - “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness!”
 - It Is Impossible To **Receive** The Truth:
 - About The Kingdom Of God:
 - Without Being Born Again!
 - **Even Though:**
 - Jesus Himself Tells Us:
 - About It!
 - And - Even Though:
 - His Word Is True & Trustworthy!
 - In This Verse:
 - Jesus Doesn’t Just Say “I” - But - “We!”
 - With All The Verbs In The Present Tense!
 - “What We Are Knowing, We Are Speaking About - And - What We Are Seeing, We Are Testifying About!”
 - This Begs The Question:
 - Who Else Is Jesus Speaking For?
 - I Believe - Jesus Is Describing:
 - The Divine Word That We Have In Scripture:
 - In Which The Entire Godhead:
 - Is Disclosing To Us:
 - The Secret Story Of Salvation!
 - The Way To Heaven!
 - The Way To See & Enter Into:
 - The Kingdom Of God!
 - And So - The Words Of Scripture:
 - And The Words Of Christ:
 - Reveal The True Wisdom Of God:
 - Because Together - They Are Speaking About What They Know!
 - And - The Written Word:
 - Along With The Living Word:
 - Brings Forth The True Witness Of God:
 - Because Together - They Are Testifying About What They See!
 - So - The Gospel Truth That God Has Given Us:
 - Is Clear & Consistent & Entirely Correct!
 - So - What’s The Problem?
 - 3:11c - “And ye receive not our witness!”
 - What Sad Words!
 - But Why Would We Not Receive:
 - Such A Credible Witness?
 - Because - We Will Never Receive:
 - Spiritual Truth:
 - Without Being Born Again!
 - Again - 1 Corinthians 2:14 - “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God!”
 - But Then - According To 3:12 - It Is Even Impossible:
 - To **Believe** The Truth:
 - Of The Gospel:
 - Without Being Born Again!
 - “If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?”
 - It Is Impossible To **Believe** The Truth:
 - About The Kingdom Of God:
 - Without Being Born Again!

- **Even Though:**
 - Jesus Himself Has Told Us:
 - About “Earthly Things!”
 - And - If We Won’t Believe Him:
 - About Those Things:
 - “How Shall We Believe, If He Tells Us Of Heavenly Things?”
 - Now - What “Earthly Things” Had:
 - Jesus Already Told Us About?
- Even Though This Is A Difficult Verse To Interpret:
 - I Believe Jesus Was Talking About:
 - Putting Spiritual Truth:
 - In Human & Earthly Terms!
 - For Example:
- Back In 1:51 - Jesus Already Told:
 - Nathanael About His:
 - Divine Purpose - In Terms Of:
 - Jacob’s Ladder!
 - Upon Which:
 - “The Angels Of God” Would Be “Ascending And Descending” Upon Him!
 - It Was An Earthly Object Lesson:
 - That Described His Purpose As The Mediator Between God & Man!
 - But - How Many Believed His Words?
- Then - In 2:16 - Jesus Already Told:
 - The People In The Temple About His:
 - Divine Person!
 - When He Told Them:
 - “Make Not My Father’s House An House Of Merchandise!”
 - It Was Another Object Lesson:
 - To Describe His Own Nature As God:
 - As Well As His Relationship With God!
 - But - How Many Believed His Word?
- Then - In 2:19 - Jesus Already Told:
 - The Offended Jews - About His:
 - Divine Power!
 - When He Gave Them The Sign:
 - Of His Own Resurrection - “Destroy This Temple, And In Three Days I Will Raise It Up!”
 - Jesus Was Describing:
 - Another Spiritual Truth:
 - In Human & Earthly Terms:
 - That They Should Have Been Able To Understand!
 - But - How Many Believed His Word:
 - And Took Him Up On His Offer?
- And Then - To Nicodemus Himself - In 3:3:
 - He Told Him About His:
 - Divine Provision!
 - “Except A Man Be Born Again, He Cannot See The Kingdom Of God!”
 - The Transformation That Is Required:
 - To Go To Heaven:
 - Is Once Again Put Into Human & Earthly Terms!
 - Its Like Being Born:
 - But - Again & From Above!
- But - How Many Believe His Words?
 - At First - Nicodemus Didn’t!
 - And Still - So Many Others Don’t!
- And This Prevented Jesus From:
 - From Telling Them Even More Truth:
 - About “Heavenly Things!”

- Even To His Own Disciples:
 - Jesus Said - In John 16:12 - "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now!"
 - But Why?
- Because - We Will Never Believe:
 - Spiritual Truth:
 - Without Being Born Again!
- But Even More - According To 3:13a - It Is Impossible:
 - To *Ascend* - To Go & Get The Truth:
 - Of The Gospel:
 - For Ourselves & On Our Own!
 - "And No Man Hath Ascended Up To Heaven!"
- So - It Is Absolutely Impossible:
 - For Anyone To Understand & Pursue The Things Of God:
 - Without Being Born Again!
 - Because - Without:
 - The Intervention Of God:
 - We Are Ignorant:
 - And Unable To Know:
 - His Truth!
 - We Are Insolent:
 - And Refuse To Receive & Believe:
 - His Truth!
 - We Are Impotent:
 - And Remain Bound To This Earth!
 - The Hole Of Nicodemus' Understanding:
 - Kept Getting Deeper & Deeper & Deeper!
 - But - This Is Where:
 - Jesus Himself Stepped In!
 - Not Just For Nicodemus:
 - But For Us As Well!
 - Because In The Rest Of 3:13 - Through - 3:15:
 - Jesus Throws Down:
 - A Lifeline - Into Our Deep Pit:
 - That Is Impossible To Get Out Of On Our Own!
 - Because - Jesus Is Able:
 - To Break Through The Impossible!
 - So That Now:

2. *It Is Possible:*

- To Be Born Again:
 - Because Of What Jesus Came And Brought:
 - To Us - In Our Natural & Hopeless Condition!
 - Jesus Makes It Possible:
- Because He Brought:
 - His Own Home:
 - To Us!
 - Even As We See In The Rest Of:
 - 3:13 - "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven!"
 - Even Though:
 - Noone Can "Ascend Up To Heaven" - In Order:
 - To Go & Get The Truth:
 - Noone Had To!
 - Because - Jesus Himself:
 - As The "Son Of Man!"
 - Not Only "Came Down From Heaven!"
 - When He Was Born Into This World!

- Jesus Even:
 - Brought Heaven Down:
 - To Us!
 - Because - In Some Sense:
 - Even While On Earth, "The Son Of Man" - In His Divine Nature - Was Still "In Heaven!"
- And So - When Jesus Came Down From Heaven:
 - He Even Brought Heaven With Him!
- As John Peterson Once Wrote:
 - "Heaven came down and glory filled my soul, / When at the cross the Savior made me whole; / My sins were washed away
And my night was turned to day! / Heaven came down and glory filled my soul!"
- Jesus Came Down From Heaven:
 - So That - His Home:
 - Might Become Your Home!
 - So That He Might Make:
 - The Impossible - Possible:
 - Through Him!
 - He Also Makes It Possible:
 - To Be Born Again:
- Because He Brought:
 - His Own Heart:
 - To Us!
 - A Heart Filled With:
 - Love - That Cause Him To Do What He Says:
 - In 3:14 - "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up!"
- Once Again:
 - Jesus Is Telling Us About:
 - His Divine Plan:
 - In Terms That We Might Understand - If We Just Read:
 - Our Bibles!
- He Looks Back To Time:
 - When God Rescued His People:
 - From A Plague Of Fiery, Poisonous Serpents - In Numbers 21!
 - 21:4-9 - "And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. / And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. / And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. / Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. / And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. / And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived!"
- So - Again - Back In:
 - John 3:14 - Jesus Uses This Episode In The Story Of The Children Of Israel:
 - To Describe His Own Divine Plan!
 - "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up!"
- So - Even At The Beginning:
 - Of Jesus' Ministry - He Was Looking To:
 - The End Of His Ministry:
 - And The Time When He Would Be "Lifted Up" On The Pole Of A Cross!
 - The Lifeline That Jesus:
 - Gave To Nicodemus - And:
 - The Lifeline that Jesus:

- Gives To Us:
 - Is In The Shape Of A Cross!
- But - What Some Might See:
 - As A “Cross Of Shame” - It Is Truly:
 - His “Throne Of Glory!”
 - Because - It Was All Part Of His Plan!
 - John 12:32 - “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me!”
- And So - Jesus Came Down:
 - To Bring & To Show His Heart:
 - In His Loving Sacrifice On The Cross:
 - For Your Sin!
 - So That He Might Make:
 - What Is Impossible For You:
 - Possible:
 - Through Him!
- He Also Makes It Possible:
 - To Be Born Again:
- Because He Brought:
 - His Own Hope:
 - To Us!
 - A Hope That:
 - According To 3:15 - “Whosoever Believeth In Him Should Not Perish, But Have Eternal Life!”
- Jesus Came From His Home In Heaven:
 - To Offer You Hope:
 - That What Happened In:
 - The Wilderness To:
 - The Children Of Israel!
 - Can Happen To You:
 - In The Wilderness Of This World!
- In The Wilderness:
 - All The People Had To Do:
 - Was “Behold” The Serpent Of Brass:
 - With An Eye Of Faith:
 - And Live!
- And Even Today:
 - All You Have To Do Is:
 - “Believe In Him!”
 - Believe In Jesus!
 - Who He Is!
 - Why He Came!
 - What He Did!
 - For You!
 - And - The Fiery Serpents Of:
 - Sin & Death & Hell:
 - Will Lose Their Sting!
 - You Will “Not Perish, But Have Eternal Life!”
- And So Now - It Is Absolutely Possible:
 - To Be Born Again:
 - Because Jesus Made It So:
 - By Bringing His Home, His Heart, And His Hope:
 - To Impossible Sinners:
 - Like Us!

Conclusion:

1. So - Its Not The **How**:
 - Of Being Born Again:
 - That We Need To Focus On!

- Because - The “Secret Things” & The “Heavenly Things” Still “Belong Unto The Lord Our God!” (Deuteronomy 29:29)
- But - When You Believe:
 - In Christ - When You:
 - “Look & Live” - It Is Because:
 - You Have Been Born Again!
- 2. And This Has Been The Means:
 - Of Salvation - Since The Beginning!
 - Even As The Lord Said Back In:
 - 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!”
 - This Verse Was Instrumental:
 - In The Conversion Of The Great English Preacher:
 - Charles Spurgeon - Who Described How:
 - An Old Minister Expounded This Verse!
- 3. That Minister Said:
 - “My dear friends, this is a very simple text indeed. It says – ‘Look!’ Now lookin’ don’t take a deal of pains. It ain’t liftin’ your foot or your finger; it is just, ‘Look!’ Well, a man needn’t go to College to learn to look. You may be the biggest fool, and yet you can look. A man needn’t be worth a thousand a year to be able to look. Anyone can look; even a child can look!”
 - When Charles Spurgeon Heard These Words:
 - He Later Would Write:
 - “I saw at once the way of salvation. I know not what else he said – I did not take much notice of it – I was so possessed with that one thought. Like as when the brazen serpent was lifted up, the people only looked and were healed, so it was with me. I had been waiting to do fifty things, but when I heard that word – “Look!” – what a charming word it seemed to me! Oh! I looked until I could almost have looked my eyes away. There and then the cloud was gone, the darkness had rolled away, and that moment I saw the sun; and I could have risen that instant, and sung with the most enthusiastic of them, of the precious blood of Christ, and simple faith which looks alone to Him. Oh, that somebody had told me this before, “Trust Christ, and you shall be saved!”
 - John 3:15 - “That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life!”
 - That - As We Will Sing In A Moment:
 - “It Is Only That You Look And Live!”

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