

A PHARISEE ASKS QUESTIONS

John 3:1-10

Jesus knows the hearts and thoughts of man. We have seen that in the last two weeks. He not only knows the hearts spoken of in Scripture but He knows your heart and mine today.

In John 1:9 we read that 'the true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.' This does not speak of universal salvation. It does not say that all will believe, but that all receive the light that can illuminate every person's need. In 1:11 it even says that Jesus' own would not receive Him. His own 'people' are the Jews we have been rightly told. But in vs. 12 of the first chapter, we are told that Jesus gave the right to become the children of God. John shows us examples of this throughout his gospel, and today we see that **Jesus knows the heart of**

I-A Pharisee- John 3:1-2, 10-

The name Nicodemus means 'conqueror of the people' in Greek. Nicodemus was a Pharisee. The word Pharisee means 'separated one.' The Pharisees are traced back by many to the time of Daniel and his three friends.

Daniel's three friends would not bow to the king nor eat of the unclean foods offered them.

They were a righteous group that clung to the Old Testament law meticulously. As expositors of the Scripture they sought to apply the Law to the Jewish daily life.

The Mishnah contained not less than 24 chapters on how to keep the Sabbath.

Not just a Pharisee, he was a ruler. Part of the Sanhedrin.

In vs. 10, Jesus calls him the 'teacher' of Israel.

Jesus pointed to the irony of 'the teacher' yet he did not understand these basic things.

Menacing darkness-

John 9:4; 11:10; 13:30; Speak of rejecting the true light. John 1:9-11

II-A Pharisee with Questions- vs. 4 & 9

Perhaps this account in John 3 is just a summary of part of the discussion. Jesus cut to the chase when He told Nicodemus, 'you must be born again.' (John 3:3)

The term in Greek, *anóthen*, means to be born again or born from above.

Gentile converts were called 'newborn children.' It spoke of new life begun as 'sons of the covenant.' They had become newborn heirs as Abraham's offspring.

Nicodemus objected to this imagery because Jesus said that **even the Jews** would miss the kingdom if they were not 'born from above.'

This would leave the Jews themselves out of the promises to Abraham.

'The Teacher' of Israel missed what God had already revealed back in the Old Testament.

Ezekiel 36:24-28 'I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.'

III-A Pharisee Hears a New Way- vs.3, 5-9

This new birth that Jesus had introduced was not left unexplained. He gave the principles of Ezekiel 36 and He promised that you could not earn it on your own.

It was not because of any desire or plan from man.

Now everyone in Jerusalem knew of birth from water. The Baptist had been emphasizing this before he took the believers into the river. Repent of your past and trust in your God.

You were born of water as a picture of the repentance that had happened in your life.

Nicodemus did not understand (v.9). Jesus said after repentance you would be born of the Spirit. You couldn't see it. You didn't perform the acts of the law to get this new birth. In John 1:12 we read that 'as many as received Him,' He gave the right to become a child of God.

Yes, He gave the right. He draws you when you place your faith, as a child, into the one who died for you.

It is not becoming proficient in the law and obedient to it. It is simple faith in the one who states, 'You Must Be Born Again.'