

John 3

Sunday 2/21/2021

SEC: The Nature of Truth and Human Resistance

We are in one of the key places in the Bible that really shows us the inside of ministry. We have been talking about truth for a couple of weeks. One of the greatest things about truth, especially in dealing with people, is that when you work with people, truth on the inside many times does not match what you see on the outside. It takes a while to go to a Bible-believing church to get truth all the time, because truth forces you to look inside yourself. None of us really like to do that. We all have this pristine picture of ourselves, and that is not true. The preaching of the Bible forces us, no matter how good we are, to examine ourselves and to make course corrections in the things in our lives.

Many times, you are going to find out when you deal with people that they will come to church for a while. They will stick it out for a year, maybe, or whatever, and then you will start to see that things change with them. What they once loved about the church or the Bible, they no longer love. If you look down to magnification, you usually see a paper trail that they have been to five, six, seven, or eight churches all their lives, and it is a pattern that people get into.

We looked at John 2, and we saw the nation of Israel. We saw how Jesus Himself said in Matthew 23:27, among other things, that they were like whited sepulchers. They were beautiful on the outside, white, beautiful marble, but on the inside was full of dead men's bones. That is what happens when truth shows up; you get what is really on the inside, what we really are. Honestly, some people cannot deal with that. They have lived a life of denial for years. They have come to the place where they prop themselves up with the things that they want to believe, and when the reality of truth confronts them, they are just not up to the task.

One of the great things we learned, and we have talked about this in People Ministry and in the Bible Institute, is that human nature never changes. We think because we live in an age with computers and cell phones and digital everything, and fast cars, that we are different than when they rode in chariots and had none of that stuff back in the Old Testament. It is only different because of the things that we have. Human nature never changes. I do not care if it is with Adam and Eve in the garden at 4004 B.C., or at the captivity of 606 B.C., or Christ coming at 4 B.C., or 500 A.D. at the beginning of the Dark Ages, or 1600 when the King James Bible began to come out, or 2021 where we are at today. Human nature never changes. The key to being effective in helping people is to understand those simple patterns that people fall into and follow, the patterns of human nature. It is not complicated.

SEC: The Anatomy of God's People

When we looked at Moses, I told you last week that he is probably one of the greatest examples and a great study on a minister who is ministering. He has to deal with the nation of Israel. You can see all the aspects of the frustration that he had with God's people. Through that, I laid out the anatomy of the nation of Israel in the Old Testament, which is called the Church of the

Wilderness in the Book of Acts. I showed you that the nation of Israel in the Old Testament was God's process to take the Gospel to the world, the truth of God to the world.

I showed you how there were three parts to the nation of Israel that made up their anatomy, so to speak.

1. You had the Ark that was a type of Christ right in the middle. Around that, in daily operation, were three families who did everything and ministered in every way and made sure that the Ark—they were the closest to it of anybody. Many times, the anatomy of a church will be the same way. You will have people at every church that you get as close to the Bible and God as you can. You are always looking for opportunity. Some people are always looking for opportunities to miss an opportunity. You are never missing an opportunity to make good on an opportunity. You see things. You understand things. You give of yourself way beyond what the average person would do.
2. Then you have the second group, which was literally the twelve tribes. The Ark was in the center, the three families ministered there, and then the twelve tribes camped in a circle around the Ark. The picture is obvious: the Ark, a type of Christ, was the center of everything that Israel did. So they camped in a circle around it to be as close as they could. Everything that radiated from the Ark, through the families, got to them.
3. Then the third part was the mixed multitude, which is commonly called the outer court. They are the ones who came out of Egypt with the nation of Israel, but they were just looking for an opportunity to get out. They were looking for whatever they could get that was a better deal than they had in Egypt. They camped at the outermost part of the camp. They are the real opposition, the mixed multitude, that whenever Moses tries to do something or God tries to do something, when the twelve tribes have problems, it is because of their association with the outer camp, the mixed multitude, that continually causes the opposition to God's ministry.

We learned from that last week that there is no difference. The anatomy of the nation of Israel is the same anatomy we find in the New Testament local church today. The things that Moses struggled with are the same with God's people, the same thing that you will struggle with when you minister to them. We saw last week that the real opposition to God's ministry will never just be the world, but rather God's people, because it was true in the Old Testament under Moses. We saw in John 2 that it was true in the New Testament under Christ. I am telling you right now, it will be true for you and me as we try to do the work of God. It is so important for you, if you have decided that you want to invest in the work of God, that you learn these lessons. It simply comes down to understanding not only why the world does the things that they do the way they do it, but why God's people do the things that they do the way they do it.

SEC: Patterns of Opposition and Bad Choices

Looking at the mixed multitude last week, or the people from the outer group, we looked at three patterns that you will find with people that are like this. Yet they are in church every Sunday. I am not talking about people who quit coming to church. I am talking about people who are in churches every Sunday. They may jump from church to church to church like a checkerboard. But the bottom line is there are three patterns and three areas that they all have in characteristic.

4. One of them, and we saw it last week in verses 18 through 25, is that they had no spiritual discernment. They could not see anything that God was doing. Here is Christ doing these miracles. The Old Testament prophecies are tenfold about who He was and now that He is here, and they simply cannot get who He is.
5. The second thing is that there was no opening of the Scriptures to them. We saw this in verses 19 and 21. They had everything they needed to know exactly who He was, and of course, they refused not to.
6. Then the third thing, verses 24 and 25, was really the crux of what we need to see and understand: Jesus takes the time to tell us who man really is and what is really in man. I took you back, if you remember, to the book of Romans, and we walked through and I laid that out, all dealing with the works of the flesh. A Christian cannot live in the flesh because once you get saved, we know the process that you can no longer live in the flesh. That is what an unsaved man does. But you can walk after the flesh. If the truth of God's Word does not overturn the tables in our lives, in our heart, then we will, like John 2, go right back to the old ways that we did before we found the truth.

It is one of the greatest studies you will ever understand: how the devil will use God's own people to destroy the work of God. I said it last week, a saved person can do everything an unsaved person can do except die and go to hell. It is no secret how the devil will use that because he can always do more damage from the inside than he can from the outside. He does it by attacking your family first because he knows that God's plan for reaching the world in the New Testament is the same as the plan in the Old Testament, and that is to reach them through families: the unbroken chain of families passing on and leaving a legacy for the Lord. The second thing that he will do will be in your own self. He will attack you. By association, if you allow a mixed multitude in your life, there is an old thing back in Revelation, it is so true, it says, "Birds of a feather flock together." You are going to find that disgruntled people always draw to other disgruntled people.

We talked about making good investments, good investments in your life with God and through the work. We know that Philippians 1:6 says, "He began a good work in you, and He wants to perform it right up to the rapture of the church." I talk a lot about our personal investment because honestly, there are going to be tough times to come. We have just seen the pandemic come through, and there will be things that come into our world that are going to show up in the future that we are going to have to deal with. Your own personal investment will be the only thing that will keep you in times of opposition or times of adversity. It keeps you focused. It keeps you understanding that you have a purpose. If you do not have any real purpose to be at church on Sunday, then you will not be there. But if you have people counting on you, if you have something you want to get, to get where you want to go with God, if you are making an investment in it, then it is a whole different story.

The key to good investments will be making good choices, putting the good choices in your life. Our lives, good or bad, will simply be about the choices that we have made. In dealing with people, you see sometimes they get so far out that they are never going to get back. They are saved, but they are so into the world, they are so into denying the truth of the Word of God. They

lose all reality of a life. You will run into them all the time. I want you to remember, in every case, no matter how far out there they are, it all started with a bad choice. Just one. Then they added to those bad choices, and it developed into a life of bad choices.

I think that suicide is a terrible thing. I feel terrible for people who actually come to the point in their life where they feel that the only way to deal with life is to take themselves out of life. I feel bad about that, but I understand the bottom line for the anatomy of suicide, because in your Bible, you have seven suicides. If you want to understand why people take their lives, you start with that. But I will simply say this: it is a tragedy, but honestly, if you are just going to lay it on the table, a man or a woman deciding they are going to take their life through suicide is just one more bad choice in a life of bad choices. Unfortunately, this is the last bad choice.

It is the way life goes. Many times you will find kids who are disobedient to parents. They will not listen to Mom or Dad for anything, love their money. They think they know all about it, and they get out there and get involved with somebody or something. They are somebody that God had planned to use, and they absolutely throw it away, all because they will deny the truth and make wrong investments. I have seen Moms and Dads make bad investments, aligning their spirit with the wrong things, associating with the wrong people. All the time they are in church every Sunday, but the real proof of the pudding is an empty life of investments for God. Not one thing they are doing, and what is even more tragic, not one thing they care about. One of the great things you want to remember is that all investments, whether they are good or they are bad, they come with a compounding interest. You add to them and you build into them, and they will control your life one way or the other.

SEC: Introduction to John 3 and Bible Study Principles

Nothing to the doom and gloom of last week. Let us get into the doom and gloom of this week. Today we are going to begin John 3. We are just going to have a good little Bible study today. This is a great thing in the Bible that you can learn today. So I am just going to tell you now, Maddie, Kenzie, and Macy, get ready. Grandpa is going to give you some more Bible today, and you want to get this all down. Do not cheat off your mom because she always gets the wrong notes down anyhow.

John 3 is probably the most used chapter in the book of John because it speaks and deals with being born again, which obviously is a New Testament doctrine for us. Yet I would say that 99.9999% of the people who use this passage do not really understand what is happening here. You have the baby milk toast crowd who all they see is the nice little warm stuff. They do not get the real meat of what is happening here. This is one of the greatest places in the Bible to show you how the Bible will lay itself out. We know that the Bible has a historical application, a doctrinal application, and an inspirational application. You have heard me say that a thousand times.

When I come to my Bible and the teaching of it, I try to stay as accurate to it as I can be. I never deviate from the chain of scriptures that it lays out the way that it should be laid out. I never try to make the Bible fit into what I want to believe or teach, but rather make my beliefs and my teaching fit into the Bible itself. In other words, I follow the rules. I do not just give them to you;

I live by them when it comes to the Bible. I want my people, you that are here today or listening to me, I want my people, the ones who want it, to have a complete understanding of the Word of God as accurate as humanly possible. I will go to great lengths to give you what I have learned, and more important, I think, the way I learned it. The Bible talks about it: you get some old guy who has been in the Bible for a while, if he has done what he needs to do, you can learn a lot from that. That is where I learned what I know, the absolute truth of God's Word.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

For it to effectively work in you, you have to believe it. That is how I was taught. In laying out the Bible, I like to use really good stories. Jesus was a great storyteller. When He tells stories in the Bible, you better listen, because they always have a depth to them, and they always have an impact into something when He tells stories. I like really good stories because in them are usually really good examples. I like stories that I can take and show you how God will illustrate some doctrinal truth through the very story by weaving it through that very story. In John 3, this will be a great story. Over the next couple of weeks, I want to use it to show you how to unlock your Bible. I do not want to just stay with the milk toast baby Christians that can never get past the little beanie weenie hot dogs in the cans. I want you to be able to digest a T-bone steak and be able to open up the scriptures and to understand and unlock your Bible.

Let us read today John 3:1-10.

John 3:1-10

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

Drake, would you stand up and ask God's blessing on the service for me this morning, buddy?
Thank you, buddy.

As I said, this story has been used probably more than any other story in soul winning messages or in sitting down and telling someone how to be saved. It is a great story, and I am not taking that part away from it. It will illustrate many things about a man and getting God's salvation. But there is so much more here. I do not know why God's people are so satisfied with just limiting themselves to the basics of the Bible. I have never figured that out. I mean, I do not know, maybe it is just me. When I saw that book, some fifty years ago, brother, I just could not put it down. I wanted everything out of it. I was never satisfied with the status quo. I was never satisfied with just getting a little bit out of it. I wanted everything out of it. I wanted to know everything there was in that. I spent fifty years of my life trying to figure it out and probably have another 350 years to go before I get there.

As I said, this has been used in so many messages. It is a great story. But this story will actually unlock four, five, maybe even six, greater doctrines in the Bible for us. All the milk toast baby Christians, that is all they will ever get out of it. They will just see it as it is, Nicodemus, and all that stuff, and use it as a nice little story. That is where they will be. But I want you to be better than that. I really do. Maybe you do not want to be better than that. Maybe you will refuse to be better than that. That is on you. All I know for you is I want you to be better than that. I want you to understand your Bible on a deep level that you can be able to take it apart and put it back together again with no pieces left over.

Before we do that, let us set some ground rules. I know you probably already know these ground rules, especially if you are in Bible Institute, you have been in people ministry, or you have just been here with me. You probably know these. But let us remember them. Let us set some ground rules in laying out the Bible.

7. First of all, every place in your Bible is going to have three applications to it. Historical Application: You have to ask yourself, "Did this really happen? Is this really an event in history, or is this a parable that he is telling of a story that did not really happen?" You have to determine that first. Doctrinal Application: You have to say, "Okay, what is God showing me from this? What doctrinal truth in the prophecy or something that I need to see that is on a deeper level is He trying to lay out through this story?" Inspirational Application: You will want to say, "Okay, how does this apply to me today? What do I take from this to get me through what I am going through today?" That is the first rule that you will always want to follow. We will certainly follow that today.
8. The second one, you want to remember this, and this one will kill you: All the Bible is written for you, but not all the Bible is written directly to you. The biggest messes you ever get into is when you take something in the Bible that is directed to somebody else other than you as a New Testament Christian and you try to make it work for you. Your Bible is addressed to three people groups. Jews: The nation of Israel. Gentiles: That is you. The

Church: That is you who are saved. When you come to a passage of scripture, you have to determine who He is speaking to.

9. The third thing that I want you to remember, and we have talked about this many, many times, I think we talked about it even Thursday night: Every story in the Gospels, every man, every woman, every child, every event will in some way be a picture of the nation of Israel in their spiritual condition or in some format of their relationship with God. To unlock the Bible, you must answer these three questions because they will begin to give you the context. Without a context, you are not going anywhere.

SEC: Historical Context of Nicodemus

Let us look at this thing historically for a moment. In John 3:1-10, we have the story of Nicodemus. Historically, it is an actual event. This is not a parable. This is a true story. Nicodemus was a real man in history. The Bible tells us that he is a high Jewish leader. He is not just a Pharisee, but he is the leader of the Pharisees. He is the Nancy Pelosi of the Jews. He is over everything and everybody that is screwed up. The Bible says that he is a ruler of the Jews. His name, Nicodemus, means "victory of the people." He comes to see Jesus at night. That would suggest that he was afraid of the other Pharisees knowing that he was coming there, so he waited until the cover of darkness and then snuck in and came to see Jesus. That is where he was at at that point in time.

I have got to say this: this is another great study. We do not have time to get into this today. Something happened out of this meeting. In John 19:39, when Christ dies on the cross, it is Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea that publicly go to Pilate in front of everybody and beg the body of Jesus and then prepare it for burial. So from John 3 to John 19, something changed in his world. That is a great study because from the time you first meet Jesus to the time you come to a point in life, some things have to change in your life too. Here in John 3, he and Jesus have a discussion found in this passage in verses 1 through 10, and it is a discussion on being born again.

The average pastor today, the average Christian, the average worker, Sunday school teacher, they will only see this story as you and me getting born again. They will never follow those three rules, for if they did, they would see four or five different doctrines here that really help unlock the Bible without putting everything into a perspective of where you are at and where Nicodemus is at and what Jesus is really talking about. From the milk bottle to T-bone steaks, that is my goal for you.

SEC: Doctrinal Deep Dive: Two Regenerations

Let us get our facts together first of all, and then we will proceed through this. On the issue of being born again, verse 3, He says, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The first heads up I would have in reading this, and there are two here, but the first heads up that would come to me, anyhow, would be that He did not tell Nicodemus that he needed to be born again. He just simply said, "Except a man be born again." Going back to rule number 3, a few moments ago, this story and this man, we told you now, will be that every story is a picture of Israel. This man here that He is talking about being born again will be the nation of Israel as

we find it in this timeframe. We know from Exodus 4 that the nation of Israel as a corporate nation is called God's son.

This story is not unlike the story of Lazarus in John 11. There is more going on there than just Lazarus getting raised from the dead. It goes along with Luke 15 and the prodigal son. There is more going on there than just this boy going out and coming back after he lives with the pigs. It is like Luke 8:42 where you have a little girl, twelve years old, who dies, and Jesus said, "Everybody says she is dead," and Jesus said, "She ain't dead, she sleepeth," and they all laughed at Him. He just gave them one of the greatest keys to death and dying in Christ that you could ever have, but they missed it. The stories are not like Luke 8:43 where it talks about the woman who had an issue of blood for twelve years. If you think that that story is just a story about a woman, you are crazy. God will take a story like John 3, and when you follow the rules, you learn what it is, but you also learn what it is not.

The next thing that would get my attention, it says, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." That ought to be on you like ugly on a 300-pound sumo wrestler jumping on your head. How can anybody see the kingdom of God when the Bible clearly tells us in Romans 14:7 that it is not meat and drink, it is not physical, but it is righteousness and peace in the Holy Ghost? Luke 17:21 tells you that the kingdom of God is inside you; you cannot see it. At least you cannot. So if I am reading that and I see the first thing He did not say, "Nicodemus, you need to be born again," He said, "Nicodemus, a man." Wow, that is a key for me. Then He says he will not see it. There is no way you and I can see it. But there is a way that Israel will see it in the millennium. He laid it out for you a couple of nights ago.

Our next fact check will be this: Nicodemus could not have gotten born again if he wanted to. You get born again by the Holy Spirit of God, and the Holy Spirit of God will not be here for thirty-three more years. Let us do a little Bible study here. Let us help you put this together. Let us at least try to get you off the bottle today and try to get you into a cheeseburger.

In the Bible, being born again is defined for you as a man getting regenerated. You will find the word "regenerated." Regenerated means you get born again, but the way the Bible uses it, it uses the word "regenerated." What does that mean? It means that Adam had it, and then he lost it, and then Christ came down and died so you could get the image back. He did it by regenerating the image that Adam had but lost, and now you get it back, restoring the foliage image of man. So the word is regeneration. It once was here, got lost, and now it is back.

Here is the key. In your Bible, you will find two regenerations. You will find in your Bible two regenerations:

10. One for the nation of Israel, which will be their new birth where they are regenerated as a nation. You will find that in Matthew 19:28 where it says this: Matthew 19:28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. This regeneration is at the second coming of Christ. Let us take it a little bit farther. Acts 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; This is

the born again that Jesus is telling Nicodemus about. This is why He did not say to him, "Nicodemus, you need to be born again." Let me just stop here and say this: if you are sitting here this morning and you are not saved, you need to be born again. Do not misunderstand this because I am going to come down your road here in just a moment, but you need to be regenerated. You need to be saved, and the only way that you and I can be saved, and I will show it to you in a moment here, is for your own personal regeneration. I will get there. This is the regeneration of Israel as a nation by the times of refreshing as a nation. God's son, a man being born of the Spirit, being born again. You will find that in Ezekiel 40-48 that takes place when the Son of Man is on the throne of His glory, the millennial reign of Christ.

11. Then you will have the second regeneration in the Bible, and this one is for you and for me. People saved in the church age after Acts 7, after the Holy Spirit of God has come down, and you were told this was going to happen in John 16 if you are paying attention, but it had not happened when John 3 was written because He tells you in John 16 that it has not happened yet. This one is found in Titus 3:4-6. Let us read this one. Titus 3:4-6 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; Praise the Lord for that. That means that God loved you enough that He came down and died for you, and then that love appeared to you, and you can have it today if you want it. You do not have to go through life empty. You do not have to go through life wondering, "Is this real or that real?" God is real, and God has the truth for you that will unlock everything you are facing in life and everything you are going to see in the world. How do you do that? Verse 5 says, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done." You cannot do anything to earn God's salvation. You cannot do a thing. In fact, Isaiah 64 says that all of our righteousness is as filthy rags in the sight of God. There is not a thing you can do to get God's righteousness. So He says, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he has saved us." Let us see how He saved us. Let us get the Bible word for it. How He saved us: "by the washing of regeneration." See that thing? Now watch this: "and by the renewing of the Holy Ghost." Renewing of the Holy Ghost? Yes, Adam had it and lost it. You get it renewed in you. Adam had the regeneration. He lost it, and then the regeneration comes to you through Christ Jesus' death on the cross after the Holy Spirit of God comes in the church age. Two regenerations in the Bible. See how easy that was? It is not complicated when you just follow and use the Bible. Just using your Bible and following the rules that God gives, He will unlock the scriptures for you and show you how to do that.

So when Nicodemus and Christ have this conversation here in John 3, He is telling him as a leader of the Jews, a leader of the nation of Israel, that Israel, God's son as a nation, needs to be born again. They need to get regenerated. Their regeneration comes from the presence of the Lord, the times of refreshing, the second coming of Christ. That is when Israel as a nation gets born again, and that is who He is talking to in John 3. To try to make that directly fit into the church for you when in John 3 the church is not in effect yet, the Holy Spirit of God has not come, shows how little you know about the Bible. You have to be able to rightly divide the word of truth.

SEC: "Born of Water and Spirit" Explained

Look at John 3:5 here, and we will clean this all the way up here. Just like when you go to the dentist, he looks in your mouth and you have got one cavity, and then he sees three more. He says, "Let us just take the time to get them all done today."

John 3:5

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Let us continue our Bible study, shall we? We know now that the conversation between Him and Nicodemus has nothing to do with Nicodemus becoming born again like you and me, though you need to be born again. Two regenerations in the Bible. Do not get the regeneration going to Israel and try to apply it to you. You will never make it that way. You need to see clearly the difference between Matthew 19 and the Book of Titus. There is a regeneration of the second coming for Israel, that they are being born again. There is a regeneration for you and me after Acts 7 and of the church age. If you are saved here this morning, you got regenerated by a new birth.

A guy asked me one time, he says, "Well, you talk about the term born again. It is only found in John 3." Somebody said, "Well, no, it is over there in the book of Peter too." He said, "Yeah, but that is not to the church." He said, "How come Paul never used the term born again?" You have to really be stupid not to know the answer to that. But that is what you get into, you see. Guys like that, they come to the place where they say, "Well, Paul never used the term born again." Gee, I wonder why he never did. I guess when you were born, you were without oxygen how long? That is one of the easiest questions to answer anywhere in the Bible, why Paul did not use the term born again. Are you kidding me? But of course, these guys are so shallow when it comes to the Bible. They do not get it.

So He says here, "born of the water." This will be the beginning of the regeneration for the nation of Israel at the second coming of Christ. Take your Bibles and turn back to the book of James. While you are turning there, I am telling you again, if you are not saved this morning, you need to be born again. Next week I am going to take the inspirational side, and I am going to show you how it does apply to you, but you have to be careful with it. Today, I just have to deal with these things one at a time to make sure I get it all accurately to you. Let me just say this so you do not miss the boat: if you are here this morning and you do not know for sure if you died right now that you would go to heaven, you need to make sure, and you need to trust the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior. You need that regeneration. You need that born again for you.

All right, James 5. Let us look at the water and the Spirit here. Obviously, again, we go to the book of James. I know you are in chapter 5, but if you would look back at James 1:1 here again, you have to always ask yourself, "Who is this book written to?" Notice it is written in James 1:1. It is not written to the church. It is written to the twelve tribes that are scattered. It is written to Israel. So you have to take that into consideration before you just jump in here and get it all out of whack.

Let us read James 5:7-16.

James 5:7-16

Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea, yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Now I just have to stop here again and show you how people get this out of whack. You see the word "call the elders of the church." So immediately, every Baptist preacher in this country, almost without exception, thinks that that church there that he is talking about is our church, the church that Paul wrote to. Of course, there are four or five different churches in the Bible. You just happen to be the one that is the embodiment of God's Holy Spirit. But they do not get that. Because they missed verse one, that it was to the twelve tribes, now they are going to try to put this thing into the church, and it is one of the most disappointing things that you are ever going to find in your life because down here it says if somebody is really sick, if you anoint them with oil, that that oil seemingly will heal them.

I have been associated with a lot of churches for fifty years. When I was just a young guy and I just got into the ministry, I was on a staff of a church here in Kansas City, and I went through this scenario two or three times where somebody was dying of cancer, and the doctors had done everything that they could do, and they said there was no hope. So the guys came, one guy, two guys, and a woman, they came not at the same time, over the course of time, they came to the pastor and they said, "We have exhausted everything. We are now going to ask the church to

anoint us with oil that we can stop this cancer." Me being the low guy on the totem pole, we were going to do this little thing before church on Sunday night. I was given the task of getting the oil. I cannot tell you for a normal person, and I am never normal, but for a normal person, that would be a great weight because I went down to the kitchen, opened up the pantry, and I was immediately confronted with nine or ten different types of oil. The average Christian would think, "If I get the wrong oil, I am going to kill this guy." He had Wesson oil. He had Crisco oil. Somebody from the bus ministry had left a can of 40 weight in there. I do not know how much weight the oil needs to be to carry the weight with God, but anyway, there was three-in-one oil. Me, Slick Bob, I thought, "This will save a long time. Here is a spray can of WD-40. Let us just take that. We can shoot everybody in the room." Long story short, I did what I was supposed to do. You want to know what oil I got? I got the Pennzoil. I thought it was good enough for Buddy Baker, it was good enough for this guy. So put it in a little cup, guy was sitting there, and all the pastors were around, and he dips the oil on his head and makes a cross with it, and anoints him with oil. Three weeks later, he is dead. Next guy came in a year later, I do not remember what it was, dead. I did try a different oil that time. I thought maybe just might have struck it with my screw up, dead. Buddy came in, and I am not, I am sorry they died, I am not making fun of the fact that they died, I am making fun that God's people were so stupid that they think that the oil was really going to heal them out of James 5 here. Of course, the third lady, she died.

These guys, it is a lot like the Charismatics. They always talk about healing and always talk about this is a big thing with them, but when the person does not get healed and dies, they do not have much to say about it. I mean, I would love to have a funeral where the guy gets up and believes the healing and what God can pay people from the dead. What a Hallelujah service that would be if you could just walk over and raise that dead guy up. I mean, you want to get people to believe that you have the power of God, just try that one. If you really have the power to heal, what are you doing in your pulpit? Why are you not down at KU Medical Center going through the cancer ward with the little kids? What is the matter with you? Of course, it is phony, it does not work. I would much assume a guy gets up there and gives me an explanation why what he believed did not work for this woman. He is not going to do that.

Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. He prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. Notice rain is, so you know this now, rain is water. He prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the water brought forth her fruit. Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that which is converted the sinner from the error of his way shall save his soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

First of all, this has nothing to do with the church. This is a tribulation passage with the Jew in the tribulation period. Let me explain all this to you about the water doctrinally in the tribulation from here. Moses and Elijah show up as the two witnesses in Revelation 11 and the book of Zechariah. They show up and they do in the tribulation the miracles that they did when they were on the earth back in the Old Testament as they were leading the nation of Israel, which is another great story in itself that we had all time to get into. Back in the Old Testament in 1 Kings 17:1,

what did Elijah do? He is up against a wicked king and his wife, Ahab, a type of the Antichrist, Jezebel, a type of Babylon, Mr. Religion, the mother of harlots, that is your picture. He shuts up heavens that it does not rain, and it does not rain for three and a half years. Then when God is ready to give the deliverance to the nation of Israel, he prays again, and the heavens open up, and the rain comes down.

In your Bible study, if you want to study it, this is called, you saw it in James 5:7 up there, "early and the latter rain." In the Old Testament, it is called the former and the latter rain. The references of it are all through the Old Testament: Joel 2, Job 37, 2 Chronicles 6, 2 Chronicles 7, Proverbs 16, Psalm 68, Revelation 11, 2 Samuel 23, Hosea 10, and Jeremiah 14 and Isaiah 5. It is all through the Bible: former and latter rain.

Here is how it is going to work, and this is how it fits into this and what He is saying to Nicodemus back here. When the Antichrist comes to power in the middle of the tribulation period, and you know it is seven years, three and a half on both sides, Moses and Elijah show up. Elijah shuts down heaven at that point that it does not rain for three and a half years. At the end of that three and a half years, he opens up the heavens, and it rains, and that rain will bring in the second coming of Christ, the fruit of the nation of Israel, the times of refreshing, being born again, Revelation 14:4, the millennium.

You should already know this, that in your Bible, the second coming of Christ is likened to a rainstorm. You should already know this. There are two rainbows in the Bible. What does a rainbow come out? It comes out at the end of a tremendous rainstorm, and there are two rainbows in the Bible. You ought to know that. The first one was with Noah when he comes out of the flood in Genesis 9:13, and the second one is found in Revelation 4 and Revelation 10 when the Lord comes back at the second coming of Christ. What does it say to us? It says, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the coming of the Son of Man." Noah came out of a rainstorm into a world that was all ready to go, and the second coming of Christ is going to come out of a rainstorm brought about by Elijah the prophet.

Rain in the Bible will always be a picture of God's Word coming down to us.

Isaiah 55:8-11

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

So shall my word that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Context: word out of His mouth, Revelation 19:11, second coming of Christ. It will accomplish that which I please and shall prosper in the thing where I send it. That is the water He is talking

about. The former and the latter rain, the latter rain bringing in Israel's regeneration by the times of refreshing as the word of God coming down out of His mouth that brings now Israel into the fruit-bearing process, and as a nation, she is regenerated, born again. That is what He is telling Nicodemus.

He says in John 3:6, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." The nation of Israel was born into flesh in Exodus 12. Did you ever read Exodus 12:1 that that is the new beginning for the nation of Israel? That is where God counted her birth. He even changed the beginning of their year based on that. So born of the flesh is Exodus 12, and born of the Spirit is the second coming of Christ. There you go.

SEC: Nicodemus's Inability to Understand

In John 3:4-9, Nicodemus says, "How can these things be?" Some of you are probably saying the same thing. "How can these things be?" Well, Nic, they are in the Bible. I do not know what to tell you. But that is the problem with God's people today. They do not know anything about the Bible, so when they hear something true about the Bible that may not be what they have always thought about the Bible because they are so shallow in the Bible, if you threw an open Bible in front of them, they could not defend themselves. That is Nicodemus.

It is a picture of Israel's inability to unlock the scriptures that I told you about last week because they have rejected the truth of God's word, Jesus Christ, when He has shown up. But I want you to see something else here, and you better learn this. He really believed who Christ said He was. He may have been a member of the Sanhedrin, and he may have been a Pharisee of the Pharisees, but underneath that, he knew that Jesus was the real deal. The fact that He came by night, I am not going to criticize Him on that any more than I am Peter denying the Lord. You know why? It would be kind of hard for me all the time that I chickened out on God, and you too. So I am not holding out against Him. I think it is a great study to see how He was here and how He got to that place in John 19. Something transformed in His life. But when He comes to Jesus, He knows exactly who He is. He gives Him the right title. We will see it next week. He gives Him His proper place. He says everything right that He is supposed to say.

Yet He cannot get squat out of the Bible. He looks at what Jesus just said and says, "How can a man go back into his mother's womb when he was old?" He could not get it. He looks at what Jesus says and He says, "How can these things be?" He could not get it. Here it comes, guys, and you better learn this: Many of God's people can believe the right things, but the reason why Nicodemus could not get anything out of the Bible is because of the crowd that he is hanging out with. He may have believed it, but his doctrine is steeped in the Pharisees, and all his life he has been taught something contrary. There are a lot of God's people who have the right Bible, and they believe in Jesus Christ, and they are even saved, but you cannot get squat out of the Bible. You know why? Because you are hanging out with the wrong crowd, and God says, "You know what? That crowd does not want to learn the Bible. All they want to do is complain about everything. So if you are going to hang out with them, then you get what they got because you are not getting nothing from Me." That is Nicodemus.

John 3:10

Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

I have got to tell you right now that had to be hard on his ego. That is like telling Joe Biden, "You are the president, you do not know what you are doing." That is tough. It is tough for God's people. That was the reality truth. That was the truth. Maybe that was the key. I do not know. Maybe that is what it took. Maybe as he left that night, that is all he thought about. "Yes, I am a master of Israel, and I do not know these things." Sometimes it takes something really shocking that hits you right in the face and damages and dents your ego for you to see your true condition.

I do not read stories like this and I do not think back when I was a kid in school, in grade school anyhow. Fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth grade. I never really straightened up until I got my head, until I got to be maybe a junior or senior in high school. I was pretty much a goofball all the other times. I remember, my athletic skills are down with sub-plant life to nil. I mean, I can pitch pretty good, but that is only because I have tremendous laser focus, and I always pitch to a guy's ego. Other than that, I watch you guys hit the ball over the fence. I would have to launch it out of a mortar round tube to get mine to go that far. I watch you guys dribble a basketball. I could not dribble a basketball. You do it between your legs, you do it around and around and around and around your back, you do all these things. Then you jump up and shoot, and that goes whoosh. I am terrible at sports. I am a guy who does not even still understand why I am going to go to the Royals game. How the umpire has got to be named Al. Got it on their hat. Think about that one for just a little while.

When I was in the seventh grade, the gym teacher put out a bulletin that they were going to have basketball tryouts early on a Monday morning to put a grade school basketball team together. Going to have tryouts all week long. He said, "We are going to evaluate your skills." So I show up down there. I mean, I thought I was going to make it. I got my own locker. I put a calendar in it because I planned to be there for a long time. I had my own lock. I just had a great thing. So they are out there, and everybody is dribbling the ball, and I am just making it. I am just, I mean, I am shooting the ball, hitting nothing. I am dribbling, tripping on my own feet, and I am just a hot dog. The coach blew the whistle, and he says, "Alexander, come over here." Now I am thinking he has seen my starlight credibility actions. He has seen my laser moves. He has seen the fact that I can move the ball. He says, "Come here, I have got to ask you a question." I said, "Yes, sir, coach." That is it. "Yes, sir, coach." That is me. "Yes, sir, coach." He says, "Don't you ever get tired of being a jerk?" And I thought to myself, "Yeah. I do." See, I did not like that. But I accepted that because I knew it was the truth. Sometimes you have to get hit with something like that. It just takes you off your, in my case, the basketball Hall of Fame. That I was not going to be the star shooter. That I was not going to be the star dribbler. I said, "You were not going to see my name on the front of high school basketball today." I hear those words in that moment, just like it was yesterday, because I never wanted to forget from that point. I was not mad at him because I knew he was right. But at that point, I knew that something had to change about me. The rest of my life, I have never forgot that. That may seem like a meaningless, goofy story to you. That is okay. I carried that with me the rest of my life. Many times when I have done something stupid, I think of that day. I say, "Don't you ever get tired of being a jerk?" And my answer is always the same, "I sure do."

Something happened with Nicodemus. Here is a guy that came by night, and I guarantee you, he did not sneak in. He had a caravan of Cadillacs with the lights out, darkened windows. He stepped out of there, probably came at one or two o'clock in the morning. He went in there by night, and Jesus laid out the greatest truths that anybody could have. And he could not get it. He could not get it. Finally, Jesus says, "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? What is wrong with you? What is wrong with you?" I guarantee you, knowing Bible scholars, Pharisees, the way we all do, that nailed him. But it nailed him good, because whatever he thought about after that for the next, what, thirty-three years, brought him to the cross to want that body. He did not care who thought what at that point in time. It is a great study. Great story. It is a great key.

The learned men of this life will be the same way. The Bible scholars, the Bible colleges, the Bible professors, the Greek and Hebrew professors. They will all know nothing about unlocking the Scriptures. They will all have a set of terms, and they will all have what they have been taught. But when it comes to, they are just like Nicodemus. When it comes to the Bible, you need to leave your education, you need to leave your status, you need to leave your theology, you need to leave your religion, you need to leave your position. Everything you have been taught, you just need to come as a baby. You need to come as a little child and simply say, "Lord, I do not know anything." Nicodemus had to get to that point. So there is more going on here in this meeting than the average person just sees, "Well, this is where we go to show somebody to be born again." You are out of your mind. There is so much going on here, and how many doctrines now have we laid out by looking at this story? "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?"

SEC: Conclusion and Future Application

I ask God's people, "How long will it take for you?" I know many of you, you are coming along. You are doing great. I will tell you, I am proud of you. You are doing really good. You are learning, you are growing, you are getting everything that you need. But I have had people in my ministry for thirty, forty years. They know no more about the Bible now than they did the first day I met them. There has to be a time in your life when you stop and look at yourself and you say, "You know what? I am not happy with the way I am with the Word of God. I am not going to stay here any longer." You are in a church where there is absolutely no reason for you not knowing everything about the Bible you need to know, except the fact you do not want to. Human nature never changes. It never does.

Next week, I am going to take this same story, and I am going to show you how you do apply it to somebody being born again. There are certain things that you can take out of it, certain things you cannot take out of it. I want to show you, because again, I want you to be accurate with the Bible. I want you to have the Bible down to the point where you see who it is written to, you see the stories and what they are trying to convey, which I think is pretty obvious after what we came through today. None of it is hard. It would be one thing if I said, "Go back and study the Greek or the Hebrew for forty years and then come back and see me." None of this is hard. But it takes discipline. It takes a desire for you to want it more than anything else, that nothing is going to stand in your way. You are going to do whatever you have got to do for as long as it takes. You

are going to get the people, places, things in your world to make it happen. You are going to learn that book. Because at the end of the day, that book is the only thing that is going to keep you. Your health will let you down. Your family will let you down. Your friends will let you down. Everybody in life will let you down at some point or the other, or the possibility that they can. There is one thing that will never let you down: that is God's truth. It will stick with you forever. So next week I am going to take you inspirationally, and I am going to show you how you can take this passage, and we actually use it in a way to win someone to Christ. There are some great things in there. But you have to understand what your limitations are.

Every head bowed and every eye closed. No.