

Nicodemus “By Night”

(John 3:1-2; 7:50-51; 19:39-42)

Jn 3:2 — Why did Nicodemus come to Yahshua by night? Was he a timid man? Or was he afraid to be seen with Yahshua for fear of his associates, the Pharisees? Or was Yahshua too busy during the daylight hours to see him or spend time with him? Or was Nicodemus too busy during the day, since he was a member of the Sanhedrin?

But whatever his motive was, in Jn 7:50-51 he was no longer a coward since he confessed Yahshua before the other Pharisees and leaders of the Jews. Nicodemus made a plea for justice, but it was rejected (Jn 7:52; 12:42-43). Dt 28:15; Jn 7:49 — Who is cursed, those who don't *know* His laws, or those who know them but don't *obey* them?

Jn 3:1 — Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews, a member of the Jewish council, the group that had sent a committee to investigate John the Baptist (Jn 1:24). He knew that John the Baptist had denied being the long-awaited Messiah (Jn 1:20), but had said that the Messiah was present (Jn 1:26-27). But the fact that Nicodemus came to Yahshua by night revealed the timidity of his faith (Jn 12:42), but his faith or persuasion was coming closer and closer to his heart as to the things he was hearing (Jn 7:50-51; 19:39).

Jn 3:1,10 — Yahshua rebuked Nicodemus for being a teacher of the Hebrew scriptures and yet not knowing about spiritual birth (Isa 44:3; Eze 36:26-27). He was a ruler of the Jews, a teacher of Israel. If Nicodemus' purpose for his visit at night was to find out for himself whether Yahshua was really a teacher from God (Jn 3:2), he found out very soon, and instead of defending or confirming his own credentials, Yahshua offered Nicodemus an eternal lesson and salvation.

Nicodemus was part of a group of Jews who had suffered with envy the most because of Yahshua's popularity. Because of envy they finally killed Him. The Pharisees were the conservatives in the Jewish religion. They held all scripture in high regard. They believed in eternal life and in the resurrection, which the Sadducees didn't. They

were the ones most people thought would be able to identify the long-awaited Messiah and announce Him to the people. But the Pharisees were the ones who had begun to think of the coming of the promised Messiah as one who would bring honor and glory to them when He would appear, and establish the Kingdom on earth, and they would rule the earth and restore the twelve tribes (Gen 15:18).

But Yahshua showed no inclination to do this. Instead, He called all to repentance (Mt 13:15), even the Pharisees (of all people). He made it painfully clear to the Pharisees that their devotion to scripture was undermined by their tendency to apply it wrongly and to exalt themselves over others (a Satanic principle, Lk 18:14; Jn 7:15). Although they studied the scripture diligently (Jn 5:39-40), they had not learned the central truth of them — justice, mercy, and faithfulness or fidelity (Mt 23:23; Lk 11:42; 18:12-14). The Jewish religious leaders studied the scriptures, but all for selfish reasons — to go to heaven when they died (Jn 5:39-40). So how could they recognize Him when He came to them? (Jn 1:11-12; 5:38; 18:37).

Yet Nicodemus chose to come even if he had to come alone. Probably no one else had the nerve. Nicodemus came alone by night. He was humble (Lk 18:14). He allowed Yahshua to challenge his understanding. He did not shrink back from revealing his ignorance about the second birth. He listened. The secret of his salvation was that he was *humble*. He humbled himself to hear, to listen, to ponder, to ask, to seek. For faith comes by hearing for those who have ears to hear. How many times did Yahshua say, “If you have ears to hear what I’m saying...”? In spite of the fact that he was a teacher of the Jews, he was willing (Jn 7:17) to be taught, to hear (verse 18) as one without deceit or falsehood.

So undoubtedly he experienced some of God’s love that night, because later John gives us a glimpse of Nicodemus’ enlightened spirit and heart (Jn 7:50-51, “by night” NKJ; Jn 19:39-42, “by night”), and so it goes with all like Nicodemus who will come “by night” with his seeking heart.