

Week of January 16 - 22

Jesus' Answer to Nicodemus (John 3:1-21)

A man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus came to Jesus one night and said, "Rabbi, we know you're a Teacher from God; no one can do these miracles you are doing, except God be with Him." Jesus said, "Verily, Verily, I say to you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

Nicodemus asked, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter his mother's womb a second time and be born again?" Jesus answered, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he can't enter the Kingdom of God. That born of the flesh is flesh, and that born of the Spirit is spirit. Don't marvel that I said, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it will, and you listen to its sound, but don't know from where it is coming or going; so it is with everyone who has been born of the Spirit."

Nicodemus asked, "How can these things be?" Jesus said, "Are you a teacher and don't know these things. We speak what we know and have seen, but you people don't accept our witness. Since you don't believe earthly things, how will you believe heavenly things? No one has ascended to heaven but He who came out of heaven, the Son of Man. As Moses lifted up the serpent, the Son of Man must be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. God sent His Son into the world not to condemn it, but that it might be saved through Him. If you believe in Him, you are not condemned, but if you don't believe in Him, you are already condemned."

The Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than the Light because their deeds were evil. Otherwise, their deeds would be disclosed. Those who practice truth come to the Light so others can see they are doing what God wants them to do.

John the Baptist's Tribute to Jesus (John 3:22-36)

Jesus and His disciples went to Judea where He stayed awhile, baptizing, while John the Baptist was baptizing at Aenon. A Jew began arguing with John's disciples about which baptism was best, his or Jesus,' and that all the people were going to Him. John answered, "God in heaven appoints each man's work. Mine is to prepare the way so everyone will go to Him. I'm not the Messiah, but to prepare the way for Him. The bride goes where the bridegroom is, and his friends rejoice with him. I'm the Bridegroom's friend and am filled with joy at His success. He must become greater and I must become less."

He is over all. I belong to the earth and speak of earthly things. He speaks of things He has seen and heard, but few accept it. Those who do believe in Him accept His words and recognize that God is true by the very words He speaks. God's Spirit is on Him without measure or limit, and loves Him because He is His Son and has given everything to Him. If you believe in Him, you will have everlasting life. Otherwise, you will never see heaven, but the wrath of God.

Jesus and the Woman at the Well (John 4:1-42)

Jesus knew the Pharisees had heard about the greater crowds coming to Him where his disciples were baptizing, so He left Judea and returned to Galilee. Needing to pass through Samaria on

the way, He came to Sychar about noon where Jacob's well was. He was tired and was resting when a Samaritan woman came for water. He surprised her by asking for a drink. Shocked because a Jew was asking her for something, she questioned Jesus. Jesus answered, "If you only knew what a wonderful gift God has for you, and Who I am, you would ask Me for some living water."

"But you don't have a rope or a bucket, and the well is deep. Where would You get this living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who enjoyed water from this well? Jesus said, "All who drink this water will thirst again, but anyone who drinks of the water I will give will never thirst again. But will become a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

The woman asked for some of that water so she wouldn't have to return to the well again. Jesus told her to go and get her husband to which she replied, "I'm not married." Jesus then told her she had had five husbands and wasn't married to the man she was living with now. She said, "You must be a prophet. Tell me, why do you Jews insist Jerusalem is the only place of worship since we claim it is here at Mount Gerazim? Jesus responded, "The time is coming when we won't be concerned about where to worship the Father. It's about how we worship – is it spiritual and real? God is Spirit and He wants this kind of worship from us. You don't know about Him and worship blindly while we worship what we know, since salvation comes through the Jews."

She said, "I know the Messiah is coming, and when He comes, He will explain everything to us." Jesus said, "I am the Messiah."

The disciples returned and were surprised He was talking to a woman. The woman left her water pot and went back home and told everyone, "Come see a man who knows all about me. Can this be the Messiah? So many came streaming from the village to see Him."

"You must be hungry, Rabbi. Eat something," the disciples urged. "No, I have some food you don't know about," Jesus replied. "It comes from doing the will of God and from finishing His work. You say that the harvest is coming in four months, but look around you. The harvest is white, and whoever reaps will be paid good wages and be gathering eternal souls. What joy awaits the sower and the reaper! You are the reaper, reaping what you didn't sow."

Many of the Samaritans believed He was the Messiah and begged Him to stay at their village. He stayed for two days, where many heard Him and believed in Him.

A Dying Boy Is Healed from Cana (John 4:43-54)

Jesus left two days later and went to Galilee where the Galileans welcomed Him with open arms, for they had seen some of His miracles at Jerusalem during the feast. Upon arriving at Cana, Jesus was met by an official from Capernaum whose son was very sick, pleading with Him to come to Capernaum and heal his son who was near death. Jesus said, "Won't any of you believe in Me unless I do more and more miracles? Go back home. Your son is healed." The officer believed Jesus, and on his way home, met his servant who told him his son was better, that the fever had broken at the same time that Jesus had told him, "Your son is healed." The officer and all his household believed that Jesus was the Messiah. This was Jesus' second miracle.

A Leper is Healed (Matthew 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-45)

Crowds followed Jesus wherever He went. A leper came to Jesus and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if you want to, you can heal me." Jesus was moved with compassion and touched him,

saying, "I am willing. Be healed!" And instantly, the leprosy disappeared. Jesus told him to tell no one, but to have a priest examine him and take an offering required for lepers who had been healed. But the leper began to shout the good news that he was healed, and large crowds soon surrounded Jesus wherever He went.

A Paralytic is Forgiven and Healed (Matthew 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12)

Returning to Capernaum, he began teaching there. Among the crowds were Pharisees and teachers of the law. Because so many were there listening to Jesus, the room and doorway were filled. Four men lowered a paralyzed boy on a mat through a hole in the room, and Jesus told him, "Cheer up! Your sins are forgiven." But the Jewish leaders asked themselves, "Who is this who is speaking blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Jesus answered, "Why do you ask yourselves these things? Why do you think evil in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Pick up your pallet and walk'? I, the Son of man, have the authority to forgive sins." He told the paralytic, "Pick up your pallet and go home, for you are healed." Immediately he got up, picked up his pallet, and went home, praising God. The crowds were all amazed and glorified God and said, "We've never seen anything like this before."

Matthew is Enlisted (Matthew 9:9; Mark 2:13-14)

Jesus went out by the lake and preached to the crowds again. As he passed by, he saw Levi (Matthew) seated at the tax office and said to him, "Follow me." Matthew got up and left everything and followed Jesus.

Note: This is the end of Jesus' first year of public ministry. He was at a Passover when His ministry work began, and now another Passover is approaching.

In the Grain Fields on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28)

When Jesus and His disciples passed some grainfields on the Sabbath and were hungry, they began to pluck the heads of grain and eat, rubbing them in their hands. But when some of the Pharisees saw it, they asked, "Why are your disciples breaking the law of the Sabbath?" Jesus said, "Did you ever read about what David and his men did when he was hungry, when he went into the house of God, and the high priest allowed them to eat the showbread? Or have you not read how, on the Sabbaths, the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and are guiltless? One greater than the temple is here, and if you had known that 'Mercy is what I desire, and not sacrifice, you would not have condemned us.' The sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So, the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath."

A Man's Withered Hand Is Healed (Matthew 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6)

Later Jesus went into the synagogue in Capernaum on the Sabbath and taught. A man with a withered hand was there, and the scribes and Pharisees watched to see if Jesus would heal him on the Sabbath.

Jesus, knowing their thoughts, asked the man in their presence, "Is it all right to do kind deeds on the Sabbath? Or is this a day for doing harm. Is it a day to save lives or to destroy them? But the scribes and Pharisees kept silent. Jesus said to them, "What if one of your sheep fell into a

pit on the Sabbath, wouldn't you save it? A man is worth more than a sheep. It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

He saw their anger and hardness of heart and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and it was healed. It infuriated the leaders so much that they consulted what to do with Jesus. They went out and met with the Herodians to discuss plans for killing Jesus.

Multitudes Come; the Twelve Are Appointed (Matthew 12:15-21; Mark 3:7-19)

Knowing this, Jesus left with His disciples, and crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, from Jerusalem and all Judea, and Idumea and beyond the Jordan followed him. His fame spread throughout Syria and men brought Him the sick, oppressed with diseases and torments, the demon-possessed and epileptics and paralytics, and He healed them.

Large crowds from Tyre and Sidon came, so Jesus asked the disciples to have a boat ready for Him should the crowd try to overwhelm Him. Many wanted to touch Him because He healed those who were sick and others troubled with unclean spirits. The unclean spirits fell down before Him and called Him the Son of God. He healed them all, charging them not to make Him openly known.

Later, He went up into the hills and, calling certain ones He chose to come close to Him, selecting twelve of them to be his apostles, to stay with Him, and to be sent out to preach and have power to heal the sick and cast out demons. Their names were Peter and Andrew his brother, James and John the sons of Zebedee, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot who was His betrayer.

An Invalid at the Pool of Bethesda Healed (John 5:1-47)

Jesus returned to Jerusalem for one of the feasts where crowds of the blind, crippled, and paralyzed people waited at the Pool of Bethesda to touch the moving water and be healed. Only the first person who touched the waters was healed. Jesus saw an invalid of thirty-eight years waiting and asked he wanted to get well. The invalid explained he could not get to the waters, so Jesus told him to get up, take up his pallet, and walk. Immediately he was well, picked up his pallet, and started walking.

Nonetheless, the Jews told the healed man that it was the Sabbath, and it was unlawful to carry the pallet. They asked for the Man who had told him to carry his pallet, but the healed man didn't know who He was that healed him. Later Jesus found the healed man and said, "You are healed; sin no more." The man left and told the Jews that it was Jesus Who had healed him. They continued persecuting Jesus, seeking to kill him, because he had broken the Sabbath and because he was calling God His own Father, 'making himself equal with God.'

Jesus answered, "The Son only does what He sees the Father doing. The Father loves the Son and shows Him all the things He is doing. I'll show you greater works than these. All men should honor the Son in the same way they honor the Father. I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father Who sent Me."