

GOSPEL OF YOHANAN

Chapter 3

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If a theological center point is to be chosen in the whole of the Scriptures, it is found right here in **John 3:3**,

Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

These words are of the most powerful in the Bible; it is either on their left or on their right that any man or woman, that ever lived, will one day stand. These words are spoken to all, whoever they are. We may think of the finest man or woman that ever walked on this earth, even one that we highly esteem, the Scriptures say this individual has to be born again.

For the occasion, the Spirit of God offered Yeshua one of the finest specimens of man that the society of the day could produce—Nicodemus—a man that Yeshua addresses in **Verse 10** as *the teacher of Israel*. This is not just anybody; this is a man whose position and knowledge so impressed the people that they were in danger of worshipping him, at his presence. To him, Yeshua says: *you..... must be born again.*

In **Daniel 2** the Stone which destroyed the great statue that men worshipped has now come to the flesh and is bringing us down to earth—one more time—by shattering images of statues that our society has created.

The words of our Messiah, here in this chapter, are very powerful. These are the types of words one pronounces to bring about a revolution. They did indeed bring a revolution, because Nicodemus, who stands here as that premium example of our culture, was completely bewildered by these words. In all his knowledge and experience, he could not fully comprehend what Yeshua meant, but he understood one thing: that these words carried him where he never thought he would go. This is what the third Gospel of Yohanan is about, as it speaks of Salvation. It is here that the truth about all men and the truth about Jesus are so simply and strongly brought out.

In the previous section Jesus gave us some hard sayings—especially those where He denied some who said they believed in Him. Now, He is about to uncover for us a very simple and very deep truth—that of being *born again*. He does not leave us with the last words of the previous chapter. He now beautifully explains the anatomy of salvation by telling us how one may not be counted among those whom He rejects.

The God of the Old Testament that has come down does not change. As you read the prophets, you will inevitably find words of encouragement and restitution to Israel following the words of punishment. Here again, Yeshua does not leave you back in John 2 verse 23 to 25, but He wants the believers to be encouraged and those who are still hanging in there to make that leap of faith.

In fact, there were no divisions between the words, the verses or the chapters in the original Scriptures. **Verse 1 of Chapter 3** should have been left right at the end of **Chapter 2**. You see, the first word in **John 2:24** –*but*– is the same word that you find at the beginning of **John 3:1**.

But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men,

In **John 3:1**, the next chapter, we read:

But there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus (DBY)

Nicodemus is brought here in contrast to those who did reject Jesus. We have a great wealth of information in this chapter, and it is my sincere prayer that each one of you will be blessed by its simplicity and depth.

Let's read **John 3:2**

This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

Here begins the story of the encounter of a man named Nicodemus with the Messiah. Who then is Nicodemus?

There are a few things the text tells us about him. First, we know from **Verse 1** that he is a Pharisee. It is unfortunate how this word came down to us. Today, some dictionaries define a Pharisee as one who is self-righteous or one who is a hypocritical person, but not all Pharisees were like that. There were some wise and sincere men among them. In fact we know that many of them came to a saving knowledge of Yeshua, as we see it in **Acts 15:5**. What I find interesting is that Paul speaks of himself as a Pharisee. In **Acts 23:6** he says: *Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee;*

In the true sense of the word, he was still a Pharisee because this word comes from the word *paroush* which means "separated" or "sanctified", and so was Nicodemus.

The second thing that **Verse 1** says is that Nicodemus was *a ruler of the Jews*. This shows us that he had some legal authority; that must have meant that he was a member of the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was a combined religious and civil authority of the Jewish people which was comprised of only seventy members, and Nicodemus was one of them.

The third thing we know about him is that, in Verse 10, he is called *the teacher of Israel*. Now, that is quite a title, one that is given to the head of rabbinical school. This makes Nicodemus one of the most theologically knowledgeable persons in Israel.

All this information is given to us to see the importance that this man had in the eyes of the people. Let us now see how he encounters Yeshua. First, we read in **Verses 2**

This man came to Jesus by night

Now, why are we given this piece of information? It must be important because in the two other mentions of Nicodemus in the Scriptures, this fact is repeated. We see him confronting the other members of the Sanhedrin in **John 7:50**

Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them,

We see him again at the burial of the body of the Messiah in **John 19:39**

And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds.

Nicodemus probably came in the middle of the night so that the rest of the Pharisees will not accuse him of being a follower of Jesus; Nicodemus was not a believer yet and he did not hide his faith later, so we understand his action here. However, there is a deeper meaning to comprehend, here. I don't think that this information is only to tell us at which time of the day he came to see the Messiah.

For one thing, "light and darkness" is a theme that is often brought back in this Gospel and the rest of the New Testament. In fact the whole conversation is about the crossing of Nicodemus from darkness onto light—from darkness of night to day light.

That he came at night is the condition in which he was and where we all were before coming into the Light. Remember the words of Yeshua when He appointed Paul, in **Acts 26:18**. Yeshua sends him and says to him, go...

'to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'

Nicodemus was about to experience this passage.

It is here, by night, that the first words of their conversation are recorded. Nicodemus says:
"Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

Here we are told what actually attracted Nicodemus to Yeshua—the *signs* or *miracles* that Yeshua performed. Nicodemus comes to Him to investigate. What were these *signs* that he must have seen that indicated to him that Yeshua is from God? Unlike Nicodemus, many fall into the hands of charlatans without investigation; this could be crucial for us today, being surrounded by people who perform *signs and wonders*.

Strangely enough, in rabbinical literature, miracles do not play a big role at all. They are viewed as matters of secondary importance throughout Jewish literature. Throughout their history, Jews do not seem to be impressed by miracles. We saw in Exodus that the great miracles, performed there, did not have much effect on the people. Even Josephus, the first Century Jewish historian, while believing in miracles, shows very little interest in miracles in his literature. Philo, the other Jewish historian, does not even speak of healing miracles; neither does he once mention exorcism, for instance. Even the Qumran scrolls show very little interest in miracles. Also later on, Maimonides or the Rambam, a pillar for modern Judaism, downplayed miracles and said something quite true. He declared that: "the belief in Moses and his law was based on the actual revelation of God on Sinai and by no means on the miracles performed; since miracles may be

the work of witchcraft and of other non-divine agencies, they can not be accepted as proof.”
(<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=650&letter=M>)

Today, we see many of our brothers and sisters running after anything that glitters without investigating it. At present, you will very seldom hear of a rabbi who performs miracles and even less one who would organize a healing service. But in the Christian milieu, it is abundant. Why is that? Shouldn't it be reversed? This awe towards miracles is hardly a Jewish phenomenon; its roots should be found elsewhere other than in the Bible.

The words found in **1Corinthians 1:22** are often quoted to show that the Jews leaned towards miracles—see what it says:

For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom;

It has become almost proverbial that the Jews are looking for miracles. Many commentators bring in this verse when speaking of Nicodemus.

But all that Paul conveys in this passage is the fact that the religious leaders kept on asking Jesus for one more sign. This is because signs did not have much effect on them.

Jesus even complained about their hardened heart when they were faced with the true miracles. In **John 12:37** it is written:

But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him,

What did Nicodemus see in Jesus that he did not see in others and which brought him to conclude that He was from God? Of course it was the messianic miracles that the charlatans of the time and of our time cannot duplicate. Such miracles as the one of bringing sight to a man born blind, or chasing a demon from one who was mute and deaf. See what the people said after this latter miracle in **Matthew 9:33**

And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, "It was never seen like this in Israel!"

The people acknowledged this miracle as one they had never seen before; it was a messianic miracle. In **Matthew 12:23** the people recognized that Jesus' miracles were unlike those who pretended to be from God.

And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"

Yeshua did not only perform messianic miracles, but even His other miracles were different from those of the imposters. Nicodemus must have recognized these differences, which are identifiable even today.

If we compare them with those of miracle workers today, they were quite different. For one thing, charlatans usually need the participation of the person in order to perform their miracle, unlike a true miracle worker. Today I understand that most of them require the faith of the person; if the miracle doesn't work the person's faith becomes the cause of the fault. Therefore, they not only blaspheme the Word of God but they destroy the faith of God's people in the process.

Perhaps Nicodemus recognized that Jesus did miracles at will, without any help, even according to His own will.

Hebrew 2:4

God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will...

Another important aspect that Nicodemus must have seen in Jesus, and one we ought to see, is that His miracles involved no relapse and were always immediate and successful. The healed one did not fall back into his old condition a couple of hours or days later, as it happens so often in the case of many pretenders. Imagine if Jesus cured a lame man, and a few hours later that healed man became lame again?

I saw, the other day on television, a report about people who followed a renowned faith healer, who carries the name of Jesus. They gave him the benefit of the doubt and followed up on the supposed healed people. They came out and said that the whole thing is a hoax...so much for the name of Jesus.

Nicodemus must have come to the same conclusion when he saw these same faith healers of his time, but when he saw Jesus he confessed:

Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.

Can you say this of any of the faith healers that are on television?

That was the starting point for Nicodemus; he understood that Jesus came from God. But what follows is very interesting. While Nicodemus was speaking, the omniscient Messiah interrupts him and goes right to the point by pronouncing these piercing words:

John 3:3

Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

At this point, Nicodemus seems to lose his train of thought and gives an unusual response:

John 3:4

"How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

Why did he answer this way?

I believe it was because the words spoken by Yeshua were very powerful and Nicodemus was clueless. The words of Yeshua were so disarming that Nicodemus uses sarcasm here as if to say to Him: "Can **I** enter a second time into my mother's womb and be born?" He responds as one who finds himself bare in front of a new reality—Truth—and reaches for a cover. Appealing to his credentials, he was saying something like: "How can you say that to *me*—the teacher of Israel—the better of the crop—one of the finest products our society can produce?" But God is not respecter of persons.

No one can be educated unto salvation, nor can anyone be naturally born saved. You must be *born again*. This was—and still is—extremely groundbreaking. This is a call to all religions and religious people, saying that nothing short of being spiritually born again can give you salvation.

This was a crucial moment in the life of this man, where the critical instant of change is situated—from condemnation to Eternal Life. It was at this time that Nicodemus, while puzzled by this great miracle of salvation that was taking place in him, understood that there was a terrifying gap between what he thought and what Yeshua was saying.

Nicodemus was a very religious and moral man. He already had a well thought out world view, yet he had to let go of it all and understand the truth about the new birth. It is this chasm that we are all called to stride across, when we are called to receive Yeshua in our heart. Being religious and moral does not make a man fit for heaven; he must be *born again*. No amount of education, religion, or discipline can change the old nature; we must receive a new nature from God.

So we see that Jesus came to revolutionize our thinking. He shakes our way, our world, our values, our beliefs that we hold on so strongly. Nicodemus understood and believed, Barouch Ha Shem (Blessed is His Name). This was a miracle of salvation; the teacher of Israel bows down to young Yeshua who was only thirty years old.

We learn here that Spiritual truths cannot be grasped by the carnal mind.

1 Corinthians 2:12-14 explains this process of Salvation well, as the Spirit of God performs that miracle in us.

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

We must never forget that the Holy Spirit is the One who teaches us the things of God. This is pure Christianity. This is true Judaism. Like someone said: You cannot cure a blind man by increasing the light. You have to be born again from the inside.

It was Oswald Chambers who wrote: “The Bible is a universe of revelation facts which have no meaning for us until we are born from above; when we are born again we see in it what we never saw before. We are lifted into the realm where Jesus lives and we begin to see what he sees.”

One thing to notice here is that Nicodemus did not ask the meaning of the term “born again.” The irony is that the expression *born again* is very Jewish. So much so, that many Jewish scholars are accusing Christians of copying their sages. The definition of “born again” in Judaism as found in the JewishEncyclopedia.com is “a renewal of a man's nature by casting

aside the impurity of sin which cleaves to him from his former life, thus turning him into a pious and righteous child of God.” It further refers to it as: “The expression used by the Rabbis for the person who underwent a change of heart through repentance and conversion is, therefore, "beriah hadashah" (a new creature).”

When a translator, working in Papua New Guinea, came to the words "born again" in John's Gospel, he asked his native co-translator to think of a good way to express it. The man explained this custom: "Sometimes a person goes wrong and will not listen to anybody. We all get together in the village and place that person in the midst of us. The elders talk to him for a long time. 'You have gone wrong!' they say. 'All your thoughts, intentions, and values are wrong. Now you have to become a baby again and start to relearn everything right.'" It was the answer the translator was looking for. Today the words of John 3:3 in Binumarien read "No one can see the Kingdom of God unless he becomes like a baby again and relearns everything from God's Word."

See how gracefully Yeshua answers Nicodemus who was now torn between heaven and earth, and whose brain must have been overloaded by this new way of thinking.

John 3:5-7

Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

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

"Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

That which is flesh is flesh; that which is spirit is spirit. What is of the earth cannot be applied to heaven. This is the first thing a believer learns. One cannot mix the two. It is here that Nicodemus puts down his arms, and says in **John 3:9**

.... *"How can these things be?"*

At this point, Nicodemus must have understood and seen the chasm, but did not know where to go from there. This is where Yeshua slowly starts to reveal who He really is—the Savior of the World.

Starting in **verse 13**, Yeshua prepares him for the great revelation of Himself.

John 3:13

"No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.

Yeshua is telling him that He is the one and only who was in heaven and who has come on earth to tell us how it is like in heaven and how we can get there. No one else in the whole of history did that. *"Do not marvel!"* He says to him, as He says later on in **John 14:1**

Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.

For us, these are heavenly truths that are worth more than anything else in this world. In this saying, Yeshua echoes the words from the book of Proverbs, where the One who ascended and

descended is God Himself. It also says that this God had a Son, and here in John we see them both. See what it says: **Proverbs 30:4**

Who has ascended into heaven, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is His Son's name, If you know?

Perhaps these words came to the mind of Nicodemus as he was *the teacher of Israel* and was surely familiar with many passages in the Old Testament.

In **John 3:5**, Yeshua said:

... unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

“Born of water” does not refer to water baptism; otherwise it would mean that no one in the Old Testament is saved. Others say that being born of water is a physical birth, but this interpretation seems to appeal to many modern minds and pretends a physiological knowledge of the body. However today no one speaks of being *born of water*, nor do we see this phrase in ancient writings, whether biblical or extra-biblical.

What does it mean?

For one thing we understand that this word *water* has something to do with the heavenly and spiritual nature and the fact of being born again.

In Yeshua’s discussion with the Samaritan woman, water is understood as a symbol of eternal life.

John 4:13-14

Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

And later on in **John 7:37-39** water appears again in close connection with the promised gift of the Holy Spirit

On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.

"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

While Nicodemus was not aware of these verses, this theme is not unknown in the Old Testament, as water is used as a synonym for the pouring out of the Holy Spirit.

In **Isaiah 44:3-4**, we read:

For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, And floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, And My blessing on your offspring;

They will spring up among the grass Like willows by the watercourses.’

The water here is presented as an outpouring by the Holy Spirit. So Nicodemus was not completely unaware of the symbols that Jesus used.

By using the expression “water and wind,” or “water and spirit”—for the words *wind* and *spirit* are the same in the Greek and in the Hebrew—Yeshua is evoking familiar imagery from many other Old Testament Scriptures.

Speaking at the start of the Millennium, we read in **Ezekiel 39:29**

‘And I will not hide My face from them anymore; for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel,’ says the Lord GOD.

Speaking of the time of the Tribulation period—we read in **Joel 2:28**

And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions.

We should not forget that this conversation took place during the Passover, where **Ezekiel 37** was read in the prayer of the Jews at that time. This passage brings in the motive of the Spirit, which is to give life. **Ezekiel 37:9-10**

Also He said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.'"

So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.

The use of *water and wind* can serve as a double metaphor for the work of the Holy Spirit as that work is reflected in the Old Testament Scriptures.

What does *water* represent for us today? The Bible tells us it also represents the Word of God. The proper starting point is the Word. The means which God regularly employs in the salvation of men is the Word of God. See **Romans 10:17**

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

The new birth can only be produced by spiritual means. What are these means? The Spirit of God, who uses the Word of God. As Peter so superbly puts it in **1 Peter 1:23**
having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,

Peter and James were men of experience. They were pastors, leaders and apostles. See what James says:

James 1:18

Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

After hearing the words of Yeshua, Nicodemus must have asked “where do I go from here?” This is where Jesus says something quite extraordinary, right before those great words we find in **verses 15-16**.

John 3:14

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

What happened there in the wilderness? As the fact of being born again was striking to Nicodemus, so is this story strikingly strange. After Israel sinned, the Lord, in anger, sent poisonous snakes among them and many of the people died. The rest urged Moses to intercede for them before God. So the Lord said that all those bitten should look upon a bronze snake which Moses would construct and in so doing be healed. This might have appeared ridiculous to many, but they died because of it! The point is that others believed and were saved. This was written in order to prepare them, along with their sons and daughters as well as ourselves, for this moment of salvation. See how the text goes:

Numbers 21:7-8

Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live."

Today the pole and serpent represent the death and resurrection of the Messiah; they speak of healing. In fact, this pole and the serpent became the symbol of medicine. These words lead us to some of the most beautiful ones in the Scriptures.

John 3:15, 16

"that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

It was Ironside who once said that, in a sense, the whole story of the Bible is contained in this verse. How many of you know this verse by heart? This is one of the most beautiful verses in the Scriptures.

Nicodemus, in his effort to learn more about Jesus, ended up learning more about himself!

The new birth is also called regeneration in the Scriptures. The definition of regeneration from the Nelson's Bible Dictionary is: *The spiritual change brought about in a person's life by an act of God. It is the new birth.*

In the Scriptures, regeneration is described under three figures. The first one is a **new birth**, a spiritual change as presented in **John 3**. It is also spoken of as a **resurrection**, as in **John 5:25** where Yeshua says: *Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.* The new life in Christ received at conversion is compared here to resurrection from the dead. The same figure is expounded in **Romans 6:13** where believers are described *"as being alive from the dead."* The

believers in Ephesians are also reminded of their spiritual resurrection when they are told in **Ephesians 2:5-6** that they “*were dead in trespasses*” yet they are now “*made alive*” and “*raised up*” to be with Christ in the heavens. A third one is that of a **new creation**. See what **2 Corinthians 5:17** says: *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new.* The contrast is made between the old creation of man in his fallen state through Adam, and his new creation having eternal life in Yeshua. This regeneration is what Nicodemus had to grasp as well as all who come close to God.

In 1833, Charles Darwin went to the South Sea Islands looking for the so-called "missing link." As he studied the cannibals who lived there, he concluded that no creatures anywhere were more primitive, and he was convinced that nothing on earth could possibly lift them to a higher level. He thought he had indeed found a lower stratum of humanity that would fit his theory of evolution. Thirty-four years later he returned to the same islands. To his amazement he discovered churches, schools, and homes occupied by some of those former cannibals. In fact, many of them wore clothes and frequently gathered to sing hymns. The reason was soon learned: Missionary John G. Paton had been there proclaiming the truths of salvation! Darwin was so moved by their transformation that he made a generous contribution to the London Missionary Society. Darwin's "missing link" thus remained missing.

Regeneration will take any one and make him, or her, a son of God.

See how the Spirit is linked with the salvation of the people.

John 3:8

"The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

No one can explain the wind, and no one can explain the working of the Spirit. Both the Spirit and the believer are like the wind.

This is a great verse for evangelists, as we are all evangelists called to proclaim the good news. The primary prerequisite for an evangelist is to realize that it is the work of the Spirit of God and that we are just tools. As useful tools, we ought to make ourselves ready to be able to answer the call and direction of the Spirit. To deliver the Word of God is a solemn work. We actually become partners with God in performing the greatest miracle ever.

Who was this Nicodemus, who was chosen as a type of a man to show how one is saved?

If Nicodemus was *the teacher of Israel*, we ought to be able to retrace him in history. Many have identified him as a certain man mentioned in the Talmud named Nakdimon Ben Gorion. First, the Talmud indicates that he was a very wealthy and much admired Judean. In the book of Gittin 56a we read, speaking of Jerusalem, that: “There were in it three men of great wealth, Nakdimon b. Gorion, Ben Kalba Shabua’ and Ben Zizith Hakeseth. Nakdimon b. Gorion was so called because the sun continued shining for his sake”

If we are talking about the same man, then that explains **John 19:39** which says: *And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds.*

This mixture was exceedingly costly; only a rich man could acquire such things. Nicodemus might be mentioned in the Babylonian Talmud under the name of Nakdimon, and there he is portrayed as a rich man. We read in in the book of **Kethuboth 67a**, "Did not Nakdimon b. Gorion, however, practice charity? Surely it was taught: It was said of Nakdimon b. Gorion that, when he walked from his house to the house of study, woollen clothes were spread beneath his feet and the poor followed behind him and rolled them up."

This man was recognized by his love and generosity. We also read in **Midrash Rabbah on Lam.100** where we see that indeed he was a rich man: "In Jerusalem there were four councillors, viz. Ben Zizit, Ben Gorion, Ben Nakdimon, and Ben KalbaShabua'.² Each of them was capable of supplying food for the city for ten years"

But this man Nakdimon, is not simply recognized for his generosity and his riches, there was more concerning him which brings us to realize the great influence he must have had at this time; we read in the **Talmud-Mas. Ta'anith 20a** that he is even compared to Moses and Joshua. "It has been taught: His name was not Nakdimon but Boni and he was called Nakdimon because the sun had broken through [nikdera] on his behalf. The Rabbis have taught: For the sake of three the sun broke through, Moses, Joshua and Nakdimon b. Gurion."

His recognition of the Messiah must have caused quite a disturbance for the other religious authorities and perhaps, many of them did follow his steps.

To conclude, what we see here is that God is no respecter of persons. We see Him choosing disciples from unschooled fishermen in **John 1** as well as from the highly knowledgeable teachers of Israel. But, let me tell you that Nicodemus was a very wise man, because he did not let this wall of incomprehension be a dividing wall between him and God. He understood, by the testimony of the Spirit of God, that this was truth, and he seized it.

Many say they need more, even after the Spirit of God comes upon them and brings them to the limit of their understanding; just like the Pharisees who asked for one more sign. But there comes a point where the Spirit cannot give more, unless the person gives Him authority over his or her life by accepting Yeshua. Subsequently, great things are further shown to them. Nicodemus understood that. He accepted to put his knowledge aside, and let the Spirit guide him onto further heights. Now Nicodemus is in heaven with Yeshua.