

A New Look at Old St. Nic' (Nicodemus)

Dr. John Niemelä

April 29, 2012, at Harvey Park Baptist Church, Denver, CO

Message posted at www.TheMessageofLife.com

INTRODUCTION:

CHRONOLOGY

Jesus was in Jerusalem thru the 8-day feast (Apr 7-14, A.D. 30)

He left Jerusalem for the Judean countryside in John 3:22.

Nicodemus came to Him during the feast. The *But* (or *Now*) that starts 3:1 introduces events of a night *during* the feast.

He did not entrust Himself to new believers, because He knew man (2:23-25)

²³ Now while He was in Jerusalem at the Passover festival, many believed in His Name when they observed the miraculous signs He was performing.²⁴ Jesus, however, would not trust Himself to them, since He knew all ²⁵and didn't need anyone to testify about man; for He Himself knew what was in man. ³¹But there was a man from the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ²This man came to Him...

These new believers had everlasting life. Despite staying in Jerusalem only briefly before going to the Judean countryside, more people were being baptized through Jesus than John.

⁴¹So when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that He was making and baptizing more disciples than John ² (though in fact, Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples) ³ He left Judea and went away to Galilee.

The signs showed Nicodemus that God sent Jesus (3:1-2) 2

Nicodemus did not fear being seen with Jesus (Proofs A–F)

- G. As a ruler (a Pharisee—the Sanhedrin's minority party—Sadducees were the majority party) Nicodemus was not fearful, but fearlessly outspoken. Evidence exists that he was Naqdimon ben Gurion, from a wealthy and powerful Jerusalem family. He was no shrinking violet.
- H. Pharisees fearlessly sought to keep Sadducees in line. He would have been quite busy at Passover, just as Jesus was. When do two busy people get together?
- I. Note that Nicodemus says, "We know..." [not "I know..."]
- J. Rulers could go anywhere they pleased at any time. It is likely that Nicodemus brought his own disciples:
³¹¹ Amen, amen, I tell you_[Nicodemus: singular], We speak what We know and We testify to what We have seen, but you_[plural] all reject Our testimony.¹² If I have told you_[plural] earthly things and you_[plural] don't believe, how will you_[plural] believe if I tell you_[plural] heavenly things?
- K. He came to Jesus again (after John 3): ¹⁹³⁹ Now Nicodemus (who had come to Jesus the first time at night) also came...

3:1 starts with *But* (or *Now*). It = "*Meanwhile, back at the ranch...*" He is one who believed during the feast (2:23)

Nicodemus defended Jesus at Tabernacles (Sept 17, A.D. 32) 3

7:37-39: Christ testified re: Himself (= day 7; day 8 = Sabbath)
Day 7 = Jn 7:37-8:1. Day 8 = Jn 8:2–10:21.

7:40-44: The crowd is divided (believers vs./ unbelievers)

7:45-49: Chief Priests and Pharisees sought to lynch Jesus

7:50-51: Nicodemus urged holding a trial for Jesus to testify

7:52: The Sanhedrin did not want a trial; no arrest occurred

He & Joseph of Arimathea gave Him a royal burial (19:38-42)

Mat 27:57-59 // Mk 15:43-45 // Lk 23:50 // Jn 19:38

Most believe (I agree) the tomb was Joseph's. How long did he think Jesus would need it?

John 20:28 is supporting evidence that Nicodemus believed at some point (but I see 2:23 and 3:1 showing that he believed during the feast of Passover in A.D. 30—John 2:13–3:21). John does not indicate the moment at which Nicodemus believed.

Nicodemus stood publicly for Jesus, but his disciples did not 4

Overwhelming rejection of Jesus, despite many signs (12:37)

Yet, many (even in the Sanhedrin believed in Him, but many of those did not confess Him publicly (12:42)

	<i>72-man Sanhedrin</i>
>½	<i>Unbel. Sadducees (37+ members)</i>
<½	<i>Unbelieving Pharisees</i>
	<i>Believing Pharisees</i>

Jesus told Nicodemus and his disciples to be born again (3:3-5)

How is one born again (according to the book of John)?

John 1:12-13

CONCLUSION

Nicodemus believed during the feast (2:23 & the *But* of 3:1)