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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A2397 ~ Jesus and Nicodemus.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

As we saw in our last Bible Adventure, Jesus stood up for God's standards and didn't compromise on what God has said in the Scriptures. After finding the merchants and money changers stealing from people who came to buy sacrifices at the Temple of God, Jesus drove them out from the Court of the Gentiles. Jesus showed that He cared for those who stayed behind to listen to Him and healed their diseases. The Apostle Peter in his first sermon in Acts, Chapter 2, told his listeners that Jesus of Nazareth was a man whose divine authority was clearly proven to the Jewish people, because they saw all the miracles and wonders which God performed through Him.

That is quite a statement for Peter to make! How was it then that the chief priests and rulers didn't see and accept the miracles that Jesus did? Were their goals and ambitions in life different from God's? In answer to these questions, the chief priests and rulers firstly didn't want the current system they had to change. They loved the power their positions of authority gave them. They even made up rules that disagreed with the Scriptures to protect their own interests and didn't care when they were wrong.

Before the Lord Jesus arrived on earth, God had been silent for 400 years. There were no direct instructions given to the priests and they were happy that God stayed out of their lives. Often people who have become Christians give testimony that they've wanted to run their own lives, and it was only when they got into a terrible mess, that they sought help from the Lord.

We wonder why someone on the Temple staff didn't get sick and look to Jesus to heal them? It would have been regarded as a lack of loyalty if someone from the ruling parties sought help from Jesus for their ill health. The Lord Jesus couldn't do many mighty miracles in some places because the people lacked so much faith in Him.

How very hard were the hearts of those rulers and scribes when they weren't glad that someone like a leper, outcast from people and slowly dying, had been completely healed! However, what joy there must have been in the families of those healed people as they were allowed to enter their home and society again! In Romans, Chapter 12, we're instructed to: "Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep." Sympathising with others in their times of trouble comforts them, and we all need comfort at some time in our lives.

Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin, and involved in governing the country under King Herod. Nicodemus must have had about the same status as a Member of Parliament in our times. His comings and goings would have been noticed by someone and he had much to lose if he made a mistake. He therefore went to visit Jesus at night, when his leaving the Temple wouldn't be noticed.

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It isn't surprising that the discreet visit of Nicodemus to Jesus at night has been told world-wide to all generations since the writing of the Gospels. Secrets do come out. And this is a warning to all who would try to do things in secret: people will find out at some point! In Luke's Gospel, Chapter 12, Jesus said: "Every secret will be made known. So then, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in broad daylight, and whatever you have whispered in private in a closed room will be shouted from the housetops."

What a time of embarrassment it will be for some people! Of course, if you want forgiveness for all those past errors of judgment and all that which doesn't measure up to Jesus' standards, repent of these and ask Him to fully wipe them away by His blood. Ask Him to be your redeemer from your sins. Give Him your life so that He may rule over it, transforming you into His loveliness and purging you from all that is displeasing to Him or hurtful to others.

Caiaphas became the ruling high priest at the same time when John the Baptist commenced his ministry. Caiaphas' father-in-law, Annas, was also a high priest but by then, also elderly. Caiaphas could see that the people were very thankful to the Lord Jesus for His messages and healings, so he had to tread carefully in opposition to Jesus. People in positions of prominence often make enquiries about those they think might oppose them publicly, to so determine the strength of their arguments.

People in churches often do the same thing. One person is unhappy about something, so they gather around themselves like-minded people to see how strong the group may be for voting something in or out. A person could be unhappy in particular about something someone else said or did. The Lord Jesus in Matthew, Chapter 18, told the person with a grievance to go privately to the person he considers he's been offended by and make his complaint to him alone. If the complaint is listened to, then reconciliation can be made. There may be apologies and matters needing to be put right. Scholars say that this part of Scripture is one that is least practised by the church generally.

Caiaphas also made the worldly-wise but unrighteous statement in John's Gospel, Chapter 11, "It is expedient (or beneficial) for us that one man should die for the people and not that the whole nation perish." It was from that day on, that the Jewish authorities made plans to kill Jesus.

One of the deluding games played by governments and big businesses these days is that of self-assessment.

Instead of getting an independent assessment, important people tell themselves how well they are doing at their job and they try to convince others that the same is true. But self-regulation never works. There needs to be someone else a person needs to be accountable to. And this is true in the Christian life as well.

A Christian pastor encouraged his deacons to ask him regularly if he was keeping up his daily devotion times and sessions of prayer. If no one asked him about these things, he could grow slack and give higher priority to visiting people and preparing sermons.

As part of their non-acceptance of Jesus' many good miracles, the scribes and priests tried to claim that Jesus did His miracles from the power of Beelzebub, or Satan. To this day, there are people who believe that Jesus and Satan were brothers and that Satan helped Jesus with His miracles.

Satan, a fallen yet created angel, does evil continually. His name means 'adversary' and he is the father of lies. If he and Jesus were cooperating in Jesus' mission, why would Jesus have had to defeat Satan in temptations out the wilderness? Satan doesn't do any good things. In James, Chapter 4, it says: "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you?" Jesus and Satan are opposite types. Jesus will rule the earth and reign as King of kings and Lord of lords for ever and ever. Satan is awaiting judgment for his rebellion against God.

Nicodemus was a teacher of authority among the Jews. He met Jesus and gave Jesus a compliment of respect. But he made the mistake of calling Jesus a teacher come from God. Jesus IS God. Jesus didn't respond to those words but He started immediately to teach Nicodemus that he needed to be born from above, that is, spiritually in his heart by the Holy Spirit. Until this happened, Nicodemus wouldn't see the Kingdom of God. The religious Jews, however, thought they'd an automatic right to go to heaven because they were God's 'special' people.

When speaking to Nicodemus, Jesus compared our physical birth to that of the spiritual one required for us to enter the Kingdom of God. In John Chapter 4, Jesus spoke of "living water" to a woman from Samaria while He was resting beside a well of water. This 'living water' is salvation through Jesus Himself. Jesus told Nicodemus not to be surprised at this new birth. When Nicodemus seemed to be confused and asked Jesus how all this could be possible, Nicodemus showed Jesus how little he understood.

All people who want to go to heaven must first believe in Jesus. There is no other way because God has placed everything in Jesus' hands. We believe that Jesus is God, who loved us so much that He came and paid the death penalty for our sins. We are free from having to pay our own sin penalty through Jesus' death. He became our substitute and we need Him to clear away our sins and give us instead, His resurrected nature and life for us to live by. In time, Jesus will take us home to heaven to be with Him.

Some people just like Nicodemus think that they have lived a good life, been an upright citizen, never robbed a bank and don't feel guilty as a sinner. But everyone has failed to meet God's standard of perfect holiness. The Bible declares that every single person (except Jesus) has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. As a result, the wages of sin is death.

What is the outcome of belief or unbelief in Jesus according to John, Chapter 3? The person who believes is not condemned and has everlasting life. But the person who does not believe in Jesus is condemned and the anger of God stays on him. There's no third option to choose between.

Nicodemus did choose life, though it cost him dearly. In Chapter 7, he stood up for Jesus in front of his peers and in Chapter 19, Nicodemus showed he was a disciple so close to Jesus, that he was one of the two men who took the body of Jesus down from the cross and buried it in the tomb.

After the initial spiritual birth there is the journey of life to be lived in faith and obedience to Jesus Christ.

Here's some Scripture to learn by memory: Philippians, Chapter 4, verses 6 and 7: "Don't be anxious or worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking him with a thankful heart. And God's peace, which is far beyond human understanding, will keep your hearts and minds safe in union with Christ Jesus."

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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