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NICODEMUS AND THE RICH RULER

We have two separate accounts of two completely different individuals who came with questions seeking answers from Jesus and struggled to accept His response. While it must be noted that both Nicodemus and the young ruler are totally different people who met Jesus at completely different moments, there are amazingly a striking number of similarities that existed between the two:

1. Both Were Rulers of the Jews

"Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews,"

(Jn. 3:1)

"A ruler questioned Him," (Lk. 18:18)

2. Both Acknowledged Jesus As A Good Teacher

"Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him," (Jn. 3:2)

"A man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him, 'Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' (Mk. 10:17)

3. Both Resisted His Teaching

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God.” Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old?...How can these things be?” (Jn. 3:3-4, 9)

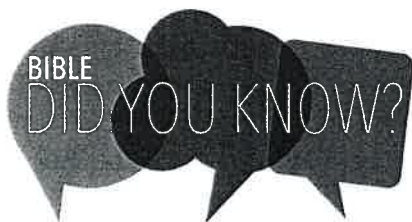
“If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property,” (Mt. 19:21-22)

Both being affiliated with the class of rulers who predominantly rejected Jesus’ claims of spiritual authority (*“Pilate summoned the chief priests and the rulers and the people, and said to them,*

‘You brought this man to me as one who incites the people to rebellion,’ Lk. 23:13-14) both Nicodemus and the young man were willing to stand on their own honest personal conclusions as to the credentials of Jesus as a spiritual teacher and resisted the pressure of conformity among their peers. Additionally, to the credit of their character, both Nicodemus and the young man were admirably serving God with their abilities in ways they could have easily been tempted to use in a more self serving capacity. Impressively, the young man was resisting all forms of temptation that are commonly present with young men and great wealth, as he asserts he had been keeping the moral commandments of God all throughout his youth and was using his wealth to the glory of God. *“Do not commit adultery. Do not murder. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. Honor your father and mother.’ And he said, ‘All these things I have kept from*

my youth,'” (Lk. 18:20-21). Nicodemus was using the wisdom and learning he had achieved in a most selfless and serving manner, teaching Israel to know God (Jn. 3:10). Yet, ironically, both found them crippled with an inability to follow the teachings of the One they both hailed as the sole great Teacher of God by two varieties of wealth: one by the wealth of knowledge and the other by the wealth of worldly possessions. How quickly the Master forced Nicodemus to change his assured manner, “Teacher, we know,” to “I do not know; I cannot understand,” as his wealth of knowledge became a hindrance to accepting his own misunderstandings about the nature of the Kingdom. The rich young ruler likewise was shaken from his confident “I have kept” to an implied “I cannot keep. Farewell,” as his wealth of material possessions was too great to follow the Lord’s conditions to eternal life. Never underestimate these two great potential

stumbling blocks to faithfully following the teachings of the Savior and let us always be seeking God’s wealth of deeper spiritual knowledge and an eternal inheritance reserved in Heaven. The power of the spiritual rebirth Jesus spoke of with Nicodemus is the only thing which can truly overcome these barriers to an obedient walk with the Good Teacher as we are forced to learn everything again with new eyes and redirect our hearts towards new desires. “The things that are impossible with people are possible with God,” (Lk. 18:27).
– Daniel Ruegg



“He who oppresses the poor taunts his Maker, but he who is gracious to the needy honors Him,” Prov. 14:31

People, Places, and Things of the **BIBLE**



Oldest Scroll of Leviticus Discovered

For the first time, advanced technologies made it possible to read parts of a scroll that was completely burnt c. 1,500 years, inside the Holy Ark of the synagogue at Ein Gedi. At the end of extremely challenging efforts which lasted over a year, the scientists and researchers were amazed to see verses from the beginning of the Book of Leviticus, suddenly coming back to life. The parchment scroll was unearthed in 1970 in archaeological excavations in the synagogue at Ein Gedi, headed by the late Prof. Dan Barag and Prof. Ehud Nezer from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Dr. Sefi Porath. from the Israel Antiquities Authority. However, due to its charred condition, it was not possible to either preserve or decipher it. The Lunder Family Dead Sea Scrolls Conservation Center of the Israel Antiquities Authority which uses state of the art and advanced technologies to preserve and document the Dead Sea scrolls enabled the discovery of this important find. It turns out that part of this scroll is from the beginning of the Book of Leviticus, written in Hebrew, and dated by C14 analysis to the late sixth-century CE. To date, this is the most ancient scroll from the five books of the Hebrew Bible to be found since the Dead Sea scrolls, most of which are ascribed to the end of the Second Temple period (first century BCE-first century CE). The fragment of the Ein Gedi scroll was scanned along with the phylacteries and phylactery cases. The Israel Antiquities Authority then sent the outcome of these scans to Professor Brent Seales of the University of Kentucky who developed a digital imaging software which allows to virtually unroll the scroll and visualize the text. Thus, the great surprise and excitement when the first 8 verses of the Book of Leviticus suddenly became legible. This is the first time in any archaeological excavation that a Torah scroll was found in a synagogue, particularly inside a Holy Ark.

