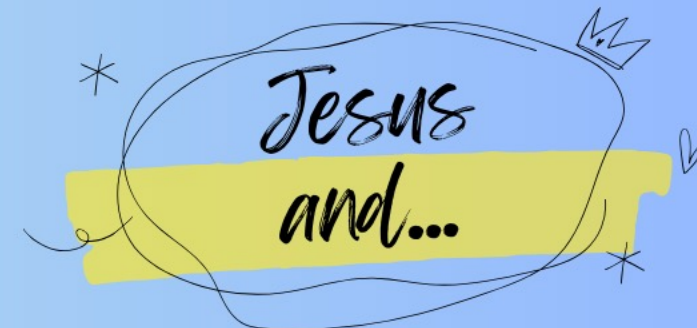


The great Paradox

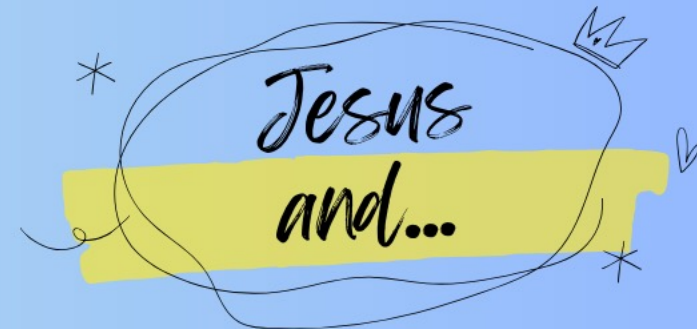
Religion is not the answer to our spiritual need.

Under the cover of night, Jesus shed light on Nicodemus's greatest need – to be born again.

The conversation in John 3, helps us understand the light of salvation that Jesus shines on Humanity.

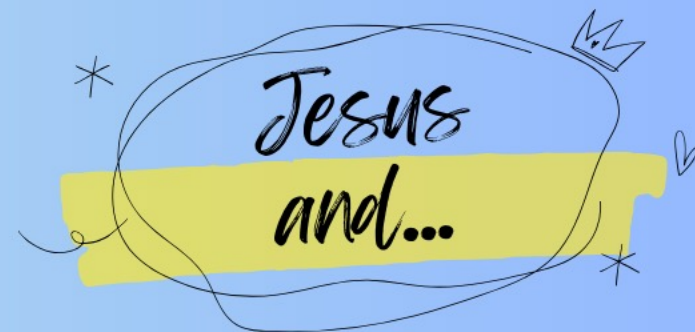


3 Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. ² He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him."
³ Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."



⁴ "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"

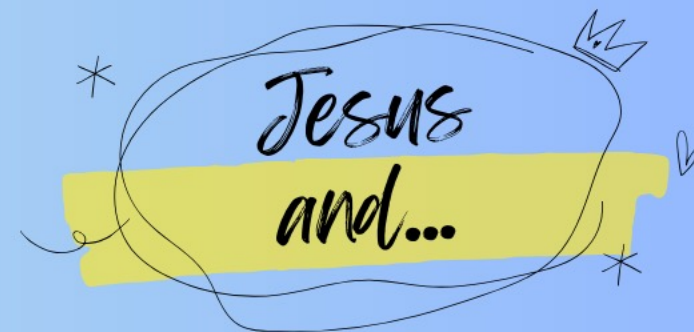
⁵ Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. ⁷ You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'



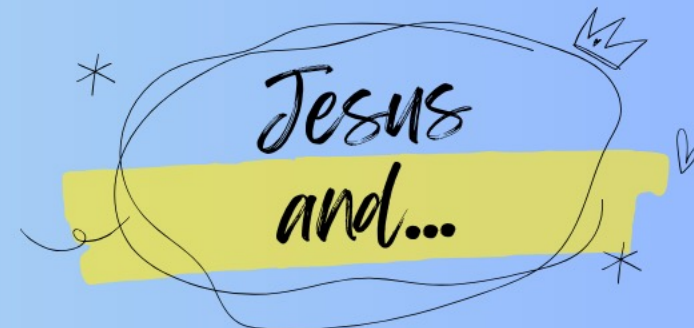
⁸ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

⁹ "How can this be?" Nicodemus asked.

¹⁰ "You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things?"

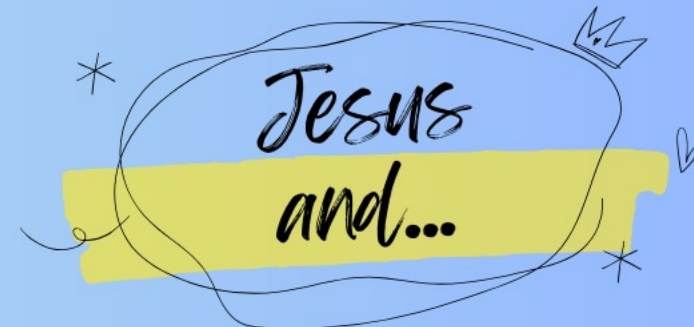


11 Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. **12** I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? **13** No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man.

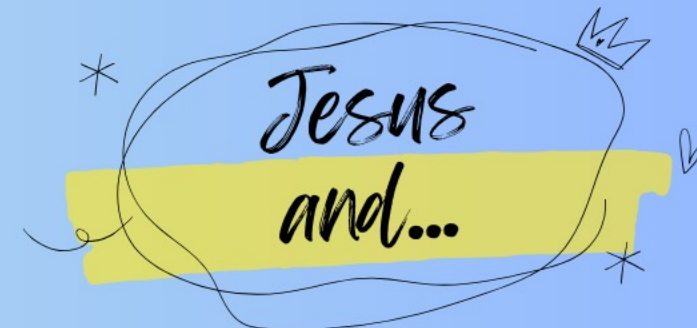


14 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, **15** that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him."

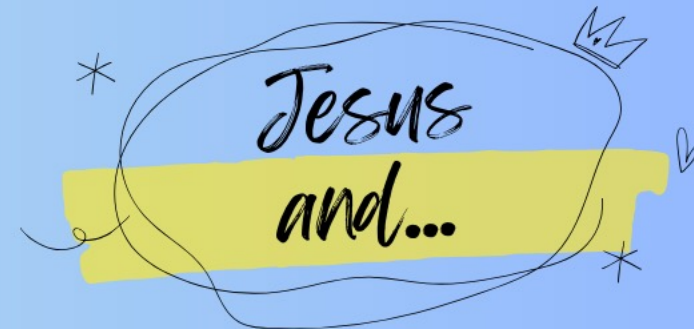
16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. **17** For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.



18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. **19** This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.



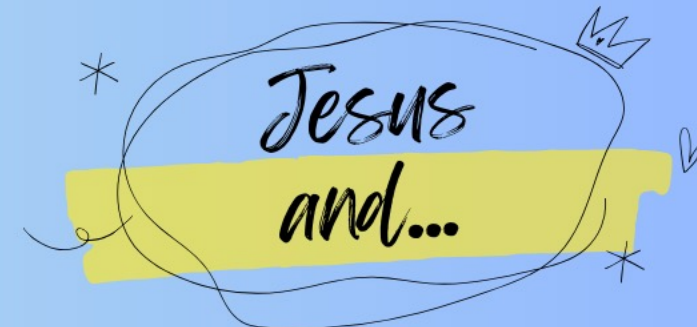
²⁰ Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. ²¹ But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.



“How can this be?” Paradox — Persistent contradiction, a statement that runs contrary to one's expectation, “Unity of opposites”

- **Nicodemus – religious elite yet empty/spiritually dead**

“**3** Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. ² He came to Jesus at night...”



Jewish Ruling Council = Sanhedrin



- 71 members
- Expert in Hebrew law
- Pharisees – especially oral tradition
- 613 distinct laws

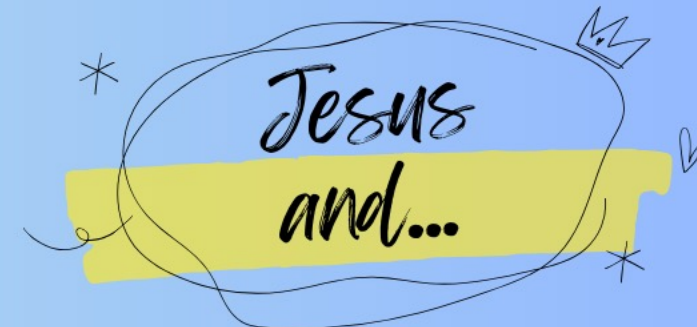
How are we like Nicodemus,
following all the rules but spiritually
empty?

Jesus
and...

“How can this be?” Paradox – Persistent contradiction, a statement that runs contrary to one's expectation, “Unity of opposites”

- Nicodemus – religious elite yet empty/spiritually dead
- **Jesus – of God but not “one of them”**

“Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.”



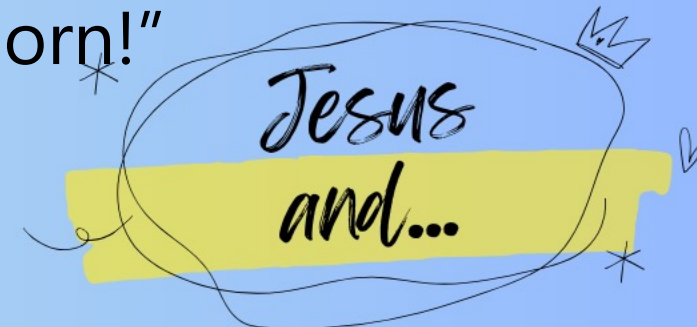
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- Nicodemus – religious elite yet empty/spiritually dead
- Jesus – of God but not "one of them"
- **Re-born when your old**

³ Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."

⁴ "How can someone be born when they are old?"

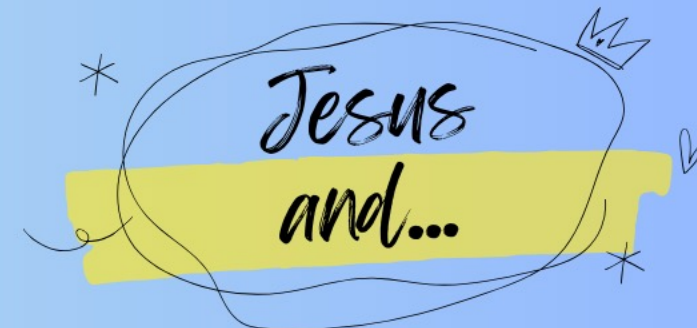
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- Nicodemus – religious elite yet empty/spiritually dead
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- **Physical “Flesh” vs Spiritual**
- **Wind – invisible/uncontrollable yet heard and movement seen**

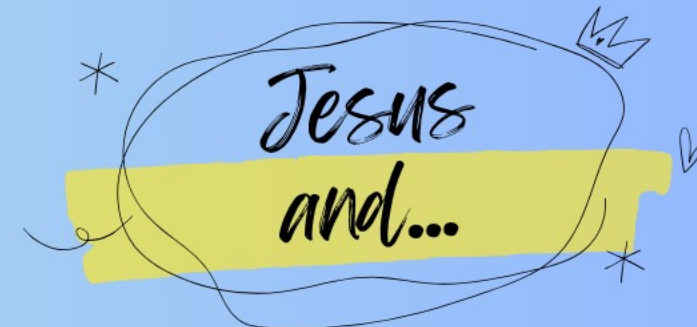
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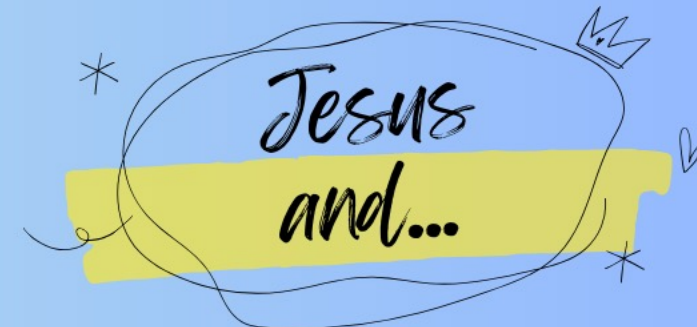
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- **Earthly vs Heavenly**

¹² I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?



“Son of Man”

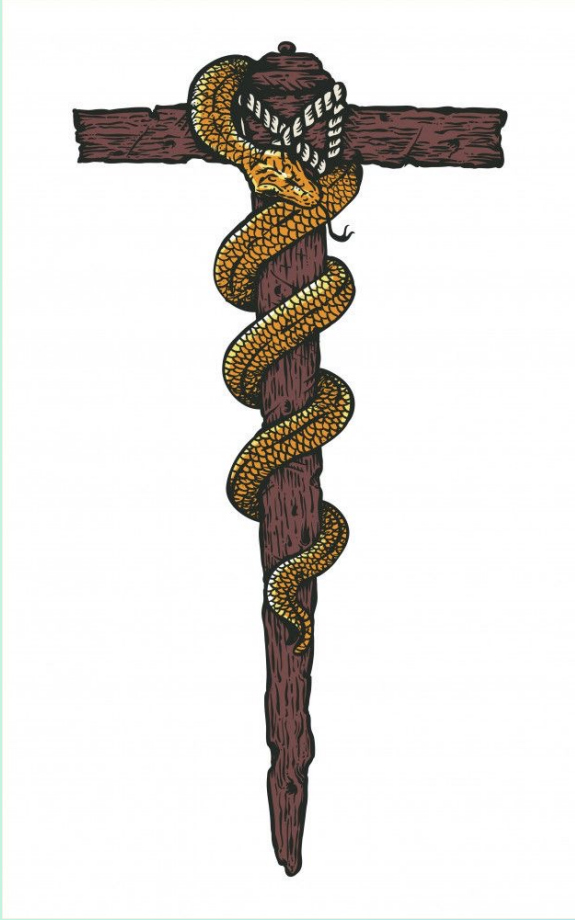


Daniel 7:13-14

“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴ He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”*

Jesus
and...

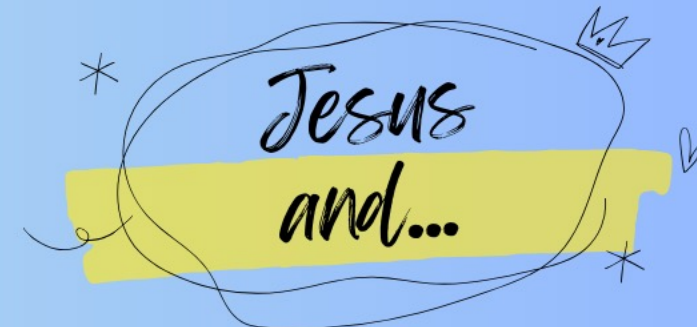
“Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness...”



Jesus
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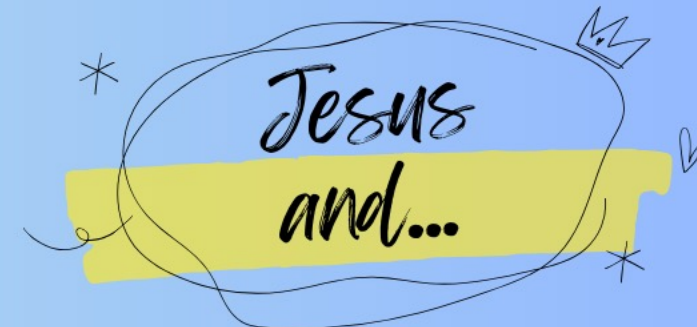
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- Earthly vs Heavenly
- **Light vs Darkness**



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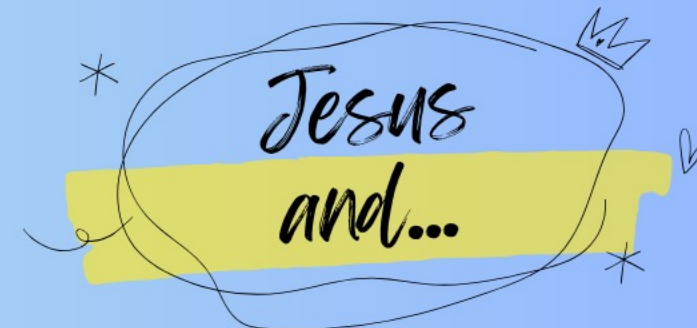
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- **Love for the world = “Gave” Death of beloved only son**

“¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

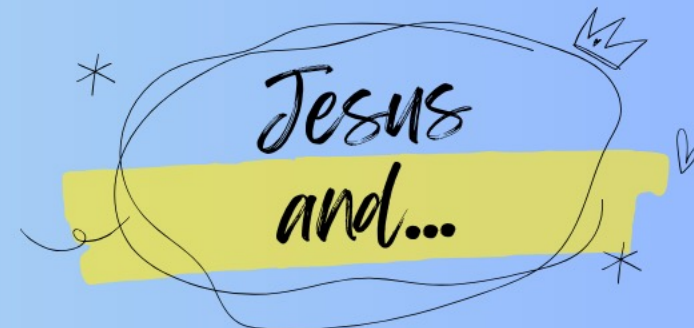


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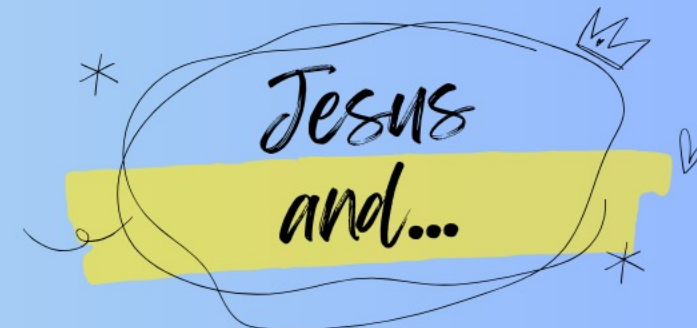
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- **Condemnation vs Salvation**
- **Light vs Darkness**



17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. ¹⁹ This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.



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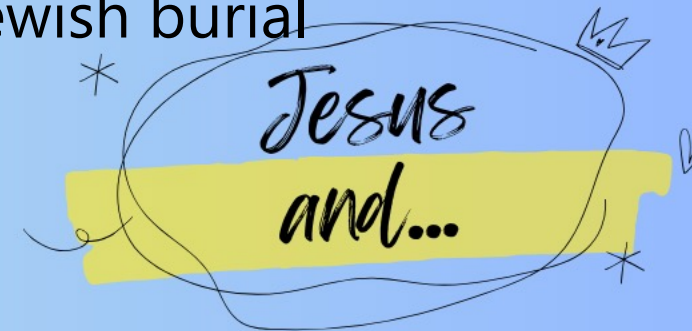


What happened to Nicodemus?

John 7:50 Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked, ⁵¹ "Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?"

⁵² They replied, "Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee."

John 19:38 Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. ³⁹ **He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night.** Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. ⁴⁰ Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs.



Application

- What paradox of Jesus are you struggling with?
- Striving yet unfulfilled
- Do you find yourself pursuing the light or living in darkness?
- Is your life a paradox – sinner saved by grace?
- Is the power of the Spirit in your life conspicuous?

