

THREE KINDS OF SPIRITUAL LEADERS

Text: John 3:2

Introduction: John 3 gives us an inside viewing of a private conversation between two religious leaders of their day: Nicodemus, an approved Jewish minister, and Jesus Christ, an enigmatic wonder-working individual looked upon with suspicion by the leaders of the Jewish community.

There have been many famous religious leaders: Mohammed, Buddha, Ghandi, Mother Teresa, Jim Jones, and others. The leaders represent all kinds of religious faiths. There are many religious leaders today. Because they do not all say the same thing, there is much confusion about what to believe and which leader should be followed.

A person can watch television and wonder who is right -- Jimmy Swaggert, Jerry Falwell, Pat Crouch, Pat Robertson, Jim Bakker (who admitted he was wrong about his health and prosperity gospel), Ernest Angsley, John Ankerberg, or Reverend Ike!

The Bible says that religious leaders and teachers are going to be held accountable for more than followers in the judgment. But it ALSO says that "every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12). Individuals are going to be held accountable for allowing themselves to be deceived, and for rejecting or receiving the light that God gives them.

In our scripture reading tonight we see three religious leaders. I am convinced that there are only three basic kinds of religious leaders, and that they are represented in this chapter.

I. THE BLIND LEADER (Nicodemus)

John 3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

John 3:10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

Matthew 15:14 Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

- A. Nicodemus was an important leader
- B. Nicodemus was an insecure leader
 - 1. I believe that is why he approached the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 2. I believe that is why he approached him by night.
- C. He was an ignorant leader

II. THE BLESSED LORD (Jesus)

John 3:2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

- A. Jesus was a unique leader
 - 1. In His works
 - 2. In His words
- B. Jesus was an uncompromising leader
 - 1. He did not flatter Nicodemus
- C. Jesus was an unselfish leader
- D. Jesus was the ULTIMATE leader
 - 1. John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
 - 2. You can trust any leader, and no matter how good a man he is, he cannot take you to heaven.
 - 3. Jesus Christ is the only man who ever lived who can lead From earth to heaven, for He is the only one who
 - Existed eternally
 - Was born supernaturally
 - Lived completely holy
 - Died voluntarily and vicariously
 - Rose again bodily and
 - Ascended openly

III. THE BURNING LIGHT (John the Baptist)

John 5:35 He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

- A. John the Baptist was different
 - 1. His appetite (locusts and wild honey) was different
 - 2. His appearance (leather girdle) was different
- B. John the Baptist was dogmatic
 - 1. About sin
 - 2. About the Savior
- C. John the Baptist was daring
 - 1. Regardless of the people he addressed (Herod)
 - 2. Regardless of the persecution he attracted

Conclusion: In a sense, each one of us is a religious leader, and while it is certain that we are not the Lord Jesus Christ, we do generally fall either into the category of Nicodemus or John the Baptist. Which are you?