

The Transformation of Nicodemus

John 3: 1-15

“In Christ” vs. “Christian”

- “Christian” 2X; “Christians” 1X
- “in Christ”, “in him”, “in the Lord” – 164X in Paul’s letters
- Are you “in Christ”?
- Justified through Christ’s death on the cross?
- Adopted as a son or daughter of God through Christ?

Nick's profile

- Family background
- Education
- Career path
- Financial status
- Status in society

Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. (John 3: 1, NIV)

“Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? (John 3: 10, ESV)

Jesus replied, “You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don’t understand these things? (John 3: 10, NLT)

■ **Pharisees:** a powerful branch of the Jewish religious community; considered to be religious experts, this group believed that the oral law was as equally authoritative and inspired by God as the Torah (written law); consequently, they obeyed very strictly God's laws and all the tradition of interpretation they had established

■ **Sanhedrin** (Jewish ruling council): highest Jewish authority in Palestine during Jesus' time; composed of 70 members plus the high priest as president; had complete control over the religious affairs of Israel and had the final say so in the interpretation of Mosaic Law; it also governed civil affairs and tried certain criminal cases under the authority of the Romans; it could not, however, impose capital punishment

Why meet Jesus after dark?

There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. “Rabbi,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you.” (John 3 : 1-2, NLT)

Non sequitur

- a conclusion or statement that does not logically follow from the previous argument or statement
- Latin: it does not follow
- 1st example of a non sequitur

“Please, sir,” the woman said, “give me this water! Then I’ll never be thirsty again, and I won’t have to come here to get water.”

“Go and get your husband,” Jesus told her.

(John 4: 15-16, NLT)

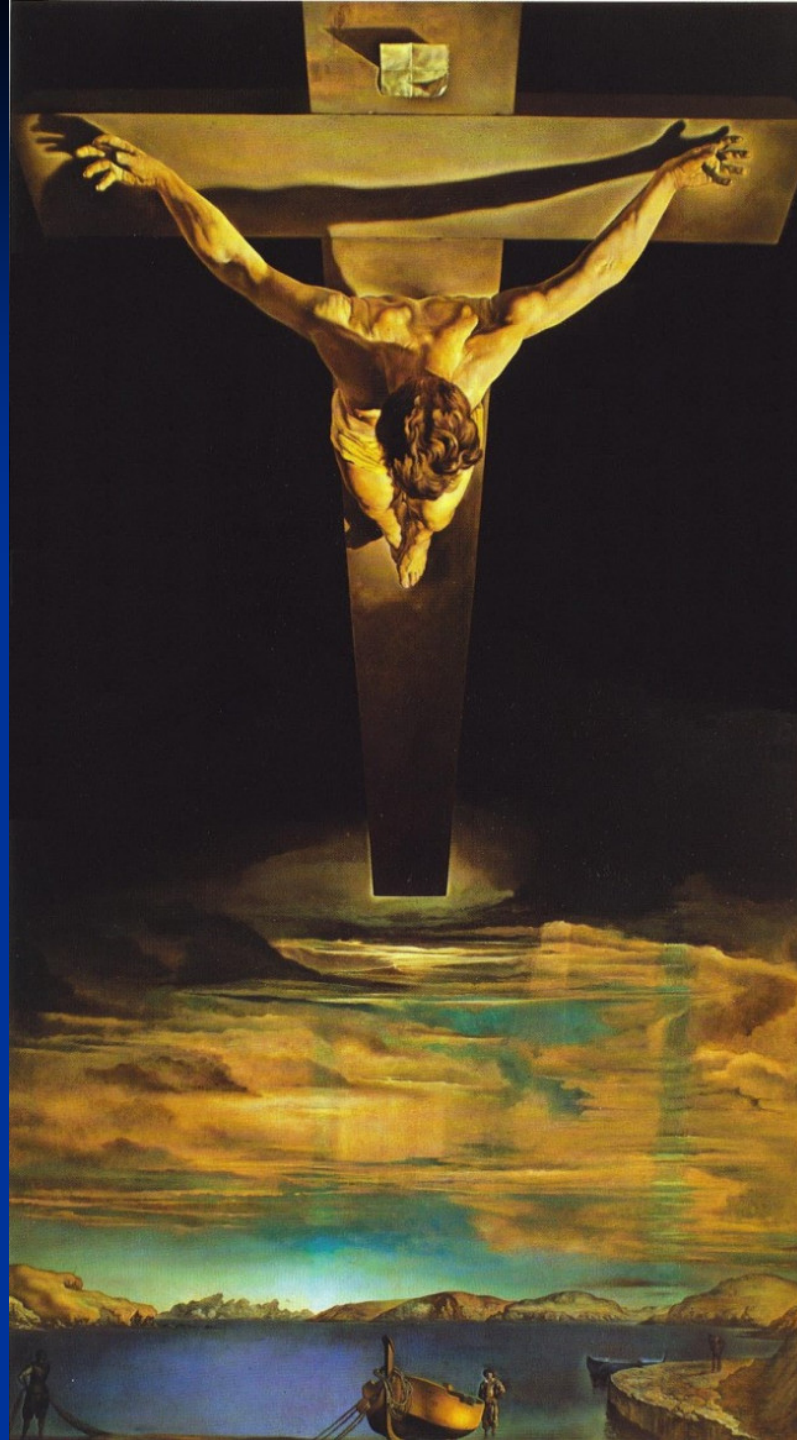
Non sequitur

- a conclusion or statement that does not logically follow from the previous argument or statement
- 2nd example of a non sequitur

“Rabbi,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you.”

Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, [or, *born from above*] you cannot see the Kingdom of God.”

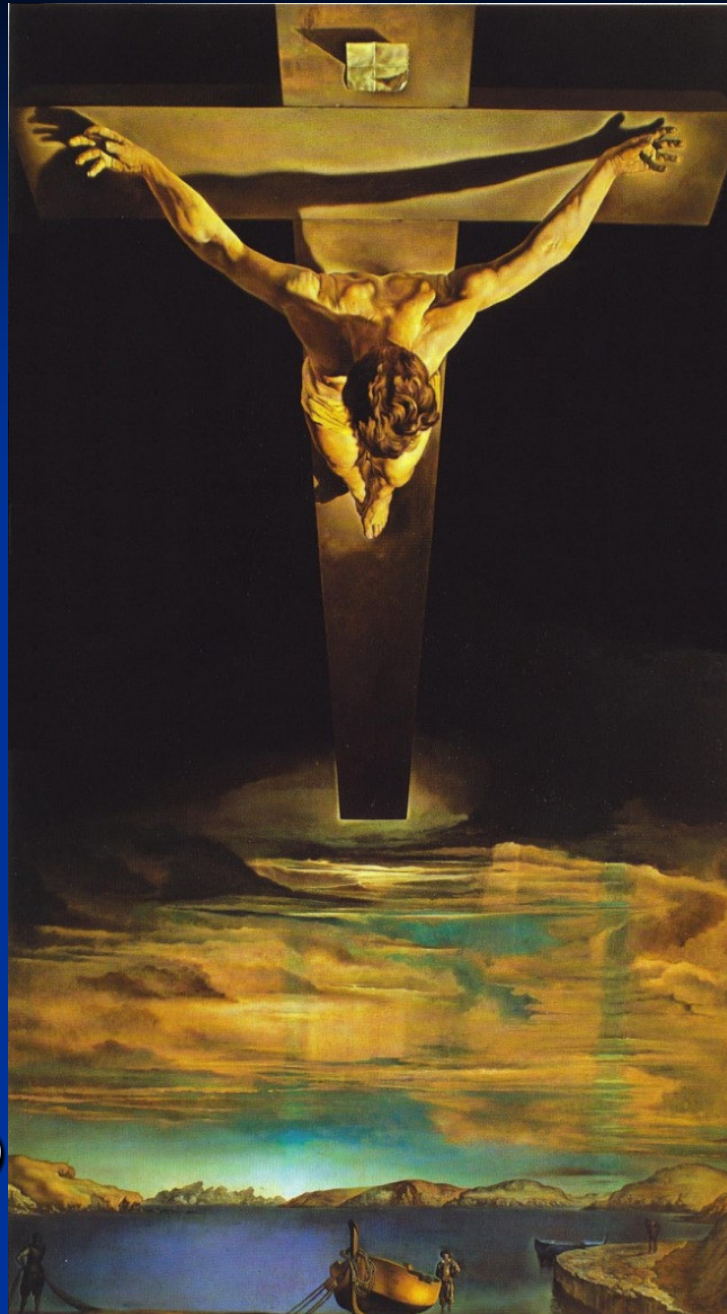
(John 3: 2-3, NLT)



Christ of
Saint John
of the Cross
by Salvador Dali
(1904-1989)



Crucifixion sketch
by St. John
of the Cross (c. 1550)

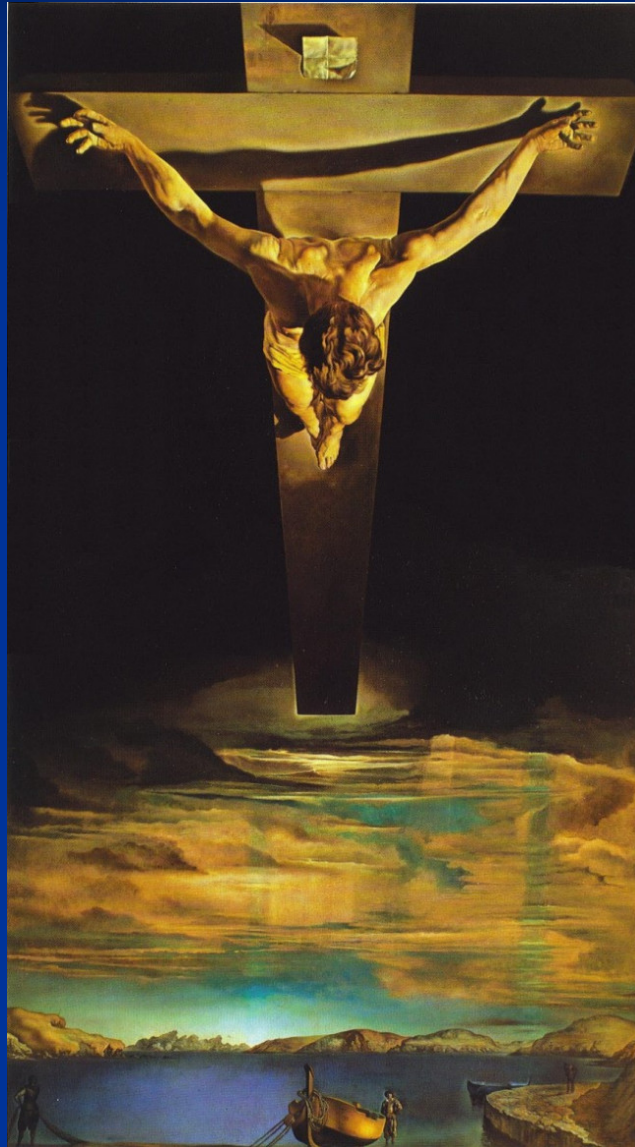


Christ of
St. John of
the Cross (1951)

3 fishermen oblivious to what's above



Nick couldn't see heavenly realities



Knowledge ≠ Salvation

3 Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again,[or, *born from above*] you cannot see the Kingdom of God.”

4 “What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus.
“How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?”

- Nic’s profile
- Age:

5 Jesus replied, “I assure you, no one can enter
the Kingdom of God without being
born of water and the Spirit.

6 Humans can reproduce only human life,
but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life.

7 So don’t be surprised when I say,
‘You must be born again.’”

(John 3: 5-7, NLT)

8 The wind blows wherever it wants.

Just as you can hear the wind
but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going,
so you can't explain how people
are born of the Spirit.”

(John 3: 8, NLT)

- Location of Nick's rendez-vous with Jesus?
- Meeting Place:

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but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going,
so you can't explain how people
are born of the Spirit.”

(John 3: 8, NLT)

■ Point of this analogy?

What have we learned so far?

- We can be religious but not born again
- We can know a lot but not born again
- We must be born from above in order to see (or enter) the kingdom of God

To be “born again”

- Your birth: did you make it happen?
- What important thing(s) have you done at birth?
- We all start at the same place at birth

To be “born from above”

- A life from above given us to
- A supernatural life given to us
- While we can “feel it” (like the wind) & see its effects, we can’t control it nor fully understand and explain it

5 Jesus replied, “I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. 6 Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life.
(John 3: 6, NLT)

Nicodemus couldn't see it/get it

9 “How are these things possible?”

Nicodemus asked.

10 Jesus replied, “You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don’t understand these things?” (John 3: 9-10, NLT)

Nicodemus couldn't see it/get it

9 “How are these things possible?” Nicodemus asked.

10 Jesus replied, “You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don’t understand these things?” (Jn. 3: 9-10, NLT)

25 “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. Your filth will be washed away, and you will no longer worship idols. 26 And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations. (Ezek. 36: 25-27)

Jesus gives Nick something to think about

12 But if you don't believe me when I tell you about earthly things, how can you possibly believe if I tell you about heavenly things?

13 No one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the Son of Man has come down from heaven.

14 And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life. (John 3: 12-15, NLT)

Jesus gives Nicodemus something to think about

- from Numbers 21: 4-9
- God sent poisonous snakes to bite the people because they complained against Him and Moses

“Why have you brought us out of Egypt to die here in the wilderness?” they complained. “There is nothing to eat here and nothing to drink. And we hate this horrible manna!” (Numbers 21: 5)

6 So the Lord sent poisonous snakes among the people, and many were bitten and died. 7 Then the people came to Moses and cried out, “We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you. Pray that the Lord will take away the snakes.” So Moses prayed for the people. (Numbers 21: 6-7)

8 Then the Lord told him, “Make a replica of a poisonous snake and attach it to a pole. All who are bitten will live if they simply look at it!”9 So Moses made a snake out of bronze and attached it to a pole. Then anyone who was bitten by a snake could look at the bronze snake and be healed! (Numbers 21: 8-9)

Something to think about

- What really saved those who looked up at the bronze serpent?
- What neutralized the venom within them?

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But the Son of Man has come down from heaven.
14 And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole
in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be
lifted up, 15 so that everyone who believes in him
will have eternal life. (John 3: 13-15)

Nick started to really listen and think

- “Rabbi, we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you.” (v. 2)
- “What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?” (v. 4)
- “How are these things possible?” Nicodemus asked. (v. 9)
- SILENCE

The next time we meet Nick (John 7)

45 When the Temple guards returned without having arrested Jesus, the leading priests and Pharisees demanded, “Why didn’t you bring him in?”

46 “We have never heard anyone speak like this!”
the guards responded.

47 “Have you been led astray, too?”
the Pharisees mocked.

The next time we meet Nick (John 7)

50 Then Nicodemus, the leader who had met with Jesus earlier, spoke up.

51 “Is it legal to convict a man before he is given a hearing?” he asked.

52 They replied, “Are you from Galilee, too? Search the Scriptures and see for yourself — no prophet ever comes from Galilee!”

(John 7: 45-47, 50-52)

The last time we meet Nick ...

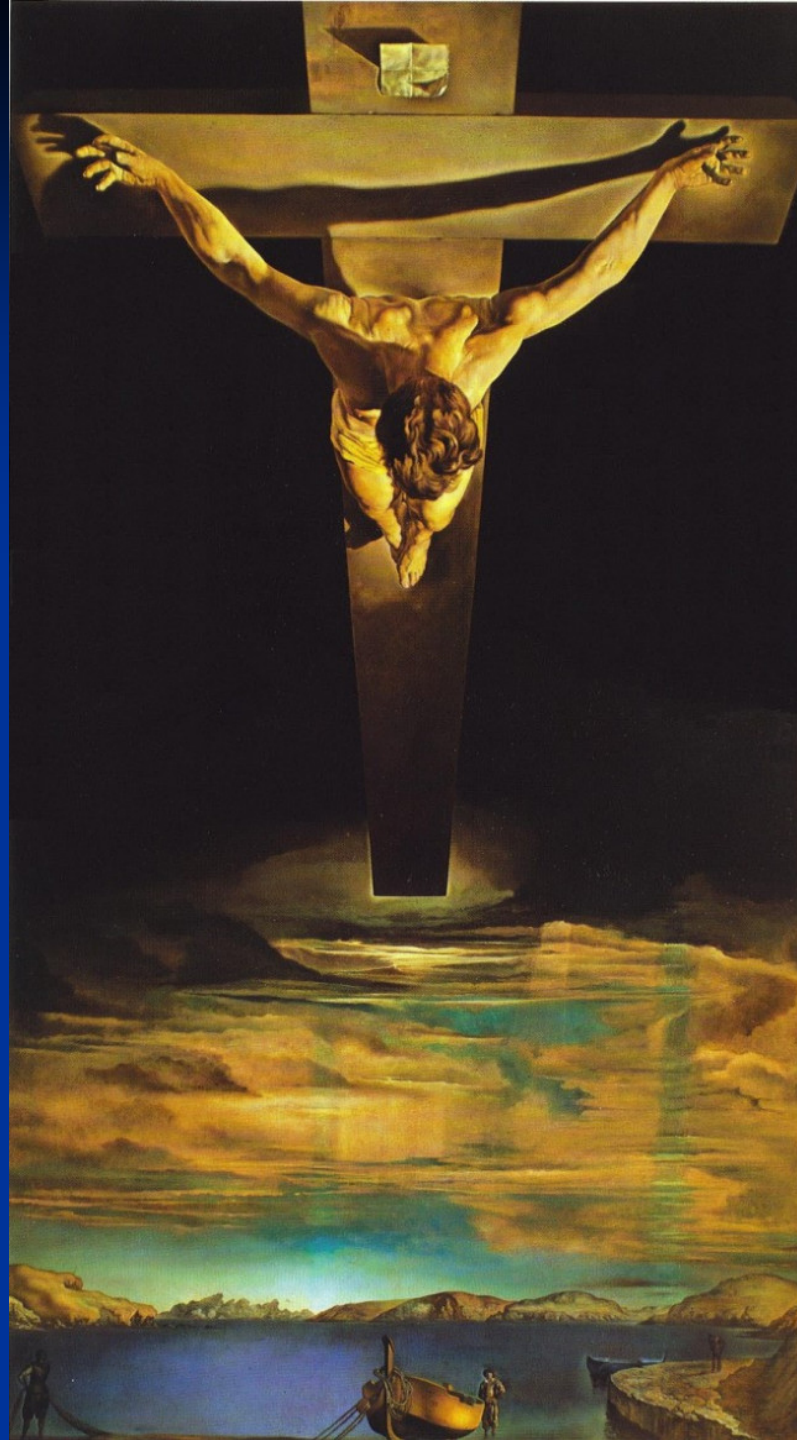
38 Afterward Joseph of Arimathea, who had been a secret disciple of Jesus (because he feared the Jewish leaders), asked Pilate for permission to take down Jesus' body. When Pilate gave permission, Joseph came and took the body away. 39 With him came Nicodemus, the man who had come to Jesus at night. He brought about seventy-five pounds of perfumed ointment made from myrrh and aloes. 40 Following Jewish burial custom, they wrapped Jesus' body with the spices in long sheets of linen cloth. (John 19: 38-40)

What has been happening to Nick?

- He started to “see” what he missed earlier

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lifted up, 15 so that everyone who believes in him
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What have we learned ?

- Being religious \neq born again
- Knowledge \neq Salvation
- Being born from above is necessary to see (or enter) the kingdom of God
- Being born from above is the work of God the Holy Spirit (cleansing from sin and being given a new heart)
- Being born from above is possible because Jesus was lifted up
- Those who believed in what God told them and acted on it were “saved”

What have we learned today?

- How are we going to apply what we have learned in our lives ?