

## Jesus' Conversation with Nicodemus

The story of Nicodemus' visit to Jesus begins with a discussion between them. It seems that the focus of the discussion was the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "*Truly, truly, I tell you, unless anyone is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" "*Truly, truly, I tell you, unless anyone is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*" (John 3:3, 5).

Of what did Jesus speak? The new birth of water and Spirit is holy baptism. In what name do we baptise? In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Our Lord Jesus Christ has commanded us to baptise in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. God has revealed Himself to us in the persons of the Holy Trinity.

We must understand God in this way. The Trinity is a revelation of God, not an idea conceived in the mind of a man. Who would be able to imagine God in this way? The concept of the Trinity makes no sense to human reason.

God revealed Himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Also, Jesus told His disciples, "baptise them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." All three are different persons. There are not three Gods, but one God, the Creator of all, but there are three persons. It's not like us when we change our behaviour according to our different roles in life. We have different relationships as parents with our children, as children with our parents, our friends with our friends, and with neighbours and co-workers. But we are always the same person in different roles. But with God, persons of the Trinity are distinct and equal persons, and have relationships with each other.

The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Father, the Father is not the Spirit, the Son is not the Spirit, and neither is the Spirit the Father or the Son. This is a mystery of God that we cannot understand completely. However, God has revealed it to us. We must think this way. Almighty God the Father sent the Son into this world to be born of a woman, suffer and die on the cross, be resurrected on the third day and ascend to heaven again.

As our Lord said, "*No one has gone up into heaven except the One who has come down from heaven, the Son of Man,*" (3:13). What is a son? The image of his father. He has the same thoughts as his father, the same will of his father, the very nature of his father, but is not the father. God the Father did not come down from heaven to live among us and die on the cross, only the Son of God. In this way we must understand how God lived among us and died on the cross for us and at the same time continued to rule the universe as God above all. God never stopped ruling the world in the person of the Father, but also lived and died on earth in the person of the Son. The Son is equal to the Father, but is not the Father. The Son is the perfect image of the Father, and no one can know the Father without the Son.

The Holy Spirit also has His own work and mission. In the Creed we confess that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, because the Father sent the Son, the Son accomplished His mission, ascended into heaven and sent the Holy Spirit to the Church from the right hand of God the Father with all the authority of the Father. The Holy Spirit helps the church fulfil its mission.

The Holy Spirit lives in our hearts at the same time that God the Father Almighty is above all and the Son is seated at the right hand of God.

The Holy Spirit guides us and keeps us in the faith, and also nourishes our faith. This work is called sanctification, which begins with baptism. Our Lord speaks of baptism in our text as a new birth because, as the Catechism says, the water of baptism is not just water, but water is linked to the Word of God. And the Holy Spirit is active in this Word, the promise of forgiveness of sins and new life in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

What problem did Nicodemus have? As a leader of the Jews, the Pharisees, he had so much knowledge of Scripture. He came to Jesus at night and said, *“Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher. For no one can do these miraculous signs, which You are doing, unless God is with him,”* (3:2). What is missing? He spoke of Jesus as a teacher and believed that God was with him. But he did not believe in Jesus as God.

So, Jesus spoke of the new birth in baptism, because only by the Holy Spirit can a person confess Christ as Lord and Saviour. To confess Christ as Lord and Saviour, we must understand Christ as the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, whom God the Father Almighty sent into the world and who sent the Holy Spirit to us to create and maintain faith in us. We must understand the work and the relationship of the three persons of the Trinity in this way.

Because of the Trinity, we have the promise of eternal life and hope in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was lifted up on the cross as was the bronze snake on a pole to save the Israelites from the fiery serpents in the wilderness (Numbers 21:9). We look to the cross to live forever.

Thank God for the gift of faith by the Holy Spirit, for the gift of the Son by the Father and the love of Jesus Christ!