

The Son of Man Lifted Up

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[0 : 00] Let's turn now to the New Testament, to the Gospel of John and Chapter 3. The Gospel of John and Chapter 3, and we'll read at the beginning.

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 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.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old?

Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not, and I said unto you, ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it glistereth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth.

[1 : 35] So is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and you receive not our witness.

If I have told you earthly things, and you believe not, how shall you believe if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man has ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

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 : 44] For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. And so on.

And particularly looking here, as I'm sure you've already noticed, at verse 14. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.

It's quite an amazing thing that we do not hear of the serpent for a period of 700 years after Hezekiah has destroyed it in the passage that we read.

And it was 700 years prior to that that the incident that we read in Numbers 21 took place in the desert.

More or less 700 years. So that is between the original time and Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus, we're talking about a period of plus or minus 1,400 years.

[4 : 04] There are several areas in Scripture where the punishment of the serpents is mentioned, but not the brazen serpent. It is only in the three passages that we have read that the brazen serpent is actually mentioned.

And we'll come to look at that in more detail in a moment. It's quite fascinating that this occurs in a conversation with one who is a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.

And this Nicodemus has come to Jesus. He's obviously heard him preaching and speaking. And he has come to him by night.

That is probably for fear of being seen by the other Pharisees and being dubbed a follower of Jesus. But he has come with various questions.

And he has realized, as we see in verse 2, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God. Now, technically, Jesus was not a rabbi.

[5 : 13] Rabbis were appointed by the Sanhedrin, that is, the Council of Seventy that ruled matters of religion for the Jews, where the majority were Pharisees.

But you notice that it's a term of respect. Rabbi, teacher, is what it really means. Nobody can do these miracles that you do except God be with them.

And then Jesus sort of shocks Nicodemus with a statement that I'm sure we're all very familiar with. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

And this is, of course, beyond Nicodemus' understanding. As it is beyond the understanding of so many people who read this particular passage and wonder about what does it mean to be born again.

Now, that is not my main focus this evening. I'm not going into that in detail. But Jesus continues the conversation with him and explains other things to him and says to him, that which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the spirit is spirit.

[6 : 31] And then Nicodemus says in verse 9, how can these things be? How are these things possible? And Jesus, in a very gentle way, rebukes him.

In verse 10, are you a master? That is, one of the Pharisees, a ruler of the Jews, he was probably a member of the Sanhedrin, almost certainly.

You are one who teaches others. And you don't know these things. You don't understand these things. And these are very basic things in the theology of the New Testament.

And yet, they may be basic, but they are not easy to understand. When you consider what it means to be born again, it is one of the most difficult things to understand.

And yet, Jesus makes it clear in verse 5 what it involves. Except a man be born of water, that is, baptism, and of the Spirit. And man there is used simply meaning human being.

[7 : 44] He cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. And that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. And in order to try to explain in perhaps in greater detail to Nicodemus, he brings up this question in verse 12.

If I have told you earthly things and you believe not, how shall you believe if I tell you of heavenly things? No one has ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven.

And Nicodemus would have realized that he is referring to himself. Nicodemus would also have known from the Old Testament that the Son of Man was a title that was given in the book of Daniel to the Messiah who would eventually come.

But then to make it even clearer, Jesus refers to this Old Testament passage in verse 14. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life.

and in order to understand fully what that was actually referring to we need to go back to this passage in the book of Numbers in Numbers 21.

[9 : 15] And again it will help if you have if you're able to move from Numbers 21 to John 3 and have both places available to have a look at them.

We find this story in Numbers 21 given approximately 1400 years before the time of our Lord and given in a very brief account of seven or eight verses of what actually happens in the desert.

And you will remember that this is the time when the children of Israel having now journeyed for almost 40 years through the wilderness are now about to enter the promised land.

And once we bear that in mind and we remember of course that the wilderness and the journey and the promised land are all metaphors of our journey through this life and heaven which is to come then we begin to see the context in which Jesus is putting this incident to Nicodemus.

We see that the people had journeyed in verse 4 from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea to compass the land of Edom. Now you will remember that the people of Edom were the descendants of Esau the brother of Jacob and therefore they were close relatives to the children of Israel.

[10 : 54] But you read in chapter 21 that the children of Edom and sorry in chapter 20 that the children of Edom had refused passage for the children of Israel to pass through their land.

And basically what that meant was that instead of being able to go like a direct route up by the Red Sea and round and then to the Jordan in order to enter the promised land it meant that they had to turn back and then go right round the edge of the land of Edom.

You can imagine that after 38 and a half nearly 39 years in the wilderness that this was a bitter disappointment meant to the people. But you can also remember a number of other things.

There are only three of those who came out of Egypt still alive. Moses, Caleb and Joshua.

It may well be that some of those who came out as very small children are still there. But from the way that the passages are written, we think that certainly entering the promised land, even Moses himself was not allowed to enter, only Caleb and Joshua entered.

[12 : 21] That would come sometime later and after various battles and victories over the Canaanites. And so we see them having to turn back.

We also see that in the chapter before that Aaron, the high priest, has died. And it's as if the leaders of the people are being taken away one by one.

And yet things look bright. They are expecting to be able to move into the promised land. This rabble that had come out of Egypt nearly 40 years ago, a mixed multitude, a small number of people, along with various other followers, some of them half Egyptian, some of them perhaps from other nations as well, has now been brought through the wilderness to be a mighty number, probably several million, some people think it's about four or five million of them by this stage.

That's including women and children. They have been given God's covenant law at Mount Sinai. They have been given the priesthood, the high priesthood.

They have been given the order, the Levitical order. They have been given the tabernacle. They have been given the tables of the law. And in those 40 years, they have seen time and time again how God has led them by the pillar of fire by day and cloud by night, has led them through the wilderness and has led them through all the difficulties that they have encountered.

[14 : 04] God has even provided for them in terms of food. And you remember the miraculous gift of the manna that fell every day except on the Sabbath.

And that is what they refer to in verse 5. Our soul loathes this light bread. That's the manna that they're referring to there.

And so we see that the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. That's perhaps not surprising.

After many years of struggle and difficulty, when you yourself see that you are almost within grasp of achieving the thing that you have desired for so long, and suddenly it's as if it were taken away from you.

Because they have seen just the three verses before that, they have seen King Arad the Canaanite coming out in battle against them and taking some of Israel prisoners.

[15 : 13] Now, we're not told what happened to these prisoners, but it would seem that as God listens to their prayer and the Israelites utterly destroy them and their cities, that probably these prisoners were rescued safe and sound.

but even so, they are now in a very difficult place. They are in what is called the Valley of Arabah, still its name to the present day.

And it's a dry, dusty, extremely hot place, just full of rocks, no water, no nothing there, and very often there are terrible sandstorms that run through it as well.

It's just at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba, north of the city, the Jewish port of Eliat, nowadays, you can see it on a map quite easily. But quite apart from that, it seems to have been a particularly desolate place.

And all these factors together bring out this sort of dissatisfaction that the people have.

[16 : 29] The soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. That may well be something that happens to you and I at times in our walk through the wilderness here as well.

That we expect God's providence to work in certain ways for our benefit. benefit. And when things don't work out the way that we want it to work out, very often we start murmuring.

We start blaming someone. And if we can't find a convenient scapegoat round about to blame, very often we will blame God.

And that's exactly what the people do. In verse five, the people spake against God and against Moses, wherefore, why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?

Now, considering that they survived for 38 and a half years, nearly 39 years, without any major difficulty, considering they'd seen God's provision for them many times during this time, it's interesting isn't it, that they come up with this complaint.

[17 : 48] It's not the first time they've done that. Perhaps it's a complaint they heard their fathers complaining against various times as well. You remember at one point in Numbers 11, the people complained that they had no meat, and the Lord brings quails.

And every time they complained to Moses, Moses prays to the Lord for them, and the Lord provides a solution. And a few chapters before this we saw again the problem of water, that there was no water, and God tells Moses to speak to the rock at Meribah.

But you see there that Moses in his frustration, and anger almost with the people, instead of just speaking to the rock, he strikes it.

the water is given. But Moses' disobedience is to be punished by God by not allowing him to enter the promised land.

He will see it from the top of Pisgah, but he is not permitted to enter in there. And it's not the only time that we see God's justice in action during the time in the wilderness.

[19 : 10] You can look at various incidents that have taken place. You remember Dathan and Korah and Abiram, when they thought they were just as good priests as Aaron and the Levitical priesthood, how the earth opened and swallowed them.

You remember Aaron's two sons, who had burnt false fire, false incense before the tabernacle, probably being drunk at the time, although again we can't be 100% sure of that, and how they died immediately.

And there are other examples as well. We see in Leviticus 24, a half Israelite, half Egyptian man who blasphemes the name of God and who is sentenced to be stoned.

Moses speaks to God as to what the punishment is, because no such occurrence had occurred before and the stoning takes place. And we see a similar incident in Numbers 15 with a man who is gathering sticks to make a fire on the Sabbath, who is also stoned to death.

There was, of course, the incident with the brazen calf, and there was in the passage that we sang about when some of them joined together with the Canaanites in Baal and worshipped the Baal of that area, and a plague broke out among them.

[20 : 44] But here we see in this passage that God does something quite different. When they complain against God and against Moses, in verse 6 we are told the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, and much people of Israel died.

It doesn't tell us how many died, but it must have been quite a considerable number. What is meant by fiery serpents? Well, most commentators think that it has nothing to do with the colour of the serpent itself.

This serpent, by the way, is what is known as a carpet viper, or a saw-scale viper. And they are still very common in this particular valley, the valley of Araba.

There is no cure for their bite. And the poison runs through as an inflammation through the bloodstream, and makes it almost seem as if your body is on fire.

And that is probably where the term fiery comes from. But it may also refer to the colour of the serpent. The serpent is a sort of coppery brown colour, very difficult to see, of course, in the sandy desert.

[22 : 06] But the Lord sends these fiery serpents among the people. people. It was not that there hadn't been serpents before.

Wherever they had gone through the peninsula of Sinai, through the wilderness, it is an area that even to this day is full of snakes, full of poisonous snakes. But we have no other recorded incident of them causing any problem or biting any of the people of Israel.

And it is as if here God's restraining grace is taken away. God allows the people to be bitten.

Why? Because of their sin. And that is so often what we see through the Old Testament.

The Old Testament in particular shows us God's justice. Whereas the New Testament so often, and we'll come to that later on, shows us God's mercy at work.

[23 : 20] So many people when they read parts of the Old Testament say, how is it such slaughter, such killing, etc., and so on. Where was God's mercy in these circumstances?

But if you look carefully at the circumstances in which the Israelites are commanded to slaughter the various peoples that they come across as they enter the promised land, it's made so clear by the Lord that they are to be extinguished because of their idolatry so that they will not infect, if I can use the word, the children of Israel with their idolatrous practices.

That's what they did at Baal-peer. That's what Aaron did with the golden calf. He had done the same by following the idols of Egypt. But this is now God's covenant people with whom he has made a covenant and has given them his law and he has commanded them to be holy even as I am holy.

And therefore God's justice is put in practice whenever there's a breach of that holiness. The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people.

They bit the people and much people of Israel died. Now some commentators think, and again if you bear in mind the size of the camp of Israel that it would have been here probably over several square miles with two or three million people and all their animals remember that they had lots of cattle and sheep as well.

[25 : 13] Then some people think that it was only in one part of the camp that this actually happened. But scripture doesn't say that. And they argue and say well you know how could they see from every part of the camp the brazen serpent on the pole.

But again it may well be that that was put on a higher part a little hill somewhere and could be seen from the whole camp glittering in the sun.

Others think that one of the priests walked around the camp carrying the pole with the serpent so that the people could actually see it. But there are various steps that we need to see here and we need to bear in mind that we're looking at this passage because of what Jesus has said to Nicodemus.

even as Moses lifted up the serpent so must the son of man be lifted up. And it's quite clear that there are parallels between what happens here in this chapter in this account and what is to happen at the cross of Calvary.

And you notice of course that the first parallel that we've already seen is that the people have been disobedient. They have questioned God's providence and God's protection.

[26 : 44] And that's possibly something that you and I are guilty of frequently as well. Questioning God's providence and God's protection for us.

Especially when things happen that we don't understand. And especially when it involves difficulty or suffering. But you notice what the first reaction of the people is.

In verse 7. Therefore the people came to Moses and said we have sinned.

We have sinned for we have spoken against the Lord and against thee. Pray unto the Lord that he take away the serpents from us. Why didn't they pray themselves?

Maybe they did. But they were aware of course of the special relationship between Moses and God.

[27 : 47] They saw and had seen on various occasions Moses as the mediator between them and God. they had seen him as an intercessor.

And you see the parallel that exists there how Moses is a type of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is the mediator for his people.

Now lifted up and on the right hand of the Father in glory he intercedes for his people. and if you are here this evening as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ have you ever realized that you have two persons of the Trinity praying for you at all times?

You have the Holy Spirit dwelling in your own heart and as Paul tells us in the letter to the Romans that he is continually interceding for us when we ourselves cannot even pray.

But yet on the right hand of the Father the Lord Jesus Christ in his mediatorial role as high priest is interceding for his people at all times.

[29 : 13] How can he do that? Well we'll come back to that in a moment or two. And you notice that Moses then carries out the instruction of the people.

Moses prayed for the people and the Lord gives him direct instructions. Make thee a fiery serpent and set it on a pole and it shall come to pass that everyone that is bitten when he looketh upon it shall live.

And Moses made a serpent of brass and put it upon a pole and it came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man when he beheld the serpent of brass he lived. And that's all that we're told in scripture.

But there are very interesting things here in these few verses. Probably by brass here is meant copper which again would be closer to the colour of the actual serpents.

Most sort of historians think that actual brass, the amalgam of the alloy of brass had not yet been discovered. But that's questionable. It may have been.

[30 : 24] It doesn't really matter anyway. But isn't it curious that God appears, the Lord appears in a sense, to be breaking one of his own commandments here.

You remember the covenant, the ten commandments that had been made with the children of Israel and which Moses on the second occasion had brought down the tables of the law from Mount Sinai, that the second commandment says, thou shalt make no graven image.

And yet that's exactly what God is telling Moses to do, to make a graven image. But what's the difference?

If you continue on in the second commandment it tells you clearly that you shall not make them to bow down and to worship to them. And there is no sense here in which the serpent of brass is to be worshipped.

It's curious, isn't it, that after 700 years as we read in second Kings, in which the people must have carried the serpent of brass with them.

[31 : 35] It was probably in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle as they entered the promised land and kept there. And then after that when Solomon builds the temple, it would have probably been in the holy place rather than the holy of holies after that.

Again, commentators disagree on which one of the two places it might have been in. It doesn't really matter. But by the time we come to Hezekiah's time, 700 years later, we read that the people had begun to worship it, that it had become an object of worship in itself, burning incense to it.

And it is then that Hezekiah and his cleansing of the temple commands Nehushtan to be destroyed, to be ground to powder and thrown out, because it had become an idol to the people.

And we hear no more about it for another 700 years until our Lord brings it up in this conversation with Nicodemus. Why would it be an image of a serpent?

Well, the obvious answer is because, of course, that was what was afflicting them. But there's more to it than that. First of all, they see that the serpent is an instrument of death.

[33 : 02] You see, when the serpent has bitten the people, when a snake bites you, and particularly if there is no antidote and no cure, then the poison of that serpent is in your blood until it causes your death.

And isn't that exactly what happens with sin? The poison of sin is in your blood from the day that you are born until the day that you die.

And it is effectively what causes your death. How does Paul put it? He says, the wages of sin is death. And that was the result of Adam and Eve having sinned in the garden.

Remember the figure in which Satan appears to Adam and Eve. it is in the figure of a serpent. And very probably one of the reasons why this is a serpent of brass is to remind the people of the fall in the garden of Eden.

There may be another reason as well. They would have seen and they would certainly have heard those who perhaps still remembered it if any were left, that in Egypt the serpent was worshipped.

[34 : 40] There was a particular cult of serpent worship through Egypt at the time when the children of Israel are in captivity there. And the worship of the serpent curiously was supposed to have healing properties for illnesses.

is. But you see there's no healing property in the actual image of the serpent itself. There's nothing that it can do.

It's a dead thing. It's just a piece of metal on a pole. It would also perhaps have reminded them of when Moses threw down his rod and it turned into a serpent and ate up the serpents, the rods of the other magicians in Egypt.

God's superiority over the gods of the Egyptians. But there's a more important reason than that.

And it is the reason that ties us to the conversation with Nicodemus. What do we see here? We see a foreshadowing of the cross of Christ.

[35 : 53] Christ. What does Jesus say to Nicodemus? Even so must the Son of Man be lifted up. And you notice of course that the original result that any man when he beheld the serpent of brass, if he'd been bitten, he lived.

All he had to do was look at it. Now, if you put yourself in the position of any individual who had been bitten there, when suddenly the message comes to you and the agony that you're in, that if you want to be cured, all you have to do is look at this image of brass.

And whichever way it was displayed, you were able to see it from where you were. it required a certain amount of faith to believe that.

And a certain amount of faith, perhaps, to also look at the serpent, believing that you would be healed. Is it not so with the cross?

How many people look at the cross and see nothing there but an empty cross? and yet fail to look at the cross in faith for what it represents?

[37 : 22] You see, the cross is the shadow of the pole, but there is substance in this cross. There's a difference between the two images.

There is inefficacy in both the serpent and the cross here. Why? there's no efficacy in the serpent itself.

And there is no efficacy in the wood of the cross, if we think of it that way, in itself. It's what takes place on the cross and the person who is on the cross that makes the difference.

And it is how you look at him. if you do not look by faith, then the cross has no meaning whatsoever.

No meaning whatsoever. It is just one of these symbols, a religious symbol that is around, that people may respect and perhaps even in some cases worship, but yet fail to see the real purpose of the cross.

[38 : 37] you see, the passage tells us, or to be more correct, it doesn't tell us that God removed the serpents. There's no word of that.

The serpents were not taken away. They were still there. But first of all, a cure is given. Look.

And it's as Isaiah puts it in chapter 45, that God says, look unto me. And it means turn round from wherever you are and look.

Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved. For I am God, and there is none else. And the first thing that you and I have to do when we come to look at an image of death, is to see the image of life that is behind it.

The solution in the desert was temporal. It was a solution that existed only as long as it was necessary. Because it appears from immediately afterwards in verse 10, the children of Israel set forward and pitched a nobath.

[39 : 51] From then on, God's restraining grace is put in place again, so that the serpents no longer bother them. You see, it is God's justice being put into action in a particular incident, in a particular place, in order to teach a lesson.

And as I mentioned already, there are so many occasions where we see that in the Old Testament. And some people ask and say, well, is God's justice not being put into operation nowadays?

And that is a very interesting question. I was reading an article just a week or so ago, which suggested that the outbreak of the coronavirus in China is specifically God's justice on a country that has and is persecuting the people of God and the word of God there.

Now, that's quite an interesting observation. You may or may not agree with it. But there is no doubt that it will take China many years to recover economically from the current situation.

God's justice in action may be well-being. There are many other things that we could refer to in that way as well. But when we come to the New Testament, we see God's justice is now replaced.

[41 : 35] I shouldn't say replaced, but God's justice is as it were taken away in favour of God's mercy. Maybe even taken away is not the right expression.

Why is that? God's Christ is because the Son of Man is lifted up. A price has to be paid for sin.

Where is it paid? So that God's justice is put into action? It is paid on the cross of Calvary. Who paid the price?

not anyone could pay the price. Why? Because God's perfect justice demands perfect obedience from a perfect victim.

How often have we seen perhaps in times of war and others people volunteering to save others? and sometimes we have seen even people paying the price for the mistakes of others.

[42 : 52] But when we come to deal with God's justice neither you nor I nor anyone else could pay the price that God is demanding.

What is God demanding? the same thing as he demanded of the children of Israel in the wilderness be ye holy as I am holy.

Which one of us would dare to say that we are holy? When you think of it the word tells you that every day you sin in the thought word and deed.

and even the Lord's people the more they go on in this wilderness become more and more conscious of just how much they sin every single day.

All you have to do is think of the first commandment love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind.

[44 : 13] And which one of us can say that we actually do that? Oh, that's not to say that we don't try but we are unable to reach the standard of holiness that God demands of us.

Perhaps we improve in our passage through the wilderness. That's what the walk of sanctification is all about. But we will never be good enough.

You and I will never be good enough to satisfy God's justice. But aren't you and I glad that God had already provided another solution?

Even before the foundation of the world we are told that God so loved the world. This famous verse in John 3 16 that we're probably all so familiar with that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

and it is this perfect victim who dies on the cross so that the price of God's justice will be fully paid.

[45 : 45] You see God's justice is not put away but God's justice has been satisfied and the way has been opened so that whoever believes as Jesus says whoever believes in the son should not perish but have eternal life.

Wasn't that exactly the same as it was with those who had been bitten by the serpents? Whoever believed in faith and looked at the brazen serpent was healed.

and if you believe in faith and you come to the cross suffering from the same disease of the bite of that old serpent the devil and that's how our Lord refers to him in the book of Revelation that old serpent the devil that the poison of sin is still present in your veins and will be there until you leave this earth for the wages of sin is death.

But nevertheless God's justice has been satisfied. A remedy a cure has been provided and so the image of death becomes an image of life.

This is what we call the atonement. God's justice is satisfied by Christ's atonement.

[47 : 25] It's a lovely word that atonement if you break it down to be at one meant with God to be at peace with God that's what the atonement is all about.

How could that be done? It could only be done by the blood of the cross and you will remember that through the wilderness the children of Israel had seen so many examples of the blood of the atonement.

Once a year the high priest went into the holy of holies with the blood of the atonement. They had seen it in the sacrifices and yet the sacrificial system and the system of the Levitical priesthood was only a shadow of what was to come.

The writer to the Hebrews tells us that in great detail and it's in exactly the same way that the brazen serpent is a shadow of what is to come.

There is a cure but the cure is only done under certain conditions. First of all you have to look.

[48 : 44] Who was allowed to look at the brazen serpent? Anyone who was bitten. Anyone. Who is allowed to come to the cross of Christ and to look on the atonement that is made?

Anyone who is willing. Anyone who is willing. You may come and you see there. If you see with the eye of faith you see what Jesus has done for you.

It sounds so easy doesn't it? And yet you notice that Nicodemus had tremendous difficulty in understanding the image. Did he ever understand it?

Well of course he did. we read later on that Nicodemus is one of the ones who goes with Joseph of Arimathea to bury Jesus. And he is almost certainly there on the day of Pentecost in the upper room with the disciples.

I have no doubt in my mind that Nicodemus became a fervent believer. and then he understood the conversation that he had with Jesus.

[50 : 06] And sometimes it is only when you believe that you understand many of the things that scripture tells us. Isn't that what Jesus says in John 14 when he speaks about the Holy Spirit that he will send another comforter and he will teach you all the things that you need to know.

When you come with the eye of faith to look at the cross and to see the one who died for you there and who shed his blood, then the eye of faith begins to lay hold on the truth of the cross and to perceive I suppose how relevant everything in God's word is to you.

And that is something that takes place as we go through the wilderness here until we reach the promised land. May God grant that he opens the door