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# **Yes, Jesus Loves Me**

**# 975-B**

**Series: Let God Be God**

**dtm** DISCIPLESHIP TAPE MINISTRIES, INC.  
INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

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# Yes, Jesus Loves Me!

They looked more like cherubs than children. Gathered around in a semi-circle, uniformly dressed in blue and white choir robes, the angelic little tots, though a bit off key, simply sang their way into your hearts, note by note. They seemed incredibly naive, remarkably pure, and totally guileless. The words they sang seemed almost anticlimactic; the look on their faces said it all.

Yes, Jesus loves me,  
Yes Jesus loves me;  
Yes, Jesus loves me,  
The Bible tells me so.

The words were so familiar, no one paid much attention; they were so simple, no one even stopped to think about what they meant. It was just a cute bunch of kids, singing a little children's chorus; another performance that pleased the parents, and brought healthy little smiles to otherwise lemonlike faces in the congregation. Two such faces covered bitter spirits on the third row. One belonged to Betty Nixon, the other to Frieda Anderson, two cynical, but faithfully hypocritical members of this very proper fellowship of saints. As the children finished their grand finale, Betty whispered to Frieda as only she could, "*Wouldn't it be great if life were that simple?*" Perhaps you can relate to Betty's sarcastic commentary on life. She could appreciate the sweetness of that childlike simplicity when it was three and four year olds in silk choir robes; but when she went out the door of that magnificent edifice at 12:15 and headed back into that real world she lived in, "*Yes, Jesus loves me*" just didn't cut it for her.

That night Betty went home to her apartment, lonely as usual, and angry as usual. Not able to sleep, she picked up her Bible, not because it was her favorite reading material, but because it was still on the bed where she had dropped it when she came in that afternoon, and she began to read.

She turned to the only place in the Bible that seemed vaguely

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familiar to her, John, chapter three. There she began reading a story, a true story, about a man named Nicodemus, a powerful man, a religious man, a successful man, who came to see Jesus late one night to discuss religious matters. She had, of course, heard the verses many times. But somehow, tonight, they were different. Tonight they seemed to be written to her. She came to verse 16, the most familiar verse in all the Bible, “For God so loved the world, He gave His only begotten Son.” About that time, that childlike melody she had made fun of that morning began to ring in her ears:

Yes, Jesus loves me,  
Yes Jesus loves me;  
Yes, Jesus loves me,  
The Bible tells me so.

Tears began to stream down her face as, for the first time in her life, the reality of that simplicity began to dawn on her. *Jesus loves ME!* Betty fell to her knees that night and acknowledged her sin and acknowledged God’s love for the first time, and she asked Jesus to come into her life. Of course, He did. He always comes where He’s invited. And at once a new heart blossomed inside that once cynical life. The interesting postscript to the story is the phone call Betty made to her friend Frieda the next morning. With tears in her eyes, but a joy in her heart she had never experienced before, she literally shouted into that telephone, “Frieda, it is that simple. It is that simple. Yes, Jesus loves me; it really is that simple.”

Of course it is. But if it is, haven’t some of us missed it? Or haven’t we replaced it with a more “adult” kind of theology that tickles the ears and excites the mind, but somehow loses in the translation the total reliability of that utterly simplistic kind of childlike faith, the faith with which we came to Christ?

I know. We are to go on from milk to meat. We are to go on to deeper things and higher things that build upon and amplify the depth of that love and the height of that love and the breadth of that love. But my friend, if in the process, we lose sight of the *awesomeness* of that love, our search for deeper truth has only led us away from the vein of gold from which there flows the riches of eternity.

Today we return one more time to the black of night where a man named Nicodemus found his way to a man named Jesus.

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The possessor of a brilliant religious mind, Nicodemus came with some honest questions, but with some preconceived notions. He came assuming Jesus to be a good man, but not the God-man. He came assuming that Jesus came from God, but being spiritually dead, he could not comprehend that Jesus did not *come* from God, but rather that Jesus *was* God. And so a loving Savior, clothed in the body of our humanity, having come to earth for a *demonstration* of His love, a demonstration so tangible no one could ever question it again, now prepares in this passage for the *declaration* of His love. It was a declaration so simple, that it would ring forth crystal clear from the lips of little children in song, and yet so profound that it would also astonish and overpower the keenest of minds in the staid halls of seminaries and churches throughout the world, throughout the course of history. It is that portion of Jesus' response to Nicodemus that we study in this lesson, our third and final study of this amazing encounter.

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 ye receive not our witness.

If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

And no man hath 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 on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the

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world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

(John 3:9-21)

The title of this lesson is “Yes, Jesus Loves Me”.

The outline takes this form:

I- The Must (verses 12-15)

II- The Mirage (verses 17-18)

III- The Miracle (verse 16)

### I - THE MUST

We have been dealing with absolutes. Jesus Christ as God living on planet earth, was in the process of defining reality. The backdrop He chose to use was a conversation with a noted religious authority of His day, a man noted in this world for what he knew; but noted in this conversation for what he didn't know. What he didn't know was that he was dead; and that only Christ could give him life. He didn't know, so Jesus, the personification of love, took the time to tell him.

Several absolutes surfaced immediately. One was that Nicodemus had to be born again. His education didn't matter. His religious training didn't matter. His position in the community; *even his position in the church* didn't matter. He was dead, and unless he came to life he could not so much as see the Kingdom of God. Secondly, this absolute was not confined to the spiritual vacuum of this religious giant. It was a divine imperative for all mankind. The key word was “must”. It meant that for God to inhabit the life of a man, and thus for man to inhabit the Kingdom of God, every man who has ever lived or who is living could be placed in one of two categories: either dead or alive, saved or lost, born again or hopelessly bound for an eternity in hell. One or the other. There simply were to be no “almost saved” Christians. There would not be one soul in heaven who got there because they were just too nice to turn down, or too good to be lost. God, being perfect love, had provided the way; and God, being perfect justice, *had made the way immutable*. For God to make one exception would be to make God less than just. So

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the die was cast. The absolutes were engraved on the tablets of Scripture, and there would be absolutely no exceptions.

Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. (John 3:3)

There you have the first “must”. Man “must” be born again. Jesus now, in this passage, goes on to define the second “must” which concerns Him. Not only must man be born again, *there must be a perfect sacrifice* for this new birth to take place. So Jesus Christ became the first and last man ever born for the primary purpose of dying. A Holy God could not allow sinful man back into His presence, unless there was atonement for the sins that had separated man from God. There had to be a perfect lamb, without spot or blemish, who could pay the price, balance the books, and allow a Holy God, who could not look upon sin, to satisfy both His righteousness and His love. But, of course, there was none. And so God’s incredible love, a love that so transcends human understanding that no word in man’s vocabulary is adequate to describe it, made a way. There had to be a sacrifice; there was none. So, as so beautifully foreshadowed by Abraham and Isaac, God provided HIMSELF, the Lamb. Thus, both the first and final link in man’s redemption, then, was the love of God.

Someone had to die. That someone had to have never sinned. But *all had sinned* and come short of the glory of God. So, unless God did something about it, there was no hope. That’s why Jesus’ statement in verse 14 constitutes the final *must*. There it reads,

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so *must* the Son of man be lifted up: (John 3:14)

There simply was no other way. Mankind was a ship, lost at sea. The waves were tossing, the winds were blowing, and no help was in sight. And no one possessed a ship adequate to brave the storms of sin and save those who were perishing. And even if they could, the price they would have to pay would be too high; for whoever would rescue dying man, would lose his own life in the process.

Man had physically been in this strait before. That physical incident was designed by a creative God to illustrate in the picture book of eternity what would one day take place spiritually, when the heart of God fully revealed itself to the heart of man. It is found in Numbers, chapter 21. We will begin reading with verse 1,

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The king of Arad, the Canaanite, who dwelt in the South, heard that Israel was coming on the road to Atharim. Then he fought against Israel and took some of them prisoners.

So Israel made a vow to the LORD, and said, "If You will indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities."

And the LORD listened to the voice of Israel and delivered up the Canaanites, and they utterly destroyed them and their cities. So the name of the place was called Hormah.

Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way.

And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread."

So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.

Therefore, the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live."

So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived. (Numbers 21:1-9 NKJV)

The children of Israel, God's physical photo album of spiritual truth, were in trouble. They had once again been delivered by God, but in their usual display of ingratitude, they began to murmur and complain about the accommodations their God had made for them on the trip. The Canaan Hilton it wasn't. And they were sick to death of this horrendous diet which consisted of nothing but mannaburgers ala carte. So they *murmured*. They grumbled and complained among themselves that God wasn't doing an acceptable job of arranging the circumstances in their lives; and this guy Moses, God's right-hand man, had to be at fault as well.

Now the wages of sin is death. So in order to demonstrate that physically, God turned loose a team of poisonous snakes, and

the snakes were just as hungry as the people. No complicated plot. The snakes bit the people, and the people died. Once the survivors began to see the consequences of their sins, they began to repent. And God told Moses to paint on the backdrop of Israeli symbolism, a portrait of Calvary. He said, “take a bronze snake and put it on a pole, and lift it up in the air. When the people have been bitten, and *know they have been bitten*, if they will but *look at that snake*, they will live. That act of faith will save them. It may seem to the natural mind, foolishness; to some it may even be a stumblingblock. But those who are willing *simply to do it God’s way* will be saved.” So Moses did as God commanded, and *everyone who looked, lived*.

“Now”, Jesus is saying to his well-schooled visitor, “just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, *even so must the Son of man be lifted up*. Just as Moses had to lift up that serpent, so that those who looked, lived; even so must Jesus be lifted up on a Cross, so that those who looked, could live eternally. So the new birth was a must for man to see the Kingdom of God, and Calvary was a must for the new birth to take place. *There is no other way*. Salvation without that Cross is not possible. Not yours, not anybody’s.

## II - THE MIRAGE

Thus, the focus on the lens of eternity becomes clearer yet. Man is lost and cannot be saved unless he is born from above. But man cannot be born again unless someone pays the price for his salvation, and no one can but Jesus. Therefore, unless Jesus dies, man cannot live.

But even as the picture clears, Satan moves into the mind of man with the most horrendous of lies. He tells man that it’s all a mirage. He whispers into the ear of man, even as he did into the ear of Eve, “God’s just out to get you. He enjoys seeing you suffer. He even came to earth just to pronounce his sentence of doom personally. God came to earth to condemn man.”

Jesus said, “No, Satan, that’s not only a lie; it’s the most deceptive of lies.”

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

He that believeth on him is not condemned:

(John 3:17,18a)

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Paul echoes that incredible refrain in Romans 8, when he joyfully exclaimed,

There is therefore now NO CONDEMNATION to them which  
are in Christ Jesus, (Romans 8:1a)

The word “NO” is as big as the word “CONDEMNATION,”  
Beloved.

Satan says that God, who is bent on destroying man and deceiving man, has constructed this maze of righteousness through which no man can pass, and then, having gleefully seen his subjects suffer and fail the test, God comes to earth as a self-righteous tyrant in the form of his son, and pronounces man dead on arrival. Condemned.

Jesus says, “No, not so.”

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the  
world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because  
their deeds were evil. (John 3:19)

Sure, he that refuses to believe is condemned, not because  
God condemned him but,

...because he hath not believed in the name of the only  
begotten Son of God. (John 3:18)

He refused to come to the Light.

### III- THE MIRACLE

Satan says, “Salvation is a mirage. God just came to earth to  
condemn us.” God says “No, salvation is a miracle.”

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the  
world; but that the world through him might be saved.  
(John 3:17)

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. (John 3:14,15)

The Eternal, Living, Creator God came to earth for only one  
reason—to rescue those who were perishing and give them life.

Just imagine that you have been desperately sick and  
have gone to the doctor. (Some of you don’t have to use much  
imagination.) And imagine that your physician enters the room,  
sits down beside you, and tells you, “You have an incurable

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disease. You have been injected with a deadly virus, and all who contract that sickness surely die.” That doctor has handed you the sentence of death. Your first reaction might even be to be angry at the doctor. You walked into that office not knowing you were going to die; now you know. That, you might wrongfully surmise, makes him responsible. Not so. *He just loved you enough to tell you of your condition.*

But now imagine that this very same doctor, tears flowing from his eyes, tells you that *there is one way you can live.* If you can receive a transfusion from someone who has never contracted the disease, someone who has your exact blood type, you will live. Not might, *will.* “The only problem,” the loving physician explains, is that *“whoever gives you his healthy blood, must take your diseased blood upon himself, and thus he must die instead of you.”* Anxiously you cry, “but I can’t ask anyone to do that. Who would die so that I could live? Who would do that?”

“I will”, the doctor lovingly replies, “I will”.

You may be saying, “but why would he do that?” I’ll tell you why. That doctor happens to be your father. And he *loves you so much, that if that is what it takes to save you,* not only will he do it, he will do it joyfully...*because he loves you so.*

Now...would you say that doctor is a messenger of condemnation? Would you rail at him for having the nerve to tell you that you were perishing, that were it not for a miracle, you would die? No, he had to tell you that you were sick, so you would let him heal you.

If you are not a Christian, you have just heard God’s plan for your life. Yes, you are stricken with a deadly disease, the disease of sin. And, yes, apart from a miracle, you *will* surely die; for the diagnosis of the disease of sin is always death. There are no exceptions. No one has ever contracted the disease and lived. But God isn’t telling you that to condemn you.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten  
Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish,  
but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

The Creator God of heaven and earth, the one who spoke the worlds into being, has tenderly lain down beside you and lovingly connected the tubes of eternity between you. He has poured out His own precious blood into the receptacle of eternity and is waiting to inject it into your life, taking on Himself the

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contaminated blood that, if left in your veins, *will condemn you to death*. Oh, beloved, don't you see? Eternal life is not complicated at all. That's why it is called "*the simple Gospel*". God simply loved you so much that He gave Himself away: He gave His life away (that's love), so that all you have to do to be healed from the disease of sin and *never die*, is to put yourself down beside Him, and let Him transfuse His life into yours, His death being the source of your life.

Condemn you? Never! You will condemn yourself if you refuse His precious gift. But, no, God did not come to condemn you. God came to save you. Oh, Beloved, "how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" (Hebrews 2:3). Let Jesus transfuse His life into yours right now. I promise you, all of the clouds of confusion and complexity will vanish; and like a little child, you will leave this place filled with joy, singing with utter simplicity:

Yes, Jesus loves me,  
Yes, Jesus loves me;  
Yes, Jesus loves me,  
The Bible tells me so.

Indeed it does, Beloved; indeed it does.

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