They say there is no fool like an old fool, and I guess I am proof of that. My name is Nicodemus and I am here to tell you my story.

I lived in Jerusalem and was trained at the feet of the beloved teacher and rabbi Gamaliel. Because of my strict upbringing and training, when I became an adult, I was selected to become a member of the Sanhedrin – which is the ruling court for all spiritual things. If there was a question about whether or not someone was obeying the law or teaching the truth, the matter was brought before us and after deliberation and consultation with the Law, we found the person innocent or guilty.

We were restricted in some of our rulings by the Roman authorities, whom we despised. We could not understand why they would try to limit our life and death decisions when they didn’t even understand our religion.

One of the responsibilities we had was to check out any religious teachers who had not been approved by the Sanhedrin; and so I, and some others of the Council, would travel throughout the land to listen to those who claimed to be our Messiah, or who had great crowds of people following them. After all, we were looking for a Messiah who would deliver us from the Romans. Because there were so many of them making that claim, we had to determine whether they might be the genuine Messiah or a false Messiah. Most of them came from the group called the Zealots.

There had been a lot of talk about a wild-looking and wild-talking man who was preaching near the Jordan River named John the Baptist. Some people claimed that even Roman soldiers were persuaded by his sermons – and were even getting baptized, something no true Jew would submit to – only those who wanted to become Jews.

Several of us made the journey down near Jericho to check out this preacher named John. After listening to him preach to great crowds, we asked to speak to him personally about his style of preaching, his message, and whether or not he might be the Messiah. He was not very complimentary – referring to people as “broods of vipers” and asking us to bring proof of repentance.

When we asked him if he was the Messiah, he quickly put that notion to rest. “No,” he said.

“Then what are you,” we wanted to know.

“I am the forerunner of the Messiah who has come to prepare the way for him. I am not even worthy to do the task of a lowly servant and untie his sandals. But one who is coming after me is mightier than I am. He will baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire.”
Satisfied that he was not the Messiah, and not claiming to be him, we came back to Jerusalem to give our report to the Sanhedrin.

There was another teacher I had heard a lot about who also gathered large crowds around him. I wanted to speak to him privately. We had heard about some miracles that he had done – miracles like raising the dead to life, restoring sight to the blind, and healing crippled legs so people could walk again.

I found out he was in Jerusalem for the Passover, so I asked him if I could speak to him privately in the cool of the evening. The Rabbis said that this was the best time to learn important lessons from a Rabbi. There would be fewer interruptions then and the Rabbi could give you his undivided attention.

We met in the garden of a friend of mine – just me and Jesus – that was his name. I began our conversation by recognizing that he was not the usual Rabbi, but one who had come from God, which was evident from the miracles that were attributed to him. His response surprised and troubled me. He told me unless I was born again I could not be part of the Kingdom of God. Now, as a Pharisee and a member of the Council, I was pledged to live as godly a life as I possibly could – keep all the laws as faithfully as I knew them. Jesus was telling me that I needed to be born again.

We Jews knew about being “born again.” That is how we described a person who wanted to become a Jew – in practice, at least, if not by birth. They would be baptized and considered to be “born again.”

But I wanted to make sure what Jesus was talking about, so I questioned 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 went on to explain the difference between a natural birth and a spiritual birth. Just then a soft breeze began to blow, and Jesus said that the wind blows where it chooses, and a person cannot know where it comes from or where it is going. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.

He knew that I could not understand all that he was trying to tell me. My mind was so filled with the things we had discussed. I wish I could say that when I left him that evening to walk home I became an instant follower of Jesus, but I cannot truthfully say that. But that night I began my journey toward him and his message.
Three years passed and I listened to Jesus as often as I could. I was intrigued by the man. Then came that day – night, really, when the Council was called into an emergency session to condemn Jesus for false claims of blasphemy. I tried to defend him, but I was outvoted by the rest of the Council. He was sent from us to Pilate, then to Herod, and back to Pilate who condemned him to death on a cross along with two other prisoners.

I watched him die – and heard him pray for those who crucified him, and offered hope to the thief on his right side. I knew that day that we had killed the Son of God. After his death, Joseph of Arimathea and I asked Pilate for the body of Jesus to bury him in an empty tomb owned by Joseph. Pilate gave us permission and we took Jesus down from the cross and wrapped him in burial cloths wound around his body, along with spices. We had to hurry because it was almost time for the Sabbath and we would not be able to work on the Sabbath.

A stone was placed at the entrance of the tomb and a Roman seal was placed over the stone. Roman soldiers guarded the tomb for three days to prevent any of his followers from stealing the body and claiming he had risen from the dead. Even Roman soldiers could not prevent him from coming out of the tomb that early Sunday morning. I saw him with my own eyes, and I became one of his followers. If you had seen him that day, you too would have followed him.

I don’t know why my eyes were blinded so long to the truth, but like some other blind people whom Jesus healed, my own eyes were opened. I knew beyond a shadow of doubt that he WAS and IS the Messiah sent from God.

Thank God I finally saw the light and he became MY Savior, too. Is He yours?