

John 3:1-21...¹ There was a man from the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.² This man came to Him at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher, for no one could perform these signs You do unless God were with him.”³ Jesus replied, “I assure you: Unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”⁴ “But how can anyone be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked Him. “Can he enter his mother’s womb a second time and be born?”⁵ Jesus answered, “I assure you: Unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.”⁶ Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit.⁷ Do not be amazed that I told you that you must be born again.⁸ The wind blows where it pleases, and you hear its sound, but you don’t know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”⁹ “How can these things be?” asked Nicodemus.¹⁰ “Are you a teacher of Israel and don’t know these things?” Jesus replied.¹¹ “I assure you: We speak what We know and We testify to what We have seen, but you do not accept Our testimony.”¹² If I have told you about things that happen on earth and you don’t believe, how will you believe if I tell you about things of heaven?¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except the One who descended from heaven—the Son of Man.¹⁴ Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,¹⁵ so that everyone who believes in Him will have eternal life.¹⁶ “For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.”¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world that He might condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.¹⁸ Anyone who believes in Him is not condemned, but anyone who does not believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the One and Only Son of God.¹⁹ “This, then, is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil.”²⁰ For everyone who practices wicked things hates the light and avoids it, so that his deeds may not be exposed.²¹ But anyone who lives by the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be shown to be accomplished by God.”

Nicodemus would probably be welcome at any church today. He seems like an ideal member—principled, knowledgeable, morally upstanding, courteous, and humble. However, Nicodemus had two big problems despite all of that outward religious appeal: **first**, he was blind to the real truth, and **second**, he was spiritually dead. The man was lost. That is, he did not have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. As a Pharisee, Nicodemus adhered to strict Jewish codes and laws, so he was certainly religious. But the problem of the religious person is not attitudes, conduct, or even character. We can change and control those things through sheer determination, and many folks do. What people really need is a change of their basic nature. We come into this world with a natural “bent” away from God. Jesus explained to the observant rabbi that all his outward goodness couldn’t erase, replace, or change his nature. Instead, every person who desires to serve God must be born again. The Lord promised that if Nicodemus received Him as Savior, then he would enter into a brand-new life. His old sinful nature would be transformed so that he could have a real relationship with God. Instead of *appearing* to be a religious man, Nicodemus would be a true believer. No one gets into heaven on the strength of good works and kind behavior. When we stand before God, the only thing that will matter is whether our old sin nature has been replaced. We want to show Him the living Spirit we received when Jesus came into our life.

I. Nicodemus Was a Religious Man (v. 1b).

- A. That would seem to be to his credit.
Many people think religion is the goal of our spiritual search.
Others study religions and select one to follow.
- B. Religion has never been the goal.
Almost everyone has a religion (Buddhism, humanism, Hinduism, etc.).
The goal is to become a new person in Christ.

II. Nicodemus Was a Curious Man (v. 2).

- A. He was curious about the man Jesus.
Whether he was the Messiah. Whether he was a messenger.
- B. He was curious about the teachings of Jesus.

III. Nicodemus Was a Confused Man (vv. 3-4).

- A. He was confused about what Jesus said. Jesus said one must be born again.
Jesus knocked the props out from under Nicodemus. Because he thought being a son of Abraham was enough. And he thought being religious was sufficient.
- B. He was confused about spiritual truths.
He tried to understand spiritual truths intellectually.
Spiritual truths can be real but not understood.

IV. Nicodemus Was a Fortunate Man (vv. 5-9).

- A. He received further instruction.
Jesus made sure Nicodemus understood the truth about spiritual rebirth.
- B. He received a word of comfort (v. 7).

V. Nicodemus Was a Sinner in Need (vv. 10-21).

- A. He was reprimanded by Jesus.
 - 1. Because he should have known these things (vs. 10)
 - 2. Because he doubted the words of Jesus (vs. 11)
 - 3. Because his spiritual growth was hindered (vs. 12)
- B. He was preached to by Jesus
 - 1. About incarnation (vs. 13)
 - 2. About the atonement (vs. 14)
 - 3. About faith in the Savior (vs. 15-20) (Outlines on the New Testament, p. 11, C.W. Keningham, Baker Book House)

VI. Nicodemus Became a Saved Man (John 7:45-53 & 19:38-42)

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John 7:45-53...⁴⁵ Then the temple police came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, “Why haven’t you brought Him?”⁴⁶ The police answered, “No man ever spoke like this!”⁴⁷ Then the Pharisees responded to them: “Are you fooled too?”⁴⁸ Have any of the rulers or Pharisees believed in Him?⁴⁹ But this crowd, which doesn’t know the law, is accursed!”⁵⁰ Nicodemus—the one who came to Him previously, being one of them—said to them,⁵¹ “Our law doesn’t judge a man before it hears from him and knows what he’s doing, does it?”⁵² “You aren’t from Galilee too, are you?” they replied. “Investigate and you will see that no prophet arises from Galilee.”⁵³ So each one went to his house.

John 19:38-42...³⁸ After this, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus—but secretly because of his fear of the Jews—asked Pilate that he might remove Jesus’ body. Pilate gave him permission, so he came and took His body away.³⁹ Nicodemus (who had previously come to Him at night) also came, bringing a mixture of about 75 pounds of myrrh and aloes.⁴⁰ Then they took Jesus’ body and wrapped it in linen cloths with the aromatic spices, according to the burial custom of the Jews.⁴¹ There was a garden in the place where He was crucified. A new tomb was in the garden; no one had yet been placed in it.⁴² They placed Jesus there because of the Jewish preparation and since the tomb was nearby.

From Night to Light – Authentic, Genuine, Life Changing Faith

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²¹ But anyone who lives by the truth comes to the light,

**What you Believe Matters: Come out of the Night and into the Light.
The Light of truth in Jesus
Be Born Again**