

# Church of God Sunday School

## JESUS TALKS WITH NICODEMUS

John 2:13, 23; 3:1-16; 7:44-53; 19:39

It was time for the yearly Feast of the Passover in Jerusalem. Many people went to Jerusalem to observe the Passover. While Jesus was in Jerusalem for this feast, He preached to the people and worked many miracles. Many people saw these miracles and believed in His name.

There was a man named Nicodemus (*nik-uh-DEE-mus*), who was a Pharisee. He was a member of the Sanhedrin (*SAN-heh-drihn*), which was an assembly of Jewish judges.

Nicodemus had heard of Jesus and wanted to talk to Him. He came to Jesus by night (or privately) and said, "Rabbi [a title of respect], 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." Nicodemus believed that Jesus was sent by God and wanted to learn more. What better time than privately, at night, when there were not large groups of people around? To learn more of Jesus, we, too, often have to get alone with Him.

Jesus was glad to talk to Nicodemus. He told him, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Although Nicodemus was an important Jew, that was not enough. It was not enough to realize that Jesus was a teacher sent by God. It was not enough to live a good life. Nicodemus had to be born again, or born a second time. Only then would he be able to enter into the Kingdom of God.

This was confusing to Nicodemus. He asked Jesus: "How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" Nicodemus did not understand that Jesus was not talking about a baby being born to a mother and father. Jesus was talking about being born from above, a spiritual birth.

Jesus told Nicodemus to "marvel not." He told Nicodemus that the wind blows and one can hear it, yet not know where it comes from or where it goes. "So is every one that is born of the Spirit." We cannot understand how the wind works, but we can see its effect. So it is a mystery how the Spirit of God can move into one's heart and work a complete change in him. We might not understand how it happens, but the results of being born again are just as clear as trees swaying in a strong wind.



Nicodemus asked Jesus, "How can these things be?" First Corinthians 2:14 says that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The things of God are considered "foolishness" by the world. They cannot discern, or understand.

Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Art thou a master of Israel [a teacher of Israel], and knowest not these things?" Jesus reminded Nicodemus of how Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. He told him that the Son of Man must be

lifted up in the same way. Jesus was speaking of His crucifixion. Jesus would be nailed to the Cross and lifted up for all to see.

Then Jesus spoke to Nicodemus the beautiful words of John 3:16, which tell the plan of salvation: "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." God sent His precious, only Son to be the Sacrifice for the whole world. Only through His Sacrifice can we be born again. Once we ask God's forgiveness, repent of our sins, and accept the gift of salvation, we have been born from above.

Nicodemus is next mentioned in John 7:50. The officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees regarding Jesus. The officers were asked why they did not bring Jesus. They answered, "Never man spake like this man." Nicodemus spoke up and asked if the law judged a man before hearing him out. Jesus was being judged by what others said of Him, not by what He was saying and doing.

Nicodemus was then accused: "Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." The chief priests and Pharisees did not want to hear Nicodemus defend Jesus anymore. So every man went home.

The last time we read of Nicodemus is after Jesus was crucified. Joseph of Arimathaea (*air-uh-muh-THEE-uh*) was a secret disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews. He asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. What would have happened to Jesus' body if Joseph had not asked for it? The Romans usually left the body of the crucified hanging on the cross to decay. To prevent the burial of a body was considered a serious dishonor to the Jews. Joseph did not want this to happen.

Nicodemus prepared Jesus' body for burial with a mixture of myrrh and aloes (expensive spices). Although less than one pound was the usual amount used to prepare a Jewish body for burial, Nicodemus brought "about an hundred pound" (a Roman hundred pound is about seventy-five English pounds). Great care was taken that Jesus' body was prepared "as the manner of the Jews is to bury." Together the two men wrapped the body of Jesus in linen clothes and laid Him in a new tomb.

What courage it must have taken for Joseph to ask Pilate for the body of Jesus. What tender love Joseph and Nicodemus showed in their care of Jesus. Joseph and Nicodemus might have been secret disciples of Jesus in the past but not anymore!

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**MEMORY VERSE:**

*"... Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."  
 —John 3:3*

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## Match each picture with the correct Scripture

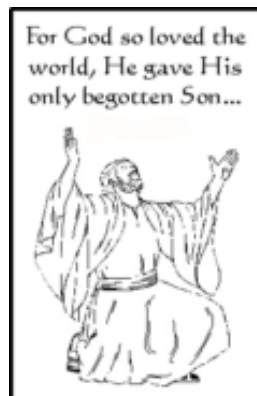


**And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.**

John 3:4

John 3:16

John 3:14



*Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old?*

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**Match the words  
with the  
correct word  
shapes**



Rabbi	Jesus	Passover	kingdom	born	Nicodemus
crucify	Joseph	disciple	salvation	Pilate	myrrh

