



Believe

JOHN

MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Was Nicodemus Ever 'Born Again'?

Bible Reading: John 2:23-3:10

[Watch LIVESTREAM at 10am](#)

Bible Reading: John 2:23-3:10

23 Now while Jesus was in Jerusalem at the Feast of the Passover, many people believed in his name because they saw the miraculous signs he was doing. **24** But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people. **25** He did not need anyone to testify about man, for he knew what was in man.

3 Now a certain man, a Pharisee named Nicodemus, who was a member of the Jewish ruling council, came to Jesus at night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs that you do unless God is with him." **3** Jesus replied, "I tell you the solemn truth, unless a person is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God." **4** Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter his mother's womb and be born a second time, can he?" **5** Jesus answered, "I tell you the solemn truth, unless a person is born of water and spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. **6** What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. **7** Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must all be born from above.' **8** The wind blows wherever it will, and you hear the sound it makes, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." **9** Nicodemus replied, "How can these things be?" **10** Jesus answered, "Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you don't understand these things? (John 2:23-3:10)

I. Nicodemus

- A. A Historical figure
- B. A Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews, a teacher of Israel, elite – 3:1, 10
- C. An example of those to whom Jesus does not entrust himself (2:23-25)
 1. Continues the thought about man/people
 2. A 'man,' Nicodemus is a specific example, not a contrast to those in 2:23-25.
 3. Comes to Jesus because of the signs.
- D. Coming to Jesus at night – 3:2
 1. Night in the gospel of John relates to darkness

- 2. Darkness (night) is contrasted with light
- 3. Those who follow Jesus do not walk in the darkness (8:12)
- 4. Speaking flattering words to Jesus
- E. Not understanding and not believing what Jesus is talking about – 3:4, 9-10
 - 1. Not understanding the deeper meaning – born from above – 3:3
 - 2. Jesus repeats himself – born of water and the Spirit – 3:5
 - 3. Nicodemus, a teacher, should have understood water and Spirit
 - 4. Rebuked by Jesus
 - a. A teacher doesn't understand
 - b. He doesn't receive
 - 5. Jesus has the last word
- F. A representative of the Pharisees – 3:11-12
 - 1. Jesus has a combative verbal contest—"an acute power struggle"—with Nicodemus including all the Pharisees
 - 2. Jesus challenges the Pharisees
 - a. They don't understand earthly things
 - b. How can they understand heavenly things
 - 3. Jesus has the last word.
- G. An Ambiguous Person
 - 1. At the end of this dialogue, no indication that Nicodemus believes
 - 2. Was he a "pretender/dissembler"?
 - 3. Appearing two more times in John's gospel
 - a. Defending Jesus – kind of – 7:50-51
 - b. Helping to bury Jesus – 19:38-39
 - i. Appears after Joseph of Arimathea a disciple of Jesus
 - ii. Doesn't say Nicodemus is a disciple
 - 4. No record that he came to faith

II. Seeing & entering the kingdom of God – 3:3,5

- A. The kingdom of God
 - 1. God's final intervention through the Messiah
 - 2. Dealing with all of humanities problems
 - 3. Nicodemus would have been waiting for this
- B. The kingdom never mentioned again
- C. Possibly another way of saying eternal life
- D. Without begin born from above one cannot see it nor be a part of it

III. The requirement of being born again

- A. Being an Israelite did not give a person entrance into this kingdom
- B. Synonymous with:
 - 1. born from above/again (3:3)
 - 2. born of water and the Spirit (3:5)
 - a. Nicodemus should have known what water and spirit meant from Ezekiel 36-38
 - b. What changes people? – the Spirit
 - c. Preconceived ideas blind us to anything else
 - 3. children of God who are born of God (1:12-13)
- C. Spiritual birth cleanses from sin (water) and brings spiritual transformation (by the Spirit)
- D. Different from being born of the flesh, which is mortal
- E. There's a believing that's inadequate (based on signs alone, a one-time experience), we need new birth from above

IV. Application

- A. Don't be ambiguous – a fence sitter
- B. New birth gives new life, the eternal life
- C. And entrance into the kingdom of God