

## Visit By Night

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Friend of Jesus / Nicodemus; Faith; Regeneration / John 3:3–6

How is it possible that a man at the very top of the ladder in Jewish Spiritual leadership did not understand the most basic teachings of Jesus? These are ideas that are considered foundational for Christian children but it often eludes those who have been in the faith for a long time. Let's study this night-time visit with Nicodemus.

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### **John 3:1 ESV**

Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.

## Who was He?

- a ruler
- Sanherid
- Spiritual leader
- revered and respected

### **John 3:2 ESV**

This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.”

# Came to Jesus

- surprising he same
  - most leaders
    - rejected Jesus
- Pharisee
- Sadducees
  - hated him
  - rejected him.

# By Night

- Nice he came
  - had some faith
  - showed humility
- Why night
  - so other

- wouldn't see...
- His faith
  - not there..
- He is
  - unsure
  - scared
  - embarrassed
  - checking out...

## Rabbi

- Notice the greeting.
- For most
  - sign of respect
  - from ruler of Jews
    - amazing respect

- humility
- honor
- Comes Short!
  - Jesus is
  - Not just good teacher
    - God
    - Messiah

## The Signs

- You are from God
  - honor
  - respect
  - faith
- Perhaps here
  - to ask question
  - like others

- **Are you Messiah?**
  
- What did Nicodemus
  - expect?
  - response?
    - Didn't get it.

**John 3:3 ESV**

Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

- First look,
  - doesn't make sense
  - out of context
  - does not respond
    - to Nicodemus
      - comments.
  
- When woman at well
  - Jesus says plainly:

**John 4:26 ESV**

Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.”

- Not so with Nicodemus.
  - Nothing about Messiah.
    - Yes
    - No
    - Maybe
- Doesn't talk about himself.
  - focuses on Nicodemus.

**John 3:3 ESV**

Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

- Seems out of place...
- Jesus not just

- collecting disciples.
  - Doing more.
  
- Growing him spiritually.
  
- This is not the answer
  - to the question that
    - Nicodemus came with.
  
- But it is
  - the answer to
    - a good question.
  
- Perhaps,
  - the question he
    - should have asked.
  
- The question
  - Rich Young Ruler

[Matthew 19:16-20](#) (ESV)

And behold, a man came up to him, saying, “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?” And he said to him, “Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments.” He said to him,

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“Which ones?” And Jesus said, “You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” The young man said to him, “All these I have kept. What do I still lack?”

- Good question
  - Blind to problems but
    - good question.

What do I still lack.

- Jesus answer
  - the the
    - unasked question:



**John 3:3 ESV**

Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

- Nicodemus
  - caught off guard
  - doesn't know how
  - to respond...
  
- Knew need for
  - conversion in
    - Israel
    - Nation
    - People
    - Politic
    - Others
  
- But not Him!
  
- Jesus says to him:

## Desire of Ages (Chapter 17—Nicodemus)

It is not theoretical knowledge you need so much as spiritual regeneration. You need not to have your curiosity satisfied, but to have a new heart.

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You must receive a new life from above before you can appreciate heavenly things. Until this change takes place, making all things new, it will result in no saving good for you to discuss with Me My authority or My mission. - DA 171

- Nicodemus
  - pride hurt
  - gains composure
  - desire to deflect
    - Responds:

### **John 3:4 ESV**

Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”

- Nicodemus doesn’t say:
  - thank you
  - I needed that
  - I know what to do

- Tries to find
  - problem in Jesus' words:

**John 3:4 ESV**

Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

- Does he not
  - understand the words?
- Or does he not
  - want to understand?
- His words are clear...
  - **You must be converted.**
- So often,
  - when people don't
    - want to hear
      - play dumb?

- I don't get it.
  - what do you mean?
  
- It is not a riddle!
  - You are spiritual leader!
  
- But you are
  - unconverted!
  
- It hurts a little
  
- Wasn't it enough
  - he humbled
  - ruler came
  - said rabbi
  - expressed faith
  
- Nicodemus was
  - rich
  - ruler

- powerful
- influential
- born Jew
- teacher
- pharisee
- legalistic
  - HE WAS RIGHTEOUS!
  
- “How could Jesus
  - say that to me?”
  
- Nicodemus was sure
  - he had salvation...

**Desire of Ages Chapter 17—Nicodemus**

He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law is attempting an impossibility. There is no safety for one who has merely a legal religion, a form of godliness. The Christian’s life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit.

- By his response

- it shows what kind
  - of spirituality
    - he has...

**1 Corinthians 2:14 ESV**

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

- “I don’t get it...”
  - Why not?
    - Because not spiritual!
- Maybe he thought
  - Jesus would
    - let him off hook.
- Nope!
  - Jesus comes back
    - More strongly:

**John 3:5-8 ESV**

Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

- More emphatic
  - More clear
- **You need to be**
  - **born again!**
- You are leader
  - but you are not there.
- Jesus explains
  - mystery of conversion.

**John 3:8 ESV**

The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the

Spirit.”

- Storms lately
  - strong wind
    - see affects
    - can't see wind.
- Why wind comes
  - to this tree
  - this way
  - not that way
  - not that tree
- Some mystery to it.
  - but it is real
    - nonetheless.

Desire of Ages (Chapter 17—Nicodemus)

While the wind is itself invisible, it produces effects that are seen and felt. So



the work of the Spirit upon the soul will reveal itself in every act of him who has felt its saving power. - DA 173

- Genuine Transformation

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- Nicodemus Responds:

**John 3:9 ESV**

Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?”

- What does he mean?
- Two ways to interpret
  - Deflecting again
  - Asking genuinely...
    - how to be converted
- I believe
  - second one.

- How can I
  - experience conversion?
- Jesus was not there
  - win an argument
  - parse theological terms
- **Jesus was there**
  - **to win a soul.**
- He saw
  - Nicodemus' heart
  - ready to receive.
- Nicodemus asks:
  - How can I be converted?
- Jesus answers:

**John 3:10-11 ESV**

Jesus answered him, “Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony.

- Serious
  - How are you
  - Spiritual leader
  - Can't understand
    - basic concept
    - conversion
- He understood
  - wind metaphor
  - born again
  - born of water
  - born of spirit
    - gets it intellectually.
- Some today

- understand religion
  - purely intellectual plain
  - resist conversion
  - resist surrender
  - resist transformation
- 
- Next verse:

**John 3:12 ESV**

If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

- Jesus talked plainly
  - Nicodemus struggling.
  
- Why???

  - Hard to accept
    - Everything he
      - knew
      - has been
      - spiritual leader

- bankrupt
  - worthless
  - unconverted
- 
- Hard to admit.
  - Hard to accept.
- 
- Leaders today
    - teach
    - preach
    - understand prophecies
    - keep list of standards
      - unconverted
- 
- Many say,
    - I can't be leader
    - I don't know...
      - bible well enough.

- What is leader?
  - Nicodemus
    - Great Leader....
    - respected by all
    - memorized scripture
    - teacher
    - preacher
      - bad example
      - unconverted
- True leader
  - this is hard.
    - humble
    - serving
    - converted.
- Nicodemus was conversion
  - willing to accept.

- How?
  
- Today,
  - some here
  - like Nicodemus
    - know truth
    - long time.
      - not converted.
  
- 
  
- Jesus is speaking
  - to you today.
  
- Salvation is simple:
  
- Conversion is simple:

**John 3:14-15 ESV**

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

- Nicodemus knows story.

OT

Fiery Serpents

Dying

Serpent on Pole

Look and live

- They could have
  - No
  - Silly
  - Bronze Serpent
  - Can't heal!
  - scientific solution
    - (history channel)
- Conversion
- Salvation
  - not through



- science
- enlightenment
- argument

## LOOK AND LIVE

- Conversion is not
  - complex concept.
- Simple surrender

### Desire of Ages (Chapter 17—Nicodemus)

The light shining from the cross reveals the love of God. His love is drawing us to Himself. If we do not resist this drawing, we shall be led to the foot of the cross in repentance for the sins that have crucified the Saviour.

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Then the Spirit of God through faith produces a new life in the soul. The thoughts and desires are brought into obedience to the will of Christ. The heart, the mind, are created anew in the image of Him who works in us to subdue all things to Himself. Then the law of God is written in the mind... - DA 176

- Nicodemus
  - left that day
    - converted man.
  
- Still had
  - questions
  - Pharisee garb
  - Sanhedrin
  
- Knew:
  - foundation of
    - christian walk
      - Born Again.
  
- Today,
  - Each of us
    - should leave
    - like Nicodemus

- transformed.

› Altar Call

# Appeal

Be Born Again