

Nicodemus

“There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 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.”

Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

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?”

Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, 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.’” (John 3:1-7)

Nicodemus’ Plan

1. He was a Pharisee
 - a. The most devout religious group in Israel.
 - b. Most were hypocritical, deceiving the people to get their money and loyalty.
2. He was religious and sincere.
 - a. He heard of Jesus, His miracles, and teaching to the people.
 - b. He probably wanted to offer Jesus his help.

He could help Jesus to not upset the religious and political leaders.
3. He met with Jesus at night because as a Pharisee he was busy throughout the day.
 - a. He fasted twice a week.
 - b. Tithed his income down to the spices and herbs in his garden.

Jesus’ Response

1. Jesus swept away his foundation in one phrase – *“unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”* (John 3:3).
2. Jesus dismissed His religious rules of:
 - a. Fasting
 - b. Tithing
 - c. Praying
 - d. Almsgiving
 - e. Good works

- f. Circumcision
 - g. Keeping of the Sabbath
 - h. Observance of the feasts
 - i. Sacrifices
 - j. Offerings
 - k. His Jewish pedigree
 - l. Attainments
 - m. Status as a member of the Sanhedrin
3. Nicodemus must be born again because **he is dead in sins**.
 4. He cannot redeem himself through works because a dead man cannot make himself alive again.
 5. You are born into this life without any effort on your part.

Nicodemus' Response

1. He asked "how" and not "why," thinking natural – not religious.
2. He had studied the Bible since he was a child – memorizing great portions. He had never read any part that taught a new birth.
3. The Plan of Salvation:

"He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:11-13)

 - a. **Not of blood** – Salvation does not come by natural descent - nationality, color, or "saved" parents, church you attend, or country of birth.
 - b. **Not the will of the flesh** – The flesh only wants to work, earn, or country of birth.
 - c. **Not by the will of man** – Salvation is not of human design.
Man designs religions which cater to the work ethic of man. With religion, man does all of the work, God receives it, and man gets the credit and glory.
 - d. **By the will of the God** – God does all the work, man receives it, and God gets the credit and glory.

Nicodemus' Next Appearance

"Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him?" The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!"

Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed."

Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?" (John 7:45:51)

1. Nicodemus probably believe on Jesus but was not brave.

2. He probably was just beginning to grow in the Lord.

“After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.”
(John 19:38-40)

1. By now, Nicodemus did not care what the crowd thought.
2. He was standing up for Jesus no matter what the cost.
3. Nicodemus spent a personal fortune to buy myrrh and aloe to bury Jesus.
4. Now his good deeds were a result of salvation, not a means of it.