

# JESUS' CONVERSATION WITH NICODEMUS

**BIBLE TEXT** : John 3:1-21; 7:45-53; 19:39, 40

LESSON 29 Senior Course

**MEMORY VERSE:** "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin" (1 John 3:9).

## **BIBLE TEXT in King James Version**

### **John 3:1-21**

**3:1** There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

**2** The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, 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.

**3** Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

**4** Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

**5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

**6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

**7** Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

**8** The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

**9** Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

**10** Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

**11** Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

**12** If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

**13** And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven.

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

**15** That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

**16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not

## **Bible References:**

### **I Nicodemus' Visit to Jesus by Night**

1 He was a Pharisee and a ruler, John 3:1

2 He sought an audience with the Son of God, John 3:2

#### **Luke 19:3**

And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.

#### **Jeremiah 29:13**

And ye shall seek me, and find *me*, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

3 His confession revealed a frank, open character, John 3:2;

#### **John 14:11**

Believe me that I *am* in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

4 Jesus imparts wisdom to an honest heart, John 3:3;

#### **Luke 2:40**

And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

#### **Proverbs 2:6**

For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth *cometh* knowledge and understanding.

#### **Ezekiel 36:26**

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

5 Nicodemus fails to comprehend the Truth, John 3:4;

#### **Proverbs 16:2**

All the ways of a man *are* clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits.

#### **Romans 10:3**

For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

### **II Jesus' Cogent Explanation of the New Birth**

1 Salvation is a necessary experience, John 3:5-7;

#### **Titus 3:5**

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

#### **Matthew 5:20**

For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

#### **Isaiah 64:6**

But we are all as an unclean *thing*, and all our righteousnesses *are* as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

#### **Romans 3:20**

Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

#### **Galatians 2:16**

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

perish, but have everlasting life.

**17** For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

**18** He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

**19** And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

**20** For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

**21** But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

**John 7:45-53**

**7:45** Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him?

**46** The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.

**47** Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?

**48** Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?

**49** But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.

**50** Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,)

**51** Doth our law judge *any* man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?

**52** They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.

**53** And every man went unto his own house.

**John 19:39-40**

**19:39** And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound *weight*.

**40** Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

**1 Peter 1:23**

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

**1 John 5:1**

Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

**2 Corinthians 5:17**

Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he* is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

**2 The action of the Spirit is similar to the wind, John 3:8;**

**Acts 2:2**

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

**John 6:44**

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

**3 Nicodemus is amazed at the power of Christ's words, John 3:9-11;**

**1 Corinthians 2:14**

But 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.

**Matthew 7:28-29**

**7:28** And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

**29** For he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes.

**Mark 1:27**

And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.

**1 Peter 3:22**

Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

**4 Jesus searchingly questions Nicodemus, John 3:12, 13;**

**Proverbs 30:4**

Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?

**Job 38:4**

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.

### III The Crucifixion Necessary to Salvation of Men

**1 Jesus is our redemption, John 3:14;**

**Numbers 21:5-9**

**21:5** And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for *there* is no bread, neither is *there* any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

**6** And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.

**7** Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.

**8** And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to

pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.

**9** And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

**Isaiah 53:1-12**

**53:1** Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

**2** For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, *there is no* beauty that we should desire him.

**3** He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

**4** Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

**5** But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

**6** All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

**7** He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

**8** He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

**9** And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth.

**10** Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

**11** He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

**12** Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

**Matthew 26:28**

For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

**1 John 1:7**

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

**1 John 2:2**

And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world.

**Hebrews 7:25**

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

**Hebrews 9:22**

And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

**1 Timothy 1:15**

This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;

of whom I am chief.

**1 Peter 1:18-19)**

**1:18** Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers;

**19** But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

**2 It is necessary to believe in Christ to be born again, John 3:15;**

**John 14:6**

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

**John 1:12**

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name:

**John 5:24)**

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

**Romans 1:16**

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

**1 Peter 2:6**

Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

**Hebrews 11:6**

But without faith *it* is impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

**3 God gave His only begotten Son, John 3:16;**

**John 4:10**

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

**John 17:3**

3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

**Romans 5:8-10**

8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

**Titus 3:4-5**

4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

**Romans 6:23**

23 For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Romans 8:32**

32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

**2 Corinthians 9:15**

15 Thanks *be* unto God for his unspeakable gift.

**Ephesians 2:8**

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that

not of yourselves: *it is the gift of God:*

#### 4 The unbeliever is condemned, John 3:17, 18;

##### **John 3:36**

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

##### **Revelation 21:8**

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

##### **Galatians 6:7**

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

##### **Revelation 20:10**

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

##### **Hebrews 3:12**

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

##### **Hebrews 4:11**

Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

#### 5 Christ's teaching proves to be clear and understandable to a perplexed heart, John 3:19-21

#### 6 Evidence that Nicodemus later was born again, John 7:45-53; 19:39, 40

##### **John 7:45-53**

**7:45** Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him?

**46** The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.

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**40** Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

#### **Notes:**

Nicodemus was an educated man who held a position in the Sanhedrin and a place of honor and respect in the eyes of his countrymen. Although possibly a cautious inquirer, he was an earnest seeker after spiritual truth, and was fair-minded. He approached Christ with reverence, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God." This virtue in the heart of an inquirer is necessary to secure an audience with Jesus. Nicodemus was honest in his questioning and not as some who merely propound questions in an effort to



hinder the Truth (**Matthew 22:15-18** **22:15** Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in *his* talk. **16** And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any *man*: for thou regardest not the person of men. **17** Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? **18** But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, *ye hypocrites*?) One who opens his heart to Christ will always find his problems easily solved by the Master (**Luke 11:31** The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here).

Possibly Nicodemus' reason for coming to the Lord at night was that a man of his position before his fellow men could not afford the reproach of Christianity (**John 9:22** These *words* spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue). True Christianity always has had its reproach, and the followers of Jesus are sometimes scorned and called peculiar. This does not affect the true follower if he has purposed in his heart to be that "peculiar treasure" unto the Lord (- **Exodus 19:5** Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine).

But there is more than one reason why Nicodemus came by night. Jesus was leading a very busy life, we must remember, and it might have been that Nicodemus had no other time when he could see Jesus. He also might not have been concerned about the reproach of his fellow men but feared the disapproval of the Pharisees at this time. (**John 12:42** Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue). The average member of that group looked upon Jesus and all His disciples with contempt.

There was a time when it meant persecution, trouble, and sneers to be a Christian. But the term Christianity has become almost synonymous with **civilization**, so it is no longer a disgrace, in the popular mind, to be known as a Christian, nominally at least. The real follower of Christ will find plenty of trouble, however. Even with all our rights and privileges in these United States there are plenty who will do all in their power to hinder the work of God or put something in the way of one of God's little ones. But, nominally speaking, it is almost a disgrace not to be a Christian today, so closely connected the name has become with the better ways of living.

Jesus mentioned the Kingdom of Heaven many times during His ministry, from the beginning to the end. The Jews were looking for the Messiah to come and set up an earthly kingdom and free them from the yoke of Roman bondage; and they failed to see, from the writings of the prophets, that the Kingdom was not to be a temporal, but a spiritual one. Jesus approached the problem at the very beginning of His conversation with this ruler: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." There is the entrance into the Kingdom: we must be born again!

This term "born again" is familiar to us now—and yet many so-called Christians do not comprehend what it means, and have never experienced it. It was not a familiar term to them at that time. It is not recorded at any earlier place in the Scriptures.

The principle of likening the transformation of the heart at justification to the natural birth was not done before Christ did it at this time. A change of heart is mentioned and brought out in the Old Testament, but this comparison is not made. Being truly born again will give us that change of heart and will embrace more than joining a religious organization and striving to live up to Christian principles, It will enable us to live a life pleasing unto God — a life **without sin**. "**Whosoever is born** of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (I John 3:9). When one is born again, he enters a new life (**2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new), a life in which the Spirit of God has control instead of the law of sin and death. No better term could be used to describe the radical change than this that Jesus used: "Ye must be born again."

Salvation is a revelation from God, and every soul who has experienced this "new birth" will say it is real. If a man be in Christ, he is a "new creature." God regenerates the heart. This is the "born again" experience in that "old

things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17).

Nicodemus had come into great light in that the Lord had revealed the Truth to his heart. Consequently it was necessary to walk in that light or never know the experience of a sinless life. "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:6, 7). For Nicodemus the time of decision had arrived. Was he going to remain in the darkness? Or was he going to come into the light and let it have its effect on him?

The Spirit of God is faithful to every heart. When we trust our guidance in the hand of the Holy Spirit and follow His divine bidding implicitly, the pitfalls and snares of the soul's enemy will always be averted (**John 16:13** Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come*). Those who do not follow the Spirit are the ones who reap the wages of sin.

It is always the enemy's business to confound or perplex his intended victim; but we have a Captain Who never lost a battle anywhere, and we know that our Commander is more than an equal for any occasion. Whenever one seeks the Son of God with honesty, sincerity, and faith, an immediate audience will be obtained. The multitudes of redeemed souls around the Throne of God will testify to this fact and praise God for it through all eternity.

Jesus did not hesitate to go to the very depths to make the most amazing disclosures of Himself to the people. Each miracle performed was for a definite and explicit reason. He was, and is, interested in the souls of men, and will not spare Himself that the redeeming power in the Blood of the Lamb may be made known to all mankind.

### **QUESTIONS**

- 1 Why do you suppose Nicodemus chose to visit Jesus at night?
- 2 Was Nicodemus' greeting one of respect or derision?
- 3 What was Jesus' message to this Pharisee?
- 4 Is it applicable today?
- 5 What does "born again" mean?
- 6 Through whom is this experience received, and what is necessary for all to do who seek it?
- 7 Did Nicodemus make a wise choice?
- 8 Do we also have the same privilege of choosing whom we shall serve?
- 9 What is the wise choice?
- 10 What is the foolish choice?