

# Nicodemus

## “Searcher of Spiritual Truth”



### Who was Nicodemus?

Nicodemus was a member of the Jewish sect called the Pharisees, who were devoted to the observation of the law of Moses. Often the Pharisees were overly rigid about obedience, and overlooked love for God and love for people. They also had a tendency to be judgmental and hypocritical. Jesus would call them out which they did not take kindly to, and as a result the Pharisees generally hated Jesus.

Nicodemus was not just a devout Pharisee, but also one of only 70 members of the Sanhedrin religious court. He would have been highly influential in religion, politics, and wealth. So, Nicodemus was the equivalent of a modern politician, celebrity preacher, and wealthy businessman all rolled into one.

Nicodemus was referred to by Jesus as “Israel’s teacher”, showing that Nicodemus was a highly respected Bible teacher.

### **Nicodemus encounters and meets with Jesus (John 3:1-21).**

Nicodemus went to see Jesus at night. Why night? Either to not be seen by the other Pharisees who looked down on Jesus; or possibly Nicodemus thought the best time to have a conversation with Jesus was at night.

Nicodemus seems to want to talk about Jesus, but Jesus sees the real reason for his visit – Nicodemus is searching for spiritual truth and fulfillment. Jesus takes advantage of the opportunity to share extremely important spiritual truths with Nicodemus – and us today 2000 years later. Included in this chapter is the most recognizable verse in the entire Bible (out of 31,102) - John 3:16. This one-sentence summary of the gospel is the most famous portion of Christian Scripture, and probably the most often-memorized and often-quoted portion of any holy text in human history.

## **What are the key truths that Jesus explained to Nicodemus?**

The key truth Jesus explained was all of us need to be spiritually “born again” to be saved, and to have a personal relationship with God. Jesus explained that we are first born physically (“born of water” i.e. flesh), and to be saved we must be “born again” (second birth) spiritually. Being born again is an act of the Holy Spirit, based on our belief (faith) in the sacrificial payment of our sins by Jesus Christ on the cross.

John 3:36 and 2 Corinthians 5:17 & 21 explain that whoever believes in Jesus has eternal life and becomes a new creation; this is possible because of Jesus payment (atonement) for our sin.

Jesus explains the need for faith to be saved by referring to the story of the Israelites being saved from deadly snake bites, by looking up and having faith in the snake image that Moses created in the desert (Numbers 21:4-9).

## **The rest of the story – Nicodemus Is Born Again and Follows Jesus**

The biblical evidence is that Nicodemus understood what Jesus taught, responded in faith to Jesus message, and was born again. Nicodemus became a strong supporter of Jesus, illustrated by a couple of biblical stories:

- 1) In John 7:50-52 we see Nicodemus taking the risk to speak on Jesus behalf.
- 2) In John 19:38-40 we see that Nicodemus (along with Joseph of Arimathea) helps prepare the body of Jesus after His crucifixion.

## **Personal Application**

First thing we need to make sure is that we are spiritually born again, by believing and receiving in the substitutory payment that Jesus provided on the cross (John 1:12; 3:16).

Second, we should be inspired and committed to help all the people we know to also choose to be born again -- and enjoy forgiveness of sins and an awesome eternal life with Jesus that starts here on earth! We can pray, love, invite, and share our story and biblical truth with God’s help.