

Lesson 110: Nicodemus talks to Jesus
Scripture: John 3:1-21
Memory Verse: Unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God. John 3:3

After His first miracle of turning the water into wine, Jesus began teaching and doing many miracles. As a result, people began to believe that He was someone important sent by God.

One man, named Nicodemus, wanted to know more about Jesus. Nicodemus was a religious leader who was a Pharisee. The Pharisees were known for strictly observing every detail of the Law of Moses, and also the Traditions. Many Pharisees saw themselves as perfect in their own eyes. They thought they knew it all, and therefore flatly refused to listen or believe Jesus' teaching. Nicodemus was different, he knew of Jesus' teaching and miracles, and wanted to learn for himself who this Jesus person was.

One night, after dark, he came to speak with Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you." It was as if he was asking, "How can someone who didn't go to Pharisee school teach the teachers? Please tell me who you are."

Jesus knew Nicodemus' thoughts and heart, so rather than answering Nicodemus direct question, Jesus went straight to the **most important issue**; He wanted to let Nicodemus know that until his sinful heart was fixed, Nicodemus wouldn't be able to really understand who Jesus was. Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Nicodemus. "How can a person be born a second time? It would be impossible for me to shrink and become a baby once again!"

Jesus replied, "A person can be born here on earth only once, but the Holy Spirit can allow someone to be born into God's Heavenly Kingdom."

Jesus went on to explain, "Can you see the wind? No, but you can see what it does. In the same way, you can't see the Holy Spirit, but the work of the Spirit can give you a new heart."

Then Jesus said, "It's like when the people of Moses' day sinned against God and were being attacked and bitten by snakes. God had mercy on the people and told Moses to make a bronze snake to lift it up for all to see. Anyone bitten by a snake that looked upon the bronze snake was healed. In the same way, I must be lifted up, so that anyone who looks upon me will not die but have eternal life. **For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.** God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son."

Jesus knew that people with sinful hearts (which is a problem we ALL have) cannot put their faith in Him. This is what Jesus was talking about when He told Nicodemus, "You must be born again. He also knew that many would get a new heart from God, and put their faith in Him. And in this teaching, Jesus was affirming what God had promised the people of Israel through Ezekiel many years before:

"For I will gather you up from all the nations and bring you home again to your land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. "