

## Nicodemus - John 3:1-21 Transcendent Series

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 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.”

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

4 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?”

5 Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter 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 Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

9 Nicodemus answered and said to Him, “How can these things be?”

10 Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?”

**Many Years ago – when we were both youth Pastors I was visiting my friend Greg Opean-Redlands**

**A)We went to this pizza place at the mall – lunch**

**B)We are sitting there – enjoying lunch, when this mall cop – uniform – badge – radio**

1)This guy walks up to us – and engages us in conversation.

**C)And then out of the blue and very random – he says – You know what I can do with this radio?**

1)I can call a couple of Prostitutes for you guys just like that. – Mall cop / pimp

**D)My friend Greg – sarcastically responds – Great and then we can get an STD/ Aids**

1)Proceeded to tell the guy that we were not interested!

**Then this mall cop dude- Are you guys religious or something.**

**A)Greg responded – not at all – In fact I hate religion and I think God hates religion too!**

**B)Then we proceeded to talk to this guy about why God hates religion –**

1)Religion is man’s attempt to reach God and earn God’s favor

**C)What the Bible teaches is – God reached down to us – reached down to save man**

1)Sending son Jesus – Relationship not religion

**Today we come to part 4 in our series Transcendent**

**A)Where we are looking at Jesus encounters with people in the gospel accounts**

**B)People who bear a resemblance to us -**

1)We Noted the Bible tells us that Jesus is the same yesterday today and forever.

**C)So in these encounters that Jesus has with various individuals we gain insight into his heart for us.**

**D)Our encounter today is with a very religious man named Nicodemus – who comes to Jesus at night.**

1)We see a very religious - Man named Nicodemus – who comes to Jesus at night.

**E)Jesus might have hated religion – but he loves the religious person**

1)However being religious is not what gives us a right standing with God.

**Who was Nicodemus?**

**A)V.1 Pharisee** The Pharisees were dedicated to preserving, interpreting, & defending Jewish Law;

**B)which they legalistically forced upon the people of Israel.**

**C)V.1 A ruler of the Jews** which meant he was a member of Sanhedrin – **A council of 70 men, who had religious jurisdiction over every Jew in the world.**

**D)The Teacher of Israel** - indicates he had preeminent status in religious circles

**E)So that is the kind of guy Nicodemus is – He is smart – very religious**

**F) He is devoted to his religious**

1) He is a man of prestige – and reputation – He is a man of Power

**“If heaven could be earned from one’s accomplishments, Nicodemus would have had change left over.”**

**Yet despite all of his accomplishments – Nicodemus is insecure – lacking assurance.**

**A) He is unsure about his future.**

**B) Nicodemus at the top of the religious ladder, looking down.**

1) Yet now we see him stepping down from that ladder to walk the streets looking for answers!

**C) Much is made about Nicodemus coming at night – but Jesus doesn’t condemn Nicodemus for coming at night so neither will I.**

**However each time Nicodemus is mentioned in John’s gospel –**

**A) he is tagged as the one who came to Jesus at night**

**B) We might say that was his a TAGLINE – how he is defined**

**C) ALL OF US CAN GET TAGGED AS WELL**

1) Interesting to think about – what would your tagline be?

**D) How would others describe you? How would you want them to describe you?**

**How does Nicodemus approach Jesus?**

**A) Respectfully – he calls him rabbi = teacher of master**

**B) That is a big deal when you consider – Jesus has had no formal training – No PHD –**

1) And Nicodemus is all about that – that is his world

**C) He is the teacher of all the Rabbi’s in Israel-**

1) He calls Jesus who has never been to one of his classes Rabbi – BIG DEAL

**Notice also – He says We know that you are a teacher come from God!**

**A) I know – You are not a quack – not a poser – you are the real deal**

**B) In fact he says We know – meaning Jesus has been the topic of conversation amongst the Pharisees and **not all are against him.****

**C) So Nicodemus approached Jesus in a general way 1)– Rabbi – God is with you – it is obvious...by the things you do.**

**But Jesus gets very specific V 3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”**

**A) Jesus is answering the unasked question on Nicodemus heart!**

**B) This was the thing that was burning on the heart of Nicodemus**

**1) *how can I know that I am going to be a part of the kingdom of God.***

**C) How can I have that Assurance?**

**D) Despite all of his knowledge / education / training / background/ his position – Nic was lost – he sensed something was wrong**

1) No assurance – This is the question every religious person needs to be able to answer –

**E) Questioning - How do I know for sure- I am a part of his Kingdom?**

**1) *How do I know – really going to Heaven?***

**His religion told him he was a part of the Kingdom of God – because of his bloodline –**

**A) As a Jewish person - He belonged to Bloodline of Abraham**

**B) Jesus says – You need to be BORN AGAIN – You need a different bloodline**

**C) His religion told him – he was secure because he sought to keep the law. – Be a good person.**

1) But I think deep down Nicodemus knew – I don’t keep it perfectly

**D) I might be better than most – but I still fall short – if I am really honest!**

**1) So he is insecure in his religion**

**E) Heard – Greg Laurie says once – He thinks “religion keeps more people out of heaven than all sins combined.”**

F) Reason – Religion can give us a false sense of security – I am ok – I belong to X Church  
1) I gave at the offering – I said the Lord’s prayer

### Jesus pinpoints the Problem – You need to be BORN AGAIN

A) Being born again is what happens to a person when they put their faith in Jesus Christ

B) Their – dead spirit comes to Life – born of the Spirit!

1) It is what theologians refer to as being regenerated – Dead person brought to life

### Jesus says to Nicodemus – Bro you need a new birth

4 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?”

5 Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

A) First Birth - born of water; - water breaks baby is coming = born of the flesh.

B) Second Birth - born of the Spirit; reborn; regeneration (Latin).

Religion attempts to turn over a new leaf.  
Regeneration transforms hearts and lives.

C) Being born again is about entering into a relationship with God –

1) Change happens on the inside that affects our life on the outside.

### D) Religion is the opposite of that – I am going through actions on the outside –

1) That hopefully will affect me on the inside.

E) Backwards – It starts with the heart!

### Now Nicodemus should have Known this?

A) Certain things we should Know –

B) Story of this woman everyday – walking by this pet store – Parrot in cage – hanging at the door

1) Hey – You are the ugliest woman I’ve ever seen

C) Three days same thing – woman complains

1) Pet store owner – apologizes – takes the Parrot in the back and slaps him around – never again say that

D) The next day – the woman is walking by again – Parrot yells Hey – she turns around –

1) Parrot looks at her and says – YOU KNOW

### There are certain things we should know – and Nicodemus should have known this

A) What Jesus means when he chides him in V. 10  
**You are the teacher....don’t know these things.**

B) This was the whole point of the NC that God had promised through the prophet Ezekiel

C) Promise of what would happen when Messiah came -

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.” Ezekiel 36:26,27

### D) New birth, leads to New behavior! The example of the wind!

7 Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

A) You can’t see the wind but you hear it and you see the effects of it

B) Airplane turbulence - feel it – can’t see it

C) So too – A person who is born of the Spirit – you see the effects on their life!

1) New Birth = New Behavior

### I read of a Christian in England who was asked to sign a church guest register.

A) He noticed that a number of guests had entered their degrees after their names.

B) He wanted to put some letters after his name, but had never been to a university.

1) So he wrote, "John Smith, BA and MA."

C)When Asked what the letters stood for, he said, "John Smith, **Born Again, and Marvelously Altered!**"

**D)MY DAD HUGE IMPACT** !!! CRIED reading word

- 1)Patient – Kinder – treated my mom Better.
- 2)One reason I am a believer today!

**Well Nicodemus asked How can this be? How does this Spiritual birth happen? –**

A)Jesus gets down to the Nitty Gritty

9 Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?"

10 Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?"

11 Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. 12 If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

**B)Not understanding earthly things – Ref to analogy of the wind –**

1)How will you understand Spiritual things

**C)Here we see Jesus is being so patient with this religious leader –**

1)Let me give you another analogy

13 No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who 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 whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

**The story in Numbers 21:4–9 was certainly familiar to Nicodemus.**

A)It is a story of sin, of a time when the nation rebelled against God.

**B) It is a Story of Judgment – Because of their sin Israel had to be punished.**

1)God sent fiery serpents that bit the people so that many died.

**C)But It is also a story of grace, for Moses interceded for the people and God provided a remedy.**

1)Instructed Moses to make Brass serpent on the Pole Those who look to it – Saved/ healed

**D)All that was required was a simple look of faith.**

1)Didn't even matter how many times they were bit or how infected they were!

**Then Jesus makes the application - even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,**

A)The term Son of man is a reference in Daniel 7 to the Messiah – exalted one

**B)Jesus used this reference in referring to himself in the gospels often –**

1)His way of saying he was the Messiah

Even so must the **Son of Man be lifted up**, 15 that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

**C)Jesus is saying to Nicodemus – the Messiah is going to be lifted up – put on a pole**

1)Just like the serpent was – The serpent was a sign of the curse

**Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree – Jesus became a curse so that we could be healed**

A)Whoever believes – whoever looks to Him in faith will not perish but have eternal life

**B)Jesus would later say: John 12:32 If I am lifted up I will draw all people to myself.**

**C)To make this perfectly clear – Jesus continues 16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**

God's Heart

- **His heart:** He loved the world.
- **His plan:** He gave His only begotten Son.
- **His will:** Whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

**D)We realize what he did for us – Cross – we look to him in faith = Born again**

**17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.**

A)Already condemned by Sin

**B)The question remains will we stay in that condemned state?**

1)Or will we look to Jesus and be set free -Born again – brought to life –

**17Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17**

18 “He **who believes** in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

**Can't be Neutral- not one of those Born again types**

19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. 21 But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”

**The way this conversation ends is interesting in light of who Jesus is talking to.–**

A)Basically Jesus was saying to Nicodemus –

**B)Even though you are in your religion you are still in Darkness – if Not born again ?**

“There is Nicodemus, flush with his moral and spiritual accomplishments, and there is someone out on the street who is homeless and addicted, and as far as God is concerned they are equally lost. They both have to start from scratch. They both have to be born again. They both need eternal spiritual life or something will eat them alive.” Timothy Keller

**True: Drug dealer and the Church goer are the same in God's eyes**

A)Both need to be born again

**B)Listen – do you really know Jesus or are you just religious?**

1)You are as lost as the worst criminal

**C)That is not my opinion – that is what Jesus is saying to the most religious man in Israel**

1)THE TEACHER

**D)Are you more religious than Nicodemus?**

**How is Nicodemus like us?**

A)Many of us were Dead in our religious background – no relationship

**B)Confidence in our religious upbringing –**

1)Catechism – Sunday School church

**C)Christian School – but never born again**

**Being born again is an interesting analogy.**

A)Did you do anything to be born? – Did you work hard to earn the privilege of being born?

**B)Your mom did all the work – call it Labor**

1)Dad didn't even do anything

**C)Jesus did the work – He went to the Cross**

1)All you do is believe it and receive it

**D)Spiritual life is yours today!**

**Before we go today:**

A)Even as believers – we can fall back into that trap of:

Performance based acceptance

**B)Earn God's favor based on our performance**

**C)Performance is a response to having His favor**

**How can we be Jesus to the people in our lives?**

A)Trapped in Religion – Bring them this story

**B)What does this mean to you – this guy – born again?**

**The Know it all – raised in the church – not walking – no longer in Church**

A)Don't be afraid to share with them – what Jesus is doing in your life -what he is teaching you.

**B)Contagious affect**

**C)How this all started – The life of Jesus had a contagious effect on Nicodemus**

1)And your life with Jesus can have a contagious effect on those in your sphere of Influence

**D)You have something – that I am missing**