



IN THE HOUSE WITH A PHARISEE

John 3:1–21

¹There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ²This 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.” ³Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” ⁴Nicodemus 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?” ⁵Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ ⁸The 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.”

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

¹⁰Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? ¹¹Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. ¹²If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? ¹³No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. ¹⁴And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

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. ¹⁷For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. ¹⁸He 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. ¹⁹And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. ²¹But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”

—John 3:1–21

Read John 3:1–21

Many people have deep questions about Jesus but are afraid to voice them. The fear that they might be rebuked, ridiculed, and even rejected keeps them from asking the essential questions of life. The questions that they have are deep, legitimate, and real. They need a safe atmosphere in which to be heard, ask their questions, and process the truth.

In this house at night, Jesus created an atmosphere where Nicodemus, a Pharisee, could come secretly and safely for a private audience with Him. There Nicodemus could ask Jesus the nagging questions of his heart, hear loving answers, and process the truth that Jesus was telling Him.

Jesus wants to provide this same atmosphere for any who are in need of answers. He who knows our heart wants to probe its depths with us in order to remove the darkness and replace it with His truth and light. Jesus’ great grace invites all of us to meet with Him safely, secretly, and privately that we might pour out our hearts until we know we are heard, understood, and answered. *Trust in Him at all times, you people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us* (Psalm 62:8).

Today as you complete your lesson, the Lord is longing to hear your heart’s questions and fill you with an understanding of His great love, truth, and light!

1. Use John 3:1–2 to explain:
 - a. Who Nicodemus was

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The scribes, those who drew up legal documents, often came from the sect known as the Pharisees. These men sought to scrupulously keep the law, adding some 613 regulations to the commandments. Though they could be members of the Sanhedrin, the ruling religious leaders, they were often in opposition to the Sadducees—the more liberal branch of the Sanhedrin. Both parties were threatened by Jesus’ words, miracles, goodness, and popularity.

- b. What he recognized about Jesus
2. According to John 3:3, what did Jesus declare was essential in order to *see the kingdom of God*?
 3. Note and comment on Nicodemus' response to Jesus' declaration.
 4. Give a short explanation of what Jesus said to Nicodemus in the following verses:
 - a. Verse 5
 - b. Verse 6
 - c. Verse 7
 - d. Verse 8
 5. Remark on the dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus from:
 - a. Verse 9

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

*Birth is the beginning of life; to be born again is to begin to live anew, as those who have lived much amiss, or to little purpose. We must have a new nature, new principles, new affections, new aims.*¹¹

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Hebrew word for *spirit* is the same word used for wind—*ruach*. The Greek word for *spirit* is also the same Greek word for wind—*pneuma* (see Genesis 1:2). Jesus uses the illustration of wind as a force that is felt but not seen to clarify the work of God's Spirit.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Jesus referred to Himself being lifted up three times in John's gospel (John 3:14, 8:28, 12:32). The saying "lifted up" intentionally has two connotations. The first refers to the cross, and the second to His resurrection and exaltation. Jesus referenced Numbers 21:8–9, which is the record of a bronze serpent being lifted up on a pole so that those Israelites bitten by the fiery vipers were able to look upon it and be healed. Just as the serpent in the wilderness was the cure for those bitten, so Jesus' crucifixion is the cure for those condemned by sin.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.

—Isaiah 45:22

- b. Verses 10–11
 - c. Verse 12
6. Use John 3:13–21 to note and comment on what Jesus said concerning:
- a. The uniqueness of the Son of Man
 - b. Lifted up
 - c. God's love
 - d. Everlasting life
 - e. God's purpose
 - f. Faith
 - g. Condemnation
 - h. Light
 - i. Darkness
 - j. Evil
 - k. Truth
7. What is your greatest takeaway from Jesus' conversation in the house with a Pharisee?