

The New Birth

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

2 ^aThis man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for ^bno one can do these signs that You do unless ^cGod is with him."

3 Jesus answered and said to him, ^aVery truly I say to you, ^aun-

¹Or from about
3:5 ^aMark 16:16
[Acts 2:38]

3:6 ^aJohn 1:13
15:50

3:8 ^aps. 135:
11:5; Ezek.
1 Cor. 2:11

3:9 ^aJohn

3:11 ^a[Ma
^bJohn 3:

Jesus Teaches Nicodemus

3 Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. **2** He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him."

3 Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.^[a]"

4 "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"

5 Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. **6** Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit^[b] gives birth to spirit. **7** You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You^[c] must be born again.' **8** The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."^[d]

9 "How can this be?" Nicodemus asked.

10 "You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? **11** Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to

what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. ¹²I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? ¹³No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man.^[e] ¹⁴Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,^[f] ¹⁵that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.”^[g]

¹⁶For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

This is the Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you O Christ

Be More Nicodemus

Nicodemus steps out of the darkness, literally, to speak to the Light of the World. He draws close.

I always imagine this conversation – with Jesus poking a camp fire a bit like the way he draws in the sand in the story of the woman who committed adultery. Jesus is there – just reflecting – light in the dark – and out of the dark, or on the edges of it, appears Nicodemus. I say on the edges of the darkness, because he is a respected member of the council, a rabbi in his own right, and he maybe doesn't want to be seen speaking with, or whisper it, fascinated by this outrageous heretic, Jesus.

So he draws close, on the edge of the light thrown by the fire. Literally. And of course metaphorically, he is on the edge of understanding. Looking at the light stepping into the light but still not quite there. Still hovering a bit in the dark.

And he says, quite profoundly, you can't do what you do Jesus, and say what you say, unless you are who you say you are – can you? Not seeing God yet, but seeing someone who has God with him. On a journey s they say.

Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him."

And how can someone be born again when they are old?

He is asking the right questions.

He is looking for the answers.

But they make very little sense yet.

We could all be more Nicodemus.

Risking stepping away from what we know and take for granted, risking ridicule maybe if we are seen; certainly risking self-doubt - he is or could be every man and every woman.

We all think we have got it right, and the others have got it wrong.

Our opinions calcify into fact. Because we can't cope with being wrong.

It's funny how many of us think that anyone who has come to different theological conclusions to us is "deceived." Perhaps we should just admit that none of us know the entire truth, all of us come from different backgrounds

with different journeys, all of us change our views as we receive new information (just like all healthy developing human beings), and thus all of us are somewhat deceived about our understanding, of life, of moral value, of God, but we're trying not to be.

Nicodemus' hunger for truth leads him into an encounter with a much bigger and more beautiful God than the small one he thought existed.

May we all be a bit more Nicodemus.