

## JESUS AND NICODEMUS

John 3:1-17

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### I. A Successful Person Came to Jesus

**A. Nicodemus was conflicted, being both attracted to Jesus and fearful of the implications.** “There was a man of the Pharisees, named *Nicodemus, a ruler* of the Jews: *The same came to Jesus by night*, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for *no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*” (JOHN 3:1-2)

**B. Jesus exposed the heart of the problem.** “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom* of God.” (JOHN 3:3)

**C. When Nicodemus attempted to shift the argument, Jesus forced him back to the central issue.** “Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? *can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb*, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*” (JOHN 3:4-5)

### II. Entrance into the Kingdom Is Supernatural

**A. New life requires more than a change of opinion, a vote of confidence, or membership in an organization.** “That which is *born of the flesh is flesh*; and that which is *born of the Spirit is spirit*. **MARVEL** NOT that I said unto thee, *Ye must be born again.*” (JOHN 3:6-7)

**B. The inexplicable is a common feature of life; why should God be different?** “*The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*” (JOHN 3:8)

**C. Nicodemus could not fit the gospel into his preconceived box.** “Nicodemus answered and said unto him, *How can these things be?*” (JOHN 3:9)

**D. Facts outweigh theory; knowledge is only as good as it is useful.** “Jesus answered and said unto him, *Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?* Verily, verily, I say unto thee, *We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.*” (JOHN 3:10-11)

**E. Those who cannot accept the moral standards of God inevitably have trouble grasping the revelation of grace.** “*If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?*” (JOHN 3:12)

### III. Grace Is God’s Way of Doing Things

**A. The doctrine of grace comes down from heaven, not up from earth.** “And *no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.*” (JOHN 3:13)

**B. The mystery of grace in Christ was foreshadowed in Numbers.** “And *as Moses lifted up the serpent* in the wilderness, even *so must the Son of man be lifted up:*” (JOHN 3:14)  
“Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, *We have sinned*, for we have spoken against the

LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And **Moses prayed** for the people. And the LORD said unto Moses, **Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.**" (NUMBERS 21:7-9)

C. In the same way as the people in the Wilderness, those who look to Jesus find salvation from their sins and their punishments. "That **whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.**" (JOHN 3:15)

D. The new birth by God's grace is God's way of saving sinners. "For **God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**" (JOHN 3:16)

E. Grace is genuinely appealing to sinners who have learned they cannot save themselves. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, **while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**" (ROMANS 5:8)

F. Unlike Nicodemus who came in the dark, believers publicly proclaim the work of Jesus. "To wit, that **God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;** and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. **Now then we are ambassadors for Christ,** as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For **he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.**" (2 CORINTHIANS 5:19-21)