



## JOHN 3: NICK AT NIGHT

“The Chosen” S1:E8,9

*John 3 introduces Nicodemus, a ruling member of the Sanhedrin, who visits Jesus under the cover of night. Why? What is he hoping to find out, or do? In this encounter Jesus speaks what is certainly the most well-known Bible verse.*

**1** 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.” **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 gives birth to spirit.

**7** You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You 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

**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. **12** I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? **13** No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. **14** Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, **15** that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.”

**16** For 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. **17** For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. **18** Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. **19** This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. **20** Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. **21** But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

**22** After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them, and baptized. **23** Now John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water,

and people were coming and being baptized. **24** [This was before John was put in prison.] **25** An argument developed between some of John’s disciples and a certain Jew over the matter of ceremonial washing. **26** They came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan—the one you testified about—look, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him.”

**27** To this John replied, “A person can receive only what is given them from heaven. **28** You yourselves can testify that I said, ‘I am not the Messiah but am sent ahead of him.’ **29** The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom’s voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. **30** He must become greater; I must become less.”

**31** The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. **32** He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. **33** Whoever has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. **34** For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. **35** The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. **36** Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on them.

### STUDY NOTES

Reading all of John 3 (not just verse 16) provides some great context to the Bible’s most-famous text. Jesus tells of when God instructed Moses to make a snake and put it on a pole, so that any who were bitten could look upon it and live (Numbers 21:8-9).



When Jesus says **For God so loved the world** He isn't saying 'God loved the world *so much!*' He's saying 'God loved the world *in this way.*' Jesus is referring to His own impending sacrificial death to save all who believe in Him. -JT

EnduringWord.com Commentary

**Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:** Nicodemus was one of those impressed by Jesus' signs (John 2:23), and a member of the ruling Sanhedrin. He was religious (of the Pharisees), educated (Nicodemus is a Greek name), influential (a ruler), and earnest enough to come **by night**. Nicodemus came to Jesus as a representative of *all men* (John 2:23-25), and in a sense he represented what is highest and best in men. Perhaps Nicodemus came **by night** because he was timid, or perhaps he wanted an uninterrupted interview with Jesus.

**Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God:** Jesus' reply to Nicodemus shattered the Jewish assumption that their racial identity - their old birth - assured them a place in God's Kingdom. Jesus made it plain that a man's first birth does not assure him of the kingdom; only being born again gives this assurance.

**Born again:** The ancient Greek word translated **again** (*another*) can be also translated "from above." This is the sense in which John used this word in John 3:31 and in John 19:11 and 19:23. Either way, the meaning is essentially the same. To be born *from above* is to be born again.

**How can a man be born when he is old?** Nicodemus' reply may not have been out of ignorance, but from thinking that Jesus meant a moral reformation. His question may be "How can you teach an old dog new tricks?" One way or another, Nicodemus clearly did not understand Jesus or the truth about the new birth.

"A man may cast away many vices, forsake many

Of the **31,102** verses in the Bible, **John 3:16** may be the most popular single verse used in evangelism.

lusts in which he indulged, and conquer evil habits, but no man in the world can make himself to be born of God; though he should struggle never so much, he could never accomplish what is beyond his power. And, mark you, if he could make himself to be born again, still he would not enter heaven, because there is another point in the condition which he would have violated - 'unless a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'" (Spurgeon)

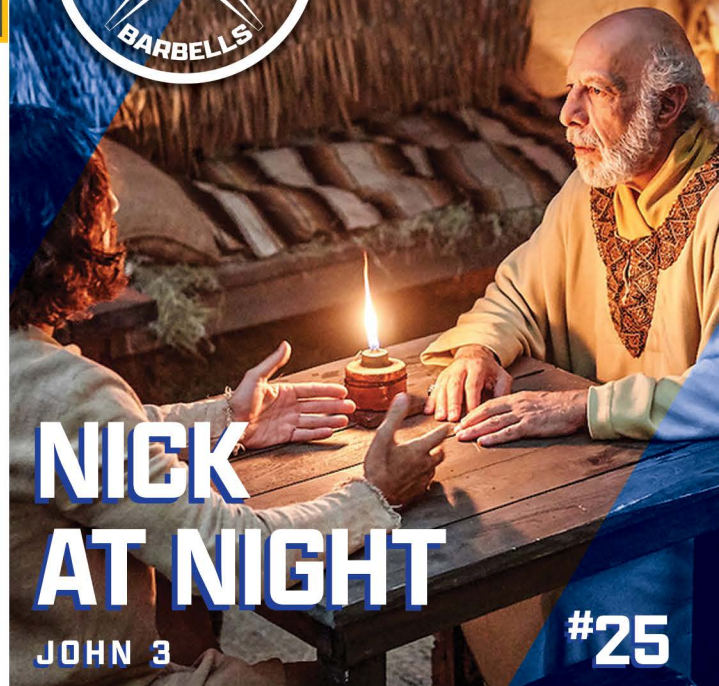
**As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness:** Jesus made a remarkable statement, explaining that the serpent of Numbers 21:4-9 was a picture of the Messiah and His work. In Numbers, the people were saved not by doing anything, but by simply looking to the bronze serpent. They had to trust that something as seemingly foolish as looking at such a thing would be sufficient to save them, and surely, some perished because they thought it too foolish to do such a thing.

**For God so loved the world** The Jews of that day rarely thought that God loved the world. Many of them thought that God only loved Israel. The universal offer of salvation and life in Jesus was revolutionary.

**He gave his only begotten Son:** "These words seem to carry a reference to the offering of Isaac; and Nicodemus in that case would at once be reminded by them of the love there required, the substitution there made, and the prophecy there uttered to Abraham." (Alford)

**He who does not believe is condemned already:** John 3:16 is the most gracious, wonderful offer conceivable - eternal life for all who believe. Yet the offer has inherent consequences, for any who reject, who refuse to believe. Their refusal makes their condemnation certain.

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JOHN 3

#25



**THE PAIN YOU FEEL TODAY  
WILL BE THE STRENGTH YOU FEEL TOMORROW**



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