

LESSON PLAN

NICODEMUS COMES TO JESUS

John 2:13-25; 3:1-21

Lesson Memory Verse: John 3:3b “Verily, verily, I say unto you; except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Lesson Aim: Show each student how to be born again so he can see the Kingdom of God .

Lesson Plan: Use the KEY – HE – SEE – WE – BE plan (explained in the Introductory Notes).

KEY (for Attention): Bring pictures to class of a caterpillar (**World Book Encyclopedia**, pp. 620-625) and explain the process of metamorphosis (a Greek word which means “to transform”). (For the older classes you can explain the four stages of growth that a caterpillar goes through before it becomes a beautiful butterfly.) First of all, an egg is laid on a leaf. After a period of time this hatches into a worm-like stage which is called the larva stage. The larva is a crawling, often fuzzy, worm that we call a caterpillar. (Show the students a picture of a caterpillar.) It may be brown, yellow, or green and has many legs. This does not look at all like a beautiful butterfly. After about a month in this worm-like stage (larva), it enters into the third stage called the pupa stage. The caterpillar makes itself a little house called a cocoon and goes to sleep inside for a period of two weeks to many months. During this time there are many changes which take place inside the cocoon. At the end of the pupa period the cocoon splits open and a beautiful butterfly comes out and opens its wings. (Now show a picture of a beautiful butterfly.) When it was a caterpillar, it had to crawl, but now it could fly. A big change had taken place in the cocoon

When we were born into the world, we were born with a sin nature. Our sin nature makes us like to sin. It begins to show itself in little ways while we are still infants, but it causes us to sin in greater ways as we get older. The Bible says we all have sinned against God (Rom 3:23; 5:12, 19). That means none of us are fit to live with God in His Kingdom until we get a new nature from the Holy Spirit. Like the caterpillar was changed into a butterfly, we need to be changed into a godly person. This change will begin as soon as we receive Jesus as our Savior. We are changed from a person that loves sin to a person that hates sin (2 Cor 5:17). This is what Jesus meant when He told Nicodemus, “You must be born again.” In this lesson I want you to know how to be born again.

HE (for Authority): Our memory verse for today says that you must be born again before you can see the Kingdom of God. When you were born the first time, you were able to see the created world of God. When you are born the second time, you will be able to see the Kingdom of God. The first time you were born into the family of your father and mother. The second time you are born into the family of God. The first time you did not understand the work of the Spirit of God. The second time you experienced the work of the Spirit of God in you. The first time you rejected the gift of God through Jesus Christ. The second time you received the gift of God through Jesus Christ. It is important that you are born again.

Explanation of difficult phrases:

“Born again” – being born into the family of God

“Kingdom of God” – the rule of God in Heaven and on earth.

SEE (for Apperception) and WE (for Application): PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word. Today I will tell you about a religious leader who came to Jesus and learned that he needed to be born again to see the Kingdom of God.

I. Nicodemus Came – John 2:23-3:3

Jesus did many miracles when He visited the cities and villages in Israel. People were attracted to Him when they heard about His miracles. Some even claimed to believe in His name when they saw His miracles. However, Jesus knew that many of them did not believe in Him for the right reason (Jn 2:23-25). Jesus wanted them to believe in Him for His spiritual power to save them from their sins, but many only believed in Him for His physical power to heal them from their sicknesses. He did the miracles of healing because He loved them. He also did them to prove that He was their Messiah King. This is what the Old Testament prophets said that He would do when He came to them.

Nicodemus was one of those people who believed in Jesus because of the miracles that He had done. Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews and probably the best religious teacher among the Jews, but he did

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not know how Jesus could do these miracles. So he came to Jesus at night to talk to Him about His miracles. He believed Jesus was a teacher come from God and admitted that no man could do these miracles except God be with Him. Jesus changed the subject. He knew that Nicodemus did not need to know how He did these miracles. He needed to know how he could be in the Kingdom of God. So Jesus told him that he needed to be born again to see the Kingdom of God (3:3). This was more important than knowing how He did His miracles.

WE: We need to believe in Jesus for the right reason. We need to believe in Jesus to be saved so we can be in the Kingdom of God. We do not believe in Him so we can become rich. We do not believe in Him so we can be healed or see some relative be healed from a sickness. We do not believe in Him so we can have a lot of fun in life. We need to believe in Jesus to change us from sinners to saints, from children of Satan to children of God, from godless people to godly people, from those going to Hell to those going to Heaven. Do you believe in Jesus so that you are born again and can see the Kingdom of God?

II. Nicodemus Confused - John 3:4-13

When Jesus told Nicodemus that he had to be “born again” before he could be in the Kingdom of God, he was very confused. He thought that Jesus meant he had to be born as a baby again. This did not make any sense to Nicodemus. He said, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?” Then Jesus explained to him that he needed to be born again of the Spirit, not of his mother, to enter the Kingdom of God. Being born again of his mother would not change anything; he needed to be born of the Spirit (3:6). Then Jesus likened the moving of the Spirit to the wind. One can hear and feel the wind, but cannot see it. So it is with the Spirit. Still Nicodemus was confused. He said, “How can these things be?” Jesus then said to him, “Are you the master teacher of Israel and do not know these things” (3:9-10)? He should have known that Ezekiel 36:26-28 tells about this work of the Spirit in the lives of people to prepare them for the Kingdom of God.

WE: We do not need to be confused about the work of the Spirit to save us. He is God and He can make us a child of God. This new birth is a gift that we receive by faith, not by reason or by our works.

III. Nicodemus Converted - John 3:14-21

As Jesus continued to talk with Nicodemus, He referred to an event that Nicodemus knew very well. It happened when the Israelites rebelled against God and Moses in the wilderness, God sent poisonous snakes among them to punish them; many of them died from the snake bites. When they were sorry for their sin, God told Moses to make a snake out of brass and put it high on a pole. Those who looked at the snake would live. Their faith in the promise of God healed them. Then Jesus told Nicodemus that the Son of man would be lifted up and those who believed in Him would not perish, but have eternal life.

Jesus explained this further in John 3:16. (Have the students recite it together.) He said that God loved the world and sent His only Son, to die for the sins of the whole world. Those who believed would not perish, but have eternal life. Jesus explained to Nicodemus that all those who did not believe in God’s Son (those not born again) were condemned already (3:18). That meant they were already on their way to Hell. Jesus told him that the reason people will not come to Him and be born again is because they love their sins (3:19). This is a result of their sin nature. But those who come to Him and do what is right are born again. When Nicodemus heard these things he later believed on Jesus as His Savior and was born again. We are not told when Nicodemus did this, but his actions give evidence that he was born again. In John 7:50 it says that Nicodemus defended Jesus when fellow Jewish leaders spoke against Him. Also, in John 19:39, it says that Nicodemus came and anointed Jesus’ body with some very costly spices and perfume after He had been crucified. By this action he showed that was not in agreement with those who wanted Jesus crucified. Nicodemus stood with Jesus when He was rejected by his comrades. Which shows he was born again (Mt 7:16).

WE: We must be born again to be in the Kingdom of God. Our actions will prove if that is true of us.

BE (for Action): You have just heard the story how Nicodemus was born again. Even though Nicodemus was a religious leader, he needed to be born again. What did he have to do to be born again? Are you born again? (Go through the simple plan of salvation using the Gospel Hand and then give an invitation for the children in your class to be born again.)