

focus

A 21 DAY BIBLE READING PLAN
PREPARING HEARTS FOR EASTER

DAY 3:

Jesus Teaches Nicodemus

John 3:1-21

What were the Pharisees?

Pharisees were a group of people who knew a lot about the Bible, and about how to obey the commands that God had given them.

But a lot of times, Pharisees misunderstood the most important part of God's Word: they thought that they were good enough to *earn* God's love.

They thought that they never sinned! This was wrong. Pharisees were sinners like everyone else.

When Jesus started teaching and doing signs (like when he turned water into wine), the Pharisees didn't like it.

The Pharisees didn't like that people were listening to Jesus instead of them, and they didn't like that Jesus was teaching that everyone was a sinner – even them!

Because the Pharisees were prideful, their hearts were blinded to Jesus. They didn't recognize that Jesus was the Messiah, even though he was doing and saying things only the Messiah would.



Nicodemus was a Pharisee.

Nicodemus must have noticed that something was special about Jesus, because he wanted to talk to Jesus and find out more.

But, Nicodemus must have been afraid of what the other Pharisees would think, because he visited Jesus at night so that no one would know.



Nicodemus asked Jesus, “Teacher, we know that you have come from God, because no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.”

Jesus answered, “Nicodemus, I have something very important to tell you. No one can be with God unless they have been born again.”

Nicodemus was confused. “Born again?” he questioned, “Only tiny babies are born. How can a person be born if they are old?”

Jesus answered, “This is important, Nicodemus. No one can be with God unless his spirit is born again. I’m not talking about a physical birth, but a spiritual one. I’m talking about something you can’t see with your eyes or feel with your hands. I’m talking about something that you believe with your heart.”

“But how does this happen?” Nicodemus asked.

Jesus was surprised. “You teach people about spiritual things and you don’t understand this? This is important, Nicodemus. I am telling you something true, but you still don’t believe me. I am speaking about things you should already understand, and you don’t believe me! How can I teach you about things you aren’t familiar with – like the things in heaven?”

“No one has ever gone to heaven except the one that came from heaven – the Son of Man.”

Jesus continued, “Do you remember the story of the bronze snake, Nicodemus? The people of Israel had sinned against God, so God sent a judgment of poisonous snakes. God told Moses to put a bronze snake on a pole. Whoever looked at the snake would be healed from the snake bite.”

Nicodemus knew the Bible, and he knew this story.





“Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness,” Jesus continued, “so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him. 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. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through him.”

Do you think Nicodemus believed Jesus's words? The Bible doesn't tell us what Nicodemus said or did right at this moment, but later we see evidence that Nicodemus did believe Jesus.

Nicodemus and the other Pharisees had trouble believing Jesus because he was asking them to believe with humility. The Pharisees thought that they could earn God's favor by being really good – so that they could brag about how good they were.

But that's not how God's grace works. It's a gift – just like Moses and the snake - all it takes is belief.

