


Day 1

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

*Jesus Teaches Nicodemus*

<sup>1</sup> Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council.

Q1. What is the name of the “Jewish ruling council”?

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**Mark 14:53**

[Before the Sanhedrin] They took Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, elders and teachers of the law came together.

Q2. Did the Pharisees believe in ‘life after death’? Was the Sadducees belief the same?

Pharisees belief  
'Life after death'?  
Sadducees belief  
'Life after death'?

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**Mark 12:18**

Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question.

**Acts 23:8**

(The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, and that there are neither angels nor spirits, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.)

Q3. In a general sense what is “resurrection”?

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**Matthew 22:29-33** [The Message (MSG)] [In this exchange, Jesus is correcting the Sadducees.]

Jesus answered, “You’re off base on two counts: You don’t know what God said, and you don’t know how God works. At the resurrection we’re beyond marriage. As with the angels, all our ecstasies and intimacies then will be with God. And regarding your speculation on whether the dead are raised or not, don’t you read your Bibles? The grammar is clear: God says, ‘I am — not was — the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob.’ The living God defines himself not as the God of dead men, but of the living.”

Hearing this exchange, the crowd was much impressed.

## Lesson 4: John 3:1-21

Q4. What did God want the Jewish religious leaders to do for the people? (Shepherd them? Teach? Demonstrate mercy? Others?)


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Q5. At the time of Christ Jesus, were the Jewish religious leaders doing their job from God's perspective?

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 "The priesthood lived in luxury well beyond that of the average man. They supported their lavish lifestyles with a temple tax which every Jew was required to pay. The temple taxes combined with taxes imposed by Herod and Rome were literally threatening the existence of the Jewish people. The people of the land were carrying a burden they could scarcely bear or tolerate. . .

"The Pharisees had great zeal for God. The average Pharisee fasted two days a week and paid his tithes to the penny. Yet, their zeal for God did not lead them to God but away from God. They examined the Law to the smallest detail, but they entirely missed what the Law was saying. John tells us that Jesus was God's word made manifest. In other words, He was Torah in the flesh. Yet, the Pharisees stood in the presence of the perfect revelation of Torah, and they did not know Him. In fact, they wanted to kill Him. (To be fair, we cannot say this is true of all the Pharisees. In fact, some later became Jesus' followers.)

"The Law was meant to lead people to love God and their neighbor. Most of all it was meant to lead to Jesus. It is ironic that because the Pharisees [through their example represented] none of these things, they were the most impure of all. Jesus said that if the people's righteousness did not exceed that of the Pharisees, they could not enter the Kingdom of God. . .

"The Sadducees were of the wealthy ruling class in Jesus' day. Many of them comprised the priesthood that controlled the temple in Jerusalem and the Jewish legal council called the Sanhedrin. They were in some ways more conservative than the Pharisees. They only recognized the Torah as the inspired word of God. They acknowledged neither the prophets nor the oral traditions that came after the first five books of the Bible. Consequently, they did not believe in the resurrection or any life after death. They were often at odds with the Pharisees over this matter."


[\[https://www.thorncrownjournal.com/blog/religiousleadersintimeofchrist\]](https://www.thorncrownjournal.com/blog/religiousleadersintimeofchrist)

 While the Sadducees "recognized" the first five books of the Bible – the Torah – to the exclusion of all other books (now known as the Old Testament), Jesus used their beloved Torah to disprove their basic belief that there is no resurrection.

? Before we move on, I would like to ask a personal question to be answered privately: In a generic sense are today's church leaders following our Lord Jesus' teachings? Or have they fallen into pharisaical (defined: excessively or hypocritically pious) judgment of the world at-large? (See Matthew 23:18-20, Matthew 22:35-40, and 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 5:12-13a.) And, if you answered 'pharisaical, then how do they ever hope to fulfill Christ Jesus' Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20?

## Lesson 4: John 3:1-21

### Day 2

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

<sup>2</sup> He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."

Q6. Why did Nicodemus come to Jesus at night?

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Q7. Does Jesus appreciate people who seek Him or do you think He was put off because it was bedtime?

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<sup>3</sup> In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

Q8. What is the "Kingdom of God"?

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Q9. What does "born again" mean to you?

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#### **Ezekiel 36:25-26**

<sup>25</sup> I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. <sup>26</sup> I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

Q10. Do you think Nicodemus may have known these verses from Ezekiel?

Yes? Why?


No?

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## Lesson 4: John 3:1-21

### Day 3

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

<sup>4</sup> "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!"

<sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.

Q11. Do you think the phrase "born of water" refers to our physical birth into this world or baptism?

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Q12. What does the phrase "born of ... spirit" mean to you?

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#### **Titus 3:5**

he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,

#### **1 Corinthians 3:16** [English Standard Version (ESV)]

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

<sup>6</sup> Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

Q13. How would you explain "Spirit"?

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Q14. What do you think Jesus meant when He said, "Spirit gives birth to spirit"?

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## Lesson 4: John 3:1-21

**John 16:13-15** [Jesus is speaking to His disciples:]

<sup>13</sup> “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. <sup>14</sup> He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. <sup>15</sup> All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.”

<sup>7</sup> You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'


Q15. What does “born again” mean to you?

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### 1 Peter 1:23-25

<sup>23</sup> For you have been **born again**, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. <sup>24</sup> For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, <sup>25</sup> but the word of the Lord stands forever." [Isaiah 40.6-8] And this is the word that was preached to you.

 The “Word of God” is an important phrase to understand; the following verses from John (introduction), Hebrews (action), and Revelation (culmination) build upon each other with increasing clarity so that all ambiguity is removed.

### John 1:1-2, 14, &17

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was with God in the beginning. <sup>14</sup> The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. <sup>17</sup> For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

### Hebrews 4:12


For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints, and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

### Revelation 19:11a, 13b, 15a

<sup>11a</sup> [John] saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. <sup>13b</sup> His name is the Word of God. <sup>15a</sup> Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations.

## Lesson 4: John 3:1-21

### Day 4

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

<sup>8</sup> 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."

Q16. Does the Holy Spirit come alongside someone? Or does He indwell a person? Or what?

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#### **1 Corinthians 3:16** [English Standard Version (ESV)]

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

Q17. If I do enough good deeds or tithed my income, will I be indwelt by the Holy Spirit?

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Q18. Does God grade 'on a point system'? Or 'on a curve'?

Yes? Why?  
No?

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Q19. If I am a better person than my 'pretty good' neighbor, will I get into Heaven?

Yes? Why?  
No?

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Q20. If God grades on a pass/fail system, how do we 'pass'?

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#### **Romans 10:8-11**

<sup>8</sup> But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: <sup>9</sup> That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. <sup>11</sup> As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

#### **Acts 2:38**

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

## Lesson 4: John 3:1-21

### Romans 8:16

The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

### 1 Corinthians 2:10-12

<sup>10</sup> but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. <sup>11</sup> For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup> We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.

### Ephesians 1:13-14

<sup>13</sup> And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, <sup>14</sup> who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession — to the praise of his glory.

<sup>9</sup> "How can this be?" Nicodemus asked.

<sup>10</sup> "You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things?"

Q21. Did Jewish religious leaders know the Bible?

Yes? Why?

No?

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Q22. What did Nicodemus fail to understand?

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## Lesson 4: John 3:1-21

### Day 5

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

<sup>11</sup> I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony.

Q23. Is the concept of “testimony” important?

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Q24. When Jesus talks about “we speak . . . we testify,” what does He want Nicodemus to understand?

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Q25. To what “you people” was Jesus referring?

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#### **Deuteronomy 17:6**

On the testimony of two or three witnesses a man shall be put to death, but no one shall be put to death on the testimony of only one witness.

#### **Deuteronomy 19:15** [Witnesses ]

One witness is not enough to convict a man accused of any crime or offense he may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

<sup>12</sup> I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?

Q26. What was Jesus emphasizing, when He made the contrast between “earthly... and... heavenly things”?

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## Lesson 4: John 3:1-21

<sup>13</sup> No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven — the Son of Man.

Q27. What did Jesus mean by this statement?

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### Philippians 2:5-8

<sup>5</sup> Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: <sup>6</sup> Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross!

<sup>14</sup> Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.

### Numbers 21:4-9 [Moses and the Jewish exiles escaping from Egypt]

<sup>4</sup> They traveled from Mount Hor along the route to the Red Sea, to go around Edom. But the people grew impatient on the way; <sup>5</sup> they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the desert? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!"

<sup>6</sup> Then the LORD sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died.

<sup>7</sup> The people came to Moses and said, "We sinned when we spoke against the LORD and against you. Pray that the LORD will take the snakes away from us."


So, Moses prayed for the people.

<sup>8</sup> The LORD said to Moses, "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live."

<sup>9</sup> So, Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived.

## Lesson 4: John 3:1-21

### Day 6

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

<sup>16</sup> "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. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. <sup>18</sup> Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

Q28. Frequently, you can spot placards that display "John 3:16". Is it enough for people to read John 3:16, or do verses 17 & 18 provide additional meaning?

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<sup>19</sup> This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

Q29. Who (or what) is the "Light"?

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Q30. What is meant by the phrase "men loved darkness instead of light"?

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<sup>20</sup> Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. <sup>21</sup> But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."

Q31. Do you know of anyone who might resist the call of God because s/he is afraid their "deeds will be exposed"? If yes, have you gotten any helps from this study to help you minister to that soul?

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## ***Lesson 4: John 3:1-21***

Q32. Is it important “that what he has done has been done through God”? Why?

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