

Jesus and Nicodemus

John 2:23-25, 3:1-21



Jesus reveals the nature of the Kingdom of God to Nicodemus.



The Story

What do you think a kingdom is?
What would it be like to live in a palace?

Well, people in Jesus' time thought that Jesus had come to live in a palace and have a kingdom on earth. But Jesus came for a different reason and His kingdom was not in any place we could visit or see. In our story today, Jesus shows Nicodemus what the Kingdom of God is really like.

Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration. Many saw the miracles He did and believed in Him. There was a Pharisee in Jerusalem named Nicodemus. He went to see Jesus at night. Nicodemus was afraid to be seen with Jesus because most of the Pharisees did not like Jesus. Nicodemus said to Jesus, "We know You are a teacher who has come from God. No one can do these miracles You do unless God is with him."

Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Nicodemus did not understand what Jesus meant. He asked, "How can anyone be born when he is old? He cannot go back into his mother's womb and be born a second time can he?"

Nicodemus was right when he said he couldn't be born again from his mother. But Jesus wasn't talking about that kind of birth. He told Nicodemus, "No one can enter the kingdom of God

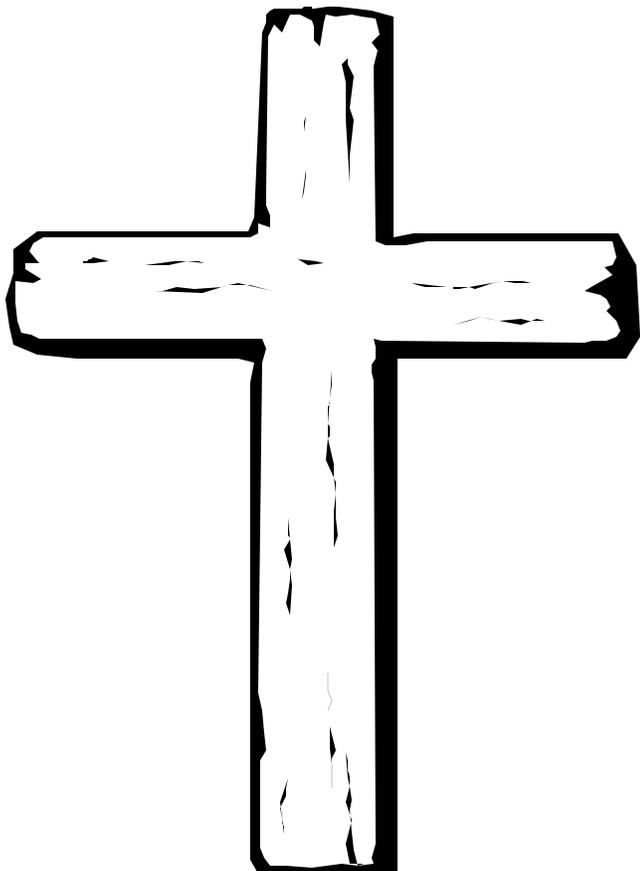
unless he is born again of water and the Spirit." Jesus was talking about baptism when he said "born of water and the Spirit."

We are "reborn" or born again as God's child when we are baptized. Through baptism, God the Holy Spirit, uses God's Word to make people into believers. When we believe that Jesus died to take away our sins, we are "born again." This is Jesus' kingdom. He lives and rules in our hearts by the power of His Word.

Nicodemus still did not understand what Jesus was trying to teach him. Jesus reminded Nicodemus how God told Moses to raise a bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness. When the people who were bitten by the poisonous snakes looked at the bronze snake, God promised they would not die. The people looked to the snake and were saved from dying.

In the same way, Jesus was going to be put up on the cross so that He could die to pay for the sins of the world. *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."* (John 3:16) Everyone who looks to Jesus and believes He is the Son of God Who died for the sins of the world will be saved from the poison of sin. We may die on earth, but through faith in Jesus we will not die forever in hell. All who believe in Him will live with Him forever in Heaven!

Activity One - Color and cut out the pictures and doorknob hanger below. First glue the cross to the hanger and then glue the world on top of the cross.

A large dashed-line box containing a circular cutout at the top and a Bible verse at the bottom. The circular cutout is intended for a doorknob. The Bible verse is John 3:16.

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Activity Two - Answer these questions about the lesson.

1. Who came to see Jesus?
2. Why did he come at night?
3. Why did Nicodemus believe that Jesus was sent by God?
4. What did Jesus tell Nicodemus had to happen for someone to believe?
5. What did Nicodemus think Jesus meant?
6. Was he right?
7. What do we call it when someone is "born again of water and the Spirit"?
8. Where is Jesus's kingdom?
9. What happens through baptism? (See sentence below)

Jesus made me a part of His Kingdom by baptism and the Spirit.

Passage

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Hymn - TLH #245 v. 1

God loved the world so that He gave
His only Son the lost to save
That all who would in Him believe
Should everlasting life receive.

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,
Thank You for sending us Your Son to die upon the cross to pay for our sins, so that through baptism we are made members of Your kingdom by the Holy Spirit. Help us daily and bless us in our study of Your Word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.