



**Growth Group Questions**  
**April 14, 2024**  
**“You Can Be Born Again”**

**Context:**

Nicodemus was a Pharisee (teacher of the Law) and also a part of the Sanhedrin, which served as the highest court in Israel. He had heard the teaching of Jesus and was very intrigued by what Jesus was saying and how he was saying it. He comes at night to learn more about Jesus as a teacher. Jesus wants Nicodemus to learn about him as the savior of the world.

Jesus wants Nicodemus to “see” something he has not seen before. Though Nicodemus was well educated, he did not fully understand what God was doing. This is the first of several in-depth conversations that Jesus has with people in the gospel of John.

The Judaism of Jesus day focused a lot on being born into the “right” family which meant that you needed to be descended from Abraham. You see this in the parable that Jesus tells of Lazarus and the rich man in Luke 16. When the rich man ends up in Hades and Lazarus is with Abraham far from Hades, the rich man calls out to Father Abraham to send Lazarus to dip his finger into the pool and cool his tongue. Being a child of Abraham was an important part of the Jewish faith.

Jesus is saying God is starting a new family in which “ordinary” birth isn’t enough. You need to be born all over again, born ‘from above’. You need to be born of water and the Spirit which is talked about in Ezekiel 36. Your genealogical lineage, your social and cultural standing no longer matters. God is doing something new and bringing all people into his family.

At the end of the conversation Nicodemus simply wonders, “how?” Yet we know the story with Nicodemus is not over. We will see him again in John 7:45-52, when he sticks up for Jesus as the religious leaders are speaking against him and seeking to arrest him. Finally, in John 19:38-40, Nicodemus joins Joseph of Arimethea to properly prepare Jesus’ body for burial.



## **Scripture:**

### **John 3:1-9**

<sup>3</sup> Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. <sup>2</sup> 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.” <sup>3</sup> Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.<sup>[a]</sup>” <sup>4</sup> “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!” <sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit<sup>[b]</sup> gives birth to spirit. <sup>7</sup> You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You<sup>[c]</sup> must be born again.’ <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.”<sup>[d]</sup> <sup>9</sup> “How can this be?” Nicodemus asked.

### **Ezekiel 36:24-27**

<sup>24</sup> “For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. <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. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

### **John 1:9-13**

<sup>9</sup> The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup> He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. <sup>12</sup> Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— <sup>13</sup> children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.

### **John 7:50-52**

<sup>50</sup> Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked, <sup>51</sup> “Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?”<sup>52</sup> They replied, “Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee.”

### **John 19:38-40**

<sup>38</sup> Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate’s permission, he came and took the body away. <sup>39</sup> He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>40</sup> Taking Jesus’ body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs.



## Questions:

1. What is a narrative? What kind of narratives does the world tell us? What kind of narratives do we tell ourselves?
2. Why are the narratives we hear from others and the ones we tell ourselves so important?
3. Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be “born again” if he was to see the kingdom of God (John 3:3). What does it mean to be “born again”?
4. How does being born again change your personal narrative?
5. In John 3:5, Jesus tells Nicodemus: “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit.” Restate this verse in your own words.
6. In Ezekiel 36:36, we read: “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.” What does it mean that we will receive a new heart?
7. In John 1:12, we are told that “. . .to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God . . .” What does it mean to “become a child of God”? How does that change the narrative of your life?
8. Pastor Paul told us that our personal narrative changes over time. How has your narrative changed since you accepted Christ as Lord and Savior?
9. Pastor Paul also said that God’s narrative overrides the narratives of this world. What does that statement mean to you? Why is this significant?

