

## Food for thought from the Gospel of John

### # 3 – 1 A Meeting at Night

#### John 2:23 – 3:2

We ended our study in chapter two with the thought that Jesus “... *Knew all **men** (people)... had no need that anyone should testify of **man**, for He knew what was in **man**.*” (John 2:24-25) Chapter three opens with the words, “There was a **man** of the Pharisees...” So, we are really continuing the thought of the previous message. Man is sinful, fickle, sometimes curious, and almost always inconsistent. Therefore being “popular” with man is “unpopular with Jesus.

In Chapter three we are introduced to a high-ranking man named Nicodemus. **Read John 3:1.** He came to Jesus by night. Every time Nicodemus is mentioned (3 X) he is always described as the one who came to Jesus by night. It has been observed that the Greek wording implies that Nicodemus is a “night-time comer.” So, Nicodemus was not coming out publicly, from among the Pharisees, and identifying as a follower of Jesus. He was more secretly exploring the idea that Jesus is special – that Jesus has been sent by God. This seemed evident to Nicodemus by the miracles which Jesus performed. Nicodemus wanted to warm-up to Jesus. But Jesus did not wait for the warm-up. He got right to the point.

#### John 3:3-7

Trying to be a good religious person is insufficient for acceptance with God. Believing that Jesus was a good person – even a prophet and healer – is not enough. In order to truly “see” the kingdom of God you must be born again (“see” = “comprehend with the mind”).

The phrase “born again” means another kind of birth – a birth that is heavenly / spiritual. Pharisees and members of the Sanhedrin had many different rites of passage that they attained in order to become leaders and teachers in Israel. So, the thought of a second birth made Nicodemus think that Jesus was asking Him to start all over – an overwhelming thought. Therefore, Nicodemus facetiously asks if he needed to go back into his mother’s womb and begin his life anew. Salvation is not just trying to start over. Unless we are changed by God’s grace, we would just mess things up again. Salvation is dying to self and gaining a new life and power from God’s Spirit living inside of us. We also need a perfect righteousness to be obtained from the one-and-only sacrifice made for guilty sinners (John 1:29; 3:14-18). See Paul’s confession in Philippians 3:1-10.

## **Here are five things Jesus said about being “*born again*:” (John 3:3-8)**

**You cannot comprehend the kingdom of God without the new birth (John 3:3).** It is spiritual in nature.

**To be born again is to be born of “water and the Spirit” (John 3:5).** This is not two separate actions. This is one action involving two important components. (Hint: Jesus is not talking about baptism)

**There are essentially only two kinds of people (John 3:6).**

- **Those who are only born one time – Physically.**
- **Those who have been born twice – first physically, then, at some later point in life, spiritually.**

**Though it is marvelous / amazing, a careful examination of Scripture and of human nature will show you that the new birth is essential for having a saving relationship with God (John 3:7).** This necessity should come as no surprise.

**The new birth is a mysterious work of the Holy Spirit (John 3:8).** It is compared to the movement of the wind: