

Last week we talked about One of the greatest lies that Satan has foisted on the human race is that religion can save you.

Those who are into religion deceive themselves by thinking that their outward rituals and rules will impress God, while at the same time they dodge dealing with the sin that is in their hearts.

Religion cannot save you because to enter God's eternal kingdom you need the new birth by the Holy Spirit. [John 3:1-7](#)

John begins by telling us that Nicodemus was a Pharisee and adds that he was a ruler of the Jews. This means that he belonged to the Sanhedrin, the ruling council in Jerusalem. Nicodemus was apparently a leading Pharisee because Jesus calls him "the teacher of Israel" ([3:10](#)).

John reports that Nicodemus came to Jesus by night. There have been many speculations about why he did this. Perhaps the most likely is that he was afraid of what the other members of the council would think of him. He seems to have been a rather timid man ([John 7:50-52; 19:39](#)).

Some suggest that since most of John's references to "night" have a spiritual symbolism, he may be hinting at Nicodemus' spiritual condition. Although he was a religious leader, he was in spiritual darkness.

The important thing with the Lord is what is in our hearts. He sees and judges "the thoughts and intentions of our hearts" [John 2:23-25](#), [Heb. 4:12-13](#)

To be reconciled to God, you must be reborn from above.

Three times in this interview Jesus uses the phrase, "Truly, truly." [John 3:3, 5, 11](#)

The point that Jesus wanted to hammer home to Nicodemus was, "You don't need further instruction in religion. You need to be born again! You need to see yourself as a sinner who needs more than moral or religious improvement. [Matthew 5:1](#)

As Jesus will go on to say, in effect, "You need to see Me as more than a religious teacher. You need to see Me as your Savior [John 3:14-16](#), [1 Corinthians. 2:14](#)

The idea is that just as we were born physically, so we need to be born spiritually. Such a birth requires the power of God.

Jesus shows him that being a Jew, even a religious Jew, is not enough. He needed a new birth as a spiritual child of God [John 1:12-13](#).

The problem is, those who are in the flesh are by nature hostile toward God and not able to subject themselves to God. [Romans. 8:6-8](#)

Thus all the religion in the world cannot resolve our basic problem of being alienated from God, because religion is based on human works that stem from the flesh and feed our pride. To be subject to the King, we need the new birth that gives us a new nature that delights in obedience to [Psalm 1;1-2, 27;4, 37;4](#)

Spiritual rebirth requires cleansing from sin and new life through the power of the Holy Spirit. [John 3:5-7](#):

There have been many interpretations, but what most scholars believe is [Ezekiel 36:25-27](#):

Jesus when He ratified the New Covenant with His blood and sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in all that believe in Him.

Although Nicodemus had been born as a Jew and that he was not just an average Jew, but a Pharisee. But Jesus yanked the rug out from under his feet and said, in effect:

“Your natural birth, your religious devotion, and your religious studies mean absolutely nothing. You must be born again!”

Nicodemus had studied the Old Testament and yet he didn't get what Jesus was saying because he was not born again. Most scholars agree that by the time of Jesus' crucifixion, Nicodemus had come to faith, as evidenced in his courage in helping with the burial of Jesus [John 19:38-42](#)