

Meet Nicodemus: The Night-time Seeker

Nicodemus was a very important, highly educated man who lived during the time of Jesus. He was a Pharisee, which means he was a strict Jewish religious leader, and a member of the Sanhedrin (the Jewish high court). While many religious leaders disliked Jesus, Nicodemus wanted to know the truth. His story unfolds in three major steps in the Gospel of John.

The Late-Night Secret Meeting (John 3)

Nicodemus first appears when he sneaks out in the dark to talk to Jesus. Because he was a prominent leader, he was likely afraid of what his colleagues would think.

During this conversation, Jesus tells him something that completely confuses him: "You must be born again."

- The Confusion: Nicodemus takes this literally and asks how a grown man can possibly be born a second time!
- The Explanation: Jesus explains he is talking about a spiritual rebirth—cleansing your heart and starting a fresh life with God.
- The Famous Verse: It is actually during this exact conversation with Nicodemus that Jesus says the most famous verse in the entire Bible: John 3:16 ("For God so loved the world...").

Standing Up in Court (John 7)

The next time we see Nicodemus, he is showing a lot more courage. The other religious leaders are furious and want to arrest Jesus without a trial.

Nicodemus stands up in front of the whole court and defends Jesus. He reminds them of the law, saying they cannot condemn a man without listening to him first. He didn't fully declare he was a follower yet, but he bravely stopped an unfair plot.

The Public Honor at the Tomb (John 19)

The final time Nicodemus appears is right after Jesus dies on the cross. He is no longer hiding in the shadows.

Nicodemus pairs up with another secret follower named Joseph of Arimathea. Together, they publicly take care of Jesus' body. Nicodemus brings a massive, expensive amount of burial spices (myrrh and aloes) to honor Jesus, showing everyone that he was a true believer.

Fun Facts About Nicodemus!

- His Name Means Victory: The name Nicodemus comes from Greek and means "victory of the people."
- He Brought a King-Sized Gift: The burial spices Nicodemus brought weighed about 75 pounds! That is roughly the weight of a large dog or an average 5th grader. It was an incredibly expensive gift fit for a king.
- He is Only in One Gospel: Out of the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), Nicodemus is only mentioned in the Gospel of John.
- He Upgraded from Shadows to Sunshine: Nicodemus' life is a great example of spiritual growth. He started out fearful in the dark, moved to speaking up in the middle, and finished standing proudly in the light.

Fill in the Blanks!

- Nicodemus held a powerful job as a religious leader called a _____.
- Because he was nervous about what people would think, Nicodemus first visited Jesus at _____.
- Jesus told Nicodemus that a person must be _____ again to see the Kingdom of God.
- Nicodemus brought about _____ pounds of spices to bury Jesus.