



## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: LESSON 4 *"COME AND SEE"*

This week we are privileged to study one of the greatest chapters in the New Testament. This chapter is said to record the world's greatest tragedy, the world's greatest truth, and the world's greatest text. John introduces us to the term "born again." Although this phrase has been abused and distorted over the years, the term is packed with powerful spiritual meaning. The world ridicules those "born-again," seeing them as narrow-minded Jesus freaks. I like what Ray Stedman has to say about those words: "I love the words "born again" because of what those words have meant in my own life and experience. It is a beautiful word picture that was coined by Jesus Himself to describe a radical spiritual transformation that has taken place in my own life and in the lives of every person who has truly committed his or her total self to the Lordship of Jesus Christ." Amen to that!

I pray that this chapter gives you a deeper understanding of what happens in a life that is regenerated and transformed by having faith in Jesus Christ. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new."  
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

### First Day

1. Read John 3:1-21. Observe and list the facts you find. (Who was Nicodemus? What did he say? Why did he say it?)



## Second Day

**Study your memory verse. Do you believe in Him?**

1. Read John 3:1-21 again. Describe Nicodemus' attitude as he came to Jesus. (Respectful? Rude? Cocky?) What did he call Jesus?

Nicodemus was a Pharisee. The name most likely came from a Hebrew word meaning "to separate." The Pharisees were a tight-knit group of religious leaders that stood together in their self-righteous smugness. They were very zealous for ritual and religious purity according to both the Mosaic Law and their own traditions. Each Pharisee had taken a solemn vow that he would devote every moment of his entire life to obeying the Ten Commandments as a way of pleasing God. They were rigid, legalistic, and usually ridiculous in their interpretation of the law and what pleased the Lord. They believed that their acceptance from God depended on their adherence to an unending list of rules and regulations. They were extremely "religious," trying to reach God on their own works and efforts. They were dedicated to preserving, interpreting, and defending Jewish Law, which they forced on the people of Israel.

Nicodemus was also a part of the Sanhedrin, which was a group of 70 elders that were the main ruling body of Jews, similar to our supreme court. I'm sure the Pharisees were quite interested in this man Jesus. When Jesus cleared the Temple, I'm sure He offended the Sadducees, which were the group of priests that controlled the Temple. The Pharisees and the Sadducees didn't get along very well, so Jesus' act may have warmed the hearts of the Pharisees. They were obviously talking about it (vs 2).  
Hmmm... who is this man?

We know that Nicodemus was a ruler. The word "ruler" is used in rabbinic literature for "a great man" or "prince." Tradition tells us that Nicodemus was one of the three richest men in Jerusalem. In verse 10, Jesus calls him "the teacher."

2. How does Jesus answer his unspoken question in verse 3?



- (4) Some believe this is an allusion to Old Testament imagery and the need for cleansing and purification.

(It is interesting to note that Christ never taught that baptism was essential for salvation, rather, an act of obedience once we are saved.)

The Holy Spirit is like the wind; you can't see it but you know it's there. The Spirit cannot be controlled or understood, but His effects can be seen.

6. Why do you think repentance is such a vital part of the new birth? Why is admitting you are a sinner so important?
7. What steps led to your new birth? Were you similar to Nicodemus?
8. Why are "religious" people often difficult to lead to Christ?
9. Many people think they can get to Heaven on their own merit. What does John 3 have to say about that?
10. The Pharisees thought their good works could earn God's acceptance. Many are saved, yet still try to "earn His favor" by doing good works. Does that describe you? (Read Romans 6:23 and Ephesians 2:8-10.)

**See you tomorrow!**

### Third Day

**Study your memory verse.**

1. Read John 3:1-21 again. Explain Jesus' mild rebuke in verses 11-12.

Jesus speaks of His Incarnation in verse 13. He calls Himself the "Son of Man," which seems to be His favorite way of referring to Himself. Jesus Himself is a witness to the truth of God.

Now Jesus uses an illustration from the Old Testament that was probably very familiar to Nicodemus.

2. Jesus refers to an Old Testament story to help explain His point in verse 14. Read Numbers 21:4-9. Compare looking at the bronze image with believing in Jesus. How is it similar?

3. The emphasis in verses 14-21 is believing. Either you do or you don't. There is no middle ground. What are the blessings of believing? The results of unbelief?

Salvation comes through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9). The Israelites, in Numbers 21, only had to look with faith at the remedy God provided. They didn't have to fight, or figure out another way to be healed, only to look to God in faith. That's still the answer today. Look to Him in faith.

4. Read John 3:16 with Romans 8:32. How did the Father "give" us His Son? How did He do it twice? What does this tell us about God the Father?









9. What does John call himself in verse 29? Who should be the main focus at a wedding?
  
10. How do we, as believers, sometimes try to steal the show? Give some examples. Ask the Lord to show you if you are guilty of this in any way.

John was like the best man of our day. In those days, the groom's friend would not only arrange details of the wedding, but guard the bridal chamber. The only one he would let enter would be the bride, who came to join the groom. After the union was consummated, the groom came out and announced the fact with a shout. Upon hearing the groom's voice, the friend of the bridegroom would be happy and relieved. His job was done, and he could step out of the way. (Charles Swindoll, Exalting Christ, the Son of God.)

Tomorrow we will continue looking at John's humble attitude. I pray that we will follow his example of stepping back and allowing Jesus to be center stage.

### Fifth Day

**Write your verse from memory. How did it impact your life?**

1. Read John 3:22-36 again. Write John's statement in verse 30. What does it practically mean?

2. How can you, personally, become less? In what way can you decrease?
  
3. How can you make Jesus "increase" in your life?
  
4. Is there any area that you struggle with trying to control? How does the example of John the Baptist speak to your heart?
  
5. John's disciples were jealous, there's no way around it. **Are you struggling with being jealous of anyone?** Maybe it's a family member. Maybe it's a person at church that has the spiritual gifts you desire. Maybe it's a co-worker that got a raise. **How is verse 30 the answer to this sin?**
  
6. James Denney, the Scottish theologian, once said, "You can never at the same time convince people that you are a great preacher and that Jesus is a great Savior." **What did he mean by that?**

7. In verses 31-36, John declares whom he believes Jesus to be. Summarize his words.

John ends with a bang in verse 36. This is the only place that John uses the word "wrath." "This phrase is used as an expression of the righteous judgement of God (Romans 1:18). It is used especially of the coming wrath of God soon to be poured out on a Christ-rejecting, God-hating, sin-loving world." (1 Thessalonians 2:16; Revelation 11:18, 16:19, 19:15) John Phillips, Exploring the Gospels.

We choose this wrath ourselves when we reject Jesus Christ. God has made it possible for us to escape the wrath and have life in His Son.

8. John uses the word "must" three times in this chapter: 3:7, 14, and 30. Why is each significant?

9. Write a prayer to the Lord, thanking Him for sending His Son to die for you so that you might have everlasting, eternal life. Thank Him for making you a new creature in Christ.

**Meditate on this thought:  
John found joy in his Master's voice (vs 29).**



