**MC900300900[1]St. Joseph Missionary Baptist Church**

**Wed Night Bible Study**

**JOHN 3:1-8**

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**MIDNIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH NICODEMUS**

***John 3:1-8 (NLT)   
1  There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee.   
2  After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. “Rabbi,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you.”   
3  Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.”   
4  “What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?”   
5  Jesus replied, “I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit.   
6  Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life.   
7  So don’t be surprised when I say, ‘You must be born again.’   
8  The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can’t tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can’t explain how people are born of the Spirit.”***

[**3:1**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+3%3A1)**. Nicodemus** was a teacher ([v. 10](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+3%3A10)), a Pharisee, and **a member of** the Sanhedrin, **the Jewish ruling council.** The Sanhedrin had 70 members who were responsible for religious decisions and also, under the Romans, for civil rule.

[**3:2**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+3%3A2)**.** Why did Nicodemus go **to Jesus at night?** Because of fear? John did not say why. Nicodemus began, **Rabbi, we know You are a Teacher who has come from God.** Nicodemus wanted to talk to Him as one Rabbi to another.

[**3:3**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+3%3A3)**.** But **Jesus** was not on the same level with Nicodemus. He is "from above" (*anōthen*; [v. 31](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+3%3A31)); therefore Nicodemus must be born "from above" ([v. 3](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+3%3A3); *anōthen*). To be **born again** or born "from above" is to have a spiritual transformation which takes a person out of the kingdom of darkness into **the kingdom of God** (cf. [Col. 1:13](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Col+1%3A13)). [**3:4**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+3%3A4)**. Nicodemus** was certain Jesus did not mean something ridiculous (such as a reincarnation or a **second** physical birth), but yet he did not grasp the nature of regeneration.

[**3:5**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+3%3A5)**.** ***---SIX REFERENCE VIEWS TO WATER IN “REBIRTH”)---***…being **born of water and the Spirit:** **(1)** The "water" refers to the natural birth, and the "Spirit" to the birth from above (from God). **(2)** The "water" refers to the Word of God ([Eph. 5:26](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Eph+5%3A26)). **(3)** The "water" refers to baptism as an essential part of regeneration. (This view contradicts other Bible verses that make it clear that salvation is by faith alone; e.g., [John 3:16](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+3%3A16), [36](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+3%3A36); [Eph. 2:8-9](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Eph+2%3A8-9); [Titus 3:5](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Tit+3%3A5).) **(4)** The "water" is a symbol of the Holy Spirit ([John 7:37-39](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+7%3A37-39)). **(5)** The "water" refers to the repentance ministry of John the Baptist, and the "Spirit" refers to the application by the Holy Spirit of Christ to an individual. **(6)** The fifth view was "Water" would remind Nicodemus of the Baptist's emphasis. So Jesus was saying that Nicodemus, in order to **enter the kingdom,** you needed to turn to Jesus (repent) in order to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

[**3:6-7**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+3%3A6-7)**.** There are two distinct realms: one is of fallen man (the **flesh**) and the other is of God (**the Spirit**). A fallen person cannot regenerate himself; he needs a divine operation. Only God's Holy Spirit can regenerate a human spirit.

People should not stumble at or reject the importance of Jesus' words. They **must be born** from above.

[**3:8**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+3%3A8)**.** This verse contains a wordplay which cannot be adequately expressed in English. The Greek word *pneuma* means both wind and Spirit. The work of **the Spirit** (*pneuma*) is invisible and mysterious like the blowing of **the wind** (*pneuma*). Man controls neither one.