



STORY

Jesus and Nicodemus - John 3

7/17/03

TEACHER PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I thank you the privilege of coming to Jesus, Who is a teacher come from God. I thank you for the opportunity to learn more about Jesus so that I can better teach these children entrusted to my care. I pray that the Holy Spirit would work mightily to create and sustain the faith of these children. I thank you for the gift of baptism which is truly a washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit. Amen.

VOCABULARY

Sanhedrin - the seventy elders, religious and political leaders of the Jews

Kingdom of God - God's rule in our hearts through the Gospel

born again - being made a child of God by the Holy Spirit; it does not mean accepting Jesus as one's Savior

regenerate - to be born again or to renew

OUTER AIM

Jesus Reveals the Nature of the Kingdom of God

INNER AIM

Jesus Has Made Me a Part of His Kingdom By Water and the Spirit

BACKGROUND

This event takes place at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. John tells us that Jesus had turned the water into wine at Cana of Galilee and manifested His divine glory. Jesus and His followers went to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, the remembrance of God's great salvation act of the Old Testament. John's Gospel account centers around the three Passovers that Jesus celebrated in Jerusalem, the last one culminating in His death. Jerusalem was not only the political capitol of Israel, it was also the religious center. Here was Herod's temple and its additions to the temple built after Solomon's temple was destroyed. Jesus got the attention of the people and the religious establishment when he drove the money-changers out of His Father's house (John 2:13-22). The hopes and fears of many years began to stir as the Jews looked for that Messiah who would drive out the hated Romans and restore the kingdom to Israel. Jerusalem was filled with the news of this strange person, Jesus. "And many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did" (John 2:23). The actions and activities of Jesus attracted the attention of a leader of the Jews, Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin.

STUDENT PRAYER

Dear Jesus, come to us as You came to Nicodemus and reveal Yourself to us as the Promised Messiah. Thank You for having made us God's children by baptism and the power of the Holy Spirit. May we learn that God so loved us that we should not perish but have everlasting life. Be with us this day and bless us in our study of Your Word. Amen.

PRESENTATION

Nicodemus, a Pharisee and ruler of Jews, came to Jesus by night. Jesus had already ruffled the feathers of the religious establishment by driving the money-changers out of the temple. This action struck the pocketbooks of those elders who had a share of the profits. It also exposed their greed and hypocrisy to the people. So Nicodemus came to Jesus secretly, at night so that he would not be identified with this strange teacher and His doctrine. Nicodemus recognized that Jesus was a rabbi, that is a teacher. From the signs Jesus performed, Nicodemus even recognized that Jesus was a teacher from God. However, Nicodemus did not understand who Jesus was or why He had come into the world.

Jesus took Nicodemus right to the heart of the matter by speaking to him about the Kingdom of God. What a difference in how this concept was understood! Nicodemus immediately thought in terms of an earthly kingdom that would be ushered in by the Messiah. Jesus was speaking about God's rule within you, a spiritual rule by the Gospel. To this end, Jesus sought to instruct Nicodemus. He stated that unless a person was born again, he could not see the kingdom of God. This made no sense to Nicodemus. With his concept of an earthly kingdom, he could not understand how a person could be born again and enter into God's kingdom. His first thought was that Jesus was somehow talking about a new physical birth—a fresh start.

Jesus was speaking of a *spiritual* kingdom and entrance being only through the Holy Spirit. It is still true that what is born of the flesh is and remains sinful flesh, while that which is born of the Spirit is spiritual. You must be born of water and the Spirit to gain entrance into the Kingdom of God. Jesus here refers to the water of baptism and the regenerative power of the Holy Spirit. It is sad that in modern decision theology, being born again means that you have accepted Jesus as your Savior and dedicate your life to Him. The emphasis in Jesus' words to Nicodemus is the change God works in sinners through water and the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is like the wind in that it works when and how it wants. All we see are the results of the Spirit's activities.

Jesus goes on to proclaim the Gospel to Nicodemus by taking him back to the brass snake in the wilderness during Israel's forty-year journey to the Promised Land. Jesus would be put upon a pole (the cross), and whoever looked to Him in faith would be saved from eternal death. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

We hear no more of Nicodemus until the crucifixion of Jesus. John points out that Nicodemus stood under the cross and understood what Jesus was talking about that first secretive night. While Jesus' own disciples fled lest they be identified with Him, Nicodemus stepped forward and claimed the body of Jesus for burial. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea confessed their faith before the world. Nicodemus was born again.

APPLICATION

Jesus answers our questions with loving patience and leads us to learn more about the Kingdom of God as He led Nicodemus.

The Kingdom of God is not an earthly kingdom. Rather, it is His gracious rule in our hearts because of Jesus' love.

The Holy Spirit leads us to believe in Jesus. Luther's explanation of the third article confesses, "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him, but the Holy Spirit has

called me by the Gospel.” Faith is a direct work of the Holy Spirit. This fact is a direct contradiction held by many today who emphasize that each individual must decide to accept Jesus as his Savior.

The Holy Spirit works through the means of grace, that is, the Gospel in Word and sacraments. Where the Word is preached and the sacraments are administered, the Holy Spirit creates the Church.

Jesus emphasizes the power of baptism by speaking of the “new birth” as coming by means of water and the Spirit.

Nicodemus was later led at time of Jesus’ death to confess his faith and put his life on the line by claiming Jesus’ body for burial.

PASSAGES

These passages can be assigned as memory work or simply discussed in class as to how they fit the lesson.

(John 3:5) Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

(John 3:16) "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

(Titus 3:4-7) But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, {5} not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, {6} whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, {7} that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

HYMN CHOICES

God Loved the World So That He Gave - TLH #245

Come, Holy Spirit, Come - TLH #225:1,4,5

Holy Spirit, Hear Us - TLH #229:7

Let the Children Come to Me - Worship Supplement #753

Jesus and Nicodemus

John 2:23-25, 3:1-21



Jesus reveals the nature of the Kingdom of God to Nicodemus.



The Story

What do you think a kingdom is?
What would it be like to live in a palace?

Well, people in Jesus' time thought that Jesus had come to live in a palace and have a kingdom on earth. But Jesus came for a different reason and His kingdom was not in any place we could visit or see. In our story today, Jesus shows Nicodemus what the Kingdom of God is really like.

Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration. Many saw the miracles He did and believed in Him. There was a Pharisee in Jerusalem named Nicodemus. He went to see Jesus at night. Nicodemus was afraid to be seen with Jesus because most of the Pharisees did not like Jesus. Nicodemus said to Jesus, "We know You are a teacher who has come from God. No one can do these miracles You do unless God is with him."

Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Nicodemus did not understand what Jesus meant. He asked, "How can anyone be born when he is old? He cannot go back into his mother's womb and be born a second time can he?"

Nicodemus was right when he said he couldn't be born again from his mother. But Jesus wasn't talking about that kind of birth. He told Nicodemus, "No one can enter the kingdom of God

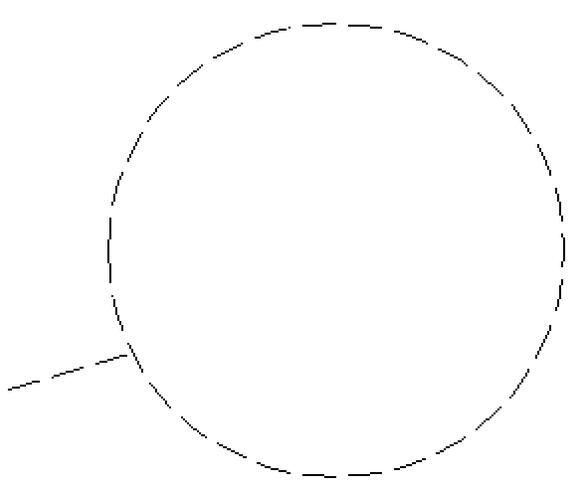
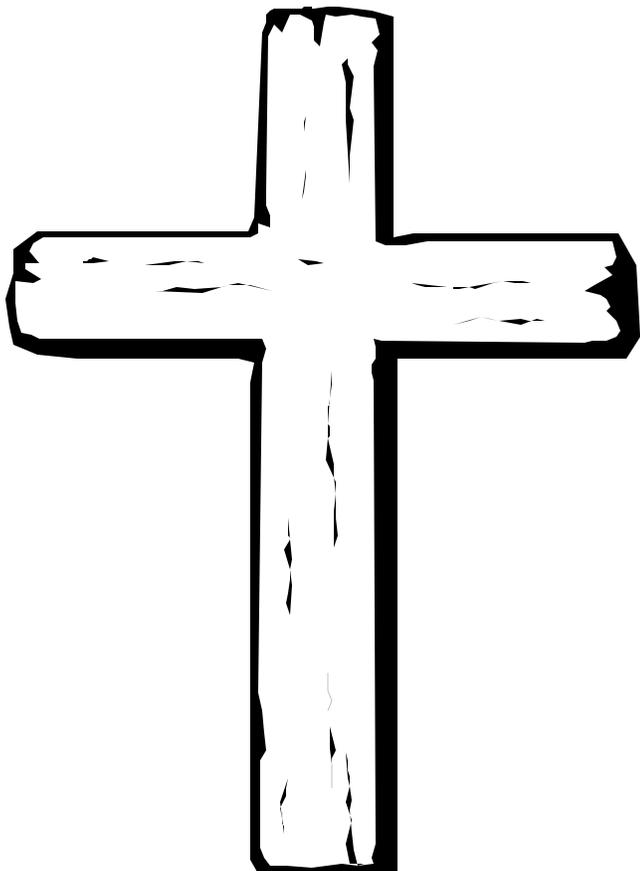
unless he is born again of water and the Spirit." Jesus was talking about baptism when he said "born of water and the Spirit."

We are "reborn" or born again as God's child when we are baptized. Through baptism, God the Holy Spirit, uses God's Word to make people into believers. When we believe that Jesus died to take away our sins, we are "born again." This is Jesus' kingdom. He lives and rules in our hearts by the power of His Word.

Nicodemus still did not understand what Jesus was trying to teach him. Jesus reminded Nicodemus how God told Moses to raise a bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness. When the people who were bitten by the poisonous snakes looked at the bronze snake, God promised they would not die. The people looked to the snake and were saved from dying.

In the same way, Jesus was going to be put up on the cross so that He could die to pay for the sins of the world. *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."* (John 3:16) Everyone who looks to Jesus and believes He is the Son of God Who died for the sins of the world will be saved from the poison of sin. We may die on earth, but through faith in Jesus we will not die forever in hell. All who believe in Him will live with Him forever in Heaven!

Activity One - Color and cut out the pictures and doorknob hanger below. First glue the cross to the hanger and then glue the world on top of the cross.



John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Activity Two - Answer these questions about the lesson.

1. Who came to see Jesus?
2. Why did he come at night?
3. Why did Nicodemus believe that Jesus was sent by God?
4. What did Jesus tell Nicodemus had to happen for someone to believe?
5. What did Nicodemus think Jesus meant?
6. Was he right?
7. What do we call it when someone is "born again of water and the Spirit"?
8. Where is Jesus's kingdom?
9. What happens through baptism? (See sentence below)

Jesus made me a part of His Kingdom by baptism and the Spirit.

Passage

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Hymn - TLH #245 v. 1

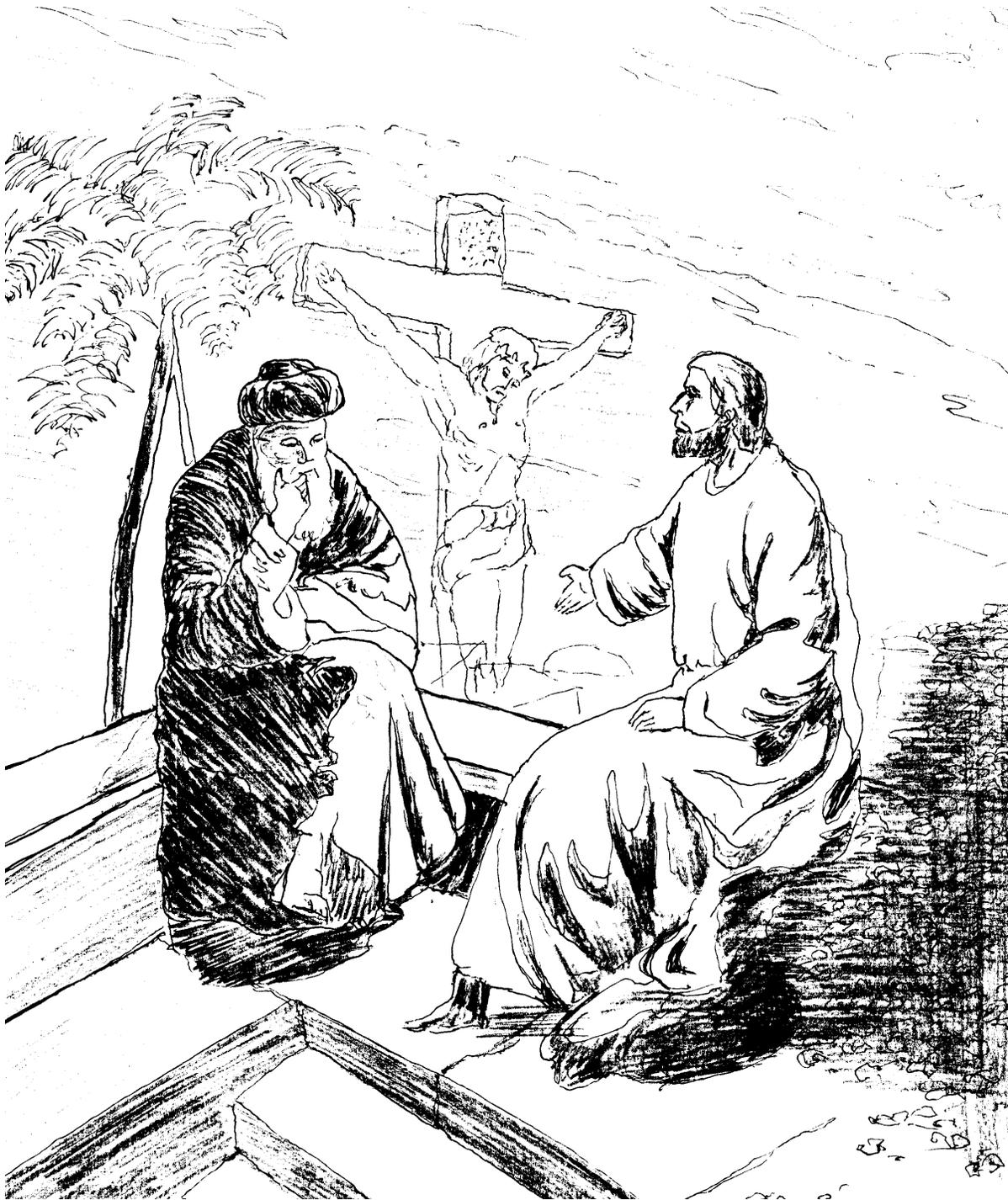
God loved the world so that He gave
His only Son the lost to save
That all who would in Him believe
Should everlasting life receive.

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,
Thank You for sending us Your Son to die upon the cross to pay for our sins, so that through baptism we are made members of Your kingdom by the Holy Spirit. Help us daily and bless us in our study of Your Word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Jesus and Nicodemus

John 3



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Nicodemus was right when he said he couldn't be born again from his mother. Jesus wasn't talking about that kind of birth. He told Nicodemus, "No one can enter the Kingdom of God unless he is born again of water and the Spirit." Jesus was talking about baptism when he said, "born of water and the Spirit."

We are "reborn" or born again as God's child when we are baptized. Through baptism, God the Holy Spirit, uses God's Word to make people into believers. Once they believe that Jesus died to take

away their sins, they are, "born again." This is Jesus' Kingdom. He lives and rules in our hearts by the power of His Word.

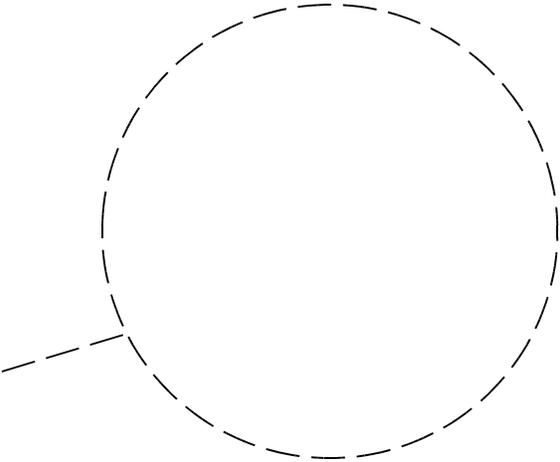
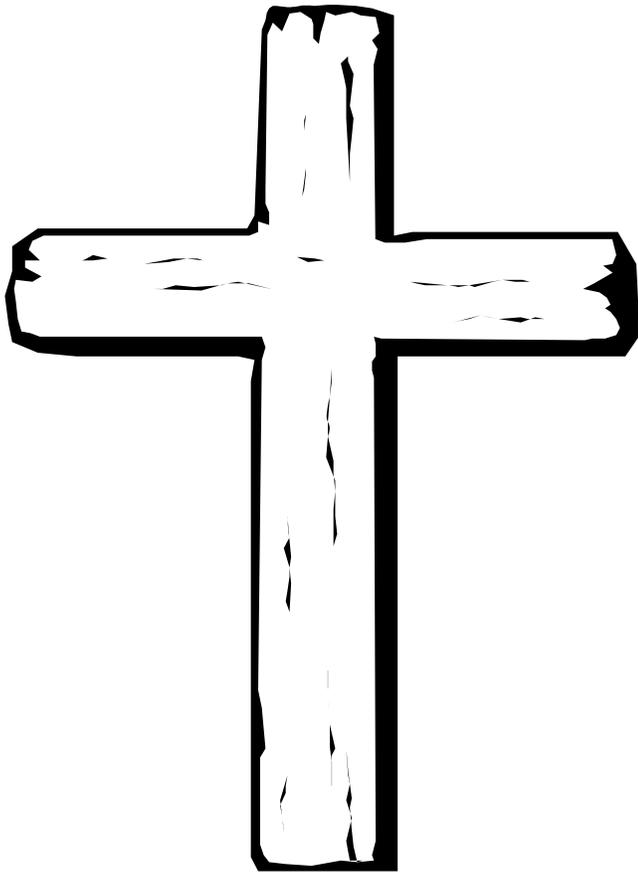
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Everyone who looks to Jesus and believes He is the Son of God who died for the sins of the world, will be saved from the poison of sin. We may die on earth, but through faith in Jesus we will not die forever in hell. All who believe in Him will live with Him forever in Heaven!

**Jesus made me a part of
His Kingdom by baptism
and the Spirit.**

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John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Activity Three - Complete the CROSSWORD PUZZLE below. Use the Word Box for the answers.

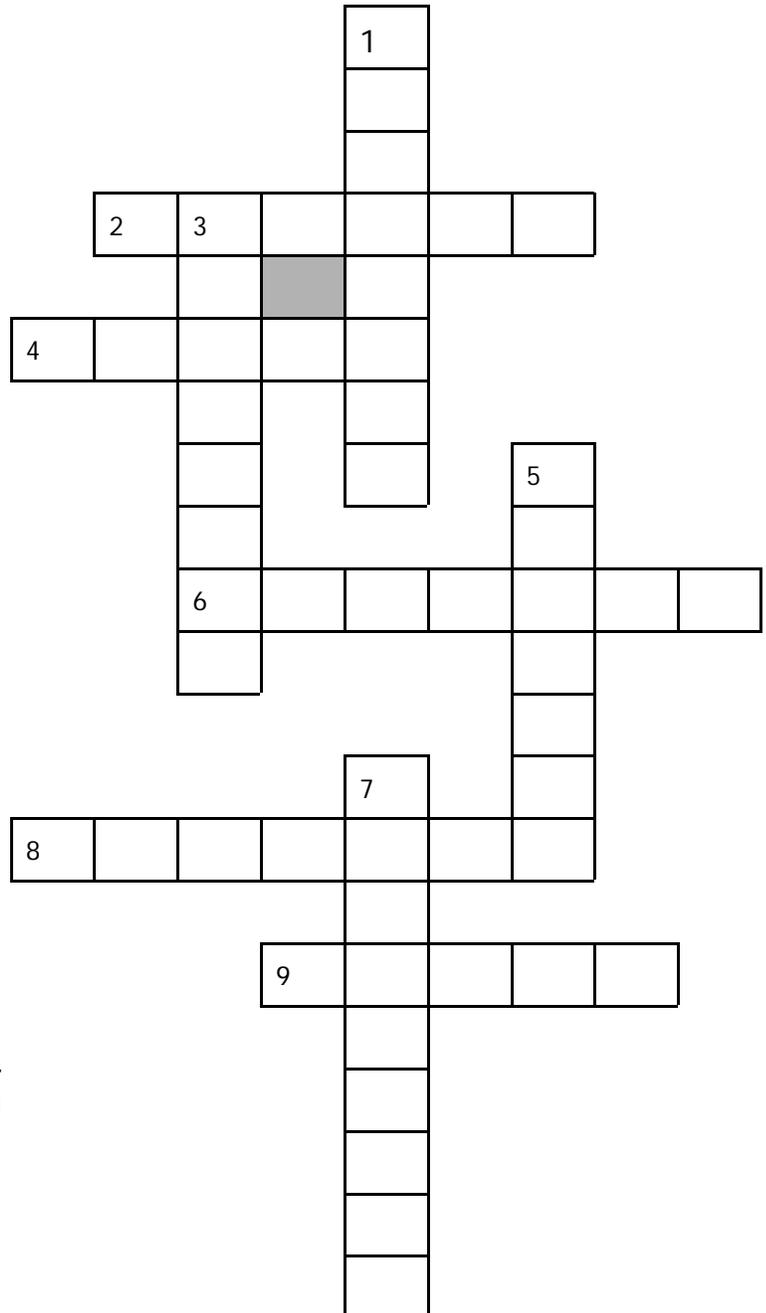
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|---------|----------|---------|----------|-----------|
| MOSES | JESUS | ETERNAL | SPIRIT | NICODEMUS |
| KINGDOM | PHARISEE | BAPTISM | PASSOVER | |

ACROSS

- Jesus told Nicodemus to be born of water and the ___.
- Who died so we might enter God's Kingdom?
- We have ___ life through faith in Jesus.
- Through this we are born again and made a child of God.
- Who put the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness?

DOWN

- The job Nicodemus had.
- For what celebration did Jesus come to Jerusalem?
- The ___ of God is in our hearts.
- Who came to see Jesus?



Prayer

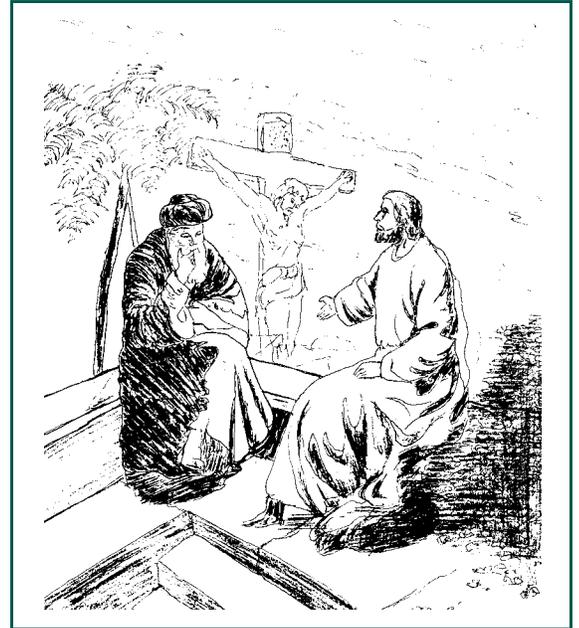
Dear God,
 Send Your Holy Spirit to us. Jesus come, as You came to Nicodemus and show Yourself to us as the Promised Messiah. Thank You for having made us Your children by baptism and the power of the Holy Spirit. May we learn that You so loved us that we should not perish but have everlasting life. Be with us today and always as we learn of You, the Triune God. Amen.

Jesus and Nicodemus

John 3:1-21

Almost everyone came into the world by being born. Adam and Eve are the only people who were not born. Everyone who has been born into the world has only been born once. Jesus tells us that those who are believers are born twice! It is hard for us as humans to understand this, but Jesus explains it to us in the Bible. He explains it to a man named Nicodemus, a man who was a Rabbi, or a teacher in the church.

Today, we will learn how a person can be born twice, as we study Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus.



Prayer

Let me learn of Jesus; He is kind to me.
Once He died to save me, Nailed upon the tree.
Let me think of Jesus; He is full of love,
Looking down upon me From His throne above. Amen.

The Story - John 3:1-21

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. {2} This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

{3} Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

{4} Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

{5} Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. {6} "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. {7} "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' {8} "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

{9} Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?"

{10} Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not



know these things? {11} "Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. {12} "If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? {13} "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. {14} "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, {15} "that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

{16} "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. {17} "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world

through Him might be saved. {18} "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. {19} "And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. {20} "For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. {21} "But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

Outer Aim - Jesus reveals the nature of the Kingdom of God to Nicodemus.

What God's Word Tells Us - Look up Titus 3:4-7. Fill in the blanks.

But when the _____ and the love of God our _____ toward _____ appeared, not by _____ of _____ which we have done, but according to His _____ He _____ us, through the _____ of _____ and _____ of the _____, whom he _____ out on us abundantly through _____ our _____, that having been _____ by His _____ we should become _____ according to the _____ of eternal _____.

Inner Aim - Jesus has made me a part of His Kingdom by water and the Spirit.

What the Story Tells Us - Find the words in the word search. The words may be vertical, horizontal, diagonal, and even backwards.

| | | | | |
|-------|------------|------------------|---------|--------|
| RABBI | NICODEMUS | KINGDOM OF GOD | SERPENT | WATER |
| FLESH | REGENERATE | EVERLASTING LIFE | SPIRIT | MOSES |
| JESUS | SANHEDRIN | BORN AGAIN | PERISH | SAVIOR |
| WIND | SON OF MAN | BEGOTTEN | | |

S A S I J K R D J E B S S E Q P L I X
O R A B B I U T S B O A F J E S U S N
N E V A W N N M K O R N T D E R T H I
O R I F L E S H A A N H E F G H B B C
F T O F P E R I S H A E D O I G E U O
M H R R E E N K I N G D O M O F G O D
A V E J O E T A N W A R P O Y H O T E
N S G U S K C I R R I I R N F X T Y M
R E G E N E R A T E N N F W J Z T H U
D S Q W E R O H J K O O D T A L E G S
E O A S D T I R I P S V B S J T N B S
S M S D T B N J T W O D Y S R M E N J
R E E F I L G N I T S A L R E V E R D

Passages - Explain the following passages as if you were talking to a friend who didn't know about Jesus.

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 3:5 - Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

Hymn - TLH #245

God loved the world so that He gave
His only Son the lost to save.
That all who would in Him believe,
Should everlasting life receive.

Christ Jesus is the Ground of faith,
Who was made flesh and suffered death;
All that confide in Him alone
Are built on this chief Cornerstone.

God would not let the sinner die,
His Son with saving grace is nigh,
His Spirit in the Word doth teach
How man the blessed goal may reach.

Be of good cheer, for God's own Son
Forgives all sins which thou hast done,
And justified by Jesus' blood,
Thy Baptism grants the highest good.

If thou be sick, if death draw near,
This truth thy troubled heart can cheer:
Christ Jesus saves my soul from death;
That is the firmest ground of faith.

Glory to God the Father, Son,
And Holy Spirit, Three in One!
To Thee, O blessed Trinity,
Be praise now and eternally! Amen.

Prayer

Grant us Thy peace upon our homeward way
With Thee began with Thee shall end the day.
Guard Thou the lips from sin, the hearts from shame,
That in this house have called upon Thy name. Amen (TLH #47 v 2)

Jesus and Nicodemus

John 3:1-21

Almost everyone in the world came into the world by being born. Adam and Eve are the only people who were not born. Everyone who has been born into the world has only been born once. Jesus tells us that those who are believers are born twice! It is hard for us as humans to understand this, but Jesus explains it to us in the Bible. He explains it to a man named Nicodemus, a man who was a Rabbi, or a teacher in the church. Today, we will learn how a person can be born twice, as we study Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus.



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Outer Aim - Jesus reveals the nature of the Kingdom of God to Nicodemus.

What the Story Tells Us - Fill in the blanks and then find those words in the WORD SEARCH. The words may be vertical, horizontal, diagonal, and even backwards.

1. _____ had a conversation with a _____ named _____.
2. Nicodemus was a member of the _____.
3. That which is born of the flesh is _____, and that which is born of the Spirit is _____.
4. You cannot hear the sound of the _____, and it blows where it wishes.
5. And as _____ lifted up the _____ in the wilderness, even so must the _____ be lifted up.
6. Unless one is _____ he cannot see the _____.

7. _____ means to be born again.
8. Unless one is born of _____ and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.
9. God so loved the world that he gave His only _____ Son, the whoever believes in Him shall not _____ but have _____.
10. Jesus is my _____ from sin.

| | | | | |
|-------|------------|------------------|---------|--------|
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S A S I J K R D J E B S S E Q P L I X
O R A B B I U T S B O A F J E S U S O
N E V A W N N M K O R N T D E R T H S
O R I F L E S H A A N H E F G H B B S
F T O F P E R I S H A E D O I G E U F
M H R R E E N K I N G D O M O F G O D
A V E J O E T A N W A R P O Y H O T G
N S G U S K C I R R I I R N F X T Y U
R E G E N E R A T E N N F W J Z T H E
D S Q W E R O H J K O O D T A L E G S
E O A S D T I R I P S V B S J T N B S
S M S D T B N J T W O D Y S R M E N J
R E E F I L G N I T S A L R E V E R D

Inner Aim - Jesus has made me a part of His Kingdom by water and the Spirit.

Your Turn - Answer the following question.

Nicodemus is mentioned in the Bible at Jesus' death and burial. When the disciples fled, he stepped up to claim the body of Christ. From these two lessons of Nicodemus, how can we be like Nicodemus?

What God's Word Tells Us - Answer the following questions.

1. What metaphor did Jesus use when describing everyone who is born of the Spirit?
(v. 8)
2. Why do you suppose Jesus told Nicodemus the story of Moses and the serpent?
3. What did Jesus mean when He said a man must be born again? (v. 5)
4. For what reasons did God send His Son into the world, and for what reasons didn't He send Him. (v. 15, 16, 17)
5. What is the only way of salvation? (v. 5, 16)

Passages

John 3:5 - Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Titus 3:4-7 - But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Hymn - TLH #245

God loved the world so that He gave
His only Son the lost to save.
That all who would in Him believe,
Should everlasting life receive.

Be of good cheer, for God's own Son
Forgives all sins which thou hast done,
And justified by Jesus' blood,
Thy Baptism grants the highest good.

Christ Jesus is the Ground of faith,
Who was made flesh and suffered death;
All that confide in Him alone
Are built on this chief Cornerstone.

If thou be sick, if death draw near,
This truth thy troubled heart can cheer:
Christ Jesus saves my soul from death;
That is the firmest ground of faith.

God would not let the sinner die,
His Son with saving grace is nigh,
His Spirit in the Word doth teach
How man the blessed goal may reach.

Glory to God the Father, Son,
And Holy Spirit, Three in One!
To Thee, O blessed Trinity,
Be praise now and eternally! Amen.

Prayer

Grant us Thy peace upon our homeward way
With Thee began with Thee shall end the day.
Guard Thou the lips from sin, the hearts from shame,
That in this house have called upon Thy name. Amen (TLH #47 v 2)