

## JOHN 3 BIBLE STUDY

Bible study of John chapter 3

[Home](#)

[Origin](#)

[John](#)

[Acts](#)

[Testimonials](#)

[Contact](#)

### John 3:1-2 Bible Study

[Select Language ▼](#)

John 3:3-12 [Born Again](#)

John 3:13-21 [Bronze Serpent](#)

John 3:22-36 [Judea](#)

**JOHN 3:1** <sup>1</sup> There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.

### What is a "Pharisee" vs. a "Sadducee"?

Pharisees were one of the leading sects within Judaism. Pharisees took pride in trying to adhere not only to the laws in the Old Testament, but a dizzying array of man-made laws as well. They were respected by the other Jews and enjoyed social, religious and political power in the community.

	Leaders of Judaism & part of Sanhedrin	Wealthy or Middle Class	Believe in Torah	Believe oral tradition has equal weight as written law	Believe in Resurrect	Believe in Messiah
Pharisee	Yes (more religious)	Middle	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sadducee	Yes (more political)	Wealthy	Yes	No	No	No

### Didn't the Romans rule Israel at this time? And wasn't there also a king named Herod?

Yes, the Sanhedrin ruled under the supervision of Herod, whom the Roman emperor had appointed for the region that included Israel. Herod in turn was under the rule of the Roman emperor, who was represented by the Roman governor and legion stationed in the region.

### How would you characterize Nicodemus' opening words to Jesus?

They sound pretty gracious and respectful. He calls Jesus not only a "teacher" but one "from God" (John 3:2).

### Are Nicodemus' opening words correct?

Not quite. Jesus IS God, not a teacher from God.

### What does it mean to be "born again"?

The original Greek word translated "again" more commonly means, "from above," - i.e., heaven. This Greek word occurs 13 times in the Bible, and is translated "from above" 5 times, "top" 3 times, "again" twice, "from the first" once, "from the beginning" once, and is not translated once. Jesus is saying that Nicodemus "**cannot see the kingdom of God**" (John 3:3) until he has been born spiritually.

### What do you think of Nicodemus' reply?

1. "How can a man be born when he is old?" (John 3:4)
2. "Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be

### What is Jesus saying in this passage (John 3:7)?

The Greek word for "again" is the same one used in John 3:3 above. It means "from above." Jesus is distinguishing between our physical birth - "**That which is born of the flesh is flesh**" (John 3:6) - and the spiritual birth.

### Is the "Spirit" then a different God?

No, God the Holy Spirit, along with God the Father and God the Son (Jesus), comprise one God, and Jesus affirmed this in Mark 12:29 by declaring, "**the LORD is one.**" But the Bible also clearly describes three distinct personhoods for God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. This notion, commonly called, "Trinity," isn't easy for us to grasp. Just bear in mind that God is God and created the universe, so there will be some things about His truth that we mere humans won't fully understand, at least not while on the earth.

### But is the Holy Spirit someone who can be said to have a 'personhood'?

Yes, Acts 13:2 says that He speaks: "**As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, 'Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'**"

### What is this "living water"?

It's salvation through Jesus Himself, whom John 1:1 also calls the "**Word**". To enter the Kingdom of God, we need to have Jesus, to know about Him, and to know Him through the Word.

### What is Jesus referring to in John 3:14?

The bronze serpent in Numbers 21:7-9: "**Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, 'We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us.' So Moses prayed for the people. Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.' So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.'**"

### The bronze serpent on a pole is an image of whom?

Jesus. When He is hanging on the cross after he had taken on the sins, cried

out, "**Why have you forsaken me?**" (Mark 15:34) to God the Father, followed by, "**It is finished!**" (John 19:30) and His death. The snake wasn't foreshadowing the baby Jesus in a manger. It was foreshadowing Jesus stricken on the cross for our sins, and this is what the next two verses, John 3:15 and 16, are referring to in "**believing in Him.**"

Did Jesus come to "condemn the world"? \_\_\_\_\_

But how do those who don't believe in Jesus end up? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do people have trouble believing in Jesus?

They love their sins, referred to as "**darkness**" and "**deeds**" that are "**evil**" in John 3:19-20.

Are there any sins in your life, your love for which is making you turn away from the "light"?

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How do you think Nicodemus felt as he left Jesus that night?