

NICODEMUS: THE MAN WHO GOT BORN AGAIN

John 2:23-3:21; 7:50-52; 19:38-42

Theme: The second birth

Episode 1 of 7

Part 1: THEY MET THE MASTER SERIES

(STORIES OF MEN AND WOMEN WHO MET JESUS)

CTTW SHORT DRAMA PROGRAMS W/QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

CHRISTIAN RADIO DRAMA

“THE STORY WITHIN”

001



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Part 1: They Met the Master Series
Episode 1 of 7: Nicodemus: The Man
Who Got Born Again
Christ to the World Ministries

DIRECTORIAL INFORMATION

CAST OF CHARACTERS: (note voice quality required)

- **Each voice should be recognizably different from any other character.**
- **Some characters appear in multiple episodes of this series. Use the same voice for the same character.**

Nicodemus: **Pharisee** (voice of a mature man)
Jesus: **The promised Messiah** (voice of a mature man)
Joshua: **Pharisee** (voice of a mature man)
Joseph: **Jesus follower from Arimathea** (voice of a mature man)
Voices: **For sound effects** (men)

Notes to all readers:

- These are radio **dramas**. The actions and emotions are in the words. Remember that the listener will only hear these words once; speak distinctly with appropriate emotion; carefully observe all punctuation (i.e., pause at commas, stop at periods, intensify at exclamation points, and give special emphasis to words in **bold** type).
- Observe all **music** cues (bold/small print) throughout the script.
- Observe **sound effects**_directions (bold print) throughout the script.
- Observe all **voice** instructions (bold print) throughout the script.
- When Scripture is used, the print is in italics, and it is the NIV (1984). Scripture references are given to aid the translators and should not be read as part of the script.

NICODEMUS: THE MAN WHO GOT BORN AGAIN

Scripture References: John 2:23-3:21; 7:50-52; 19:38-42

(Music: Theme music begins, then gradually fades to underscoring during comments by Program Host. Note to producer: Limit theme music not to exceed 12-14 seconds.)

Program Host

Welcome to “The Story Within.” Today’s drama tells us about Nicodemus, a man who “Met the Master.” It is based on the gospel of John in the Bible. Nicodemus, a Pharisee, and one of the prominent religious leaders, heard about Jesus. Although many other Pharisees rejected Jesus’ teaching, Nicodemus grew to believe Jesus was sent from God. He approached Jesus one night. Jesus revealed to Nicodemus his need to be born again and explained to him what that meant. Later, Nicodemus defended Jesus to other Pharisees, but they continued to reject Jesus’ authority and eventually had Him arrested and crucified. Following Jesus’ death on the cross, Nicodemus openly joined Joseph of Arimathea to anoint and bury the crucified Savior.

Listen now as Nicodemus tells us his story and its unexpected conclusion.

(Music: swells to indicate change; then fades to soft underscoring)

(Nicodemus – Storyteller)

When I first heard about this Teacher Jesus, I thought He was just another fraud. As we often learn the hard way, many people claim special powers or proclaim a new message with no purpose other than deceit. Yet, Jesus was different. I pride myself on knowing, obeying, and teaching God's Word, and Jesus obviously knew scripture. He lived an honest life, and He taught like no one else. He spoke with His own authority rather than basing His teachings on the authority of someone else.

Other Pharisees became upset when Jesus healed or plucked grain for Himself and His followers on the Sabbath, our day of rest and worship. When confronted, however, Jesus stressed that God made the Sabbath for people, not people for the Sabbath. Jesus focused on the intent, not just the content of God's commandments. For Jesus, true righteousness begins in a person's heart.

I finally reached the point I knew I had to speak to Jesus. I wanted to explore further the Man and His message. Yet, I did not want to upset my fellow religious leaders. To be perfectly honest, I feared what they might say or do. Because of that, I approached Jesus late at night, when no one would see us together.

(Music: swells to indicate change; then fades to soft underscoring)

Nicodemus: (quietly, timidly) Excuse me, Rabbi. My name is Nicodemus. I am a member of the local Pharisees. I have heard You speak, and I wonder if I could talk privately with You for a few minutes.

Jesus: Certainly, Nicodemus. I will be glad to talk with you.

Nicodemus: I apologize for the late hour and will try not to keep You too long.

Jesus: We will take all the time you need. How may I help you?

Nicodemus: *“Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him”* (John 3:2).

Jesus: Nicodemus, *“I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again”* (John 3:3).

Nicodemus: *“How can a man be born when he is old? Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!”* (John 3:4).

Jesus: *“I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit”* (John 3:5-8).

Nicodemus: *“How can this be?”* (John 3:9).

Jesus: *“You are Israel’s teacher, and do you not understand these things? I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. I have*

spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven — the Son of Man. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.” For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God” (John 3:10-21).

Nicodemus: Thank you, Rabbi. You have given me much to consider.

Jesus: Consider well, Nicodemus. I hope to see you again.

(Music: swells to indicate change; then fades to soft underscoring)

INTERMISSION:

Program Host: Thank you for listening to “The Story Within.” Our story will continue in a moment. Nicodemus, a religious leader in Israel, had heard many things about Jesus. He heard about His teachings and about how He had healed many that were sick. Determined to find out more about Jesus, Nicodemus came one night to talk with Him. What he heard came as a surprise. Let us continue as Nicodemus explains what happened.

(Music: swells to indicate change; then fades to soft underscoring)

(Nicodemus continues his story)

After some time of hearing about Jesus, the One many believed to be our promised Messiah, I finally had the opportunity to speak to Him myself. Because I knew taking that step would upset our established authorities, I approached Him at night. Although I expected a new perspective from Jesus, never did I dream of such an unusual message. To be born again? Not a physical birth but a spiritual one? Jesus as the light of God in our dark world? Oh, how we need light, and Jesus’ message rang true. What He said was consistent with the prophets of old and the longing in my heart and mind. My mind tumbled with questions: *Is He the one – our promised Messiah? Can He save our people? Can He save the world?*

I was not the only one who wondered about Jesus. Many believed and followed Him as Messiah. Some thought Him a prophet. Several followed out of curiosity or because they wanted to be healed or to see the miracles He performed.

Others refused to believe. Because scripture said the Messiah would come from Bethlehem, they said Jesus, with His home in Galilee, could not be the Promised One. What they did not know until later was that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, after his family journeyed there for a required government census.

During the Feast of Tabernacles the religious leaders grew increasingly upset by people's growing interest in Jesus. They felt threatened both by His popularity and rejection of their cherished traditions, so they sent temple guards to arrest Him.

When the guards returned empty-handed, the chief priests and Pharisees demanded the reason why. The guards explained they had never heard anyone speak the way Jesus did. That did not sit well with the Pharisees and other rulers. Their response was immediate and harsh.

(Music: swells to indicate change; then fades to soft underscoring)

Joshua: *“You mean he has deceived you also? Has any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him? No! But this mob that knows nothing of the law — there is a curse on them”* (John 7:47-49).

Nicodemus: Wait a minute, Joshua. *“Does our law condemn anyone without first hearing him to find out what he is doing?”* (John 7:51).

Joshua: What are you saying, Nicodemus? *“Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee”* (John 7:52).

Nicodemus: All I am saying is we should give this man the opportunity to defend Himself before we condemn Him.

Joshua: Blasphemy! Pure blasphemy! That is what this Jesus speaks. How can you or anyone else defend such a heretic. *(turns to guards)* You guards, get out! We will deal with you and your incompetence later.

INSERT: (Sound effects: retreating footsteps and clanging of the soldiers’ armor as they leave)

(Music: swells to indicate change; then fades to soft underscoring)

(Nicodemus continues his story)

Displeased by the failure of their plan, the religious leaders began plotting for another way to rid themselves of this troublemaker for their established way of life.

In the meantime, the more I compared Jesus’ words to the words of the prophets, the more convinced I became that He was the Promised One. The more I noticed our established leaders, the more convinced I became that they cared primarily for positions and traditions rather than the truth Jesus spoke.

This became abundantly clear by the Feast of Passover. In spite of Jesus’ love for others, His words of truth, and miraculous work, they sought to have Him arrested and crucified.

Jesus had to know what was coming. Yet, He never backed down. He kept preaching, teaching, healing, confronting about wrongdoing when necessary, and loving everyone. In addition to well-respected citizens, Jesus reached out to sinners, outcasts, and those considered unworthy or unclean by the religious establishment. He taught and lived love for God and love for one another, with no exceptions.

On Thursday night of Passover week, the evil schemes of those in charge began falling into place, aided by Judas, a member of Jesus' inner circle. They sent guards for Jesus again. This time they found Him and some of His disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane, praying. In reality, only Jesus prayed. His followers had fallen asleep. Betrayed by a kiss of identification from Judas, the guards arrested Jesus there. People told lies about Him, made fun of Him, spit on Him, and beat Him mercilessly. They placed a royal robe and a crown of thorns on Him, bowing down in mockery. Finally, on Friday, they hung Jesus, stripped of His clothing, on a cross between two thieves. He died a criminal's death, though He had committed no wrong.

Joseph, a wealthy religious leader from Arimathea who believed in Jesus and had no part in the events leading to His death, received permission to bury Jesus in his own new tomb. No longer ashamed of my belief in Jesus as Messiah, I joined Joseph. We wrapped Jesus' bruised and bloodied body in strips of linen with the

myrrh and aloes I supplied. We wanted to honor Jesus, according to our burial customs but had to rush since the Sabbath drew near.

(Music: swells to indicate change; then fades to soft underscoring)

INSERT: (Sound effects: wrapping Jesus' body in strips of linen)

Joseph: I can't believe Pilate allowed me to take Jesus' body, Nicodemus.

Pilate may have the Roman government's authority backing him, but never have I known anyone so intimidated by the people he governs.

Nicodemus: Thank God he granted your request, Joseph. I hate to admit it, but far too long I also feared what people thought about me. Now, I have to live the rest of my life with the regret that I waited until Jesus' death before I stood up for my belief in Him.

Joseph: We all have regrets, Nicodemus. As I understand it, that is the reason Jesus came – to offer us a better way – forgiveness for our sins when we repent and a right relationship with God.

Nicodemus: But why did Jesus have to die? (*voice catches*) What purpose does this serve?

(Music: swells to indicate change; then fades to soft underscoring)

(Nicodemus continues his story)

Although neither of us understood how God could use the death of Jesus to accomplish His plan of salvation, we continued to believe He would . . . somehow.

Pilate ordered Jesus' tomb sealed and soldiers to guard the entrance. Long hours followed Jesus' burial. Dazed, and wretched, we waited – for what we didn't know – as we mourned.

None of us knew that the seal and guards would prove useless three days later when Jesus stepped out of that tomb. Through His victorious resurrection, Jesus conquered sin and death. As Jesus did for me, He grants eternal hope to all who accept His offer to be born again.

(Music: Dramatic music swells; then begins reprise of Theme music; softly underscore comments of program host during Our Response to God)

OUR RESPONSE TO GOD

Program Host

Like Nicodemus, people today search for true meaning in life. Also like Nicodemus, we find that meaning only in Jesus, our resurrected Lord. Jesus suffered the agony of the cross for you and me. Jesus who knew no sin took the burden of our sins – every one of them – and paid the price for them when He died. Through His death, He offers us eternal life.

Jesus invites us to be born again, to repent of our wrongs and turn our lives over to Him. He offers forgiveness for our sins, the presence of His Holy Spirit, and a home in heaven. When we choose to be born again, Jesus removes our old nature and gives birth to a new one.

Now we come to the time when we can respond to God.

God is a great God. He is all-powerful. He made the world and all that is in it. He made the heavens, the moon and the stars—the entire universe. God knows all things. He knows more about us than we know about ourselves. He is everywhere present. We can never flee from the presence of God.

God is also a God of kindness and mercy and grace. He is a loving God. He shows His love and mercy and grace to us in many ways.

How should you and I respond to this great God of the entire universe who loves us and shows His mercy and grace to us every day? Jesus said: “*The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength*” (Mark 12:29).

I’m going to pray a brief pray from my heart to God. Listen to my prayer, and then when I have prayed I will lead you to pray the same prayer.

Dear God, I thank You that You are a great God. I love You. Amen.

Now repeat the prayer aloud after me. We will pray it a portion at a time. Make the prayer your very own to God. Mean it with all your heart as you pray.

Dear God, (pause for listener to repeat)

I thank You that You are a great God.. (pause for listener to repeat)

I love You. Amen. (pause for listener to repeat)

Thank you for praying that prayer. We will learn more about God and His love for us in the next program. The next episode will be a drama about “The Demoniatic of Capernaum.”

(Music: swells to indicate change; then fades to soft underscoring)

Questions and Answers

The Questions and Answers below are designed to be used following the broadcast of the drama. They are questions a typical listener might have after listening to the drama. The number of questions used will of course depend upon the amount of air time available at the conclusion of the drama. It may not be necessary to use all of the questions provided. Voices used for the questions should include: male and female; young and old; believers and non-believers. The Program Host should give all the answers to the questions.

Try to make both questions and answers conversational in nature.

The questions should be asked in a forthright manner. Persons asking the questions should reflect different attitudes and positions. Most of the questioners should reflect an openness and honest desire for the truth; some should reflect deep concern; some should reflect anxiety; some could reflect sarcasm or unbelief; some could even reflect anger. Occasionally a voice antagonistic to Christ and the Gospel could ask one of the questions.

The Program Host should use warm and friendly language and tone of voice. He should never talk down to a questioner in a demeaning fashion regardless of the question asked. He should never express shock or surprise at the question asked. He should speak in a manner that puts the questioner at ease. Some producers might want to use names. For example, a question might begin with: “My name is _____. Could you explain . . .” or “My name is _____. Here is my question: . . .” The Program Host could use the person’s name in answering the question. The use of names is at the producer’s option.

The Questions and Answers could begin by the Program Host saying: “Thank you for listening to this drama. Now let us go to some questions that listeners like yourself have about what we have heard.”

1. Question: What does “born again” mean?

Answer: “Born again” is a term Jesus used to refer to the experience of a person trusting Jesus as Savior. When a person turns from her sin and places her trust in Jesus as Savior, she is said to be “born again.”

2. Question: What is the second birth?

Answer: The second birth is the experience of a person trusting Jesus as Savior. It means the same as being “born again.” The first birth, which we all experience, is the physical birth. The second birth is experienced by persons who trust Jesus.

3. Question: What or who is a Pharisee?

Answer: The Pharisees were a very strict religious group in biblical times. They were very zealous for the Mosaic law. They took great pride in their beliefs and lifestyle and considered themselves superior to most other people.

4. Question: Why did Nicodemus come to Jesus at night?

Answer: We do not know. Perhaps he was very busy during the day. Perhaps he came at night because he knew Jesus also was very busy during the day and nighttime afforded the best opportunity to talk with Him. He may have come at night because he did not want others to know he was talking with Jesus. The main point is that he did come.

5. Question: Why did Moses lift up a snake in the wilderness?

Answer: The people had sinned greatly against God. Poisonous serpents from the wilderness bit many of the people and they died. Moses prayed for the people and God instructed him to fashion a bronze snake and lift it up on a pole in the camp. The people were healed if they looked at the bronze serpent, acknowledging their sin and expressing their faith in God’s forgiveness. This event pointed forward to Jesus being lifted up on the cross and dying for our sins. We are saved by looking to Him.

6. Question: What did Jesus mean when He said that light had come into the world?

Answer: Jesus was referring to Himself as the Light of the world.

7. Question: What does “Messiah” mean?

Answer: “Messiah” means “Anointed One” or “Christ.” It is a term used for Jesus. He is often called Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Christ, the Anointed One sent from God to be our Savior.

8. Question: Why did not all the religious leaders believe in Jesus?

Answer: The religious leaders had sinful hearts and refused to surrender their lives to Jesus. They resented Jesus and His teaching.

9. Question: Why is it difficult for some people to accept Jesus’ offer to be born again?

Answer: Many people want to hold on to their sin and go their own way rather than surrender their lives to Jesus and follow Him.

10. Question: Sometimes I am afraid and ashamed to let other people know that I am a believer and follow Jesus. How can I overcome this fear?

Answer: When we are hesitant to let others know that we are believers, we should pray and ask God to help us to be bold and unafraid. The more we speak out and let other people know, the easier it becomes.

Thank you for listening and taking part in this program. May God be with you and keep you safe.

(Music: Theme music swells dramatically then fades as broadcast ends)

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