

Episode: One-Hit Wonders No. 8

Narrator: Nicodemus

Primary Scriptures: John 3:1-21, 7:50-51, 19:38-42

Story Summary: Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night

Location: Jerusalem, Israel

Time: Circa 28 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: John 3:16-18, 21

Nicodemus is one of the most interesting people in the Bible. He crops up only in the book of *John*, where he is mentioned three times. It's important to note that all three of these mentions could be summaries of longer conversations and events.

Nicodemus is introduced in John 3:1 as a Pharisee and member of the Jewish ruling council. In John 3:10, Jesus says that Nicodemus is "Israel's teacher." There is no doubt that Nicodemus is powerful and well-known. In John 3:2, it says he came to Jesus by night. Many people speculate Nicodemus came at night so nobody would know he had come to meet Jesus even though this was very early in Jesus' ministry.

In John 3:2 Nicodemus says, "We" know Jesus is a teacher who has come from God, because no one could perform the signs he performs unless he comes from God. It is unclear who "we" is, because many of the Pharisees and leaders are certainly not convinced Jesus is from God.

All great teachers are eager to learn, so it is very possible that Nicodemus wants to take an opportunity to learn whatever he can, regardless of the source. If so, Jesus starts asking him questions and giving him information that bewilders him. His head must have been spinning by the time they reached the conversation of John 3:15 where Jesus says that anyone believing in the Son of Man may have eternal life. Nicodemus must surely have wanted eternal life beyond anything else.

John 3:16-21 are some of the most familiar verses in the Bible. What is not clear is whether those are the words of Jesus to Nicodemus or the words of the author, John. Scholars are split on the answer.

The second time Nicodemus is mentioned is John 7:50-51. He offers a weak defense for Jesus when the Jewish leaders want to arrest him. It is unclear how involved Nicodemus is in the following trials of Jesus.

The third time Nicodemus is mentioned is John 19:38-42. After Jesus is crucified, Joseph of Arimathea gets permission from Pilate to bury the body. Nicodemus brings seventy-five pounds of spices and ointments so that he and Joseph can bury the body properly. The Bible doesn't say if Nicodemus became a follower of Jesus.