

## Episode 7: Invitations

**While you watch:** As you watch this episode, mark off each person and the main events that happen in the show. This will help to keep your focus so you can pay close attention to each character that is introduced.

### Characters:

- Moses
- Matthew
- Nicodemus
- Quintus
- Gaius
- Mary Magdalene
- Jesus

### Events:

- Moses makes a serpent on a pole
- Quintus talks to Nicodemus
- Matthew visits his family home
- Jesus meets with Nicodemus
- Matthew is in the tax booth and sees Jesus
- Jesus says Matthew is going to host a dinner party

**Reflect on the episode:** The spotlight is on Matthew in this episode. We get a glimpse into his daily routine, his relationship with Gaius and his family all before he makes the biggest decision of his life to follow Jesus.

We finally see Matthew “knock” on the door. If you remember from episode 2, Matthew stood in front of a door, but he didn’t knock. He was afraid of rejection and what was on the other side of that door. Now he goes back to that door and this time he knocks! He visits his mother and learns that their family’s store was robbed and his father is having to travel and spend time away from home. The conversation with his mother doesn’t go great, but you can see Matthew is justifying his profession as a tax collector. He is rich, he is using the gift God gave him - his mind, but as his mom points out he isn’t using God’s gifts for God. He is hurting God’s people. What gifts has God given you? Do you feel like you are using them for God’s glory? What do you need to do to use your gifts for God?

This episode is called “Invitations” and yes that is plural. Jesus extends an invitation to follow him to both Matthew and Nicodemus. Unfortunately, the responses from these men are different. Let’s dive in!

Mary asks Jesus to meet with Nicodemus in the night at a secluded location. Jesus agrees and Nicodemus gets the opportunity to meet with the Son of God. Read John 3:1-21 and then fill in the blanks below for the first three verses.

- **John 3:1-3 (ESV)** – <sup>1</sup> Now there was a man of the Pharisees named \_\_\_\_\_, a ruler of the Jews. <sup>2</sup> This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.” <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is \_\_\_\_\_ he cannot see the kingdom of God.”
- It is in this interaction between Nicodemus and Jesus that the most well known, most memorized verse is stated by Jesus. Write John 3:16 below.

## Bible Reference

The episode starts out with Moses making a pole with a serpent on it. See the Old Testament scripture reference:

- **Numbers 21:5-9 (ESV)** – <sup>5</sup> And the people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food.” <sup>6</sup> Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. <sup>7</sup> And 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. <sup>8</sup> And the Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.” <sup>9</sup> So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- This is also mentioned in **John 3:14-15 (ESV)** <sup>14</sup> And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

In the show Jesus extends the invitation for Nicodemus to follow him. This is not explicitly stated in scripture, but through Jesus' words in John 3:16 we are all called to be Jesus' followers. If you accept Jesus in your heart, ask for the forgiveness of your sins and proclaim him to be your Lord, you will be saved.

Did you notice Nicodemus was the first one to hesitate and not drop everything to follow Jesus? He talks about all that he has. He questions if he should give up who he is, be nomadic and a new creation. Nicodemus allows fear and his comfort to limit how God could use him. He said "No" to Jesus. Nicodemus will have his part in Jesus' story later on, but he misses out on so much by not following Jesus. He was not a disciple, he did not witness all of Jesus' miracles, he did not hear all of Jesus' teachings firsthand. Don't be like Nicodemus. You don't want to miss out on what God has in store for you. If you have not accepted Christ in your life, don't wait. Do it now! God has great things in store for you. God loves you and wants you to be his adopted child. Take some time to pray the below short prayer and ask Jesus into your heart. If you have already asked Jesus into your heart, thank him for what he has done for you.

### **The Salvation Poem**<sub>2</sub>

Jesus, You died upon a cross  
And rose again to save the lost  
Forgive me now of all my sin  
Come be my Savior, Lord, and Friend  
Change my life and make it new  
And help me, Lord, to live for You.

Something that Nicodemus could not grasp was the concept of being born again. He was wrapped up in the literal meaning of being born again out of the womb, where as Jesus was explaining being born again as transformation into a new creation.

- **John 3:4-7 (ESV)** <sub>4</sub> 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?" <sub>5</sub> Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. <sub>6</sub> That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sub>7</sub> Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

Upon accepting Christ as your savior, you have become a new creation. You were born again. The Spirit is inside you and your old life is done. If you just accepted Christ, congratulations, the angels are rejoicing! The first step is to get into the bible, learn and surround yourself with a good church congregation. If you have been saved for some time now, how have you noticed yourself as a new creation? Are there any steps you need to take to further your growth and development as a Christian, a new creation?

Matthew is back in his tax booth when Jesus passes by. But Jesus doesn't fully pass by Matthew, he locks eyes with him and stops. Jesus calls to him and says "Follow me". In the beginning of the episode we see Matthew finally "knock" on his family's door. Now we see him get out of his comfort zone again and accept Jesus' invitation to follow him. It is a big day for Matthew and his growth! Circle below what Matthew did in response to Jesus' question.

- **Matthew 9:9 (ESV)** – *As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me," And he rose and followed him.*
  - This is also mentioned in Mark 2:13-14

You can't grow in your faith unless you get out of your comfort zone and say "yes" to Jesus' calling on your life. Every day is a learning opportunity. Every day you have to choose Jesus and it isn't always easy. Matthew decided to say "yes" to Jesus, where Nicodemus gave excuses and chose not to follow him. Who do you think had the most life altering experience? Who stepped out of their comfort zone? Make a commitment today to say "yes" to Jesus. In the space below, write a commitment prayer to God letting him know you will say "yes", you want him to use your life for his glory, you are ready to get out of your comfort zone and be led by the Holy Spirit. At the end of the prayer, sign your name to make it official.

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*Although we don't actually see the dinner at Matthew's house in this episode, Jesus tells Matthew he will be hosting a dinner for everyone. More on this in the next episode!*

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