

# John 3:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

## Analysis

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Nicodemus asks, 'How can these things be?'—expressing bewilderment at Jesus' teaching. The question is genuine, not hostile. A leading teacher in Israel cannot comprehend basic spiritual realities. This exposes the gap between religious expertise and spiritual understanding. Knowledge of Scripture doesn't automatically produce comprehension of its spiritual meaning. Nicodemus needs what he's being taught—spiritual illumination.

## Historical Context

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Nicodemus likely knew Ezekiel 36:25-27 promising the Spirit's cleansing and indwelling. Yet he couldn't connect this to Jesus' teaching about new birth. Religious education without spiritual regeneration leaves one unable to grasp spiritual truth. Jesus' response (verse 10) emphasizes this irony—Israel's teacher doesn't understand Israel's hope.

## Related Passages

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**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

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1. Why doesn't religious education automatically produce spiritual understanding?
2. What Old Testament passages should have prepared Nicodemus for Jesus' teaching on new birth?

## Interlinear Text

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ἀπεκρίθη	Νικόδημος	καὶ	εἶπεν	αὐτῷ	Πῶς	δύναται
<b>answered</b>	<b>Nicodemus</b>	<b>and</b>	<b>said</b>	<b>unto him</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>can</b>
G611	G3530	G2532	G2036	G846	G4459	G1410
ταῦτα	γενέσθαι					
<b>these things</b>	<b>be</b>					
G5023	G1096					

## Additional Cross-References

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**Isaiah 42:16** (Parallel theme): And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.

**John 6:52** (Parallel theme): The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

**John 6:60** (Parallel theme): Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?

**Luke 1:34** (Parallel theme): Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?