

John 2:13 – John 3:15 – Jesus – Man’s Man, Not impressed with crowds, focused on those who seek Him.

Joh 2:13-14 Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business.

Here we have another geographical point. He started out at Cana of Galilee, went to Capernaum, and is now in Jerusalem.

Notice that John labels this feast the “Jews' passover.” It is no longer the “... LORD'S passover ...” (Exo_12:27). It is the Jews' passover—merely a religious feast, quite meaningless, just a ritual to go through. The One of whom the Passover speaks has now come. “... For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us” (1Co_5:7).

Our Lord went up to Jerusalem. This was not at the beginning of His public ministry but probably at the end of the first year. All males were required to go to Jerusalem three times a year, at the time of the Feast of Passover, at the Feast of Pentecost, and at the Feast of Tabernacles. He went up for the Passover which was about April the fourteenth. So you see that John gears this into the geography and into the calendar.

Now we find that He cleanses the temple. He did this twice. One cleansing was at the beginning of His ministry and one again at the end of His ministry.

They were selling animals and selling doves and changing money. It is quite interesting that they would not accept any kind of money except the temple money there; no other kind could be used or offered. So they had an exchange place, and they made a good profit by making the exchange of coins.

Why did they have such a system? Why did they do this? Because they were making religion easy. They would take the Roman coinage, which had an effigy of Caesar and the imprint of paganism on it, and they would exchange that for Jewish coinage which could be used in the temple. So they were there for the convenience of the worshipers. Also, they changed large coins into smaller ones. Not only did they make religion easy, but they also made religion cheap. I recognize that we ought not to overemphasize money in the church and should not beg, but I'll tell you something that is more intolerable than that. Some people treat the church and the cause of Christ as something so cheap that at times it becomes necessary to sound an alarm.

They were also selling animals. There was a lot of traffic in those sacrificial animals. It was work and expense to raise those sheep and oxen, and somebody would have to do it for a price. It was very easy for all this to become a religious racket. Today we have that problem with us also. - McGee

How have we made giving easy, less intentional, and taken away the sacrifice? If the IRS revoked the church’s status as 501c (Charity), would the giving drop?

Joh 2:15-17 When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE HAS EATEN ME UP."

I tell you, the Lord was rough. There is no question about that. I don't like the pictures we have of an anemic-looking Christ. The artists don't seem to realize who He was.

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The disciples remembered the verse from Psa_69:9. This psalm is quoted seventeen times in the New Testament and is one of the six most quoted psalms in the New Testament. It is quoted again in Joh_15:25 and Joh_19:28-29. The other psalms which are frequently quoted are Psalms 2, 22, 89, 110, and 118. - McGee

What is your picture of Jesus? Love and rainbows never offended anyone, if that is it. You need to read your Bible! He is a man’s man. He stood tall, said the unpopular things, preached on hell, and was really only silent in the face of the establishment when He died for us!

Joh 2:18 So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?"

The word that He used for destroy is luo which means “to untie.” He is, of course, referring to His own human body.- McGee

Joh 2:19-20 Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"

The temple at that time was Herod's temple. It was still in the process of being built, and it had already been under construction for forty–six years.

There is a specific use of words in the Greek here that I want you to see. In verses Joh_2:14 and Joh_2:15, when it tells of Jesus cleansing the temple, the word used for temple is hieron which refers to the temple as a whole. Specifically, it was the outer court of the temple which Jesus cleansed. The word Jesus uses in verse Joh_2:19 and the Jews repeat in verse Joh_2:20 is naos which refers to the inner sanctuary of the temple. This word can also be used in reference to the body as Paul does in 1Co_6:19 when he says that the holy place today is not a temple made with hands but that our body is the temple (naos) of the Holy Spirit. The Jews were asking the Lord whether He really meant that He would destroy this temple, but, of course, our Lord meant the temple of His body.- McGee

Joh 2:21-22 But He was speaking of the temple of His body. Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.

Jesus said that if they destroyed this temple, He would “raise it up.” The word He used was egeiroμ, which John uses five times in his Gospel. Its actual meaning is “to wake up” and, each time the word is used, it refers to awaking from the dead. Paul used the same word in his sermon in Antioch of Pisidia where he used it four times. It refers to the resurrection of Christ, and it refers to the resurrection of believers also. It is used in reference to the restoration to life of Lazarus. It was a “waking up.” That is the picture which we have in this word egeiroμ. That is precisely what He meant when He spoke of the temple of His body. But His disciples didn't understand that, and it was not until after His resurrection that they recalled it and referred to it.-McGee

Jesus Knows What Is in Man

Joh 2:23-25 Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.

As a result of the signs which Jesus performed in Jerusalem at the Passover, many believed in His name. This does not necessarily mean that they actually committed their lives to Him in simple trust; rather, they professed to accept Him. There was no reality to their action; it was merely an outward display of following Jesus. It was similar to the condition which we have in the world where many people claim to be Christians who have never truly been born again through

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faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. – BBC

2:24 Although many believed in Him, yet Jesus did not believe (same word in Greek) in them. That is, He did not commit Himself to them. He realized that they were coming to Him out of curiosity. They were looking for something sensational and spectacular. He knew all men—their thoughts and their motives. He knew why they acted the way they did. He knew whether their faith was real or only an imitation. – BBC

There is a difference in just accepting Him as Savior vs. accepting Him as Lord and Savior. **How about you?** If you have not put Him as Lord of your life, then you are missing out on Power, Peace, and the favor that can only come in an obedient relationship. This is where we are going next. As He leaves the big crowd to meet someone who is truly seeking – Nicodemus.

You Must Be Born Again

Joh 3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.

This man is set apart from the mob. Our Lord didn't trust the mob because He knew their faith was not genuine. But this man Nicodemus is a genuine man. Let's get acquainted with him.

Three things are said about him here. The first thing is that he was a man of the Pharisees. That means that he belonged to the best group in Israel. They believed in the inspiration of the Old Testament, they believed in the coming of the Messiah, they believed in miracles, and they believed in the Resurrection. He was a man of the Pharisees, and his name was Nicodemus—we are given his name. And he was a ruler of the Jews. This tells us of the three masks that this man wore. – McGee

What masks are you wearing? Just like Nicodemus, Jesus needs us to drop the masks and get to heart.

Joh 3:2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

The Bible does not say why Nicodemus came to Jesus by night. The most obvious explanation is that he would have been embarrassed to be seen going to Jesus, since the Lord had by no means been accepted by the majority of the Jewish people. However, he did come to Jesus. Nicodemus acknowledged the Lord to be a teacher sent by God, since no one could perform such miracles without the direct help of God. In spite of all his learning, Nicodemus did not recognize the Lord as God manifest in the flesh. He was like so many today who say that Jesus was a great man, a wonderful teacher, an outstanding example. All of these statements fall very far short of the full truth. Jesus was and is God. - BBC

Where are you with your faith? Do you co-workers and all your acquaintances know where you stand with Jesus?

He comes with a genuine compliment. He's no hypocrite. He says that we Pharisees have agreed that You are a teacher come from God. I think that he came to talk about the Kingdom of God. The Pharisees wanted to establish the kingdom and throw off the yoke of Rome, but they had no way of doing it. Here comes this One who is popular—with the multitudes following Him wherever He goes—so the Pharisees want to hitch their little wagon to His star. Since He has come from the country up in Galilee and they think He doesn't know how to deal with these politicians as they do, they want to combine forces. So Nicodemus comes, acknowledging that Jesus is a teacher come from God.

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The proof that he points to is the miracles Jesus performed. He had to recognize the miracles. Please notice that no one doubted the miracles of our Lord—not in that day! You've got to be a professor in a seminary today, removed by two thousand years and several thousand miles from the land where it all took place, and then you can doubt the miracles. But you will not find that either the friends of Jesus or His enemies ever doubted His miracles. - McGee

Joh 3:3-4 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." 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?"

... I think he came to talk about the kingdom of God. I see no other reason why our Lord would almost abruptly interrupt him and say to him, "The thing is, you can't even see the kingdom of God except you've been born again."-McGee

Jesus has a way of changing your agenda if you listen. To many times we come seeking one thing, and Jesus, wants us to see His Will for us. Has this ever happened to you? Sometimes, when you are not getting an answer to a prayer, you need to stop and ask God if you should be praying about something else first?

Jesus had said he must be born again. The Greek word for "again" is another which means "from above." This man Nicodemus couldn't think of anything but a physical birth. He immediately dropped the condescending mask of the Pharisee and asked how this could be. Our Lord wasn't speaking of a physical birth at all. He was speaking about a spiritual birth. But Nicodemus couldn't understand about a spiritual birth. The reason was that he had no spiritual capacity to comprehend it. – McGee

Here again we see how difficult it was for men to understand the words of the Lord Jesus. Nicodemus insisted on taking everything literally. He could not understand how a grown-up could be born again. He pondered the physical impossibility of a man entering his mother's womb again in order to be born.

Nicodemus illustrates that "the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1Co_2:14). - BBC

Joh 3:5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Now what does it mean to be born of water and of the Spirit? There are those who think that to be born of water is a reference to water baptism. But this would be a strange expression if it did refer to that. Then, there have been several very fine Christian doctors who interpret "born of water" as the physical birth which is a birth in water; that is, the child in the womb is in water. I don't think that is what is meant here at all. He wasn't talking about the difference between natural birth and spiritual birth, but He was talking about how a man could be born "from above" or "born again."

As we saw in chapter 2, water is symbolic of the Word of God. We will find later in this book that Jesus says, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (Joh_17:17, italics mine). There is a cleansing, sanctifying power in the Word. In Joh_15:3 Jesus says, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (italics mine). The Word of God is likened unto water again and again. We believe that "born of water and of the Spirit" means that a person must be born again by the Holy Spirit using the Scripture. We believe, very definitely, that no one could be born again without the Word of God applied by the Spirit of God. One today is born from above by the use of water, which is the Word of God, and the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, making it real to the heart.

There are three outstanding conversions in the Book of Acts. They have been given to us, I think, primarily as illustrations. There is the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch, the conversion of Cornelius, and the conversion of Paul.

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These three men are representatives of the three families of Noah: the son of Shem, the son of Ham, and the son of Japheth. In each of these three cases, the Word of God was used by the Spirit of God for their conversions. God's method seems to be the Word of God, used by the Spirit of God, given through a man of God. I am confident that our Lord, saying that one must be born of water and of the Spirit, referred to the Spirit of God using the Word of God. Without this, Nicodemus could not enter into the kingdom of God. – McGee

Joh 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

God does not intend to change the flesh, meaning this old nature which you and I have. The fact of the matter is that it can't be changed. The Word of God has much to say about this. The old nature is at war with God. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom_8:7-8). God has no program for our old nature, to retrieve it or improve it or develop it or save it. That old nature is to go down into the grave with us. And, if the Lord comes before we go down into the grave, we are to be changed in the twinkling of an eye, which means we will get rid of that old nature. It can never be made obedient to God. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." That is an axiom. God does not intend to save the flesh at all. This old nature must be replaced by the new nature. The spiritual birth is necessary so that you and I may be given a new nature, friend. – McGee

Joh 3:7-8 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

3:7 Nicodemus was not to marvel at the teachings of the Lord Jesus. He must realize that one must be born again and understand the complete inability of human nature to remedy its own fallen condition. He must realize that in order to be a subject of God's kingdom, a man must be holy, pure, and spiritual. -BBC

3:8 As He so often did, the Lord Jesus used nature to illustrate spiritual truth. He reminded Nicodemus that the wind blows where it wishes, and a person can hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. The new birth is very much like the wind. First of all, it takes place according to the will of God. It is not a power which man holds in his own control. Secondly, the new birth is invisible. You cannot see it taking place, but you can see the results of it in a person's life. When a man has been saved, a change comes over him. The evil things which he formerly loved, he now hates. The things of God which he formerly despised, these things are now the very things which he loves. Just as no one can fully understand the wind, so the new birth is a miraculous work of the Spirit of God which man is not able to comprehend fully. Moreover, the new birth, like the wind, is unpredictable. It is not possible to state just when and where it will take place.- BBC

Joh 3:9 Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?"

When we come to the Lord Jesus, we have to take off all our masks. We can't use them there. You have to be the real "you." You have to come just as you are; then Jesus will deal with you that way. And this is the way He will deal with this man Nicodemus. – McGee

Joh 3:10 Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?"

That's gentle satire that our Lord is using here. He is saying to this man, "You are a ruler in Israel and acting as if I were telling you something that couldn't be true, because if it were true, you would have known about it." And then Jesus asks, "Don't you know these things, Nicodemus?"-McGee

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Do we sometimes let our pride get in the way of humbling coming to Christ and fully grasping the repentance and new life offered?

Joh 3:11 Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness.

The Lord Jesus then underlined the infallibility of His teaching, and yet man's unbelief concerning it. From all eternity, He had known the truthfulness of this and had only taught what He knew and had seen. But Nicodemus and most of the Jews of his day refused to believe His testimony.-BBC

Joh 3:12 If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

What were the earthly things to which the Lord referred in this verse? It was His earthly kingdom. As a student of the OT, Nicodemus knew that one day the Messiah would come and set up a literal kingdom here on earth with Jerusalem as His capital. What Nicodemus failed to understand was that in order to enter this kingdom, there must be a new birth. What then were the heavenly things to which the Lord referred? They are the truths which are explained in the following verses—the wonderful way by which a person receives this new birth.-BBC

Joh 3:13 No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.

Only one person was qualified to speak about heavenly things, since He was the only One who was in heaven. The Lord Jesus was not merely a human teacher sent from God, but He was One who lived with God the Father from all eternity, and came down into the world. When He said that no one has ascended to heaven, He did not mean that OT saints such as Enoch and Elijah had not gone to heaven, but that they had been taken up whereas He ascended to heaven by His own power. Another explanation is that no human being had access to the presence of God continually in the way which He had. He could ascend to God's dwelling place in a unique way because He had descended out of heaven to this earth. Even as the Lord Jesus stood on earth, speaking with Nicodemus, He said that He was in heaven. How could this be? Here is a statement of the fact that, as God, the Lord was in all places at one and the same time. This is what we mean when we say that He is omnipresent. While some modern translations omit the words who is in heaven, they are widely supported in the manuscripts and belong to the text. - BBC

Joh 3:14-15 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

When Moses lifted up that brass serpent on a pole because of God's judgment upon the sin of the people, all they had to do for healing was to look to it. As Moses lifted up the serpent, so Christ is going to be lifted up. That serpent, you see, represented the sin of the people. And Christ was made sin for us on the Cross because He bore our sin there. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up. - McGee