

John Chapter Three

Read John 3:1-15 – Regeneration is Necessary

v1. “THERE WAS A MAN OF THE PHARISEES, NAMED NICODEMUS, A RULER OF THE JEWS:”

Nicodemus was a member of the Sanhedrin council, the ruling body of the Jewish religion and as we studied in the “Between the Testaments” series the national ruling council of the Jews. Though they were under Rome much of the day to day business of governing the people of Judea was conducted by the Sanhedrin. He was a Pharisee, the party in power because they apparently had the greatest numbers of followers among the Jews during the time of Jesus. The Sadducees controlled the priesthood and the office of the high priest.

v2. “THE SAME CAME TO JESUS BY NIGHT, AND SAID UNTO HIM, RABBI, WE KNOW THAT THOU ART A TEACHER COME FROM GOD: FOR NO MAN CAN DO THESE MIRACLES THAT THOU DOEST, EXCEPT GOD BE WITH HIM.”

Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, and while we don't know specifically why; we can understand that it was quite likely that any visible support or even association with Jesus could be politically disastrous for a Pharisee; especially a member of the Sanhedrin. Nicodemus was apparently a brave man, a man of conviction, because we have him defending Jesus in later in John's account.

John 7:50-51 “NICODEMUS SAITH UNTO THEM, (HE THAT CAME TO JESUS BY NIGHT, BEING ONE OF THEM,) DOTH OUR LAW JUDGE *any* MAN, BEFORE IT HEAR HIM, AND KNOW WHAT HE DOETH?”

The leaders of the Jewish people were divided, though we don't read much about those who believed in Jesus as the Messiah. Some said:

John 9:16 “THEREFORE SAID SOME OF THE PHARISEES, THIS MAN IS NOT OF GOD, BECAUSE HE KEEPETH NOT THE SABBATH DAY. OTHERS SAID, HOW CAN A MAN THAT IS A SINNER DO SUCH MIRACLES? AND THERE WAS A DIVISION AMONG THEM”

Others wanted to call him a sinner because he did not keep the traditions that they had raised to the level of scripture. We have a number of religious denominations today and some brethren who do the same thing; that is raise their traditions to the same level of importance as the Word of God.

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Others admitted that:

“IF THIS MAN WERE NOT OF GOD, HE COULD DO NOTHING.” **John 9:33**

These signs, wonders and miracles were given to prove who Jesus was and where his power came from. Some people recognized that even before Peter declared it to them by the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

Acts 2:22 “YE MEN OF ISRAEL, HEAR THESE WORDS; JESUS OF NAZARETH, A MAN APPROVED OF GOD AMONG YOU BY MIRACLES AND WONDERS AND SIGNS, WHICH GOD DID BY HIM IN THE MIDST OF YOU, AS YE YOURSELVES ALSO KNOW:”

v3. “JESUS ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO HIM, VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO THEE, EXCEPT A MAN BE BORN AGAIN, HE CANNOT SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD.”

Now that would seem to be a strange response; this man Nicodemus has just declared that he knows that Jesus has power from God and Jesus talks about being born again. But what is the one most important things we can do help determine our ultimate destiny in heaven; that we must do in order to be children of God? We have to be born into God’s family, not in the same way as being born into a fleshly family but by God’s special prescription:

Titus 3:5 “NOT BY WORKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH WE HAVE DONE, BUT ACCORDING TO HIS MERCY HE SAVED US, BY THE WASHING OF REGENERATION, AND RENEWING OF THE HOLY GHOST.”

James says that we are begotten of God through his truth that we should become a kind of first fruits:

James 1:18 “OF HIS OWN WILL BEGAT HE US WITH THE WORD OF TRUTH, THAT WE SHOULD BE A KIND OF FIRSTFRUITS OF HIS CREATURES.”

As such we become new creatures:

Galatians 6:15 “FOR IN CHRIST JESUS NEITHER CIRCUMCISION AVAILETH ANY THING, NOR UNCIRCUMCISION, BUT A NEW CREATURE.”

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By being born again, by becoming new creatures, by being washed in the blood of the Jesus Christ the sacrifice for our sins we have also purified our souls as the Apostle Peter writes.

I Peter 1:22-23 "SEEING YE HAVE PURIFIED YOUR SOULS IN OBEYING THE TRUTH (by the washing of water, **Acts 22:16**) HROUGH THE SPIRIT UNTO UNFEIGNED LOVE OF THE BRETHREN, **see that ye** LOVE ONE ANOTHER WITH A PURE HEART FERVENTLY: BEING BORN AGAIN, NOT OF CORRUPTIBLE SEED, BUT OF INCORRUPTIBLE, BY THE WORD OF GOD, WHICH LIVETH AND ABIDETH FOR EVER."

v4. "NICODEMUS SAITH UNTO HIM, HOW CAN A MAN BE BORN WHEN HE IS OLD? CAN HE ENTER THE SECOND TIME INTO THIS MOTHER'S WOMB, AND BE BORN?"

Nicodemus took what Jesus said literally, and understanding the physical impossibility of what Jesus was telling him, didn't understand.

v5. "JESUS ANSWERED, VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO THEE, EXCEPT A MAN BE BORN OF WATER AND **of** THE SPIRIT, HE CANNOT ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD."

Men were being baptized by John and by the disciples of Jesus. Jesus explains that in order to enter into the kingdom of God a man must be born both of water and the Spirit. This new birth carries much more importance than is normally attached to such an occurrence. Nicodemus was a true and faithful teacher of the word of God; he recognized Jesus power and was ready to accept that Jesus came from God. He was in the kingdom of Israel but not in the kingdom of God as it would not come until the Messiah or Christ came. John the Baptist was declaring that this kingdom was near at hand and Nicodemus wanted to know more.

Jesus explains to Nicodemus that this birth, being born again, is through water and Spirit rather than from the mother's womb. They are the agents; the instruments used to produce this rebirth, the medium in which we are buried to be raised a "NEW CREATURE". The Spirit is living, active; the water is an inanimate object. The Spirit is the active agent, the water the instrument of our rebirth. This is why we're told:

Mark 16:16 "HE THAT BELIEVETH AND IS BAPTIZED SHALL BE SAVED; BUT HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT SHALL BE DAMNED."

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The people who heard Peter's sermon at Pentecost and asked what they needed to do:

"THEN PETER SAID UNTO THEM, REPENT, AND BE BAPTIZED EVERY ONE OF YOU IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS, AND YE SHALL RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST." **Acts 2:38**

v6. "THAT WHICH IS BORN OF THE FLESH IS FLESH; AND THAT WHICH IS BORN OF THE SPIRIT IS SPIRIT."

Jesus is answering Nicodemus this way. That fleshly part of man that is born of a mother and father is not what is being reborn but rather the Spirit within man that must be reborn or begotten of the Spirit.

v7. "MARVEL NOT THAT I SAID UNTO THEE, YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN."

Jesus tells Nicodemus not to wonder about being born again. It is the fleshly part of man that is born of the flesh, of his father and mother; but it is the spirit within man that must be born or begotten of the Spirit.

v8. "THE WIND BLOWETH WHERE IT LISTETH, AND THOU HEAREST THE SOUND THEREOF, BUT CANST NOT TELL WHENCE IT COMETH, AND WHITHER IT GOETH: SO IS EVERY ONE THAT IS BORN OF THE SPIRIT."

The idea that Jesus is presenting to Nicodemus is that man cannot know all things and why they are as they are. The wind blows and we cannot know where it started, where it will end nor can we see it; we can only see its effects. It blows where it will. There are other things that God has not revealed unto man or that man has not discovered. Especially those things of the Spirit that we cannot know unless God reveals them, as Solomon tells us:

Ecclesiastes 11:5 "AS THOU KNOWEST NOT WHAT *is* THE WAY OF THE SPIRIT, *nor* HOW THE BONES *do grow* IN THE WOMB OF HER THAT IS WITH CHILD: EVEN SO THOU KNOWEST NOT THE WORKS OF GOD WHO MAKETH ALL."

That which is born again is the spirit of man not the fleshly part of man and it is born again by the action of the Spirit of God; the Spirit of both man and God be invisible things that we can not see, touch, feel or quantify. As Paul writes:

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I Corinthians 2:11 “FOR WHAT MAN KNOWETH THE THINGS OF A MAN, SAVE THE SPIRIT OF MAN WHICH IS IN HIM? EVEN SO THE THINGS OF GOD KNOWETH NO MAN, BUT THE SPIRIT OF GOD.”

v9. “NICODEMUS ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO HIM, HOW CAN THESE THINGS BE?”

As a child of Abraham, a Pharisee, and a member of the ruling council of God's chosen people this man already considered himself to be a citizen the kingdom of God's people. He had been born into it by being a descendant of father Abraham. He did not readily take to the idea that he would need to be born again to enter the kingdom of God.

There were a lot of times that Jesus taught things that his hearers either couldn't grasp or couldn't accept. In speaking of being the bread of life:

John 6:52 “THE JEWS THEREFORE STROVE AMONG THEMSELVES, SAYING, HOW CAN THIS MAN GIVE US *his* FLESH TO EAT?”

They raised a controversy over eating his flesh; which we do symbolically in partaking of the Lord's Supper.

John 6:60 “MANY THEREFORE OF HIS DISCIPLES, WHEN THEY HAD HEARD *this*, SAID, THIS IS AN HARD SAYING; WHO CAN HEAR IT?”

v10. “JESUS ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO HIM, ART THOU A MASTER OF ISRAEL, AND KNOWEST NOT THESE THINGS?”

Jesus thinks that a teacher or master in Israel should be familiar enough with God's word and the prophecies of the Old Testament that they should understand these things. They had been taught that new things and new principles would be given them:

Jeremiah 31:31 “BEHOLD, THE DAYS COME, SAITH THE **LORD**, THAT I WILL MAKE A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL, AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH.”

v11. “VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO THEE, WE SPEAK THAT WE DO KNOW, AND TESTIFY THAT WE HAVE SEEN; AND YE RECEIVE NOT OUR WITNESS.”

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Jesus was a witness from God of those things he taught and yet his teaching was not received and Nicodemus is slow to accept what Jesus is saying. These things were given Jesus by the Father:

Matthew 11:27 “ALL THINGS ARE DELIVERED UNTO ME OF MY FATHER: AND NO MAN KNOWETH THE SON, BUT THE FATHER; NEITHER KNOWETH ANY MAN THE FATHER, SAVE THE SON, AND *he* TO WHOMSOEVER THE SON WILL REVEAL *him*.”

The prophets had foretold that a kingdom of higher spiritual power should be established on earth and a teacher like Nicodemus should know that. Yet, Jesus, even as a witness from God of those things he taught, was not received by many of those who heard>

John 3:32 “AND WHAT HE HATH SEEN AND HEARD, THAT HE TESTIFIETH; AND NO MAN RECEIVEDTH HIS TESTIMONY.”

John 7:16 “JESUS ANSWERED THEM, AND SAID, MY DOCTRINE IS NOT MINE, BUT HIS THAT SENT ME.”

The doctrine, that body of teaching that Jesus brought to mankind was not his but God’s who sent him.

v12. “IF I HAVE TOLD YOU EARTHLY THINGS, AND YE BELIEVE NOT, HOW SHALL YE BELIEVE, IF I TELL YOU *of* HEAVENLY THINGS?”

What Jesus is trying to explain to this man has to do with things pertaining to God’s kingdom here on earth and man’s relationship to it. If he won’t accept that, how is he going to be able to accept anything that he might be told about the heavenly realm, or eternal things?

v13. “AND NO MAN HATH ASCENDED UP TO HEAVEN, BUT HE THAT CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN, *even* THE SON OF MAN WHICH IS IN HEAVEN.”

No one, except one who has come down from heaven can teach these things. No man knows the mind of God; except that it be revealed. Jesus declares that he is the “SON OF MAN” having left his place in heaven where he is the son of God.

John 6:33 “FOR THE BREAD OF GOD IS HE WHICH COMETH DOWN FROM HEAVEN, AND GIVETH LIFE UNTO THE WORLD.”

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Christ is the son of God, He is deity, He is divine. John continues here to drive this theme of his gospel as he is directed by the Holy Spirit. No man has ever ascended into heaven but Jesus has. He was the one that David spoke of in **Psalms 110**, quoted by Peter on Pentecost:

Acts 2:34 “FOR DAVID IS NOT ASCENDED INTO THE HEAVENS: BUT HE SAITH HIMSELF, THE LORD SAID UNTO MY LORD, SIT THOU ON MY RIGHT HAND.”

Paul declared it as well:

I Corinthians 15:45-47 “AND SO IT IS WRITTEN, THE FIRST MAN ADAM WAS MADE A LIVING SOUL; THE LAST MAN ADAM **was made A** QUICKENING SPIRIT. HOWBEIT THAT **was** NOT FIRST WHICH IS SPIRITUAL, BUT THAT WHICH IS NATURAL; AND AFTERWARD THAT WHICH IS SPIRITUAL. THE FIRST MAN IS OF THE EARTH, EARTHY: THE SECOND MAN **is** THE LORD FROM HEAVEN.”

v14. “AND AS MOSES LIFTED UP THE SERPENT IN THE WILDERNESS, EVEN SO MUST THE SON OF MAN BE LIFTED UP:”

We remember the occurrence. Because of their speaking against God the Israelite nation were bitten by serpents sent by Him to punish them. After they asked Mose to pray for them God provided a way of escape for those who would take advantage of it, just as he does today.

Numbers 21:9 “AND MOSES MADE A SERPENT OF BRASS, AND PUT IT ON A POLE, AND IT CAME TO PASS, THAT IF A SERPENT HAD BITTEN ANY MAN, WHEN HE BEHELD THE SERPENT OF BRASS, HE LIVED.”

Jesus declares that he must be lifted up just as this brass serpent was in the wilderness. And we also know through further study that if we obey the commandments surrounding that lifting up of the son of God; we too will escape the death sting of the serpent, the devil.

John 12:32 “AND I, IF I BE LIFTED UP FROM THE EARTH, WILL DRAW ALL **men** UNTO ME.”

If we are drawn to Him and obey his commandments:

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Hebrews 2:9 “BUT WE SEE JESUS, WHO WAS MADE A LITTLE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS FOR THE SUFFERING OF DEATH, CROWNED WITH GLORY AND HONOUR; THAT HE BY THE GRACE OF GOD SHOULD TASTE DEATH FOR EVERY MAN.”

And further through Paul’s letter to the Roman brethren:

Romans 5:18 “THEREFORE AS BY THE OFFENCE OF ONE *judgment came* UPON ALL MEN TO CONDEMNATION; EVEN SO BY THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF ONE *the free gift came* UPON ALL MEN UNTO JUSTIFICATION OF LIFE.”

v15. “THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE”

This is another theme of John’s writing; the fact that Jesus is the author of eternal life, the source of our knowledge and access to God the Father.

John 3:36 “HE THAT BELIEVETH ON THE SON HATH EVERLASTING LIFE: AND HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT THE SON SHALL NOT SEE LIFE; BUT THE WRATH OF GOD ABIDETH ON HIM.”

John 6:47 “VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU, HE THAT BELIEVETH ON ME HATH EVERLASTING LIFE.”

Read John 3:16-17 – The Love of God

v16. “FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, WHAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.”

Do we really understand the power of this little two letter word “SO”? God **SO** loved this world, He **so** loved you and I, that he sent his only son to die in our place. God wanted you and I to be delivered from the dominion and penalty of sin as Paul testifies:

Romans 5:8 “BUT GOD COMMENDETH HIS LOVE TOWARD US, IN THAT, WHILE WE WERE YET SINNERS, CHRIST DIED FOR US.”

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God loves man despite his rebellion and sin; he loved us in spite of the fact that men throughout the time, through their wickedness, have caused him to destroy them, punish them, remove nations and peoples from physical existence. John repeats the theme of these verses in his first epistle:

I John 4:9 "IN THIS WAS MANIFESTED THE LOVE OF GOD TOWARD US, BECAUSE THAT GOD SENT HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON INTO THE WORLD, THAT WE MIGHT LIVE THROUGH HIM."

We had to have a cleansing agent for our souls that the Mosaic Covenant did not provide.

Hebrews 10:4 "FOR *it is* IMPOSSIBLE THAT THE BLOOD OF BULLS AND OF GOATS SHOULD TAKE AWAY SINS."

We all have the need for redemption:

Romans 3:23-26 "FOR ALL HAVE SINNED, AND COME SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD; BEING JUSTIFIED FREELY BY HIS GRACE THROUGH THE REDEMPTION THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS: WHOM GOD HATH SET FORTH *to be* A PROPITIATION THROUGH FAITH IN HIS BLOOD, TO DECLARE HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS THAT ARE PAST, THROUGH THE FORBEARANCE OF GOD; TO DECLARE, *I say*, AT THIS TIME HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS: THAT HE MIGHT BE JUST, AND THE JUSTIFIER OF HIM WHICH BELIEVETH IN JESUS."

And because God so loved us, we must love God in return:

I John 4:19 "WE LOVE HIM, BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US."

And we know that we love God; How???

I John 5:3 "FOR THIS IS THE LOVE OF GOD, THAT WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS: AND HIS COMMANDMENTS ARE NOT GRIEVOUS."

The end result of both of these loves, God for us and ours for God brings us to that eternal destination were seeking. Being freed from the sin that separates us from God and brings spiritual death we become the heirs of eternal life. Our faith in Christ Jesus leads us to follow him. Not a dead faith that has no works to prove itself but a living, acting, working faith that leads us through obedience unto life everlasting. Just as John describes:

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Revelation 22:14 “BLESSED *are* THEY THAT DO HIS COMMANDMENTS, THAT THEY MAY HAVE RIGHT TO THE TREE OF LIFE, AND MAY ENTER IN THROUGH THE GATES INTO THE CITY.”

v17. “FOR GOD SENT NOT HIS SON INTO THE WORLD TO CONDEMN [judge] THE WORLD; BUT THAT THE WORLD THROUGH HIM MIGHT BE SAVED.”

Before God sent his Son to open the way for our return to God that we might be saved; the world was a state of total condemnation. It needed saving because there was no remedy for sin.

John 12:47 “AND IF ANY MAN HEAR MY WORDS, AND BELIEVE NOT, I JUDGE HIM NOT: FOR I CAME NOT TO JUDGE THE WORLD, BUT TO SAVE THE WORLD.”

This scripture clearly teaches that Jesus came to save, not to judge the world. Does this apply to the day in which these words were spoken or to the present age? Does it conflict with other scripture that tells us that Jesus will judge us from the book of life using the book of his law?

Revelation 3:5 “HE THAT OVERCOMETH, THE SAME SHALL BE CLOTHED IN WHITE RAIMENT; AND I WILL NOT BLOT OUT HIS NAME OUT OF THE BOOK OF LIFE, BUT I WILL CONFESS HIS NAME BEFORE MY FATHER, AND BEFORE HIS ANGELS.”

Revelation 20:12 “AND I SAW THE DEAD, SMALL AND GREAT, STAND BEFORE GOD; AND THE BOOKS WERE OPENED: AND ANOTHER BOOK WAS OPENED, WHICH IS *the book* OF LIFE: AND THE DEAD WERE JUDGED OUT OF THOSE THINGS WHICH WERE WRITTEN IN THE BOOKS, ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS.”

It applies to the age in which it was spoken, it does not apply to the Judgment to come. We have example of Jesus not exercising judgment on people who refused to accept him or even let him enter their city:

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Luke 9:52-56 “AND SENT MESSENGERS BEFORE HIS FACE: AND THEY WENT, AND ENTERED INTO A VILLAGE OF THE SAMARITANS, TO MAKE READY FOR HIM. AND THEY DID NOT RECEIVE HIM, BECAUSE HIS FACE WAS AS THOUGH HE WOULD GO TO JERUSALEM. AND WHEN HIS DISCIPLES JAMES AND JOHN SAW *this*, THEY SAID, LORD, WILT THOU THAT WE COMMAND FIRE TO COME DOWN FROM HEAVEN, AND CONSUME THEM, EVEN AS ELIAS DID? BUT HE TURNED, AND REBUKED THEM, AND SAID, YE KNOW NOT WHAT MANNER OF SPIRIT YE ARE OF. FOR THE SON OF MAN IS NOT COME TO DESTROY MEN’S LIVES, BUT TO SAVE THEM. AND THEY WENT TO ANOTHER VILLAGE.”

Read **John 3:18-22** – We Condemn Ourselves

v18. “HE THAT BELIEVETH ON HIM IS NOT CONDEMNED: BUT HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT IS CONDEMNED ALREADY, BECAUSE HE HATH NOT BELIEVED IN THE NAME OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD.”

This belief that Jesus is talking about here; what kind of belief is it? Is he talking about just acknowledging that Jesus is the Son of God, or is he talking about an active belief that manifests itself in every action we take, every fiber of our lives? He is talking about an active, living, belief (faith) working through love and perfected by obedience.

John 5:24 “VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU, HE THAT HEARETH MY WORD, AND BELIEVETH ON HIM THAT SENT ME, HATH EVERLASTING LIFE, AND SHALL NOT COME INTO CONDEMNATION; BUT IS PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE.”

John 6:40 “AND THIS IS THE WILL OF HIM THAT SENT ME, THAT EVERY ONE WHICH SEETH THE SON, AND BELIEVETH ON HIM, MAY HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE: AND I WILL RAISE HIM UP AT THE LAST DAY.”

Those that refused to believe in Christ were under condemnation before he came and his coming gave them better opportunities for them to believe. Those who still do not believe suffer an even greater condemnation because of their greater opportunity.

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John 20:30-31 “AND MANY OTHER SIGNS TRULY DID JESUS IN THE PRESENCE OF HIS DISCIPLES, WHICH ARE NOT WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK: BUT THESE ARE WRITTEN, THAT YE MIGHT BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD; AND THAT BELIEVING YE MIGHT HAVE LIFE THROUGH HIS NAME.”

v19. “AND THIS IS THE CONDEMNATION, THAT LIGHT IS COME INTO THE WORLD, AND MEN LOVED DARKNESS RATHER THAN LIGHT, BECAUSE THEIR DEEDS WERE EVIL.”

The analogy of light and life is age old and easily understood. Even within the physical realm where light shines things grow and flourish and we understand the application. Even most plant life in the physical world must have a certain portion of sunlight to do well. Jesus is the Light of the world; his Light will show us a way to travel through the times of our living on this earth. The way that will allow us to reach an eternal destination sharing a heavenly home with Him and the Father.

John 1:4 “IN HIM WAS LIFE; AND THE LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF MEN.”

John 1:9-11 “*That* WAS THE TRUE LIGHT, WHICH LIGHTETH EVERY MAN THAT COMETH INTO THE WORLD. HE WAS IN THE WORLD, AND THE WORLD WAS MADE BY HIM, AND THE WORLD KNEW HIM NOT. HE CAME UNTO HIS OWN, AND HIS OWN RECEIVED HIM NOT.”

But just as his own received him not, as John tells us, the world and those who associated themselves with worldly things will not receive Jesus either. People want to do their own thing, they want their pleasures, they don't want to be held accountable for their actions, they want to enjoy sin but the light exposes their sinfulness, therefore they also want to live in the dark. Do you ever wonder why people don't want to know the word of God? Do you ever wonder why people want to hear sermonettes, stories and jokes instead of honest presentations of God's word? Jesus says because their deeds are evil, oh probably not by the standards of our society today but by God's standards:

“THEY ARE OF THOSE THAT REBEL AGAINST THE LIGHT; THEY KNOW NOT THE WAYS THEREOF, NOR ABIDE IN THE PATHS THEREOF.” **Job 24:13**

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v20. “FOR EVERY ONE THAT DOETH EVIL HATETH THE LIGHT, NEITHER COMETH TO THE LIGHT, LEST HIS DEEDS SHOULD BE REPROVED.”

When and where is it that people do those things that otherwise they might be ashamed? At night, in darkness; hidden from the view of those who might know them; that is if they have a conscience that can still be touched; if not it doesn't make much difference. They're like the burglar plying his trade that Job describes:

Job 24:16-17 “IN THE DARK THEY DIG THROUGH HOUSES, *which* THEY HAD MARKED FOR THEMSELVES IN THE DAYTIME: THEY KNOW NOT THE LIGHT. FOR THE MORNING IS TO THEM EVEN AS THE SHADOW OF DEATH: IF *one* KNOW *them*, *they are in* THE TERRORS OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH.”

Job says that they're scared to death that they would be exposed. Jesus says those who do evil of choice show that they hate the light and truth and seek to cover the exposure of their deeds so that the light will not reveal them.

v21. “BUT HE THAT DOETH TRUTH COMETH TO THE LIGHT, THAT HIS DEEDS MAY BE MADE MANIFEST, THAT THEY ARE WROUGHT IN GOD.”

Those who live according to the truth of God's word love the light; because they have nothing to hide in their lives; they don't have those things they don't want exposed.

v22. “AFTER THESE THINGS CAME JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES INTO THE LAND OF JUDAEA; AND THERE HE TARRIED WITH THEM, AND BAPTIZED.”

Remembering our previous discussion regarding where John baptized, this verse very plainly states that he was in Judea. The conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus took place in Jerusalem; then Jesus went out into the countryside of Judea and stayed there for a period of time and baptized disciples. We would point out that Jesus himself did not baptize these people but rather his disciples did the baptizing.

John 4:2 “(THOUGH JESUS HIMSELF BAPTIZED NOT, BUT HIS DISCIPLES,)

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Read **John 3:23-36** – John the Baptist

v23. “AND JOHN ALSO WAS BAPTIZING IN AENON NEAR TO SALIM, BECAUSE THERE WAS MUCH WATER THERE: AND THEY CAME, AND WERE BAPTIZED.”

John continues to baptize followers, working as this verse says where there was much water. On the one mosaic map that I found Aenon is shown on the west side of the Jordan across from Bethabara in Judea.

v24. “FOR JOHN WAS NOT YET CAST INTO PRISON.”

Jesus is now teaching, has begun his public ministry, John has not been cast into prison as yet and is also teaching and baptizing so they worked at the same time for span of time. We’re not told how long. For it was shortly afterward that Herod “LAID HOLD ON JOHN” as Matthew records.

Matthew 14:3 “FOR HEROD HAD LAID HOLD ON JOHN, AND BOUND *him*, AND PUT HIM IN PRISON FOR HERODIAS’ SAKE HIS BROTHER PHILIP’S WIFE.”

v25. “THEN THERE AROSE A QUESTION BETWEEN *some* OF JOHN DISCIPLES AND THE JEWS ABOUT PURIFYING.”

We’re not sure just what kind of question was raised as the Bible doesn’t tell us, but the context seems to indicate that a question concerning the baptism of John and the baptism of Jesus. Or perhaps since both were baptizing for the remission of sins, some question arose regarding this purification and what it meant.

v26. “AND THEY CAME UNTO JOHN, AND SAID UNTO HIM, RABBI, HE THAT WAS WITH THEE BEYOND JORDAN, TO WHOM THOU BAREST WITNESS, BEHOLD, THE SAME BAPTIZETH, AND ALL *men* COME TO HIM.”

It would almost appear that some of John’s disciples are complaining that Jesus is now attracting all the crowds and followers and they’re jealous. But if we look back to chapter one we can fully understand why Jesus was attracting such a large following; John has pointed him out as one who was more worthy, one whose teaching could be expected to be superior:

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John 1:15 “JOHN BARE WITNESS OF HIM, AND CRIED, SAYING, THIS WAS HE OF WHOM I SPAKE, HE THAT COMETH AFTER ME IS PREFERRED BEFORE ME: FOR HE WAS BEFORE ME.”

John 1:27 “HE IT IS, WHO COMING AFTER ME IS PREFERRED BEFORE ME, WHOSE SHOE’S LATCHET I AM NOT WORTHY TO UNLOOSE.”

John 1:34 “AND I SAW, AND BARE RECORD THAT THIS IS THE SON OF GOD.”

v27 “JOHN ANSWERED AND SAID, A MAN CAN RECEIVE NOTHIING, EXCEPT IT BE GIVEN HIM FROM HEAVEN.”

John tells his disciples that “A MAN CAN RECEIVE NOTHING, EXCEPT IT BE GIVEN HIM FROM HEAVEN.” He is reminding them that this Jesus has also received his teaching and his mission from heaven. What appears to be happening is that the disciples of John are getting themselves into the same mindset that Paul addressed in the church at Corinth.

I Corinthians 4:6-7 “AND THESE THINGS, BRETHREN, I HAVE IN A FIGURE TRANSFERRED TO MYSELF AND *to* APOLLOS FOR YOUR SAKES; THAT YE MIGHT LEARN IN US NOT TO THINK *of men* ABOVE THAT WHICH IS WRITTEN, THAT NO ONE OF YOU BE PUFFED UP FOR ONE AGAINST ANOTHER. FOR WHO MAKETH THEE TO DIFFER *from another?* AND WHAT HAST THOU THAT THOU DIDST NOT RECEIVE? NOW IF THOU DIDST RECEIVE *it*, WHY DOST THOU GLORY, AS IF THOU HADST NOT RECEIVED *it?*”

Paul tells them not to be puffed up one against another; and the problem he’s addressing here was their division over whether they were of Paul, or Apollos or Cephas. John disciples seem to be about to do the same thing. He says that what Jesus is or has, has come from God. When we consider our own lives, James reminds us of this as well:

James 1:17 “EVERY GOOD GIFT AND EVERY PERFECT GIFT IS FROM ABOVE, AND COMETH DOWN FROM THE FATHER OF LIGHTS, WITH WHOM IS NO VARIABLENESS, NEITHER SHADOW OF TURNING.”

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v28. “YE YOURSELVES BEAR ME WITNESS, THAT I SAID, I AM NOT THE CHRIST, BUT THAT I AM SENT BEFORE HIM.”

John had testified from the beginning that he wasn't the Christ but rather the one sent to herald or proclaim the coming of the one who was to follow. We remember from our study of chapter one.

John 1:20 “AND HE CONFESSED, AND DENIED NOT; BUT CONFESSED, I AM NOT THE CHRIST.”

v29. “HE THAT HATH THE BRIDE IS THE BRIDEGROOM: BUT THE FRIEND OF THE BRIDEGROOM, WHICH STANDETH AND HEARETH HIM, REJOICETH GREATLY BECAUSE OF THE BRIDEGROOM'S VOICE: THIS MY JOY THEREFORE IS FULFILLED.”

John says he is not the bridegroom but rather the friend of the bridegroom who witnesses his words. We, today, would call him the best man in a wedding. Jesus uses the analogy of the wedding to describe, his relationship to the church; those who are invited to the wedding with Christ as the bridegroom; Jesus used this analogy as well:

Matthew 22:2 “THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE UNTO A CERTAIN KING, WHICH MADE A MARRIAGE FOR HIS SON,”

Paul uses this analogy to describe the Corinthian church:

II Corinthians 11:2 “FOR I AM JEALOUS OVER YOU WITH GODLY JEALOUSLY: FOR I HAVE ESPOUSED YOU TO ONE HUSBAND, THAT I MAY PRESENT *you as* A CHASTE VIRGIN TO CHRIST.”

v30. “HE MUST INCREASE, BUT I *must* DECREASE.”

At this point John is about finished with his earthly ministry; he knows his days are limited; he must decrease or his followers must cease to follow him as the one he was to herald has come and must increase.

v31. “HE THAT COMETH FROM ABOVE IS ABOVE ALL: HE THAT IS OF THE EARTH IS EARTHLY, AND SPEAKETH OF THE EARTH: HE THAT COMETH FROM HEAVEN IS ABOVE ALL.”

John Chapter Three

John says that where they came from determines who is supreme. John is an ordinary man who came from the earth and speaks of things of the earth; Jesus, the Son of God, came from heaven and is therefore superior. We see here again the importance of the miracle of Jesus birth. John again emphasizes the deity, power and authority of Jesus and we understand of course because:

“AND JESUS CAME AND SPAKE UNTO THEM SAYING, ALL POWER IS GIVEN UNTO ME IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH.” **Matthew 28:18**

Paul writes to the Roman brethren that Jesus is higher than the fathers which the Jews held high:

Romans 9:5 “WHOSE *are* THE FATHERS, AND OF WHOM IS CONCERNING THE FLESH CHRIST *came*, WHO IS OVER ALL, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER. AMEN.”

And to the Ephesians that he is over all in both this world and the next:

Ephesians 1:20-21 “WHICH HE WROUGHT IN CHRIST, WHEN HE RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, AND SET *him* AT HIS OWN RIGHT HAND IN THE HEAVENLY *places*, FAR ABOVE ALL PRINCIPALITY, AND POWER, AND MIGHT, AND DOMINION, AND EVERY NAME THAT IS NAMED, NOT ONLY IN THIS WORLD, BUT ALSO IN THAT WHICH IS TO COME:”

v32. “AND WHAT HE HATH SEEN AND HEARD, THAT HE TESTIFIETH; AND NO MAN RECEIVETH HIS TESTIMONY.”

Just as he told Nicodemus, and later the Jews who questioned him, Jesus testified of heavenly things

John 8:26 “I HAVE MANY THINGS TO SAY AND TO JUDGE OF YOU: BUT HE THAT SENT ME IS TRUE; AND I SPEAK TO THE WORLD THOSE THINGS WHICH I HAVE HEARD OF HIM.”

But men did not believe him. In the minds of the rulers and priests of Judea; the Messiah that God promised just couldn't have come as a simple carpenter's son from a small town in Galilee.

John Chapter Three

v33. “HE THAT HATH RECEIVED HIS TESTIMONY HATH SET TO HIS SEAL THAT GOD IS TRUE.”

While those that received him were few, they confessed in their hearts that God is true. The fact that men rejected Christ in his day has no effect upon the truth of God’s Word, just as the fact that men reject, twist and pervert the Word of God today does not diminish it’s value one bit. Paul addresses it this way to the Romans:

Romans 3:3-4 “FOR WHAT IF SOME DID NOT BELIEVE? SHALL THEIR UNBELIEF MAKE THE FAITH OF GOD WITHOUT EFFECT? GOD FORBID: YEA, LET GOD BE TRUE, BUT EVERY MAN A LIAR, AS IT IS WRITTEN, THAT THOU MIGHTEST BE JUSTIFIED IN THY SAYINGS, AND MIGHTEST OVERCOME WHEN THOU ART JUDGED.”

v34. “FOR HE WHOM GOD HATH SENT SPEAKETH THE WORDS OF GOD: FOR GOD GIVETH NOT THE SPIRIT BY MEASURE *unto him.*”

John 7:16 “JESUS ANSWERED THEM, AND SAID, MY DOCTRINE IS NOT MINE, BUT HIS THAT SENT ME.”

Jesus, being sent from God, spoke the words that God gave him. God gave his Son the Spirit without measure or “not by measure” whereas all others, apostles, prophets, etc. God gave his Spirit by measure or in limited portions.

v35. “THE FATHER LOVETH THE SON, AND HATH GIVEN ALL THINGS INTO HIS HAND.”

Again, a declaration of the deity of Jesus by John as the Son of his Father, given all things, therefore all power. Jesus declares this himself:

Matthew 11:27 “ALL THINGS ARE DELIVERED UNTO ME OF MY FATHER: AND NO MAN KNOWETH THE SON, BUT THE FATHER; NEITHER KNOWETH ANY MAN THE FATHER, SAVE THE SON, AND *he* TO WHOMSOEVER THE SON WILL REVEAL *him.*” This is repeated almost with the same words in **Luke 10:22.**

John Chapter Three

The Hebrew writer puts it this way:

Hebrews 2:8 “THOU HAST PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. FOR IN THAT HE PUT ALL IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIM, HE LEFT NOTHING *that is* NOT PUT UNDER HIM. BUT NOW WE SEE NOT YET ALL THINGS PUT UNDER HIM.”

v36. “HE THAT BELIEVETH ON THE SON HATH EVERLASTING LIFE: AND HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT THE SON SHALL NOT SEE LIFE; BUT THE WRATH OF GOD ABIDETH ON HIM.”

John testifies that those who receive Christ; believe Jesus' teaching, John told us in Chapter One, He gave the power or right to become sons of God.

John 1:12 “BUT AS MANY AS RECEIVED HIM, TO THEM GAVE HE POWER TO BECOME THE SONS OF GOD, *even* TO THEM THAT BELIEVE ON HIS NAME.”

Jesus himself declared the reward for believing on him.

John 6:47 “VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU, HE THAT BELIEVETH ON ME HATH EVERLASTING LIFE.”

Is this belief just something that we talk about or is this belief measurable by our actions? Obviously to us it is a belief that is measurable by our actions. However, the world and most of the people who profess to follow Christ don't seem to believe that. Paul writes if we are guided by the Word of God that it will influence how we live.

Romans 1:17 “FOR THEREIN IS THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD REVEALED FROM FAITH TO FAITH: AS IT IS WRITTEN, THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.”

John also tells us that if we refuse to believe God, we make God a liar in our hearts, because by our lives we publicly demonstrate that we don't believe him.

I John 5:10 “HE THAT BELIEVETH ON THE SON OF GOD HATH THE WITNESS IN HIMSELF: HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT GOD HATH MADE HIM A LIAR; BECAUSE HE BELIEVETH NOT THE RECORD THAT GOD GAVE OF HIS SON.