



# Jesus, the Authoritative Saviour

## Lesson 4 John 2:13 - 3:21

### THE FIRST PASSOVER (2:13-25)

#### The Cleansing of the Temple

##### A. The setting - 2:13-14

**2:13** “And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, **14** And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

1. In Jerusalem for the Passover - 2:13
2. The Temple would have been full of people
  - a. According to Jewish law, all Jewish men were required to go to Jerusalem for three feasts (**Deuteronomy 16:16**):
    - i. Feast of Passover
    - ii. Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)
    - iii. Feast of Tabernacles
  - b. The Feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover) was a city-wide event
3. People had made the religious activities a fairly lucrative enterprise - 2:14

##### B. The actions of Jesus in Cleansing the Temple - 2:15-16

**2:15** “And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; **16** And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise.”

1. Jesus makes a whip - 2:15
2. He drives them out (“drove” means “to eject”) - 2:15
3. Overthrew the tables (“overthrew” means “overturned”) - 2:15
4. Jesus said, “Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise” - 2:16

##### C. The Sign - 2:17-21

**2:17** “And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up. **18** Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? **19** Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. **20** Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? **21** But he spake of the temple of his body.”

1. Jesus' cleansing of the Temple caused the disciples to remember Psalm 69:9 which speaks of God coming to a dry and weary person to restore life - 2:17
2. The Jews wanted a sign from Jesus that proved He had the authority to cleanse the Temple as He did - 2:18
3. Jesus points to His own resurrection as the sign - 2:19
4. The Jews miss the point - 2:20

#### D. The Recollection - 2:22

**2:22** “When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.”

The disciples remembered this conversation after Jesus’ resurrection. It is important to note that we read the Bible in its entirety and look at situations as we see them now, in the context of the whole, but the disciples didn’t have perfect understanding at the time of the events.

#### E. The Acceptance - 2:23

**2:23** “Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast *day*, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.”

They saw the works and believed. This will be really important when we get into John 10-11

#### F. The Protective Action - 2:24-25

**2:24** “But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all *men*, **25** And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.”

1. “*Did not commit himself unto them*” means “to not entrust or not put confidence in them.” It is a reference to His not entrusting them for His well-being. They believed on Him, but He wasn’t putting Himself at their disposal.
2. “*Because he knew all men*” means He created them - 1:3
3. Verse 25 - This was of His own choice. He didn’t need anyone telling Him about what was in man.

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### JESUS AND NICODEMUS (3:1-21)

#### A. Nicodemus - 3:1

**3:1** “There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:”

1. “*Pharisees*” were a political and religious group known for astuteness in the law
2. “*Ruler of the Jews*” was a supreme judicial and administrative council of the Jews. Nicodemus was probably a lay member of the Sanhedrin.

#### B. The setting - 3:2

**3:2** “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.”

##### 1. Night

- a. Due to fear of the Jews - 7:50, 19:39
- b. Teachers commonly gathered in conversation during the cool of the evening
- c. Due to the large crowds during day which would hinder such a personal conversation

##### 2. Jerusalem

## C. The interview - 3:3-21

### 1. Nicodemus' acceptance of Jesus as religious teacher - 3:2

- a. Rabbi is a title of respect conferred on distinguished Jewish teachers
- b. *"We know"* - use of the plural pronoun *"we"* means that Nicodemus possibly represented a small sect of Sanhedrin who accepted Jesus
- c. *"Thou art a teacher come from God."* It literally means in the Greek "you have come from God as a teacher," and *"from God"* is first in order and holds the place of emphasis <sup>1</sup>

### 2. Jesus' proclamation - 3:3

**3:3** "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."

- a. The nature of the new birth - 3:3, 5-8
- b. *"Born again."* Again is defined four ways in scripture:
  - i. From the top - **Matthew 27:51, Mark 15:38**
  - ii. From above - **3:31, 19:11**
  - iii. From the beginning - **Luke 1:3**
  - iv. Again - **Galatians 4:9**
- c. You must be born again to see the kingdom of God. It is absolutely necessary.

### 3. Nicodemus' first question, "How is this possible?" - 3:4

**3:4** "Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?"

### 4. Jesus' first answer - 3:5-8

**3:5** "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. **6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. **7** Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. **8** 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."

- a. Born of water means physical birth (not baptism); *"flesh is flesh"* - **3:6; Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:5**
- b. Born of the Spirit means spiritual birth - **3:6-8**
- c. Spiritual birth is the work of God - **3:8**

### 5. Nicodemus' second question, "How does it happen?" - 3:9

**3:9** "Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?"

### 6. Jesus' second answer - 3:10-21

- a. The key word *"believe"* is used seven times in these verses. How are we born again? By believing in Jesus Christ.
- b. Don't you know this as a spiritual leader in Israel? Don't you know what it takes to be right with God? **3:10**  
**3:10** "Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?"

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<sup>1</sup> Elmer Towns, John: Believe and Live (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2002) 28.

- c. “We” testify and you don’t receive our witness. Who is the “we” of verse 11?  
**3:11** “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.”
- i. The testimony of John the Baptist and Jesus
  - ii. The testimony of Jesus (the Son) and God the Father (more probable due to 3:32)
- d. I have expounded earthly truths to you, and you don’t believe. How will you believe heavenly things? **3:12**  
**3:12** “If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?”
- e. The Son of Man came down from heaven - incarnation - **3:13**  
**3:13** “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven.”
- f. The Son of man must be lifted up - **3:14**  
**3:14** “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:”
- i. Speaks of crucifixion
  - ii. Same use in John 8:28
- g. Belief is essential - **3:15**  
**3:15** “That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”
- h. God’s love is the foundation of salvation - **3:16**  
**3:16** “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
- i. God didn’t send Christ to condemn the world, rather, to save the world - **3:17**  
**3:17** “For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”
- j. God’s view of Condemnation - **3:18-21**  
**3:18** “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. **19** And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. **20** For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. **21** But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.”
- i. Whoever believes is not condemned (justified - declared righteous)
  - ii. Unbelievers are condemned already. They are condemned already because of sin (**Romans 3:23**) and unbelief.
  - iii. Light came into the world, but men loved darkness
  - iv. Condemnation is the rejection of the truth of who Christ is
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## THE GREATEST VERSE OF THE BIBLE (3:16)<sup>2</sup>

**3:16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

For God	the greatest being
so	the greatest degree
loved	the greatest affection
the world	the greatest object of love
That he gave	the greatest act
His only	the greatest treasure
begotten	the greatest relationship
Son,	the greatest gift
that whosoever	the greatest company
believes	the greatest trust
in Him	the greatest object of faith
should not perish	the greatest deliverance
but have	the greatest assurance
everlasting	the greatest promise
life	the greatest blessing

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### LIFE LESSONS

1. The resurrection power of Christ is a foundational truth of the Christian faith. From it stems inerrancy of scripture, proof of divinity of Christ, etc.
2. Spiritual birth is essential for entry into the family of God
3. The new birth occurs at the moment of belief in Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world

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<sup>2</sup> ibid. 33.