

FINAL STUDY NOTES -THIS WEEK'S STUDY – (John 2:13 – 3:13) - 10/16-17/2023 – Jesus Cleanses the Temple. The Discerner of Hearts. The New Birth.

Classroom Location and Zoom – Sign In information, below at end of the notes;

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OPENING PRAYER

The Gospel According to John:

- To fully understand this Gospel, we need to understand the purpose of the Holy Spirit in writing it, (Joh 20:30-31) *And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; [31] but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.*
- **Review from last week: Water Turned to Wine (Joh 2:11-12)** *This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him. [12] After this He went down to Capernaum, He, His mother, His brothers, and His disciples; and they did not stay there many days.*

THIS WEEK'S STUDY:

Jesus Cleanses the Temple – (Chap 2:13-22); The Discerner of Hearts – (vs. 23-25).

The New Birth – (Chap 3:1-21) You Must Be Born Again!

Jesus Cleanses the Temple – Jesus' strong display, possibly His strongest display, of righteous anger!

Joh 2:13 Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

- *Jesus went up to Jerusalem, being obedient to the Mosaic law that required the adult male Jews to be in Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. This is the first of three Passovers which John mentions (Joh 2:13; 6:4; 11:55). This is not the first time, of course, He had gone to Jerusalem for the feast even as a child. (Luk 2:41-42) His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. [42] And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. Jesus made it a point to be in Jerusalem for the feasts in obedience to the Mosaic law.*

Joh 2:14 And He found in the temple (heiron - outer temple court, Gentiles) those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business.

- The word “temple” here is a reference to the outer court area, not the inner court. There's another Greek word for the inner court. This is the outer court, the “hieron,” also referred to as the court of the Gentiles. There, *He found in the temple those who sold the oxen and the sheep and the doves, and the money changers doing business.* They had made it a marketplace. According to the traditions, these concessions were authorized by the high priest, who received commissions from the sales of the animals for sacrifice and from the changing of money and sometimes would just own the whole thing!
- **When you brought an animal to sacrifice it to the Lord, it was necessary that that animal be perfect.** You weren't to just bring in some damaged animal to give to God. It had to be without spot, without a blemish in order to be accepted as a sacrifice. To make sure that it was perfect. Usually, he found a blemish, and it would be rejected. He would not offer it as a sacrifice. The worshipper would then be required to purchase the “temple approved” sacrificial animal at an extremely inflated price, gouging even the poor people!
- **Then there were the money changers doing business!** You could not give in the offering to God any Gentile coinage, which was considered a sacrilege. They would not accept it as the temple offering. They would take your Roman or Gentile coinage and exchange it for the temple shekel. But again, at a very high rate of exchange. You'd have to pay an exorbitant fee of twenty-five to fifty percent. It was just stealing from the people in their desire to worship God!

- **Secondly, there in the temple grounds, they were profaning the temple and the sacrifices, making them common, easy, and meaningless to accomplish.** You can simply buy your way in and making it easy, convenient, for the people. You wouldn't have to go out to your flock and get a lamb and bring it all the way in. Jesus saw this.

Joh 2:15 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.

- **Now we find that He cleanses the temple. He did this twice.** As John recorded this cleansing of the temple at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, the other gospels record a temple cleansing at the end of Jesus' ministry during the final Passover week before Jesus' crucifixion (*Mat 21:12-17; Mar 11:15-18; Luk 19:45-46*).
- **When He had made a whip of cords.** Probably the cords that they had tied around the oxen that were for sale. He went around, picking up these cords and He made this *whip*.
- **He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables.** I think Jesus was a man's man! Why didn't they stop Him? I think He was rugged. I think He was rough. When He saw this abomination, He was just so upset, incensed with righteous anger! He went through that place dumping over the tables and money. You would think that they'd all just be ganging up on Him. What are You doing here dumping the money on the floor? These guys are scrambling to pick up the money. He begins to drive out the oxen, the sheep and those that were selling them.
- **He drove them all out of the temple.** When the holiness of God and His worship was at stake, Jesus took fast and furious action. The "*all*" indicates that He drove not only men out but also the animals. Yet, although His physical action was forceful, it was not cruel. Although the primary reference is to the actions of the Messiah in the Millennial Kingdom, Jesus' actions in cleansing the temple were an initial fulfillment of (*Mal 3:1b*). *And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the LORD of hosts.*

Joh 2:16 And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!"

(Mat 21:12-13) Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. [13] And He said to them, "It is written, 'MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER (Isa 56:7),' but you have made it a 'DEN OF THIEVES.' (Jer7:11)

- **This is at the very beginning of the ministry of Jesus. This happens to be the second sign** that John gives to us to show that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. Jesus is calling the temple My Father's house. At the end of the ministry of Christ, the final week; probably the day after His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, He came back into Jerusalem and once again He cleansed the temple. He did this at the beginning of His public ministry and once again at the end of His public ministry. So twice Jesus cleansed the temple from the merchandising that had become so common within the temple itself. *My Father's house,"* they all knew it was the house of God and **thus He is claiming to be the Son of God as He cleanses the temple.**

Joh 2:17 Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE HAS EATEN ME UP."

- (*Psa 69:9*) ***Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, And the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me. Notice that Jesus would not tolerate irreverence toward God! (Rom 1:18) For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.***
- **We see here in Jesus' cleansing the temple, the strongest display of His righteous anger** toward those who were profiteering off the peoples' desire to worship God and to worship Him as prescribed in the Law of Moses. Also this place of "business," of profiteering was in the temple! The temple was to be the most holy place in Israel, a place where God had said, this is the sacred place where My people will worship Me! (*Exo 25:8*) And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. But the religious leaders in their stealing from the people had profaned the sacred temple, had made it common! Jesus was incensed!

Note that the outer court, which was to be a place of holiness and worship for the Gentiles had been taken over to “do business” to become a house of merchandise!

- **What a great reminder and example this is for us!** *His disciples* remembered (*Psalm 69:9*) as they saw Him with this zeal going in and cleaning up the place. We must remember Jesus’ example of righteous anger! But also, let it not go as far as to bringing our vengeance on anyone, for (*Heb 10:30*) *For we know Him who said, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,” says the Lord. And again, “THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE.”*
- **The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me:** The commandment Jesus fulfilled from (*Psa 69:9b*) applies to us as well. It was written for our learning, that we might have hope, knowing we are doing what is right, even when it is difficult! When we respond rightly to the *reproaches* the world casts against us for Jesus’ sake, it bothers them even more. It makes them know there isn’t anything they can do against a child of God whose eyes are really on Jesus! We need to do what is right!

Joh 2:18 So the Jews (temple authorities, representatives of Sanhedrin) **answered and said to Him, “What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?”**

- **What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?** The Jews demand that Jesus show some type of miraculous sign that would indicate His authority for the actions that He had just taken in regulating the activities of the temple. Their demand for a sign reveals that they had not grasped the significance of Jesus’ rebuke that centered in their need for proper attitudes and holiness in worship. Such an action itself constituted a “sign” of Jesus’ person and authority. Moreover, they were requesting from Jesus a crass display of miracles on demand, further displaying their unbelief. You say that this is Your Father’s house, what sign do you show us? Of course, He is fulfilling a prophecy of the Messiah. Thus, what sign do you give to us that You are the Messiah? That this is Your Father’s house? That You are the Son of God?

Joh 2:19 Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy this temple (naos), and in three days I will raise it up (His resurrection!)

- **Jesus is, of course, referring to His own human body. And His coming death and resurrection!** (*2Co 6:16a*) *And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple (naos) of the living God.*
- **His Resurrection! In three days I will raise it again;** by which He would appear to be the Son of God, with power! The One that had power of laying down His life, and taking it up again! **This is the very sign, namely, His resurrection from the dead on the third day,** that He gives the Jews, when they sought one of Him at another time, and upon another occasion.

Joh 2:20 Then the Jews said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?”

- **This 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. If this date of the Passover, the 14th of Nissan, were *forty-six years* after Herod began to dedicate the temple, it would have occurred on April 7, 30 A.D.
- **Hieron and naos. Both of these Greek words are translated as “temple.** In verses (*Joh 2:14-15*), 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, also referred to as the court of the Gentiles, which Jesus cleansed. The word Jesus used 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, the most sacred, the holiest part! This word is also used in reference to the bodies of believers, as Paul does in (*1Co 6:19*) *Or do you not know that your body is the temple (naos) of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?* 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!

Joh 2:21 But He was speaking of the temple of His body.

- **Jesus is referring to His body as a temple, not as a tent but as a temple.** He said, “If you destroy this temple, in three days I will raise it up.” So He is talking about His death and resurrection. The ultimate sign of the truth and the fact that Jesus was the Messiah and is the chosen of God will be in the resurrection! The

third day when He rises from the dead will be the confirmation, the sign, the ultimate sign!

- **Later on, we are told in (Mat 12:38-40)** *Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." [39] But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. [40] For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. So once again, the same sign, His death and resurrection! The resurrection from the dead is the sign!*
- **Not understanding that Jesus was talking about His body but thinking of it in a literal sense.** He had just cleansed the temple so thinking that He's talking about that temple, having gotten rid of the merchants. They said, We've been working on this thing for forty-six years. It was a magnificent building, being about ten stories high. Made of huge stones, covered with gold and it was just a magnificent, beautiful place. They would be working on it for another twenty years. It took sixty-six years to complete the building of that temple. Now Jesus said, Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up. They, thinking of that great temple of Herod, said, You're going to raise it up in three days?
- **Mark tells us (Mar 14:56-58)** *For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree. [57] Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying, [58] "We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. That was his interpretation of what Jesus had said here, still thinking at that time He's talking about that earthly temple of Herod. But Jesus, of course, was talking about His body.*
- **The disciples didn't understand at that time.** As we go through John, you'll find that often, the disciples are sort of mystified by what Jesus said. They believed Him and they were following but He would make these statements and they would, I'm sure, turn to each other and say, Do you know what He's talking about? It wasn't until after His resurrection that things began to fall into place. They began to understand some of the predictions that He had made.

Joh 2:22 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.

- **And they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.** Paul the apostle said, (1Co 15:1, 3-4) *Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, [3] For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, [4] and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.* They did not understand the scriptures that the Messiah would be despised and rejected, cut off, put to death. They didn't understand that until after His resurrection. Then it all came together in their minds. Then they understood, and then they believed the scriptures and the words of Jesus because now it has been fulfilled and they can see the fulfillment of it! How certain are you that the Scripture and the words which Jesus say, are completely and totally true, no matter what?
- **The second way John demonstrated Christ's deity in the account of the temple cleansing was to show His power over death through His resurrection.** Only God has this right!

Jesus Knows What Is in Man

Joh 2:23 Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed (pisteuo – to have faith) in His name when they saw the signs which He did.

- **Jesus then began to work miracles.** John doesn't record any of the miracles that Jesus did. But He began to heal the sick and this was such a great part of His ministry. When people saw the miracles, many of them believed in Him.
- **But He didn't believe in them.** A faith that is predicated upon only seeing miracles is superficial, thin and is not a faith that Jesus will commit Himself to. Our faith can't be established in spectacularism. Our faith has to be established in the word of God. They were watching the miracles of Jesus, and they trusted in Him, but He didn't trust in them. They committed themselves to Him.

2:24 But Jesus did not commit (pisteuo – to have faith) Himself to them, because He knew all men,

- **But Jesus did not commit Himself to them** because their faith and their trust was predicated upon the spectacular, upon the miracles. That is not the kind of faith that Jesus puts His trust in man. Oh yes I believe. I had a great experience. It was just so marvellous I felt tingling all over my body. Jesus does not

commit Himself to that kind of faith that believes because it had tingling sensations. Your faith cannot be established upon the miraculous. Your faith has to be established in the word of God! That's the only true foundation for faith is God's word. It's got to be something more solid than seeing miracles. It must be the word of God upon which our faith is based and founded. That's the kind of faith that Jesus will commit to.

- **Many believed – did not commit.** Actually, the Greek words are the same. It's translated *commit* here but it's the same word that the people who *believed* in Jesus, He didn't believe in them; or they committed themselves to Jesus, He didn't *commit* to them; or they trusted in Jesus, but He didn't trust in them. That is that faith premised upon the viewing of the spectacular. He didn't believe in them because, **He knew all men. He knew that it was a shallow faith. It was a faith that was predicated upon a moment of excitement.** It didn't have a strong foundation.

Joh 2:25 and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.

- **He didn't need for someone to say, You watch out for that Judas Iscariot.** He's sort of shady. He knew from the beginning who it was that would betray Him. He didn't need someone to come along and give Him inside information. He knew men. He knew what was in man.

You Must Be Born Again ("born" used 8x in vs. 4-8)

Joh 3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus (victor over the people), a ruler of the Jews.

- **In reality, chapter three is just a continuation. The Jews had come, and they had said, What sign do you show us?** We have then Jesus giving them the sign, working the miracles and many following, believing because they saw the miracles. Now, one of the leaders of the Jews will come to Jesus. He's going to ask more thoroughly about Jesus. He said, "We know that You have come from God because no man can do the things that You are doing unless God is with him." So now we get this discussion of some of the most basic and foundational truths of salvation here. There is much to study, meditate, think over, as you go through the third chapter of John. This is foundational, may we get it down correctly!
- **Nicodemus. We know from this verse two things about him. He was a Pharisee, a ruler or one of the spiritual leaders.** He was a member of the Sanhedrin and thus a ruler of the Jews as far as religious matters went. A little further down, Jesus said, Are you a teacher? So we know also that he was a teacher. From John, chapter 19, we assume that he was a very wealthy man because at the burial of Jesus, he stepped forward with Joseph of Arimathea, bringing about 100 pounds of myrrh and aloes. That would be extremely expensive. No doubt he also a wealthy man, a Pharisee.
- **Pharisees were men who had committed themselves to keeping the whole law.** They would make a vow before three others that they vowed to keep the whole law. There were about 6,000 who were of the Pharisaic sect. They were the ones who spent their whole lives in endeavoring to keep the whole law.

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."

- **This man came to Jesus by night.** Some have thought that Nicodemus's visit at night was somehow figurative of the spiritual darkness of his heart or that he decided to come at this time because he could spend more uninterrupted time with Jesus. Possibly the most logical explanation lies in the fact that, as a ruler of the Jews, Nicodemus was afraid of the implications of associating openly in conversation with Jesus. He chose night in order to have a more lengthy, private, hidden meeting with Jesus, rather than risk disfavor with his fellow Pharisees among whom Jesus was so unpopular.
- **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.** There is that acknowledgment of Jesus coming from God. Having observed the miracles that Jesus was doing, he became convinced of the divine origin of Jesus.

Joh 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly (vs. 3, 5, 11), I say to you, unless one is born again (born from above), he cannot see the kingdom of God."

- **Jesus answered and said to him,** words that are sort of a mystery, to open up a whole line of thought and understanding.
- **Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.** It seems that

Nicodemus, recognizing that Jesus had come from God, was looking for God's latest word to man. From the time of Malachi some four hundred years earlier, it was recognized that God had not spoken to His people. There was silence from heaven. Now, Jesus comes on the scene, working miracles that attest that He must be from God. No man can do the things He is doing except through the power of God. God is with Him. So it seems, Nicodemus is coming, seeking God's word for this hour, for this time. Jesus begins by saying that ***unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*** That is, you cannot understand it. You cannot really know it without being born again!

- **Paul says much the same thing in (1Co 2:14) *But 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.*** There are things of God and the things of God that are a mystery to the world. They have absolutely no comprehension. It takes the enlightenment of our minds by the Holy Spirit to understand. So Jesus is basically saying this to Nicodemus. There must be a spiritual birth. You've got to be born again if you are to understand or to see the things of the kingdom of God. We see here the typical example of someone who believes they are truly a fine Christian, but really are not, because they have not yet even been born again!
- **This idea of being born again is given to us throughout the New Testament.** Paul speaks of it in (**Rom 6:4**) *Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.* Peter said, (**1Pe 1:3**) *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*
- **Paul said in (2Co 5:17) *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*** There is a work of God's Spirit within a person's life whereby that person comes into a totally new dimension of life, the dimension of the Spirit. Originally when God created man, He created him a threefold being—spirit, soul, body.
- **God is a superior Trinity of Father, Son, Spirit.** Man is an inferior trinity of spirit, soul, and body. However, man as he was created by God, spirit, soul and body, the soul or the mind of man was controlled by the spirit which was uppermost. Thus, the thoughts and the mind of man were on the things of God because the spirit being uppermost. The body, it's there, it's necessary but it was subject unto the Spirit.
- **Paul tells us (Gal 5:16-17) *I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. [17] For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.*** The whole warfare is on supremacy of your life. Who is going to rule or what is going to rule your life? The flesh or the spirit? The fleshly desires or the spiritual desires? What are you going to allow to rule in your life? Whatever is ruling in your life will control your mind and thus you will have either the mind of the flesh or the mind of the Spirit. It all depends on what is uppermost.
- **When God created man, the inferior trinity—spirit, soul, and body.** It is in the realm of the spirit that man meets God; in the realm of the spirit that man knows God; the realm of the spirit where man fellowships with God. It's in the realm of the spirit where God and man touch. So that man with spirit uppermost lives in communion and fellowship with God! That's the way it was in the garden of Eden until the day that Adam disobeyed God as he followed after and allowed the desires of his flesh to master over the spirit.
- **As God said, (Gen 2:17) *but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.*** When Adam ate of the forbidden fruit, he died spiritually. The spirit died and he became flipped; the flesh becoming uppermost, the spirit dead. The awareness and consciousness of God was broken. God came down to the garden to commune with Adam and Adam hid himself from the presence of God. Alienated from God because of the sin. So man, born from Adam, the natural man, is body and mind. Now, the mind is controlled by the body appetite. Thus, Jesus describes that life as a person just interested primarily in the things of the flesh; what we're going to eat, what we're going to drink, what we're going to wear. Those are the things that occupy a person's mind. The things of the flesh.
- **The mind of the flesh is alienated from God. It cannot know God.** It's at enmity with God. It cannot know or understand the things of God. In order for man to be restored into fellowship with God, in order for man to have an understanding of the things of the kingdom of God, there's got to be the rebirth of man's spirit. He's got to be born again!
- **So here comes Nicodemus, the natural man, looking for the things of God, the word of God.** God who has been silent, what's God's word now? And Jesus said, "Unless you are born again, you can't see it." You can't comprehend it. Here he is in a fleshly governed body, fleshly mind, trying to comprehend the

things of the spirit. Jesus said it just doesn't happen! Nicodemus, you must be born again if you're going to comprehend or understand the things of the Spirit!

Joh 3:4 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?"

- **Not naturally, so how can a man be born when he is old?** A teacher himself, Nicodemus understood the rabbinical method of using figurative language to teach spiritual truth. He was merely picking up Jesus' symbolism. Nicodemus was obviously proud of being born a Jew in Israel, of the seed of Abraham. How could any birth be better than that?

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.

- **First, it was to see! Now it is to enter into the kingdom of heaven!** The kingdom of heaven is where God rules. Thus, if God rules in your life, you have entered into the kingdom of heaven. Wherever God rules, that's the kingdom of heaven.
- **But you can't enter into it, Jesus said, unless one is born of the water and the Spirit.** What does Jesus mean by born of the water? Two possible interpretations. The one is water baptism. We know that water baptism does symbolize the death of the old life. The old life buried. The life of the flesh we reckon it to be dead and through the water baptism, buried with Christ. but even so in the same likeness, we are risen in Christ as we come up out of the water. It's a symbolism of that new life risen together in Christ Jesus. There are those who say that the water here represents the water baptism whereby by this symbolism.
- **The second interpretation is that water represents your fleshly birth.** The etymology of the word, "birth" in Hebrew is *yalad*, which speaks of the rupturing of the membrane when a woman breaks water. There comes the water, and then of course the birth of the child. Thus, they say that the water represents your fleshly birth.

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

- **Contextually, Jesus is talking about the fleshly birth and the spiritual birth being separate and distinct!** *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; 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.** In fact, we can't change it. The Word of God has much to say about this. The old nature is at war with God. **(Rom 8:7-8) Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. [8] So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.** 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, unless the church is Raptured. Then, 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!

Joh 3:7 Do not marvel that I said to you, You must be born again.

- **You need to be born twice!** You've been born once of the flesh, the water, and of course that is necessary. But then the second birth is the birth of the Spirit. So you have the idea of the two births. As someone said, "Born once, you die twice. Born twice, you die once." So, the second birth being the spiritual birth.
- **That brings up the issue that all of us must squarely face and that is, Have I been born again?** Have I been born of the Spirit? That should be of primary concern to every one of you. Because if you have not been born again, you have no comprehension of the things of the Spirit and you have not entered into the kingdom of heaven! You cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven unless you have been born again! You cannot enter into that kingdom of God. Jesus said, "*Do not marvel that I said, You must!*" That is, if you are to enter the kingdom of God. You must, if you are to understand the things of the Spirit. ***You must be born again.*** ***Born of the Spirit.***

Joh 3:8 *The wind (pneuma -Gk; ruach-Heb.) 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 (pneuma -Gk; ruach-Heb.)."*

- **You can feel the effects of the wind. You can see the effects of the wind.** But you can't see the wind. It's foolish to try to deny the fact that the wind exists because I can't see it. I don't believe anything I can't see. You can't see the wind. You do see the effects of the wind. You see the leaves blowing or the dust blowing or the leaves of the tree shaking. You can feel the wind. Although we don't quite understand it, it illustrates the way one is born of the Spirit. I can't tell you exactly how the Spirit of God operates, but I can surely tell when He is moving in the lives and hearts of His people. That's exactly what our Lord is saying here.
- **So with the Spirit. You can feel the presence of God's Spirit.** You can see the results of God's Spirit though we don't see the Spirit Himself. Yet we know He is there! We feel His presence! We experience His power in our lives. *So, is everyone that is born of the Spirit! (Rom 8:14) For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

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

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

- **Nicodemus answered and said to Him, How can these things be?** This is a question that is asking for the process, "How?" By what process then can a man be born again? Recognizing the difficulty of the concept, he now is asking Jesus *how* this comes to pass. "*How can these things be?*"
- **Jesus answered and said to him, possibly** chiding him a bit, **Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?** I'm talking to you of basic fundamental rudiments of the spiritual life. You're supposed to be leading people in the things of the Spirit, in the things of God. Are you a master in Israel, and yet you don't understand these basic, fundamental rudiments of the spiritual life?
- **The teacher of Israel.** The use of the definite article "the" indicates that Nicodemus was a renowned master-teacher in the nation of Israel, an established religious authority par excellence. Jesus' reply emphasized the spiritual bankruptcy of the nation at that time, since even one of the greatest of Jewish teachers did not recognize this teaching on spiritual cleansing and transformation based clearly in the OT. The net effect is to show that externals of religion may have a deadening effect on one's spiritual perception!

Joh 3:11 *Most assuredly, I say to you, We (Jesus and His disciples) speak what We know and testify (bear witness to) what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness.*

- **We speak what We know.** Jesus is saying, **Look, I know what I'm talking about.** I testify the things that I know about, and I am witnessing to you of that which I have seen. The spirit life, the Spirit-filled life, the Spirit-led life. The Spirit led Jesus. He knew the life of the Spirit. He knew that life of fellowship with God. He was talking about His own personal experiences of this Spirit-dominated life, which is a life that is in fellowship with God. A strong but delicate reproof to Nicodemus, who, though a master of Israel, did not understand the very rudiments of the doctrine of salvation. He was ignorant of the Spirit.
- **What we have seen** - Jesus had seen by His omniscient eye all the operations of the Spirit on the hearts of men. His ministers have seen its effects as we see the effects of the wind, and, having seen men changed from sin to holiness. They are qualified to bear witness to the truth and reality of the change. Every successful minister of the gospel thus becomes a witness of the saving power of the gospel. That includes you and it includes me!
- **You do not receive Our witness.** The plural "you" here refers back to the "we" of (Joh 3:2), where Nicodemus was speaking as a representative of his nation Israel ("*we know*"). Jesus replies here, with "*you,*" indicating that Nicodemus' unbelief was typical of the nation as a collective whole. Even though we give evidence of the truth of the new religion; though miracles are performed, and proof is given that this doctrine came from heaven, yet you reject it!

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?*

- **If I really get into the deeper spiritual matters.** If you don't understand that two and two equals four, how are you ever going to do trigonometry? I'm trying to talk to you about basic fundamental things and you don't

comprehend those. How can I take you deeper?

- **If I have told you earthly things.** If you, a teacher in Israel, do not understand the nature of such an earthly thing, or custom of the kingdom established over the Jewish nation, as being born of baptism, practiced every day in the initiation of proselytes, how will you understand such heavenly things as the initiation of My disciples by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire from heaven, if I should proceed farther and deeper on the subject?

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.

(Pro 30:4) Who has ascended into heaven, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is His Son's name, If you know? (Eph 4:10) He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

- **Jesus here is speaking now again of His divine origin which Nicodemus recognized.** We know that You are come from God, no man can do the things that You do except God is with Him. So Jesus here affirms that He has come from heaven, knowing the heavenly things.
- **We're dealing with things on the earthly level. We're dealing with man. Man whose spirit died** because of sin. Man who became alienated from God because of the death of the spirit. As in ***(Isa 59:1-2) Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. [2] But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.*** Man who was alienated from God because of sin which has killed the spirit, spiritual death. Jesus said, I'm trying to talk to you on an earthly level, but you can't seem to grasp it. If I went into the things of heaven, I've come down from heaven, if I try and tell you about that, you'll be totally lost.
- **Jesus is saying, I've come down from heaven but I'm trying to talk** to you on an earthly level. You can't grasp that. You'd be totally lost if I tried to talk to you about heavenly things. But now the question. Jesus isn't ignoring his question, now He comes to the question, the process of being born again. How can these things be?
- **What Jesus is talking about here in verse 13, is as John the Baptist said in (Joh 3:31-34) He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. [32] And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. [33] He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true. [34] For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure.** Jesus "makes it clear that only He can speak authoritatively about things in heaven, no one else can! Do we understand this?
- **We must be born again! Are you sure? How about your friends and loved ones?**

CLOSING SONG:

NO LONGER SLAVES *Bethel (2;19/2:22)*

You unravel me With a melody You surround me with a song Of deliverance from my enemies 'Til all my fears are gone I'm no longer a slave to fear I am a child of God I'm no longer a slave to fear I am a child of God.

*From my mother's womb You have chosen me Love has called my name I've been **born again** Into Your family Your blood flows through my veins I'm no longer a slave to fear I am a child of God (3X)*

CLOSING PRAYER:

Read and study John Chapter 3 & 4

CLASSROOM LOCATION AND ZOOM – SIGN IN INFORMATION:

**Phil Twente ptwente@gmail.com cell 714 425 9221 www.ptwente.com - Audio & notes from previous studies
PLEASE NOTE WE WILL CONTINUE TO NEED A PASSCODE TO JOIN THE ONLINE (ZOOM) STUDY!**

MONDAY 7 PM Bible Study - Time: 07:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

THE MONDAY NIGHT STUDY WILL BE MEETING, CC LIVING WORD, 17101 ARMSTRONG, IRVINE, CA, AS WELL AS CONTINUING IN ZOOM!!

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THE TUESDAY MORNING STUDY WILL BE MEETING, CC LIVING WORD, 17101 ARMSTRONG, IRVINE, CA, AS WELL AS CONTINUING IN ZOOM!!

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