

Glory Revealed
Week 3 – John 2:13-3:36
Revealed to the Jews

I. The cleansing of the temple – John 2:13-25

Prophecies – Malachi 3:1; Zechariah 14:21

The preceding verses in Zechariah 14 tell how all nations will go up to Jerusalem to worship. F.F. Bruce explains, “The only place within the temple precincts which was open to people of ‘all nations’ (apart from the Israelites) was the outer court (sometimes called the ‘court of the Gentiles’); if this area were taken up for trading it could not be used for worship” (*The Gospel of John*, p. 75).

It would be the presence of Jesus at Passover that would draw Nicodemus to Jesus in John 3. Jesus knew the hearts of all people and would only entrust Himself to those who believed fully (John 1:12).

There is a difference in belief (trusting in Christ as Lord) and acknowledgement of facts.

II. Nicodemus - John 3:1-15

Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews, and a member of the Sanhedrin. He had been impressed with the signs that Jesus performed without realizing their deeper meaning. He came to Jesus at night, seeking to understand.

“Jesus saw beyond his words of greeting to the state of his soul, and answered him in language which, baffling and unintelligible as Nicodemus found it, was carefully calculated to speak to his condition” (F.F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, p. 82).

A. Born of the flesh

In childbirth, the mother labors experiencing agony before giving birth to the child. Before the medical advances that we have today, many women gave their very lives in childbirth.

B. Born of the Spirit – (water and the Spirit – Ezekiel 36:25-27)

Jesus labored experiencing great agony of flesh and Spirit and gave His life that we might be born again. (Hebrews 12:1-2)

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name. Who were born not of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12-13).

Jesus is the explanation or picture of the Father for all who have ears to hear and eyes to see. He is also the interpreter of the heavenly truths that are revealed to those who believe.

Jesus first explained the second birth with reference to Ezekiel 36 and then through an object lesson from the time of Moses. The serpent that was lifted up is from Numbers 21.

The healing power did not come from the bronze serpent but from belief and obedience. Just as the serpent was lifted up, so Jesus “must” be lifted up. To look was to believe.

To whom or what we look for help reveals our belief and affection. Remember Lot’s wife.

“In this Gospel Jesus is glorified by being crucified (cf. John 8:28; 12:23, 32, 34). He who descended has now once more ascended up on high, but he has ascended by way of the cross; the cross on which he was lifted up became the ladder of his ascent to the Father’s presence (cf. John 1:51)” (F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, p. 88).

“The kingdom of God is seen or entered, new birth is experienced, and eternal life begins, through the saving cross-work of Christ, received by faith” (D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, p. 202).

John 7:50; 19:38-42 – two other appearances of Nicodemus.

III. John’s Explanation – John 3:16-21

Many believe verses 16-21 are John’s explanation of Christ’s conversation with Nicodemus.

Quote from *Glory Revealed* (p. 74):

“What could be less complicated than belief? What could be more effortless than faith? There’s nothing to achieve, no quest to complete, no challenge to overcome, no method to master, no merit to earn. We have only to trust the One who made us, who loves us, and who satisfied all of God’s expectations on behalf of all humanity. Most, however, will opt for religion over regeneration. Pride is not only powerful; it’s blinding” (Chuck Swindoll).

IV. John the Baptist – John 3:29-30

He must increase – the best man rejoices for the bridegroom. He does not desire to take his place.

“At this point in salvation history, now that the light has come (1:6-9), the lamp has done its work (5:35)” (ESV Study Bible, p. 2026).

V. Believe and Obey

“He who *believes* in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not *obey* the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him” (John 6:36).

We act out of what we believe. Our obedience reveals our heart.
John 14:21 – the power to obey is fueled by our love for Christ.

The struggle in the Garden of Gethsemane was a matter of Jesus’ mind and feelings being hammered in every possible way to make him mistrust the Father. He almost died of it on the spot. But, Jesus added to his friends, “*in me* this ‘ruler’ has not the least thing on his side” (John 14:30). It was, finally, what was *not* in Jesus that made him invincible, that kept him safe.

This is the true situation: nothing has power to tempt me or move me to wrong action that I have not given power by what I permit to be in me. And the most spiritually dangerous things in me are the little habits of thought, feeling, and action that I regard as “normal” because “everyone is like that” and it is “only human” (Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, p. 376).

Satan can only demand to sift us as wheat if there is something that needs sifting – Luke 22:31-34

“And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength” (Mark 12:30).

When my love for Christ surpasses my love for self, sin loses its hold. God’s greatest command is for our greatest good!

“He must increase, but I must decrease.”

John 3:30