

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN



the beginning was the Word,¹
and the Word was with God, and
the Word was God.
In the beginning

Christ, 1—14. The
Andrew, Peter, &c.,

CHAP. 1.
A.M. 4081. A.D. 27.
a Ge. 1.1; Pr. 8.22, 23;
Ep. 3.9; He. 1.1, 3.8;
Re. 1.8, 11, 13, 17, 21.
6 ver. 14; 13ol. 1.1, 2, 3.
7; Re. 19. 13.
1 In Greek, 'was
Logos.' This
was given
who after
came into

The Gospel of John

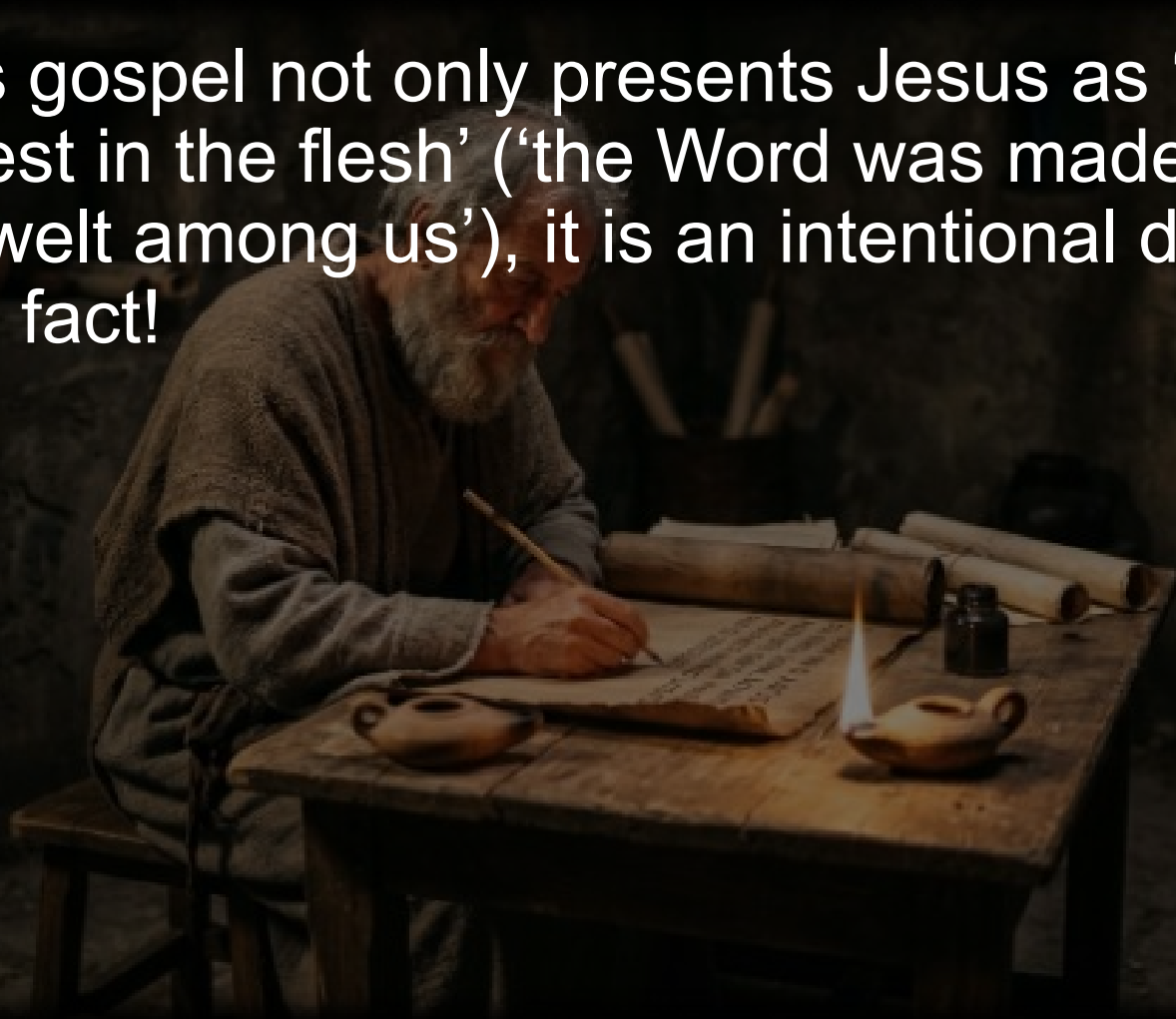
John's reason for writing:

- ³⁰ And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:
- ³¹ 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.

John 20:30-31

The Gospel of John

- John's gospel not only presents Jesus as 'God manifest in the flesh' ('the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us'), it is an intentional defense of that fact!



The Gospel of John

Key word:

- Believe x 100
 - Believed / Believeth / Believeest / Believing / Commit (to trust)
- Gr. πιστεύω 'pisteuo'
- to have faith (in, upon, or with respect to, a person or thing), by implication, to entrust (especially one's spiritual well-being to Christ)

The Gospel of John

“The theme of John’s gospel is the deity of Jesus Christ. More here than anywhere else His divine Sonship is set forth. In this gospel we are shown the babe of Bethlehem was none other than the “only begotten of the Father.” There are evidences and proofs given without number. Although all things were made by Him, although in him was life, yet He was made flesh, and dwelt among us. No man could see God; therefore, Christ came to declare Him.”

Henrietta C. Mears

What The Bible Is All About

The Gospel of John

Heptadic Structure (groups of 7's)

- Seven 'I AM' statements
- Seven miracles
- Seven witnesses
- Seven X 'meta tauta'

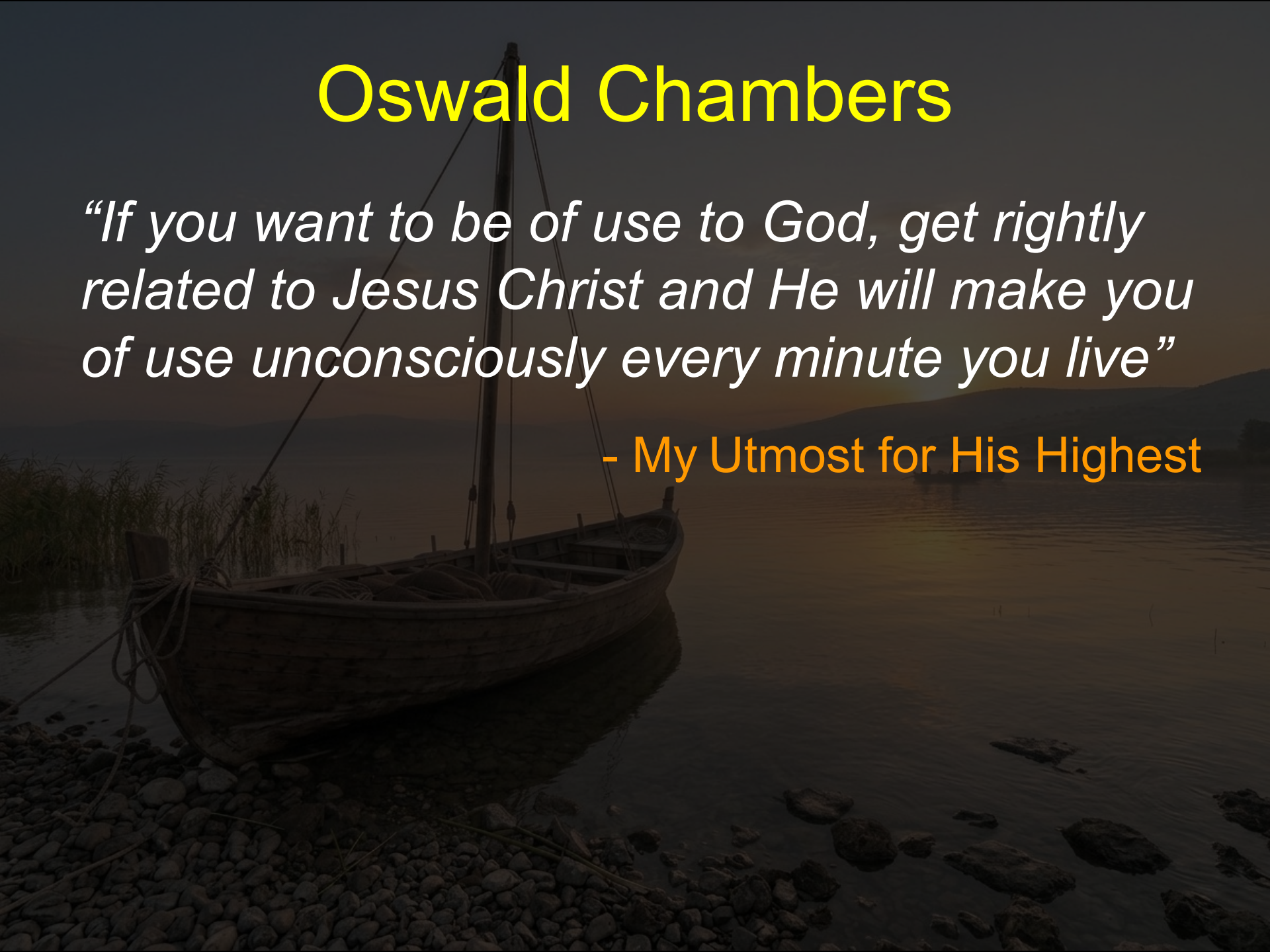
– 'after these things'

(3:22 / 5:1 / 5:14 / 7:1 / 13:7 / 19:38 / 21:1)

Oswald Chambers

“If you want to be of use to God, get rightly related to Jesus Christ and He will make you of use unconsciously every minute you live”

- My Utmost for His Highest



THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Chapter 3

I *There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus,
a ruler of the Jews:*

John 3:1

Nicodemus

- He is widely identified in extra-biblical Jewish historical sources (e.g. the Talmud) as Nakdimon ben Gurion
 - Lit. Nicodemus, son of Gurion
- Rabbinic tradition records that he was one of the three wealthiest men in Jerusalem during the period leading up to the fall of the city in AD 70.
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Nicodemus

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- This is confirmed in Jewish historical accounts that treat Nakdimon as a figure of high national prestige and influence.
- It is therefore all the more remarkable that this man would come to Jesus at all!

Nicodemus

- *“If ever there was a group, which could be called religious fanatics, it was the Pharisees.*
- *They were a select group -- never more than 6,000 of them -- who had each one taken a solemn vow before three witnesses that he would devote every moment of his entire life to obeying the Ten Commandments*
- *...the Pharisees conducted their punctilious attempts to observe the Law and thus please God.*
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- Pastor Ray Steadman

Nicodemus

- *“It is amazing that he would come to Jesus at all, because the Pharisees regarded themselves as superior to other men in spiritual status before God due to their total dedication to obeying the law of God. But not only did this Pharisee and ruler of the Jews come to Jesus, he asked certain questions of him”.*

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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.*

John 3:2

- Given what we have just learned, it now makes sense why Nicodemus would want to meet Jesus 'by night'.
- Nicodemus was risking his reputation and position to come to speak to this 'outspoken troublemaker'.
 - Remember in Ch2 Jesus was turning the tables in the Temple!

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.

John 3:2

- He opens by addressing this young, unschooled, itinerant Galilean as "Rabbi"
 - which translates as 'Teacher' or 'Master'
- For a member of the supreme court of Israel to voluntarily address Jesus with a title of equal—or greater—honor is an incredible concession of respect.
 - It speaks volumes of the humility of Nicodemus!

² And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

2 Timothy 2:24

- Scholars agree that in the context of 2 Timothy 2:22, as Paul is writing to Timothy, Paul is speaking of docility, or the virtue that renders someone teachable.
 - A servant of God cannot be quarrelsome or defensive.
 - To instruct others in meekness (v. 25), an individual must first be submissive to God's truth and open to correction themselves.
 - Pride shuts down spiritual learning; only a teachable heart can rightly handle and communicate divine wisdom.
 - Contrary to opinion, *arrogance* is not a spiritual gift!

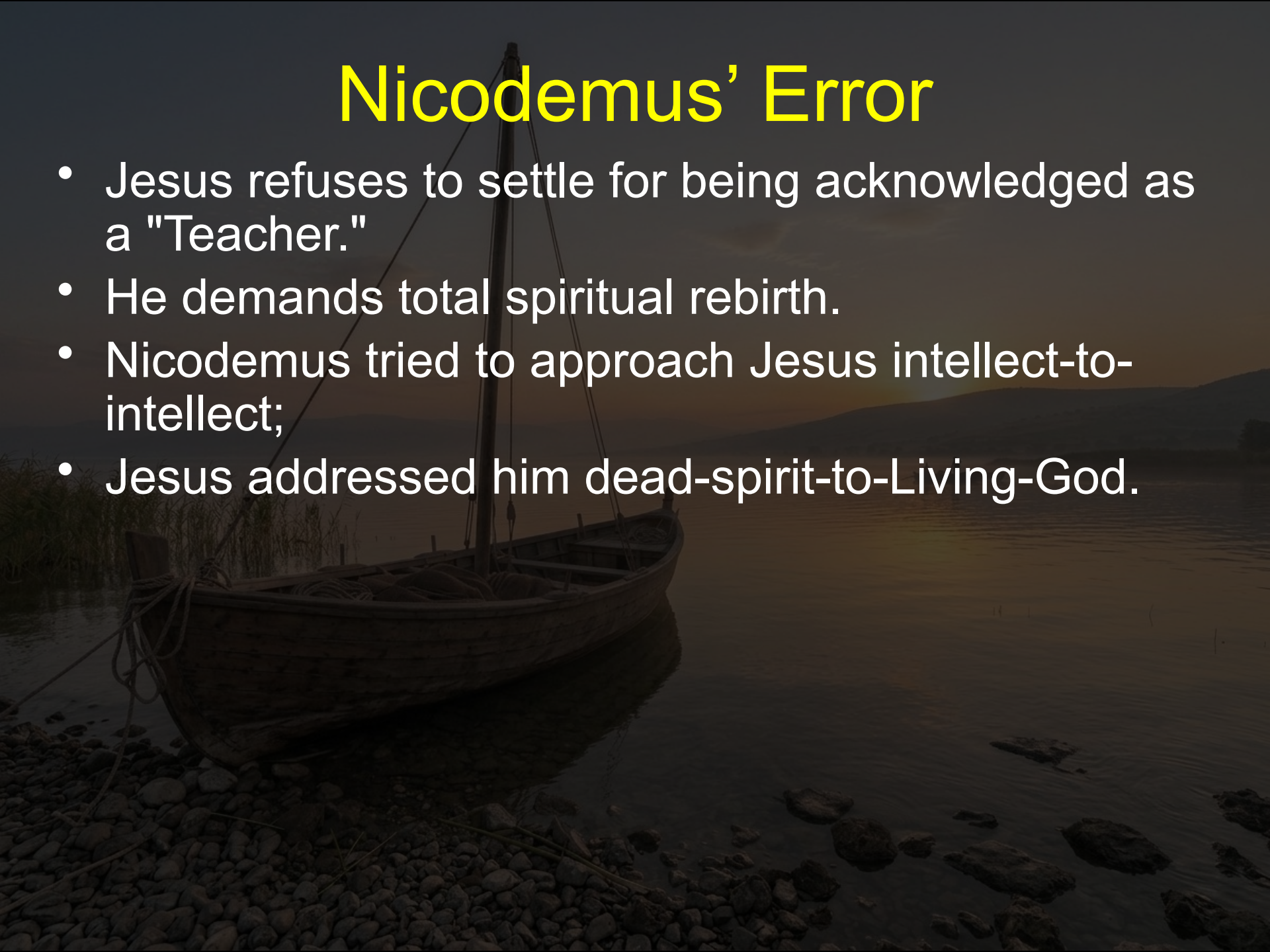
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- On the surface, this sounds like high praise.
- Nicodemus is acknowledging that Jesus isn't just an ordinary rabbi, but a divine messenger like the Old Testament prophets.
- He points to the signs (miracles) as proof that God's presence is with Jesus.
- But this falls short of who Jesus really is!

Nicodemus' Error

- Jesus refuses to settle for being acknowledged as a "Teacher."
- He demands total spiritual rebirth.
- Nicodemus tried to approach Jesus intellect-to-intellect;
- Jesus addressed him dead-spirit-to-Living-God.



Nicodemus' Error

- A Teacher vs. A Saviour:
 - A teacher gives advice, instruction, and moral guidance. A teacher tells you how to live. But a dead, condemned sinner does not need a teacher to give them a moral curriculum; they need a Saviour to give them life.
- The "Signs-Based" Belief:
 - Nicodemus represents the very group mentioned at the end of Chapter 2 (John 2:23–25) who "believed in His name when they saw the signs," but to whom Jesus would not commit Himself because He knew what was in man. Nicodemus arrives with an intellectual, sign-seeking recognition: "You are a great teacher."
 - Remember, John only records 7 miracles!
 - John focuses on the cause, not the effect!

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- This is telling!
- Clearly the Pharisees had acknowledged, albeit not publicly, that Jesus was not a fraud, but had been sent from God.
 - This goes to make their later rejection of Him even more incredible, and shows that they (the Pharisees in general) hardened their hearts.
 - Nicodemus on the other hand, after this personal encounter with Jesus, will never be the same!

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- Notice how Jesus doesn't say, "Thank you, Nicodemus, coming from the teacher of Israel, that means a lot!"
- Jesus effectively tells him: Nicodemus, you don't need a new lesson from a better teacher. You need a new nature from a sovereign Creator!

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.

John 3:3

- Jesus cut's right through our religion (the best we can do for God), and says in effect, 'your religion cannot save you'.
 - It is also an acknowledgment of 'the problem of the human heart' - Jeremiah 17:9
 - Nowhere in scripture do we see God 'patching up', repairing or restoring the heart.
 - The heart is incurable, that's why we need to be born again – with a new heart.

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.

John 3:3

- Verily, verily, I say unto you!
 - ‘Have I got your attention? Listen up! Take note of this!’
- ‘Except...’
 - This is the only way
 - But praise God, there is A way!
- Jesus will further underline the exclusive nature of salvation by declaring ‘*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*’
 - John 14:6

Born Again

- *John uses a very interesting word here that is translated "anew," or "again." It is the Greek word, 'anóthen', which has three meanings:*
- *It means again to do it a second time;*
- *it also means to begin radically, completely, a new beginning;*
- *and it also means from above, and it is used in that sense in other places in Scripture. It signifies God must do this.*
- *The Christian understanding of this word includes all three of those meanings.*

- Pastor Ray Steadman

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?

John 3:4

- Nicodemus, as do most of us, immediately thinks in terms of the natural, but as we commented in chapter 1:12, true life is not physical, it is spiritual.
- So much of our time and focus is on the physical, natural order of things.
 - That is why we find it hard to understand and adjust to spiritual things.

The Natural Man

¹⁴ But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

1 Cor 2:14

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?

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- Another thought that may have been underlying Nicodemus' question is the rabbinic view that the various stages of Jewish life, from birth, circumcision, bar mitzvah, talmidim (disciples), all the way to Rabbi were seen as a new beginning.
- Nicodemus had 'been there and done it'.
- What could possibly be left that he had not accomplished? Was Jesus suggesting to Nicodemus that he go back and start all over again? If so, how could he begin at birth?

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.

John 3:5

- ‘Verily, verily, I say unto thee’
- Note again the importance of what Jesus says
- Jesus gives the most profound answer: to enter the kingdom of God, in fact, the only way to enter the kingdom of God, is through being born, both by water and by the Spirit.
- Two births are mentioned

Born of the Spirit

In Adam all die... 1 Cor 15:22

- The punishment for sin was death (Gen 2:17 / Rom 6:23)
- In the Garden of Eden we all died spiritually
- Unless we are 're-born' spiritually, we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven, we will remain spiritually dead

In Christ shall all be made alive... 1 Cor 15:22

- God is the 'Father of Spirits' Heb 12:9
- Whatever is born of God does not sin (1 Jn 3:9 / 5:18)

Our Warfare

17 For the **flesh** lusteth against the **Spirit**, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that **ye** cannot do the things that ye would

Gal 5:17

“These two forces within us are constantly fighting each other to win control over us, and our wishes are never free from their pressures” Gal 5:17 – The Living Bible

- The real you (Soul) resides in a physical frame, which is itself the battleground

Our Warfare

II Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

1 Peter 2:11

- We are to:
- Mortify the deeds of the flesh Rom 8:13 / Col 3:5
- Reckon ourselves as dead Rom 6:11
- Crucify the flesh, its passions & desires Gal 5:24

The Life of the Spirit

² As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby

1 Peter 2:2

- We are to feed our spiritual life by:
- The Word 1 Pet 2:2 / Heb 5:13-14 / Acts 2:42
- Renewing our minds Rom 12:1-2 / Col 3:2 / Phil 4:8
- Fellowship Acts 2:42 / Heb 10:25
- Praying Acts 2:42
- Communion Acts 2:42 / 1 Cor 11:28

Born of Water?

- What does this mean?
- Some Bible scholars contend that 'born of water' is referring to baptism.
- Others will argue for water here being symbolic of the Word of God,
- A third position would have it that the water refers to the Holy Spirit 'washing' us.
- A fourth view holds to 'water birth' simply being a reference to our natural birth.

Water of Baptism?

- *John's baptism was the sensation of the nation at this time. Everyone was talking about it. The Pharisees had sent a delegation to John to ask him why he was baptizing. The meaning of John's baptism was the central theological question of the day in which our Lord speaks. What Jesus means, then, is what baptism signifies. It is not the water that changes anybody. Many people superstitiously think that if they baptize their babies that will assure the children entrance into the kingdom of heaven; or if they themselves were to be baptized as adults that would guarantee them admittance into heaven. That is rank superstition!*

Water of Baptism?

- *Water does not change anybody that way. It may make you a little cleaner, you might even smell better, but it does not make you any different in God's eyes. What the baptism stands for is what is important. Do not, like the many in John's gospel, miss the real meaning because of the symbol! The symbol behind baptism is repentance, an honest admission of need.*

– Pastor

Ray Steadman

Water of Baptism?

³ Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

⁴ Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Rom 6:3-4

Water of the Word?

- *There are those who say the water refers to the Word of God. As Peter in his first epistle, chapter 1, verse 23, said that we've been "begotten unto this living hope through the Word of truth." And so, we've been born again through the Word of God. And Jesus said in John 15, "Now you are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you." And so it is being born of the Word of God.*

Chuck Smith

Water of the Word?

²³ Being **born again**, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, **by the word of God**, which liveth and abideth for ever.

1 Peter 1:23

Water of the Word?

²⁶ That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

Ephesians 5:26

Water of the Word?

3 Now ye are **clean through the word** which I have spoken unto you.

John 15:3

Water of the Word?

³¹ Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

John 8:31

Water of natural birth?

To be born of the water would refer to the natural birth, because in context then, Jesus said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, but that which born of the Spirit is spirit". And so, He's talking about the two births: born of the water, and born of the Spirit. And that the born of the Spirit is referring to the new birth, the spiritual birth that we have, where born of the water would refer to the fleshly birth.

– Chuck Smith

Conclusion?

- All these views have validity:
- We must repent, which is what baptism symbolises, if we are to be saved.
- We are also saved by the Word,
- We too are saved by the washing and regeneration of the Spirit.
- However the only view that allows the context to interpret what Jesus says is that we must be born naturally, and this must be followed by a new birth spiritually if we are to enter the kingdom of God.
- The following verses underline this conclusion.

Conclusion?

- We should also note that there are many who have not been baptised who are genuinely saved (the thief on the cross is just one example).
- There have also been many who have been born again without reading a page of scripture – in some countries people are denied access to the Bible, yet have put their trust in Jesus as their Saviour and Lord.
- We do need to be washed and regenerated by the spirit, but this is part and parcel of the *spiritual birth* Jesus talked about.

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.

John 3:5-6

- Jesus says man must be born of 2 things:
- Scripture always interprets scripture
- Jesus Himself lists the 2 births
- One Physical, One Spiritual

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.

John 3:7-8

John Wesley was asked:

Why do you so often preach John chapter 3, verse 7?

*“Because you **MUST** be born again!”*

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.

John 3:7-8

- Notice now that Jesus, in talking about the new birth only mentions being 'born of the Spirit'. If the 'water' in verse 5 referred to baptism, or the word of God, it would be stated again here.
- The fact that it is not, indicates again that the water in v5 is in reference to natural birth.

9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

John 3:9-10

- lit. 'are you the master of Israel'
- Why did Jesus chide Nicodemus for not knowing?
- Because he should have known the scriptures

The Promised New Birth

33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Jeremiah 31:33

The Promised New Birth

²⁶ A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

²⁷ And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

Ezekiel 36:26-27

II Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **We** speak that **we** do know, and testify that **we** have seen; and ye receive not **our** witness.

John 3:11

- Once again Jesus adds emphasis...
- Who is the 'we'?
- The disciples?
- Hardly! They had not spoken, known or testified of the new birth!
- The new birth is a matter settled in heaven
- The 'we' here has to be in reference to the Godhead!

¹² If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

John 3:12

- Jesus' answer to Nicodemus' question was using simple earthly analogies
- If Nicodemus is struggling with this, how will he fare when Jesus reveals things from a heavenly perspective? (as He will in v.14).
- We are all a little like this, God will so often use earthly situations to try to convey something of profound spiritual importance to us, and so often we fail to understand even the earthly!

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.

John 3:13

- This must have blown Nicodemus' mind! Jesus is standing in front of him, yet Jesus now says that, not only has He ascended up into heaven, but that is His origin, and even now is where He is! This verse outlines the mystery of the incarnation – God becoming flesh and dwelling among us.

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John 3:13

- Notice that Jesus says that no man... Jesus is no mere man, but God manifest in human form.
- That is how He can stand in front of Nicodemus talking to him, and also declare that the Son of man is in heaven.

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,
even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish,
but have eternal life.

John 3:14-15

- Jesus now speaks of heavenly things
- Numbers 21

The Serpent on the Pole

5 And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

6 And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.

Numbers 21:5-9

The Serpent on the Pole

⁷ Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.

⁸ And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.

The Serpent on the Pole

9 And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

Numbers 21:5-9

- Brass = Judgment
- Serpent = Sin
- Sin judged & put on a pole
- What was required to be delivered from the bite?
- Faith in the only remedy God prescribed

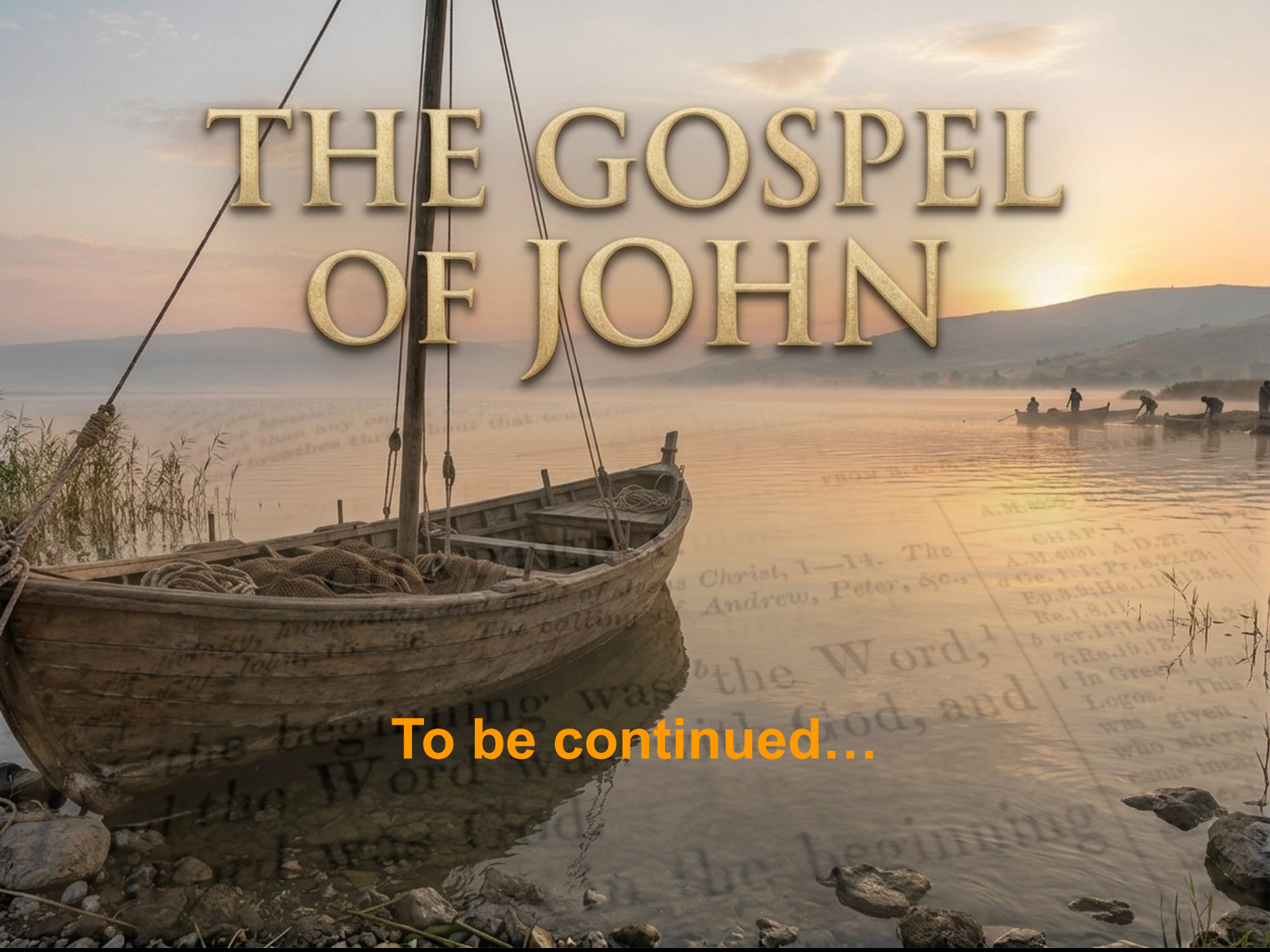
The Serpent on a Pole

- Just as those bitten by the serpent (representing all those who have been bitten by the incurable 'serpent' of sin – i.e. all mankind), could choose (every individual had to make this choice for themselves) to look at the brass (signifying judgment) serpent (signifying sin) lifted up on a pole.
- In just the same way 'whomsoever will' can look to Jesus, who was lifted up on the cross, becoming sin for us, and receiving from God the judgment we deserved.

The Serpent on a Pole

- In so doing, they will be 'healed', and though they were 'as dead' as a result of the serpent's bite, they will now be made alive – i.e. 'born again'.

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To be continued...



Calvary Chapel Portsmouth

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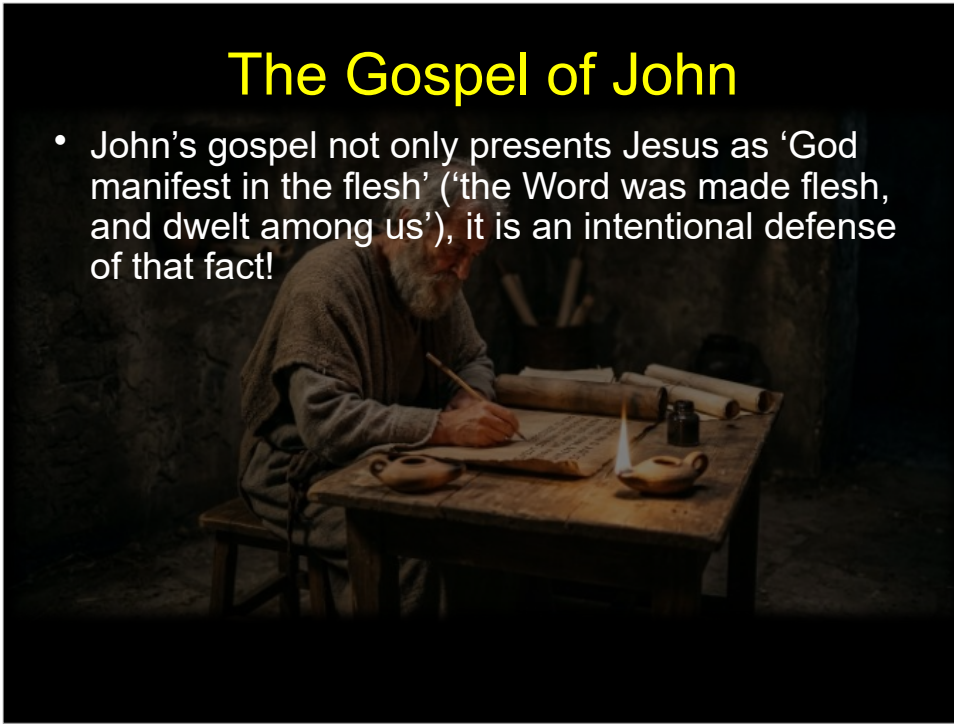
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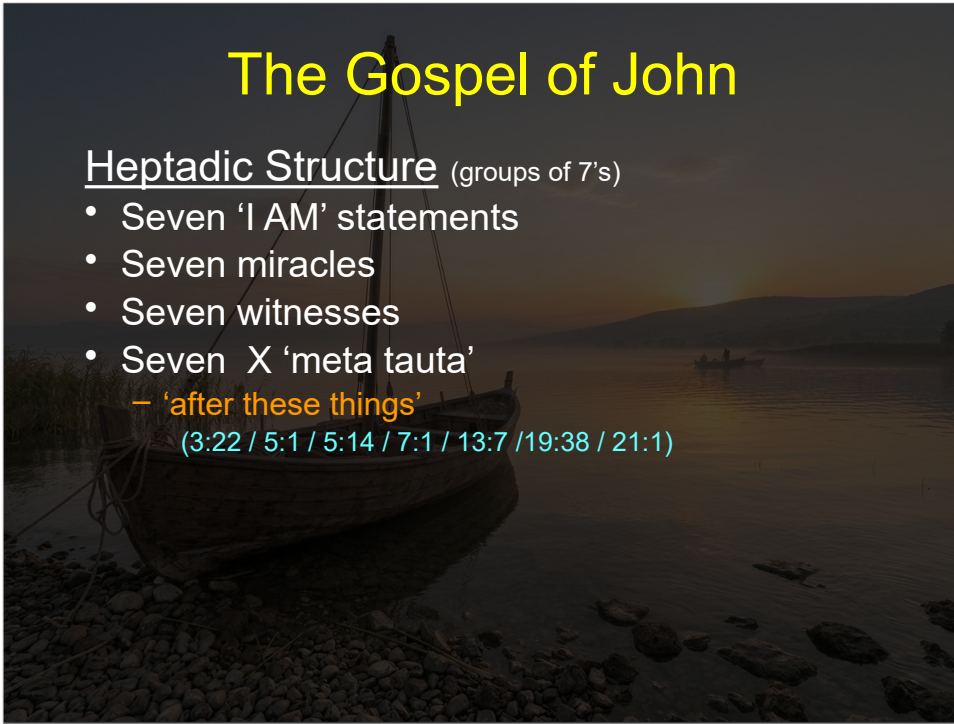
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What The Bible Is All About

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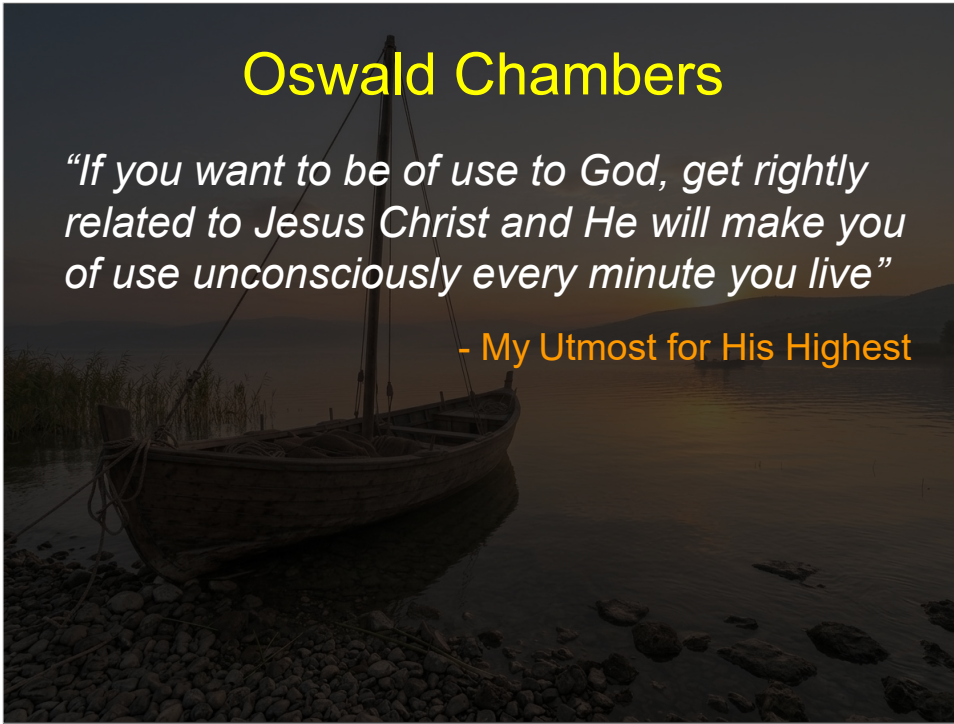
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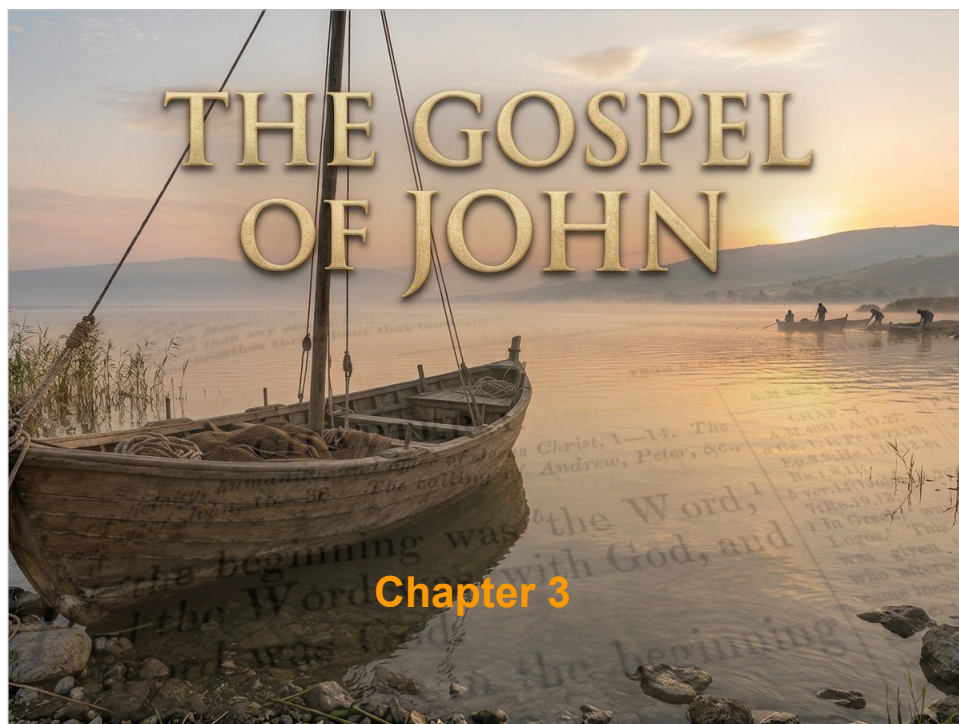


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- My Utmost for His Highest





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- He is widely identified in extra-biblical Jewish historical sources (e.g. the Talmud) as Nakdimon ben Gurion
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- Rabbinic tradition records that he was one of the three wealthiest men in Jerusalem during the period leading up to the fall of the city in AD 70.
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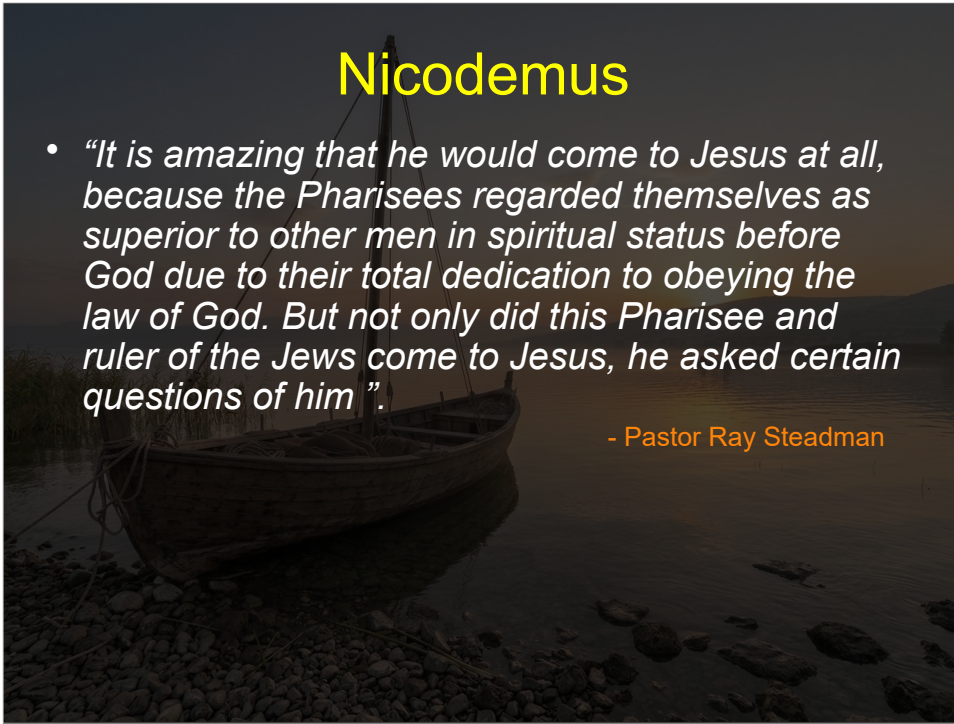
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² *The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*

John 3:2

- Given what we have just learned, it now makes sense why Nicodemus would want to meet Jesus 'by night'.
- Nicodemus was risking his reputation and position to come to speak to this 'outspoken troublemaker'.
 - Remember in Ch2 Jesus was turning the tables in the Temple!

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. John 3:2

- He opens by addressing this young, unschooled, itinerant Galilean as "Rabbi"
 - which translates as 'Teacher' or 'Master'
- For a member of the supreme court of Israel to voluntarily address Jesus with a title of equal—or greater—honor is an incredible concession of respect.
 - It speaks volumes of the humility of Nicodemus!

² And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

2 Timothy 2:24

- Scholars agree that in the context of 2 Timothy 2:22, as Paul is writing to Timothy, Paul is speaking of docility, or the virtue that renders someone teachable.
 - A servant of God cannot be quarrelsome or defensive.
 - To instruct others in meekness (v. 25), an individual must first be submissive to God's truth and open to correction themselves.
 - Pride shuts down spiritual learning; only a teachable heart can rightly handle and communicate divine wisdom.
 - Contrary to opinion, *arrogance* is not a spiritual gift!

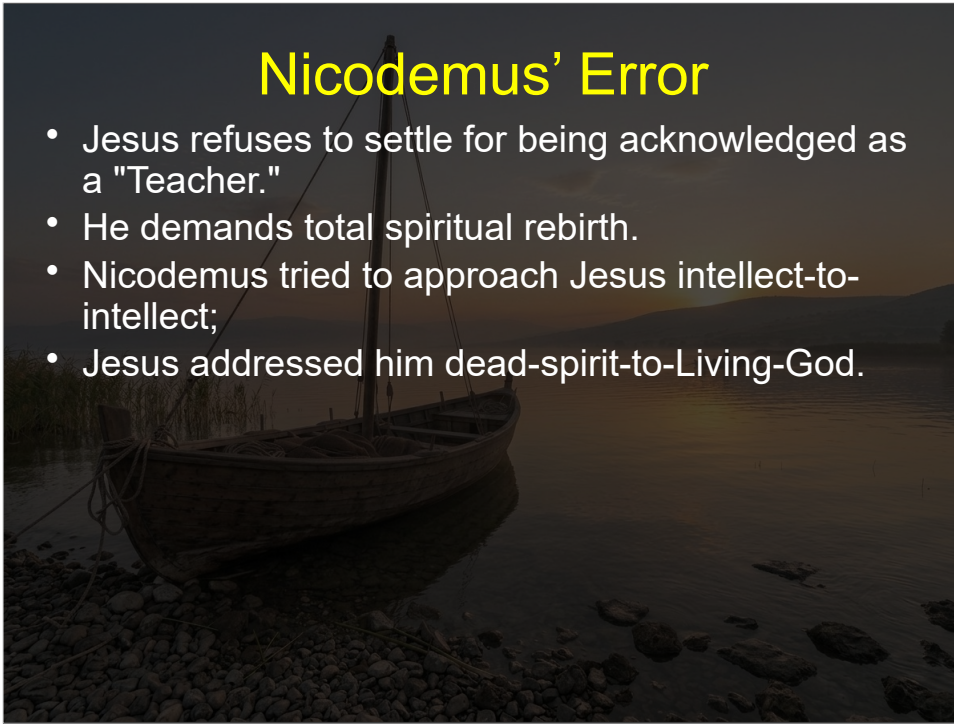
Contrary to opinion, arrogance is not a spiritual gift!

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. John 3:2

- On the surface, this sounds like high praise.
- Nicodemus is acknowledging that Jesus isn't just an ordinary rabbi, but a divine messenger like the Old Testament prophets.
- He points to the signs (miracles) as proof that God's presence is with Jesus.
- But this falls short of who Jesus really is!

Nicodemus' Error

- Jesus refuses to settle for being acknowledged as a "Teacher."
- He demands total spiritual rebirth.
- Nicodemus tried to approach Jesus intellect-to-intellect;
- Jesus addressed him dead-spirit-to-Living-God.



Nicodemus' Error

- A Teacher vs. A Saviour:
 - A teacher gives advice, instruction, and moral guidance. A teacher tells you how to live. But a dead, condemned sinner does not need a teacher to give them a moral curriculum; they need a Saviour to give them life.
- The "Signs-Based" Belief:
 - Nicodemus represents the very group mentioned at the end of Chapter 2 (John 2:23–25) who "believed in His name when they saw the signs," but to whom Jesus would not commit Himself because He knew what was in man. Nicodemus arrives with an intellectual, sign-seeking recognition: "You are a great teacher."
 - Remember, John only records 7 miracles!
 - John focuses on the cause, not the effect!

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. John 3:2

- This is telling!
- Clearly the Pharisees had acknowledged, albeit not publicly, that Jesus was not a fraud, but had been sent from God.
 - This goes to make their later rejection of Him even more incredible, and shows that they (the Pharisees in general) hardened their hearts.
 - Nicodemus on the other hand, after this personal encounter with Jesus, will never be the same!

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. John 3:2

- Notice how Jesus doesn't say, "Thank you, Nicodemus, coming from the teacher of Israel, that means a lot!"
- Jesus effectively tells him: Nicodemus, you don't need a new lesson from a better teacher. You need a new nature from a sovereign Creator!

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.

John 3:3

- Jesus cut's right through our religion (the best we can do for God), and says in effect, 'your religion cannot save you'.
 - It is also an acknowledgment of 'the problem of the human heart' - Jeremiah 17:9
 - Nowhere in scripture do we see God 'patching up', repairing or restoring the heart.
 - The heart is incurable, that's why we need to be born again – with a new heart.

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.

John 3:3

- Verily, verily, I say unto you!
 - ‘Have I got your attention? Listen up! Take note of this!’
- ‘Except...’
 - This is the **only** way
 - But praise God, there is A way!
- Jesus will further underline the exclusive nature of salvation by declaring ‘*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*’
 - John 14:6

Born Again

- *John uses a very interesting word here that is translated "anew," or "again." It is the Greek word, 'anōthen', which has three meanings:*
- *It means again to do it a second time;*
- *it also means to begin radically, completely, a new beginning;*
- *and it also means from above, and it is used in that sense in other places in Scripture. It signifies God must do this.*
- *The Christian understanding of this word includes all three of those meanings.*

- Pastor Ray Steadman

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?

John 3:4

- Nicodemus, as do most of us, immediately thinks in terms of the natural, but as we commented in chapter 1:12, true life is not physical, it is spiritual.
- So much of our time and focus is on the physical, natural order of things.
 - That is why we find it hard to understand and adjust to spiritual things.

The Natural Man

¹⁴ But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

1 Cor 2:14

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?

John 3:4

- Another thought that may have been underlying Nicodemus' question is the rabbinic view that the various stages of Jewish life, from birth, circumcision, bar mitzvah, talmidim (disciples), all the way to Rabbi were seen as a new beginning.
- Nicodemus had 'been there and done it'.
- What could possibly be left that he had not accomplished? Was Jesus suggesting to Nicodemus that he go back and start all over again? If so, how could he begin at birth?

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.

John 3:5

- 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee'
- Note again the importance of what Jesus says
- Jesus gives the most profound answer: to enter the kingdom of God, in fact, the only way to enter the kingdom of God, is through being born, both by water and by the Spirit.
- Two births are mentioned

Born of the Spirit

In Adam all die... 1 Cor 15:22

- The punishment for sin was death (Gen 2:17 / Rom 6:23)
- In the Garden of Eden we all died spiritually
- Unless we are 're-born' spiritually, we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven, we will remain spiritually dead

In Christ shall all be made alive... 1 Cor 15:22

- God is the 'Father of Spirits' Heb 12:9
- Whatever is born of God does not sin (1 Jn 3:9 / 5:18)

Our Warfare

¹⁷ For the **flesh** lusteth against the **Spirit**, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that **ye** cannot do the things that ye would

Gal 5:17

“These two forces within us are constantly fighting each other to win control over us, and our wishes are never free from their pressures” Gal 5:17 – The Living Bible

- The real you (Soul) resides in a physical frame, which is itself the battleground

Our Warfare

¶ Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

1 Peter 2:11

- We are to:
- Mortify the deeds of the flesh [Rom 8:13](#) / [Col 3:5](#)
- Reckon ourselves as dead [Rom 6:11](#)
- Crucify the flesh, its passions & desires [Gal 5:24](#)

The Life of the Spirit

² As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby

1 Peter 2:2

- We are to feed our spiritual life by:
- The Word 1 Pet 2:2 / Heb 5:13-14 / Acts 2:42
- Renewing our minds Rom 12:1-2 / Col 3:2 / Phil 4:8
- Fellowship Acts 2:42 / Heb 10:25
- Praying Acts 2:42
- Communion Acts 2:42 / 1 Cor 11:28

Born of Water?

- What does this mean?
- Some Bible scholars contend that 'born of water' is referring to baptism.
- Others will argue for water here being symbolic of the Word of God,
- A third position would have it that the water refers to the Holy Spirit 'washing' us.
- A fourth view holds to 'water birth' simply being a reference to our natural birth.

Water of Baptism?

- *John's baptism was the sensation of the nation at this time. Everyone was talking about it. The Pharisees had sent a delegation to John to ask him why he was baptizing. The meaning of John's baptism was the central theological question of the day in which our Lord speaks. What Jesus means, then, is what baptism signifies. It is not the water that changes anybody. Many people superstitiously think that if they baptize their babies that will assure the children entrance into the kingdom of heaven; or if they themselves were to be baptized as adults that would guarantee them admittance into heaven. That is rank superstition!*

Water of Baptism?

- *Water does not change anybody that way. It may make you a little cleaner, you might even smell better, but it does not make you any different in God's eyes. What the baptism stands for is what is important. Do not, like the many in John's gospel, miss the real meaning because of the symbol! The symbol behind baptism is repentance, an honest admission of need.*

– Pastor

Ray Steadman

Water of Baptism?

³ Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

⁴ Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Rom 6:3-4

Water of the Word?

- *There are those who say the water refers to the Word of God. As Peter in his first epistle, chapter 1, verse 23, said that we've been "begotten unto this living hope through the Word of truth." And so, we've been born again through the Word of God. And Jesus said in John 15, "Now you are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you." And so it is being born of the Word of God.*

Chuck Smith

Water of the Word?

²³ Being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

1 Peter 1:23

Water of the Word?

²⁶ That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

Ephesians 5:26

Water of the Word?

³ Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

John 15:3

Water of the Word?

³¹ Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

John 8:31

Water of natural birth?

To be born of the water would refer to the natural birth, because in context then, Jesus said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, but that which born of the Spirit is spirit". And so, He's talking about the two births: born of the water, and born of the Spirit. And that the born of the Spirit is referring to the new birth, the spiritual birth that we have, where born of the water would refer to the fleshly birth.

– Chuck Smith

Conclusion?

- All these views have validity:
- We must repent, which is what baptism symbolises, if we are to be saved.
- We are also saved by the Word,
- We too are saved by the washing and regeneration of the Spirit.
- However the only view that allows the context to interpret what Jesus says is that we must be born naturally, and this must be followed by a new birth spiritually if we are to enter the kingdom of God.
- The following verses underline this conclusion.

Conclusion?

- We should also note that there are many who have not been baptised who are genuinely saved (the thief on the cross is just one example).
- There have also been many who have been born again without reading a page of scripture – in some countries people are denied access to the Bible, yet have put their trust in Jesus as their Saviour and Lord.
- We do need to be washed and regenerated by the spirit, but this is part and parcel of the *spiritual birth* Jesus talked about.

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.

John 3:5-6

- Jesus says man must be born of 2 things:
- Scripture always interprets scripture
- Jesus Himself lists the 2 births
- One Physical, One Spiritual

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.

John 3:7-8

John Wesley was asked:

Why do you so often preach John chapter 3, verse 7?

*“Because you **MUST** be born again!”*

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.

John 3:7-8

- Notice now that Jesus, in talking about the new birth only mentions being 'born of the Spirit'. If the 'water' in verse 5 referred to baptism, or the word of God, it would be stated again here.
- The fact that it is not, indicates again that the water in v5 is in reference to natural birth.

⁹ Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

¹⁰ Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

John 3:9-10

- lit. 'are you the master of Israel'
- Why did Jesus chide Nicodemus for not knowing?
- Because he should have known the scriptures

The Promised New Birth

³³ But *this* shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Jeremiah 31:33

The Promised New Birth

²⁶ A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

²⁷ And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

Ezekiel 36:26-27

¶ Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

John 3:11

- Once again Jesus adds emphasis...
- Who is the 'we'?
- The disciples?
- Hardly! They had not spoken, known or testified of the new birth!
- The new birth is a matter settled in heaven
- The 'we' here has to be in reference to the Godhead!

¹² If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

John 3:12

- Jesus' answer to Nicodemus' question was using simple earthly analogies
- If Nicodemus is struggling with this, how will he fare when Jesus reveals things from a heavenly perspective? (as He will in v.14).
- We are all a little like this, God will so often use earthly situations to try to convey something of profound spiritual importance to us, and so often we fail to understand even the earthly!

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.

John 3:13

- This must have blown Nicodemus' mind! Jesus is standing in front of him, yet Jesus now says that, not only has He ascended up into heaven, but that is His origin, and even now is where He is! This verse outlines the mystery of the incarnation – God becoming flesh and dwelling among us.

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.

John 3:13

- Notice that Jesus says that no man... Jesus is no mere man, but God manifest in human form.
- That is how He can stand in front of Nicodemus talking to him, and also declare that the Son of man is in heaven.

¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,
even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

¹⁵ That whosoever believeth in him should not perish,
but have eternal life.

John 3:14-15

- Jesus now speaks of heavenly things
- Numbers 21

The Serpent on the Pole

⁵ And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

⁶ And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.

Numbers 21:5-9

The Serpent on the Pole

⁷ Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.

⁸ And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.

Numbers 21:5-9

The Serpent on the Pole

⁹ And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

Numbers 21:5-9

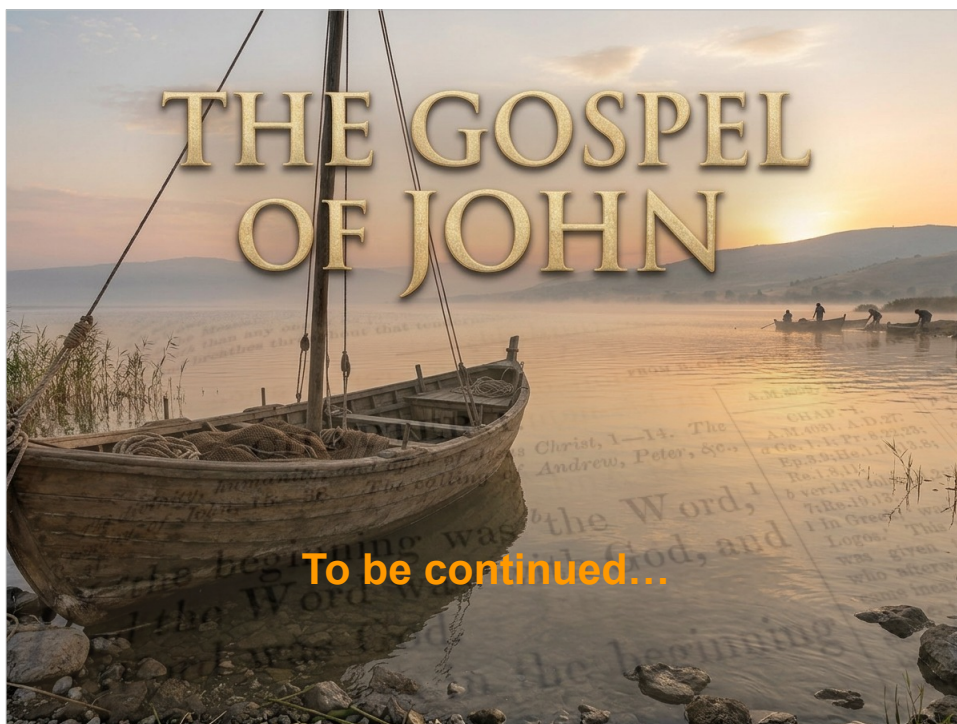
- Brass = Judgment
- Serpent = Sin
- Sin judged & put on a pole
- What was required to be delivered from the bite?
- Faith in the only remedy God prescribed

The Serpent on a Pole

- Just as those bitten by the serpent (representing all those who have been bitten by the incurable 'serpent' of sin – i.e. all mankind), could choose (every individual had to make this choice for themselves) to look at the brass (signifying judgment) serpent (signifying sin) lifted up on a pole.
- In just the same way 'whomsoever will' can look to Jesus, who was lifted up on the cross, becoming sin for us, and receiving from God the judgment we deserved.

The Serpent on a Pole

- In so doing, they will be 'healed', and though they were 'as dead' as a result of the serpent's bite, they will now be made alive – i.e. 'born again'.





Calvary Chapel Portsmouth

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