

## **Dr. David Turner, Gospel of John, Session 5, John 2:13-3:36**

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This is Dr. David Turner in his teaching on the Gospel of John. This is session 5, Jesus' Early Ministry in Jerusalem. John 2:13-3:36.

Welcome to our fifth video on the Gospel of John. We've looked at an introduction to the book and at the first couple of chapters. So now we're following Jesus after his first miracle in Cana of Galilee to his first trip in Jerusalem.

So, we'll look at the narrative flow first and then look into some of the important matters that come up in this chapter. We start looking at John 2, verse 12, over through the Nicodemus story. We're noticing that Jesus is making a transition between the Cana of Galilee and Judea.

So, we're told that after doing the miracle at Cana of Galilee, verse 12, he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers, and stayed there for just a few days. But when, in verse 13, it was almost time for the Passover, they went up to Jerusalem. The first thing that happened there is what we might call, for lack of a better term, the temple incident, where Jesus cleared out the people who were doing financial transactions in the temple.

It's not exactly clear why that was necessary to do. There certainly was a need for financial transactions to take place, with money needing to be changed from foreign visitors, and also sacrificial animals had to be purchased. So, what was going on there was a necessary service, either the location of it or the manner in which it was done in a dishonest fashion was the problem, and we can catch hints of that, I guess, here and there in the narrative about what it was.

It must have been a very interesting experience to see Jesus taking names and kicking butt there, as it were. So he drove all of the people out who were taking care of the sacrificial animals there, scattered the coins of the money changers, and overturned their tables. To those who sold the doves, he said, get out of here, stop turning my father's house into a market.

That led his disciples to think of the Old Testament passage, zeal for your house will consume me, more on that passage after a few moments. So, the response that was made, the aftermath of this occurring in the temple, led to Jesus being asked the question, which was an important word in John, right? The Jews responded to him, what sign can you show us to prove your authority over all this, to do this? In other words, who gave you the right to perform this type of act here in our temple? Jesus gave them a reply that turned out to be a very obscure statement, destroy this

temple, I'll raise it again in three days. Well, obviously, it had taken quite a while to build the temple.

Herod had been remodeling it, refurbishing it, expanding it, broadening its platform, and beautifying its buildings. They say here in verse 20, for going on 46 years at this point, and they said, you're going to destroy it in three days. Jesus was intentionally opaque there, evidently, because the editorial comment we receive in verses 21 through 22 indicates that he had been speaking of the temple, which was his body.

And after he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered what he said, and they believed the scripture and the words that he had spoken. So this statement, veiled as it is in verse 19, I'll raise it again in three days, ends up being a prophetic word to them. So as the narrative goes on, after the story of Jesus clearing the temple and his interaction with the leaders is unsatisfactory as that was, we have a very interesting thing said here at the end of chapter two, which prepares us to understand the Nicodemus incident, which is coming next.

While he was in Jerusalem at the Passover festival, many people saw the signs he was performing and believed in his name. Of course, John does not tell us anything about the individual signs. There was a request for signs in verse 18, and verse 23 says that Jesus was doing signs.

Many people saw those signs, and many people believed. But what follows from that statement is rather confounding to us. It's a bit of a pun in Greek with a play on the verb *pisteuo*.

Many people saw the signs he was performing, and then he believed in his name, but Jesus was not entrusting himself to them. He was not putting his faith in them, so to speak, for he knew all people. He did not need testimony about mankind, for he knew what was in each person.

So here we have in John the first hint that faith, which is based on seeing signs, is perhaps suspicious in some way, or insufficient, or not necessarily what we would like to see as a full, mature, saving faith. And then I think this gives us information that helps us understand where Nicodemus is coming from in chapter 3. So, when we look at John chapter 3, we see this man Nicodemus, who's obviously described as being a ruling teacher of the Jews, someone who was well known, a person of prestige and status in the community, one that Jesus later says in chapter 3, and is it verse 12? No, verse 10, you're Israel's teacher, and you don't understand what I'm saying. So, Nicodemus was a person of great renown, evidently, but still was clueless when it came to understanding Jesus.

So, when we look at the narrative of Jesus and Nicodemus, Nicodemus first indicates that he believes Jesus must be a teacher come from God, because of his signs, which

seems to link Nicodemus to the people who believed in Jesus at the end of chapter 2. He gives Jesus then this compliment, and I'm sure is taken quite a back by Jesus not saying thank you, or I appreciate that of you, or thanks for your confidence. Jesus simply says, you can't see the kingdom of God unless you're born again. So, we have these repeated exchanges between Jesus and Nicodemus, which leads to pretty much mutual exasperation, because they don't really understand each other very well at all, and we'll look into that in a bit more detail in a little bit.

So, we have the narrative between Jesus and Nicodemus up through verse 15. Evidently at that point, beginning at verse 16, I'm wondering whether this is an editorial comment, not exactly the direct words of Jesus. At least it must be that way, because in the NIV Bible I'm holding in my hand, the red letters stop at verse 15.

At least that was their interpretation. I've wondered about this before, and wondering even whether the red letters should stop at verse 13, but it does seem to me that Jesus very likely might have said, as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life. So, this is the way Jesus concludes the narrative with Nicodemus, and we aren't really told whether Nicodemus then says to Jesus, okay, now I get it, I believe, or whether Nicodemus still is shaking his head and wondering what's going on, going away in doubt, or what's going on.

Nicodemus is just left hanging, but don't worry, he's going to come back again in chapter 7, and we'll see him again there, and we'll see him again for a third time later on in chapter 19, I believe. So, John's editorial remark in verse 16, following down probably through verse 21, I think is the interpretive way for us to understand the interview with Nicodemus. What we are to take from Jesus' interview with Nicodemus is then verses 16 through 21, that God loved the world, he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, Jesus not coming into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world.

Those who don't believe are already condemned, unfortunately, because they haven't believed light has come into the world through Jesus, and Nicodemus, who comes to Jesus by night for whatever reason, is a person who is still evidently in the dark at this point, and so we have this metaphorical language of light and darkness here at the end of the chapter. Whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, that it might be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God, verse 21. In a book like John, we have to take verse 21, I think, in light of what is said in verse 2, that Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, and Nicodemus then is, excuse me, verse 21 sort of hints that a person like Nicodemus needs to come out of the darkness and to come into the light.

Thinking back to the prologue again about what it says about Moses and Jesus, Nicodemus was a follower of Moses, a very prominent follower of Moses. Now he's

placed in a situation where he needs to understand that just as the Torah came by Moses, so grace and truth ultimately came through Jesus. Whether Nicodemus is going to understand that fully or not remains to be seen, although we see some better things about Nicodemus as we look more fully into the rest of this gospel.

So, let's take a moment now and compare the way it says in John 3, that Jesus and John's ministries are laid out. This isn't at all surprising because we already read in chapter 1 that John said he was not the light, but he came to testify about the light. So, verses 22 through 36 of the chapter, now I'm going to let this play out for us one more time.

Baptisms were going on at Enon near Salim, locations that we will not take the time to try to clarify to a great extent, and a debate about John's disciples, verse 25, and certain Jews over the matter of ceremonial washing. And the reference was made to John that Jesus is baptizing lots of people, and almost to get the impression his church is growing faster than yours, so what do you think of that? To this John replied, in verse 27, a person can only receive what's given to them from heaven. You know that I said I'm not the Messiah, I'm just sent ahead of him.

And he compares himself not to the bridegroom, but to the friend of the bridegroom whose joy comes from helping the bridegroom enjoy his wedding. So, John says, he, Jesus, must become greater, I must become less, verse 30. One wonders whether the rest of the chapter, verse 31 and following, are the words of John the Baptist, or again the editorial remark that clarifies what's going on from verses 21 to 30.

If so, that would be a pattern much like we had at the beginning of the chapter. If that would be the case, then just as 3, 1 through 15 describe the interview between Jesus and Nicodemus, and 16 through 21 show us the editorial perspective on that. So also, then in parallel, verses 22 through 30 would be the interview of John the Baptist and these Jewish people, and then verse 31 and following would be John the Evangelist, the author of the book's commentary on that.

I tend to take that as the way that should be viewed here. So, if this is the case, then John is commenting, John the Evangelist, the author of the book, that the one who comes from above is above all. The one who is from the earth belongs to the earth.

He testifies to what he has seen as John the Baptist. No one accepts his testimony. Whoever has accepted it has certified that God is truthful.

So, the reader then is being challenged to decide whether they are going to accept the testimony of John or not to accept the testimony of John. The one whom God sent, evidently verse 34, is a reference to Jesus. He speaks the words of God because God gives the spirit without limit.

A very clipped statement, and we wonder about what some of the antecedents are. Actually, the NIV has been a bit interpretive here because actually the text simply says, the one whom God sent speaks the words of God for he gives the spirit without limit. The NIV has interpreted it to say the Father gives the Spirit without limit.

Verse 35, then, the father loves the son and has placed everything in his hands. The Lord believes in the Son as eternal life. Whoever rejects the Son will not see life, but God's wrath abides on him.

Again, the way in which verses 35 and 36 make that point is very similar to the way in which verses 16 through 21 make the point about the necessity of faith in Jesus. So if this is the case, then we sort of have two halves of the chapter, chapter 3 verses 1 through 21, chapter 3 verses 22 through 36, with 3, 1 through 20, matching with 3, 22 to 30, and 3, 16 to 21, matching with 3, 31 to 36. Now that we've looked at the overall flow of the chapter, let's look briefly at, again, an idea of what Jerusalem would have been like at that time.

Jesus has come into the temple. We're not sure exactly how he entered or which of the gates were in like that, but he has done his work of overthrowing the money changers and all that somewhere in the area. It's theorized that he was either doing it in the streets outside the temple, where the people would have gone into perhaps along the southwest side or the south side where the steps are still preserved today, or that perhaps they were doing some of this work even inside the temple enclosure in the so-called court of the Gentiles where just about anybody could get in.

This is just not that clear from the text, at least to me at this point. So, looking at the picture today then of Jerusalem, looking at more or less from the west, a little bit to the northwest, I would guess. Today we have the famous western wall here, the retaining wall built by Herod the Great, today known as the place of prayer, the wailing wall, where many tourists attend and many Jewish people are there every day praying for God to redeem Israel.

The southern exposure to the temple here and the steps going up into the temple gates which have been under what is presently the Al-Aqsa Mosque at the southern end of the temple. Perhaps we would be looking at where they were selling the, changing the money and selling the sacrificial animals at this area down in here where you can still see, as we'll notice in a moment, the remnants perhaps of stalls in a street level that was there during Roman times. Looking at the same area from the south, here would be the steps of which we were speaking a moment ago and the entrances into the temple which would have gone up underground and popped up inside in the court of the Gentiles.

This is perhaps not as accurate a reconstruction as some that I've seen of the area, but now we're looking from the northwest to the northeast, I should say, to the

southwest. And so, the southern access to the temple is down here and the wailing wall would be over here on the other side of the temple enclosure itself. This is the artist's reconstruction of the holy place and the holiest place, the temple proper.

This would be the court of the Gentiles where other people were allowed to come and the court of the women, court of the men, and ultimately only where the priests could operate here and the high priest only once a year on the Day of Atonement could enter the holy of holies. So, either in this external area or perhaps outside on the street, the money changers and sellers of victims were going. This is a picture that I took in 2014 when visiting the southwestern corner of the temple you can still see today these sorts of retaining walls that are built to hold up the other wall or are they built simply to enclose shops.

And you can still see the ash embedded into the rock there in the stone. The street ash lorries were broken down by stones being thrown down from the top by the Romans in AD 70 and broke down the street that used to be here yet today. Perhaps this is where the buying and selling was taking place that's referred to there in the text.

We come back then to think about the text as a text rather than the referential world that it cites. So, the literary structure of these chapters. We've already discussed this material somewhat but notice this summary of what I think I've already gotten into to some extent.

One way of looking at John 3 would be to notice the narrative of the interview between Jesus and Nicodemus in 3:1-15 followed by the editorial comment in 3:16-21. So, the moral of this story according to the editor would basically be that Jesus, I'm sorry I'm looking at the wrong slide. We're looking first at chronology and theology. So, the question would be about Jesus clearing the temple first of all when did it happen and second of all, why did he do it?

So, the question of when would be, did he do it early on in his ministry as portrayed here in distinction from the way the synoptic gospels have it or did he do it at the end of his ministry as the synoptic gospels have it? So did he do it both times early as in John later as in the Synoptics or did he simply do it once then if he only did it once then either John is rearranging the historical chronology in order to make a thematic point by putting it early or the Synoptics have done that. I think most people would conclude even from an evangelical viewpoint that Jesus probably cleansed the temple only once during his ministry and that he did so toward the end and as John has moved this forward in his gospel along in keeping with his way of placing the material that Jesus made all these repeated trips to Jerusalem showing us that Jesus had difficulties issues with the Jewish leadership in Jerusalem from early in his ministry and that the tension was gradually building up to his final time there in John chapter 12.

So, I would conclude that he only cleansed the temple once in his ministry at the end. So why did he clear the temple? There are those who teach that Jesus was there simply to cleanse it that everything that was going on was fine it only needed to have a revival and get the people who were doing these things to be more spiritual to be more honest and so he was just sort of creating a bit of a little reform movement there trying to straighten it out a bit. On the other hand, you have scholars who think that Jesus was there to portray the whole destruction of the temple and that by overthrowing the temple's money changers and the little shops he was saying to them in essence here's a small picture of what the Romans are going to do in a little bit in AD 70 they're going to tear down the entire structure.

I think the first of those views is a bit too light and the second of those views is a bit too heavy. I think what Jesus is ultimately about is purifying the people of God and renewing the presence of God with the people. So, when we look at the hint early on here that Jesus was speaking of the temple of his body when he spoke of how to destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it again, and when he later spoke in our very next chapter to the woman at the well in Samaria by saying to her that what God is looking for is not so much the place where you worship but the manner in which you worship.

When he said to her it's not such whether it matters so much of whether you worship at Mount Gerizim or in Jerusalem although Jerusalem has been the place because God is the salvation of the Jews he says the hour is coming and now is when people worship God in spirit and in truth. So, by purifying the temple by cleansing it by clearing out the money changers evidently, Jesus is making a statement against the corruption that had crept into that practice which in itself was a necessary practice but was evidently being carried out unethically. He's also making a statement I think about what will happen in the future where we're not so much going to worry about where a person worships whether they worship God in spirit and in truth.

We also want to note in John chapter 2 before we get to chapter 3 that there are a couple of different allusions to the Old Testament which if we had more time we would take the time to look at in more depth noting how in chapter 2 verse 16 there is the reference to turning the father's house into a market which may be in reference to Zechariah chapter 14 verse 21 and also in verse 17 which seems to be an allusion back to Psalm 69 verse 9 zeal for your house will consume me. These are other texts that need to be thought about in their own immediate context and then noticing how these texts are sort of recycled or reused here in the New Testament noticing how the similarities and differences between the two texts would play out in further study but we don't have time to do all that just now we're trying to just give an overview of the book so we'll leave that with you the viewer to do that as you see the need. So, moving then into John 3 where I was jumping ahead a moment ago

unfortunately sorry about that now we really are there when we read this chapter we wonder where the red letters should stop in other words where do the words of Jesus himself end in the narration and where do the narrator's comments on the words of Jesus begin.

A common approach that I think makes a lot of sense is to view chapter 3 verses 1 through 15 with Jesus and Nicodemus as being the conversation and then verses 16 through 21 being the editorial comment. John is then saying not John the Baptist but John the evangelist the author of the book he's emphasizing the fact that Jesus is the son of God that he has come to bring faith to humanity and that the judgment is upon those who have not already believed. So, this will be an instance then of what's sometimes called realized eschatology in John.

Belief and judgment are not something that will be turned be found out at the end of time at final judgment life and death faith and unbelief salvation and judgment are something that have already begun to play out in history with the presence of Jesus. So, the person who hasn't believed in Jesus is already condemned according to this material. So, we have the narrative and then the editorial comment upon it.

The same thing in the second part of the chapter we have the narrative about John and persecution the dispute that John was asked about which leads to his comments about him not being the one but being the second in command so to speak the one who is pointing to Jesus, not the priority himself. So, this discussion about John and purification and John's relative position compared to Jesus leads to the editorial comments of verses 31 to 36 ultimately then about how Jesus is the one upon whom God has sent the spirit the spirit remains upon Jesus and Jesus is the one whom we need to look at carefully. So, we see this implicit Trinitarian theology in John chapter 3 where the Father equips Jesus with unlimited capacity with the spirit and Jesus is the Father's agent having been enabled by the Holy Spirit.

So, the flow of John 3:1 through 21 then to break it down just a little bit more in detail of the first half of the chapter we've just looked at 3 1 to 21 being comprised by 3:1 to 15 the conversation and 3:16 to 21 the editorial comment. Let's go back and look at that section by itself. We have Nicodemus and Jesus sort of having three exchanges.

First, Nicodemus comes in and says that we know you're a teacher and come from God. Well so much said so much true as much as he knew he was speaking correctly but as the saying goes he was as it was damning Jesus with faint praise. So, Jesus does not even acknowledge that Nicodemus has said he's a teacher comes from God.

Jesus says to him you can't see the kingdom of God unless you're born again. So that initial misunderstanding of Jesus' identity leads to the next problem that develops which is that Jesus' remarks about being born again are not understood by



Nicodemus. So, Nicodemus does not fully understand who Jesus is and second Nicodemus certainly doesn't understand what Jesus meant when he says be born again.

So, in verse 4 Nicodemus says how can you be born when you're old? Surely, they can't enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born. So, Nicodemus has difficulty understanding what Jesus meant by the new birth. So, Jesus replies then in verse 5 no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water in the spirit.

So, Jesus is now expounding a bit on what he meant by being born again as being born of water in the spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh spirit gives birth to spirit. You shouldn't be surprised at my saying you must be born again.

The wind blows where it will. You hear it sound. You can't tell where it comes from or where it's going.

So is everyone who is born of the spirit. So, Jesus has associated water and spirit with the renewal from God and Nicodemus is having issues with that. He doesn't get that.

So, the third exchange begins in verse 9 when Nicodemus simply says how can this be? He's not tracking with Jesus at all here. So, Jesus replies by saying to him as a teacher of Israel you ought to know this. You have the responsibility to shepherd God's people and teach them the truth and Jesus is implicitly here saying to Nicodemus you're not doing the job.

So, Jesus then continues this along these lines to Nicodemus if you don't get what I'm saying when I speak about these earthly things like being born, speaking of terms like water, then how are you going to get heavenly things? And no one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven that would be Jesus. The pre-existence of Jesus being alluded to is first taught clearly in the prologue and just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness so must the son of man be lifted up alluding to an Old Testament event that no doubt Nicodemus had some familiarity with. Ending by saying that everyone who believes in him might have eternal life.

This would be the ultimate answer to Nicodemus' question about the new birth. What are you talking about with the new birth? What Jesus is talking about with the new birth is that everyone who believes in him might have everlasting life. So, this evidently would be where the narrative between Jesus and Nicodemus ends.

Nicodemus as far as we know is as befuddled as he was when he came perhaps more so. He thought he understood Jesus to an extent and each thing he said to Jesus only led him further into problems and misunderstandings. So I'm sure that he thought why he even bothered to go.

Or perhaps not. Perhaps the spirit was already beginning to work in Nicodemus' heart. He was beginning to glimpse these things and he was developing a more positive view of Jesus.

One that would lead him to say what he said at the Sanhedrin meeting in John chapter 7 which we will look at eventually in this series of videos. Now we move on to the exegetical questions that we need to pay a bit of attention to here in John 3. First of all, what does it mean to be born of water and the spirit? I'm not so sure that many Bible scholars get this any better than Nicodemus himself did back when the text was originally created. There are those who teach us that all that Jesus meant by this is that it's a reference to both natural and spiritual birth.

They would tell us that what Jesus meant to Nicodemus was that just as you were born physically, you need to be born spiritually. Water refers to natural birth, the amniotic fluid breaking as you often hear about birth stories, and then being born by the spirit. The problem with this explanation, I think, is that the expression born of water is not an expression in ancient sources that refers to natural physical birth as far as I'm aware.

I don't think this expression really meant that back in the day. The fact that we speak of a woman's water breaking as she's very near to giving birth should not be read back into this text. It's a fairly innocuous interpretation, to begin with.

I think some would call it a tautology. Everybody knows that in order to be born again, you have to have been born once. How would that be a teaching that Nicodemus couldn't understand? I don't want to take that view.

I think that's one you commonly hear, but I don't think that's what it's about. Other people relate it to water baptism and Christian baptism. The problem with that is it's very anachronistic.

Clearly, Nicodemus could not have been expected by Jesus as the teacher of Israel to know about the Christian baptism. Nicodemus could have been expected to know by Jesus about how water is used in ritual purification in biblical Judaism. He certainly would have had much familiarity with it in Second Temple Judaism and the various customs and traditions that they had added to the Bible for ritual purity.

As a Pharisee, he would perhaps have taken on many of the Old Testament traditions about priestly purity and applied them to himself as a Pharisee, and perhaps even to the extent of extra washings before meals as alluded to in Matthew chapter 15. Nicodemus would have known a lot about water rituals and purity, and at least ritual purity, whether he thought of it in terms of actual purification from ethical violation from sin is perhaps another question. So, not Christian water baptism, but perhaps

Jesus was trying to get him to think about water cleansing, particularly the cleansing of John as John the Baptist was baptizing people in the water to prepare them to meet the Messiah.

Perhaps there's a little bit of that in this expression. But perhaps we're a little bit narrowing it too much, and we should be thinking of water purification and water cleansing in light of some of the Old Testament passages that speak in detail and associate water in the spirit with God's eschatological work in purifying Israel. So, we look first at a text like Isaiah 44, verses 3 to 5. I will pour out water on the thirsty land and streams on dry ground.

I will pour out my spirit on your offspring and my blessing on your descendants. This looks at first blush pretty much like a poetic parallelism, pouring out water on the thirsty land, my spirit on your offspring, streams on the dry ground, my blessing on your descendants. Seems to match up pretty nicely there.

So, pouring out water is a way of describing God's eschatological renewal of his people, and then the rest of the text describes the results of that. The people are going to spring up like grass in the meadow. Notice the simile here, like grass in the meadow, like poplar trees.

One will say, I belong to the Lord. Another will call himself by the name of Jacob. The other will write on his hand, the Lord's, and will take the name Israel.

A similar text is Ezekiel 36, perhaps one that is even more to the point of what Jesus was probably saying to Nicodemus. The promise of God to Israel is, I will regather you from all the countries and bring you back to your own land. I will sprinkle clean water upon you and you will be clean.

That makes sense. I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. Here we go.

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you. I'll remove from you your heart of stone, give you a heart of flesh, and I will give you my spirit. Not simply give you a new attitude or a new outlook on life, a new spirit, but this will be something much more radical than that.

I will put my spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. If this is the prophetic tradition to which Jesus is referring, he is amazed that Nicodemus doesn't have the spiritual sensitivity to associate what's going on with John the Baptist and with Jesus' own ministry with these prophetic words about God purifying Israel in the future. So, when Jesus speaks about being born again through water and the spirit, he would have expected Nicodemus to associate that with a text like this, which connects the water ritual and uses it as a metaphor to

describe a spiritual renewal from the inside out, changing one's heart, putting a new spirit in a person, even here, I will put my spirit in you.

So, to my mind, this makes more sense about what God was saying, what Jesus was saying to Nicodemus than the idea that he was just speaking about baptism or he was just speaking about spiritual birth. This to me makes a lot more sense. So, to be born of water and the spirit, perhaps a way to translate that would be more like born of water, that is to say, born of the spirit, water even the spirit.

So, the two words are connected by the word and there are not two separate entities, but the first is a reference to the second. The two are basically two ways of saying the same thing. Another accidental question in John 3 at the end of the chapter is important here for Christological concerns, and it is who is giving the spirit without limit? We already noted in John 3, verse 34, in reading the text previously, that the one whom God sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit is a bit of an interpretive translation because it simply says he gives the Spirit without limit.

This probably means that God gives the spirit to Jesus without any limitation. This would tie back into chapter 1 where John the Baptist is speaking of Jesus, and John the Baptist says, the man on whom you see the Spirit come down, keywords, and remain, and remain is the one who will baptize in the Holy Spirit. So, the fact that the spirit comes upon Jesus to stay, not comes and goes, perhaps is related to what we're being said here in 3.34, God gives the spirit without limit.

If that is the case, then verse 34 would be a specific instance of what verse 35 says. God gives Jesus the Spirit without limit. The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands.

That is to say, specifically, the Father gives the spirit to Jesus. More broadly, in verse 35, the Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. So I think this text then in John 3.34 speaks of the way in which the Father endows Jesus with the spirit and ties them into later texts such as John 6 where Jesus says, my words are spirit and they are life.

And in John 7 where he speaks of the spirit coming upon the disciples from him, out of him flows rivers of living water. Obviously, this prepares the way for our understanding of John 14 through 16 where we have several texts that speak about the comforter, the advocate, and the helper coming as Jesus is phasing out and being crucified and returning to the Father. He does not leave the disciples without help.

As he has received the Spirit from the Father, he gives the Spirit to the disciples as he ascends to heaven. This is exactly what he said in chapter 20, verse 22, as the Father sent me, so send I you receive the Holy Spirit. As we think through the matter of the

relationship of John 3 and theological concerns, we think about the doctrine of the Trinity again, not so much in terms of what theologians might call its ontological or metaphysical character in John 1 about how the word could be with God and yet be God, but noting how the Trinity as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have accomplished the work of redemption in the world and how we are invited to join them.

As the Father sent me, Jesus says, so send I you. How does that work? Well, let's notice a few things about the way the Father sends Jesus as his agent. We have the verb *apostello* in Greek and we have the verb *pempo* in Greek and both of these words are used to describe the Father sending Jesus.

Notice you can see they occur many times to describe that. So, Jesus is the agent of the Father in legal terminology in both ancient and modern times. If you authorize someone to be your agent when it comes to an adoption process or buying a house or to be your healthcare guide or whatever, that person is legally authorized by you to speak for you.

In rabbinic language, the *shaliach*, the agent, the sent one of a person is the same as that person. So, Jesus then comes as the Father's agent, fully empowered by the Father. He's not doing his own thing.

He is doing the Father's thing, the works that he is going to do as he's going to make very clear in chapter 5 in Jerusalem are the works of the Father, not his own. So, it's not simply that the Father sends Jesus as his agent. The Father sends the Spirit to equip Jesus.

The Spirit comes upon Jesus, 1.32.33, and remains upon him. The Father gives the Spirit to Jesus without measure or in an unlimited way. But the interesting thing about John's theology, and again perhaps one of the reasons why Clement wanted to refer to John as the spiritual gospel, because the language of the Spirit being sent to Jesus doesn't stop there.

Jesus sends the Spirit to equip his church. He spoke to Nicodemus about the need to be born of the Spirit. The woman at Samaria led to his comment about how those who worship God must worship him in spirit and in truth.

I think that means more than just getting your heart right before God, and worshiping in the Spirit. I think that means you worship God as the Spirit of God has prepared your spirit to walk with God. In John 6.63, the words that I speak to you are Spirit.

The Spirit flows from Jesus to the church. Then in chapters 14, 15, and 16, references to Jesus going away but sending the Spirit to the church, enabling the church to remember what Jesus has said, helping the church learn new things from Jesus

through the twelve apostles who will receive the Spirit, and then ultimately breathing upon them and saying, receive the Spirit to equip them to be his agents as the Father sent me as the Father's agent, so I'm now sending you as my agent upon the world, to the world. Finally, as we conclude the video, what type of person does Nicodemus represent to us? Apparently, Nicodemus represents in the Gospel of John the kind of people who were seeking the signs in chapter 2. They saw many things that Jesus did and in some sense, they believed in him.

They believed something about him. They believed he could do signs. Perhaps they believed in the words of Nicodemus.

He was a teacher sent from God. But Jesus did not commit himself to these people. He knew what was in them, which is very similar to the way this works out later on in John 6. As we shall see even more dramatically in chapter 8, the way the word belief is used there.

Perhaps Nicodemus is a person who gives us a way of looking into the minds and hearts of other leaders of Israel at this time. Because when Jesus comes in and cleans up the temple, to say the least, he makes a political act. He does something that upsets the people who are in charge of the place.

He is doing something that they should have done to clean it up. So, you wonder then what the religious leaders in general were thinking about Jesus all this time. This really comes to the fore, I think, in chapter 7 where the leaders of Israel are mentioned there as thinking that Jesus could not have been the Messiah because they don't think anyone coming from Galilee could be the Messiah.

They just don't think he has what it takes to be Messianic. Yet during their debate about him in verses 50 to 52, Nicodemus reminds them that doesn't the law tell us that we should at least find out what he has to say for himself before we condemn him. We wonder whether Nicodemus then would also be related to the person that he ultimately connects up within 19 when it comes time for Jesus to be buried.

John chapter 12 alludes sort of mournfully to the fact that there were many secret believers. We call them that, it's not exactly the words of the text. Believers who understood Jesus and believed in him in some sense of the word were unwilling to pay the price of public commitment to follow him.

It says in 12:42 they were concerned about their status in the synagogue. In chapter 19 verse 38, it refers to Joseph of Arimathea as well as to Nicodemus as burying the body of Jesus, receiving the body from Pilate, and permission to bury the body of Jesus from Pilate. One would think that by that public act, they would at that point have been thoroughly blowing their cover as followers of Jesus or at the very least they would have been good Jews taking care of corpses.

That was a big thing in Second Temple Judaism, particularly in one of the apocryphal books which the term escapes me at the moment. I'll come up with it and tell you later. So, they were concerned about that, and in whatever sense their spirituality led them either as the conscientious Second Temple Jews to care for a body or their relationship to Jesus was much stronger than anyone had realized before.

They wanted to bury his body because they believed in him. So, there is a bit of ambiguity in the portrayal of Nicodemus not only here but even in these later passages in chapter 7 and in chapter 19. Most people I think that Nicodemus eventually became a believer in Jesus at least by the time of 19.

But it's interesting to see the process that was going on here. We could say Nicodemus and others like him were certainly curious about who Jesus was. The signs that he was doing certainly got their attention.

The way that he taught, and the way that he spoke certainly was winsome as well and got their attention. To the extent that they were curious though did their curiosity go further into what we would call a courageous faith in him despite the opposition to him or did they remain so timid that they didn't do much to show a public commitment to him? So, the crucial question I guess about Nicodemus as it relates to us would be something along these lines.

We have seen information about Jesus that piques our curiosity. We want to know more about him. He is certainly a teacher who comes from God.

No doubt Nicodemus was right. The question I guess would be are we simply seeking Jesus because we're curious about him like we might be of any ancient figure who is famous and we sort of are interested in what their life might have been like or what their ideas were or are we coming to Jesus as someone who is that and a lot more, much more than all that. Someone who is offering to us not just a fascinating teaching or interesting ideas that pique our curiosity but someone who is offering to change us from the inside out through something that he is calling the new birth.

Jesus doesn't necessarily want us to simply come to him and say you're a teacher come from God. Jesus wants us to come to him realizing that we need nothing less than a new birth. We need nothing less than the power of the Spirit of God in our lives and the cleansing that would be portrayed by the water in the Old Testament.

So, I leave you with that question as we bring this video to an end. Are we merely here to be informed by Jesus or are we in the process already of being transformed by his Spirit's work in our lives? Thank you.

This is Dr. David Turner in his teaching on the Gospel of John. This is session 5, Jesus' Early Ministry in Jerusalem. John 2:13-3:36.