

Dr. David L. Turner, John, Session 5,

John 2:13-3:36

6-Min. Video Overview

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Welcome to The Explainer. Today, we're diving into a puzzle from the Gospel of John that's, believe it or not, 2,000 years old. It's this really fascinating paradox about what it means to believe, and getting to the bottom of it, well, it might just change how you think about faith itself.

So let's jump right in with a strange moment straight from the source. You have all these people in Jerusalem; they're seeing Jesus perform these amazing signs, and the text says they believed in him. But then, it says something really confusing.

Jesus wouldn't entrust himself to them. So what's going on here? Okay, so the key to this whole thing is actually a little wordplay in the original Greek. See, the word for believed is the exact same word used for entrust.

So you get this wild situation. They entrusted themselves to him, but he wouldn't entrust himself to them, which really makes you wonder: what was so wrong with their belief? To figure that out, our source, Dr. David Turner, points us to two really important encounters. All right, case study number one: it all starts when Jesus gets to Jerusalem for Passover.

And where's the first place he goes? The temple, the absolute heart of Jewish religious life. Now, look, having people exchange currency or sell animals for sacrifice, that was actually a necessary service for pilgrims coming from all over. The problem wasn't what they were doing; it was how they were doing it.

It had become a corrupt, dishonest business, and it was turning his father's house into just another marketplace. So this isn't some quiet suggestion. This is a huge, dramatic, and really provocative move.

Jesus is making a massive statement, and you can bet it got the attention of the people in charge. And right on cue, the religious leaders show up to challenge him. They're basically saying, who do you think you are? Who gave you the right to do this? They demand a sign to prove he has this authority.

And his answer- well, this is our first big clue to solving the whole belief puzzle. You can just imagine them looking at each other, totally confused. They're thinking about the massive physical temple, the one that had been under renovation for 46 years.

How could anyone possibly rebuild that in three days? But see, they're taking him way too literally. Jesus is talking about something else entirely. And the author of John helps us out here.

He spells it out for the reader. Jesus was talking about the temple of his body. Now, this wasn't just some clever riddle.

It was a prophecy, a sign pointing to his own death and resurrection. And this is so important. His signs aren't just magic tricks.

They're pointing to something much, much deeper. Okay, let's move on to our second case study, because this is where it all starts to click. We need a man named Nicodemus, who is basically the perfect example of this not-quite-right, signs-based faith.

He comes to meet Jesus secretly at night. And let's be clear, Nicodemus was no lightweight. This guy was a religious superstar, a brilliant scholar, a leader, the teacher of Israel.

And just like the crowds, he saw the signs Jesus was doing, and he came to him thinking he had it all figured out. He says everything right, doesn't he? He calls him rabbi, says he's from God, connects the miracles to divine power. But just watch how Jesus responds.

He doesn't say, "Oh, thank you. He just blows past the compliment and gets right to the real issue. I mean, talk about a conversation stopper.

This just comes out of nowhere and completely changes the subject. Jesus shifts from talking about signs and authority to this idea of a radical personal transformation. And Nicodemus, the expert, is just floored.

He is just completely lost. This guy, this top scholar, can only think in these physical, literal terms. And that right there, that shows you the absolute limit of his belief.

It's all based on the signs he can see. He gets the what, but he is totally missing the why. So what on earth did Jesus mean by being born of water and the spirit? This is where Dr. Turner's analysis really shines a light for us, because it's probably not what a lot of people think.

Yeah, to really get what Jesus is saying, we can't just slap later Christian ideas onto this conversation. We have to go backward. We have to look at the scriptures that Nicodemus, of all people, as the teacher of Israel, should have known inside and out.

And boom, here it is. This is the big aha moment. Dr. Turner points us to prophecies just like this one from the book of Ezekiel.

All this talk of cleansing water, a new heart, a new spirit. This was all part of God's promise to one day renew his people from the inside out. This is the conversation Jesus was tapping into.

So here's the main point. The water and the spirit, they're not two different things. The water is a metaphor for the spiritual cleansing that leads to a new heart, a new spirit, God's own spirit living inside a person.

It's one single, profound, internal transformation. So understanding this idea of an internal transformation finally brings us back to that first mystery. It perfectly explains why Jesus was so hesitant about the crowd's belief.

It's because there are two totally different kinds of belief going on here. And the difference is huge. You've got the crowd in Jerusalem with this superficial belief.

It was all based on watching cool signs and, you know, mentally agreeing with what they saw. They knew about Jesus. But Jesus was looking for something way deeper, a transformational belief, one that's all about an internal renewal, a real change of heart and spirit.

And Nicodemus is the poster child for this. He was so incredibly informed. He had the facts.

He saw the signs. He came to a logical conclusion. But he hadn't yet had that inner renewal that Jesus says is the real deal.

He was stuck on the surface. And just like that, the whole analysis brings the question right back around to us, doesn't it? The big takeaway from this whole passage isn't just about what we know up here in our heads. The real question is, is that knowledge actually leading to a profound internal change? Are we, like the crowds, just informed spectators or are we experiencing the transformation Jesus was talking about? That's the question this text leaves us to answer.