

The new birth Jesus talked about is not merely a metaphor, but an actual reality that results from the impregnation of the human heart by the Spirit of God (see Romans 8:1–11). Nicodemus, no doubt, shared the common notion that the Messiah's kingdom was to be a political kingdom in which his nation would be freed from Roman domination. Jesus tried to tell him of its personal, spiritual nature. This was so different from what was in Nicodemus's mind that he did not understand what Jesus was talking about. He just could not see how he, a good man, a genuine Pharisee, one of the rulers of the messianic nation, would not be welcomed into the messianic kingdom with open arms. He just could not take it in that, instead, he himself, as well as his ideas, needed to be reconstructed from the ground up.

Nicodemus is not the only one. Many people think they are already good enough.

**Slide 12. [Jhn 3:16-36 KJV] 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**

(v. 16) is the great truth that motivated God's plan of salvation

[1Jo 4:9-10 KJV] 9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son [to be] the propitiation for our sins.

**Slide 13. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.**

The divine purpose of God's love in sending His Son (**that whosoever believeth ... have everlasting life**) is restated (**that the world through him might be saved**; v. 17). A comparison of the wording brings to the forefront the importance of belief in Jesus and His agency.

**Slide 14. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**

The person who refuses to believe in Jesus stands **condemned already** (v. 18) by virtue of his or her refusal.

NLT: 18 "There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son.

**Slide 15. 19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.**

Darkness (v. 19) is John's expression for the condition of a perishing world in which evil is compounded by self-rule and rejection of God. The light of God, Jesus Christ, is come into the world to intervene and offer deliverance. People who cling to the darkness and to that which is condemned (see 3:17) reject the light and will perish (see 3:16).

NLT: 19 And the judgment is based on this fact: God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil.

**Slide 16. 20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.**

Those who are lost don't want to be in the presence of the Holy Spirit. They hate the light. God sees them for who they are and they know it.

NLT: 20 All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed.

**Slide 16. 21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.**

Conversely, what is wrought in God (v. 21) shows its origin in the truth that operates in the light and demonstrates its difference from the darkness by gravitating to the light.

NLT: 21 But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants.

## **NEXT SECTION**

### **John the Baptist's Last Testimony of Christ**

**Slide 17. 22 After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.**

[Jhn 4:1-2 KJV] 1 When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, 2 (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)

**Slide 18. 23 And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.**

According to the King James Commentary, The location of Aenon is unclear. Possibly, it was about eight miles south of Scythopolis (Beth-shan), west of the Jordan.

**Slide 18. 24 For John was not yet cast into prison.**

John publicly criticized Herod, ruler of Galilee for marrying Herodias, his brother's wife.

[Luk 3:19-20 KJV] 19 But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, 20 Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

**Slide 19. 25 Then there arose a question between [some] of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.**

King James Commentary: **Purifying.** Many viewed baptism as a ceremonial purification, and proper purification was a matter of great concern to some Jews (see, e.g., Mark 7:1-5). The religious authorities had questioned John about his baptism (see 1:25), and such differences of opinion may have led to that interrogation.

**Slide 20. 26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all [men] come to him.**

[Jhn 1:7 KJV] 7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all [men] through him might believe.

The Baptist's disciples knew that he had testified about Jesus, but they loved their master and were envious of Jesus' success.

**Slide 21. 27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.**

These words were true of both Jesus and John (and of everyone). Both had what God had given them, so there was no place for envy. The Greek for “**to give**” is used frequently in this gospel (**seventy-five times**), especially of the things the Father has granted or entrusted to the Son. Heaven is frequently a respectful substitute for “God.”

**Slide 22. 28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.**

The bridegroom (v. 29) is the most important man at a wedding. It refers here to Jesus, the Christ (v. 28), and alludes to the Baptist’s testimony that he was not the bridegroom but rather the best man. It is the function of the friend (the best man; v. 29) to handle the marriage arrangements and to help the bridegroom, which describes the role of John the Baptist.

**Slide 23. 29 He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.**

Customary was the joyous delight of the best man, enough so that the Baptist could compare his disposition toward Jesus to the wedding experiences of his disciples. The best man was known to rejoice greatly at the arrival of the groom and would then turn the bride over to the him.

**Slide 24. 30 He must increase, but I [must] decrease.**

At that point, the friend would decrease and the groom would increase. Similarly, John the Baptist had been sent to prepare the way for the Messiah, and here he reaffirmed his subordinate position and joy in the role that God had granted him.

**Slide 24. 31 He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.**

John compares himself with Jesus. Jesus cometh from above (Greek, anōthen; see discussion on 3:3) and is of heavenly origin, which puts Him above people and things of earth. Earth (Greek, gē) and earthly emphasize finite limitation; unlike kosmos (“the world”; see discussion on 1:10), these words lack John’s insinuation of sinfulness. They could apply to anyone, but here they particularly refer to John the Baptist.

**Slide 25. 32 And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.**

Jesus spoke from divine experience what he hath seen and heard (v. 32; see 3:11-13). No man means not that no person accepted what Jesus said (see v. 33) but rather that people in general refused His teaching (see 3:11).

**Slide 26. 33 He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.**

Those who received (accepted) his testimony hath set to his seal (v. 33), or “certified,” the truth that Jesus came from heaven and that God was acting in Him for the world’s salvation. That reception thereby certified not only that Jesus is truthful but also that God is truthful. John repeatedly stated that

to believe in Jesus is to believe in God because Jesus reveals the Father, and nothing but what the Father has shown Him and told Him (see 5:19-30; 6:37-40; 8:29).

**Slide 26. 34 For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure [unto him].**

Communication in the ancient Mediterranean world depended on reliable messengers. Jesus was more than a messenger, however; He was an authorized agent, able to transact business as well as to deliver messages. In the Jewish institution of agency, the authority of the agent is defined this way: the one sent is as the one who sends. Moreover, Jesus is a unique agent in that He is the Son of the one who sent Him (similar to the householder's son in Matt. 21:33-39). John set out the credentials of Jesus' agency: (1) He has been given the Spirit without measure.

**Slide 27. 35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.**

(2) He is the beloved Son (v. 35). (3) The Father ... hath given all things into his hand, which in Jewish law indicated right of ownership to legally transact business (see also 13:3).

**Slide 27. 36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.**

In view of these credentials, the offer of eternal life is guaranteed. Jesus is fully authorized to speak for God and act for God. Everlasting life (v. 36) is a present possession, not something the believer will obtain only later (see discussion on 3:15). Conversely, the wrath of God also is guaranteed. This is a strong expression meaning that God is actively opposed to everything evil. The word "wrath" occurs only here in John's gospel (see discussion on Rom. 1:18). The offer of life is held out in Jesus, and for one who rejects it, the wrath of God abideth on him. One may put God out of mind, but John made it clear that God's wrath does not eventually fade away. His opposition to evil is both total and permanent.