

# Darkness & Light

*John Chapter 3*

*Puritan Reformed Church - Pastor David Reece*

*Lord's Day October 29th, Anno Domini 2023*

**Scripture Reading - Genesis 8**

**Acceptable Sacrifice of Praise - Ps 19**

- 1) **Erecting & Entering the Tabernacle** - God with us, The Logos Tabernacled Among Men & Faith in Christ as the Doorway of Entry into the Tabernacle **(1:1-28)**
  - a) Prologue - 1:1-18
  - b) Prelude to Jesus' public ministry (1:19-51)
    - i) The Testimony of John the Baptist Pointing to Jesus (1:19-28)
- 2) **The Brazen Altar for Sacrifices** (Exodus 27:1-8) - Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world - Christ our Substitute **(1:29-51)**
  - i) John the Baptist's public witness concerning Jesus (1:29-34)
  - ii) Jesus gains his first disciples (1:35-42)
  - iii) Jesus gains two more disciples, Philip and Nathanael (1:43-51)
- 3) **The Brazen Laver of Water** - Cleansing & Spiritual Renewal by Christ **(John 2-3)**
  - a) **Sign 1:** Turning Water in ceremonial cleansing pots into Wine (John 2:1-11)
    - i) Jesus clears the temple (2:12-17)
    - ii) Jesus replaces the temple (2:18-22)
    - iii) Inadequate faith (2:23-25)
    - iv) Jesus and Nicodemus (3:1-21)
    - v) John the Baptist's continuing witness concerning Jesus (3:22-36)

**Purpose Statement - John 20:30-31** - "30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."

## TEXT OF JOHN

### III. The Brazen Laver of Water - Cleansing & Spiritual Renewal by Christ (John 2-3)

#### a) Sign 1: Turning Water in ceremonial cleansing pots into Wine (John 2:1-11)

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#### iv) Jesus and Nicodemus (3:1–21)

**3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”**

- 1) A teacher come from God - attested to by signs.
  - a) Tests of a true prophet
    - i) **Necessary** - Testimony of being a prophet
    - ii) **Necessary** - Non-Contradiction with prior revelation, ZERO statements claiming to be from God that contradict prior revelation.
    - iii) **Necessary** - True predictions, ZERO false predictions
    - iv) **Optional** - Signs to draw attention to him
    - v) **Optional** - Signs to draw attention to his teaching
  - b) **Deut 18:17-22**

17 “And the Lord said to me: ‘What they have spoken is good. 18 I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. 19 And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him. 20 But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.’ 21 And if you say in your heart, ‘How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?’— 22 when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

c) **Deut 13:1-5**

13:1 “If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, 2 and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other gods’—which you have not known—‘and let us serve them,’ 3 you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. 4 You shall walk[a] after the Lord your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him. 5 But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has spoken in order to turn you away from the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of bondage, to entice you from the way in which the Lord your God commanded you to walk. So you shall [b]put away the evil from your midst.

2) “No one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.”

a) Should we use Signs and Wonders as the ultimate authority?

b) Truth is:

- i) **Propositional** - Truth is the meaning of declarative sentences.
- ii) **Rational** - Truth coheres with the laws of logic.
- iii) **Knowable** - Truth is known by God & can be revealed to men.
- iv) **Universal** - Truth is the same for everyone, everywhere, at all times.
- v) **Unchanging** - Truth does not change.

c) Empiricism - Knowledge Comes through Sense Experience

- i) Experience is **not propositional, not truth claims**, it is interpreted into truth claims.
- ii) Sense Experience contradicts itself and is thus **not a rationally coherent source**.
- iii) Deriving Universal claims from Experience relies upon invalid Reasoning from fallible Sense Experience and experience is thus **not certain as knowledge** nor the source of knowledge.
- iv) Experience is Relativistic / Subjective as a source & **not Universal / Objective**.
- v) Experience is **Changing**.

d) Some Supernatural signs can be performed by demons and the occult.

**3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again [OR born from above], he cannot see the kingdom of God.”**

- 3) Unless you are given Spiritual Life, then you will not be able to differentiate between the true church and the false church, you will not be able to differentiate between true prophets and false prophets.

**4 Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”**

**5 Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”**

**9 Nicodemus answered and said to Him, “How can these things be?”**

**10 Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?**

- 4) Literalism - Failing to understand figures of speech and representations that are made clear in the context
- 5) Born of Water - Effect of the New Birth to Cleanse. Power of the Spirit to Cleanse.
- 6) Born of Spirit - Origin of the new birth. From the Spirit.
- 7) It was not fitting for a man to fill a church office and fail to understand the Doctrines of Grace even at this early point in Redemptive History

**11 Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. 12 If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?**

- 8) Speaking the knowledge / Testifying to what has been seen
  - a) Knowing what was told - more basic to less basic - more familiar to less familiar - easier to see to harder to see - earthly to heavenly
- 9) You do not receive - but you cannot see unless you receive the testimony
- 10) Earthly Things - things about the current order of Earth
- 11) Heavenly things - things about the new heavens and new earth - things about the rule that exists of the God of Heaven who is invading this world to liberate it.

**13 No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.**

12) He came from Heaven to come to bear witness about Heavenly things.

13) Christ Descending/Ascending language - Descending from heaven in order to come to earth at incarnation - not descending to hell at death in order to rise to heaven.

**14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up** [put on display], **15 that** [hina - in order that] **whoever believes** [pas ho pisteuon] **in Him should not perish but have eternal** [everlasting - aionion] **life. 16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes** [pas ho pisteuon] **in Him should not perish but have everlasting** [aionion] **life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved** [would be saved].

14) We will come back to the Serpent.

15) All who believe in Christ shall not perish.

16) All who believe in Christ shall have everlasting life.

17) Because God so loved the world (in contrast to just the one Jewish nation) that God gave His only begotten Son.

a) The begottenness of the Son

i) Virgin Birth?

ii) Resurrection?

iii) Eternal Begottenness of the Son as the Second Person of the Trinity

18) He gave His only begotten Son in order that all of the nations, the world, not just ethnic Israel, would be saved.

19) Jesus makes it so that all believers are saved.

a) Limited Atonement

20) Just above we were taught that belief comes by the work of the Spirit.

a) Irresistible Grace

21) V. 17 - God did not send His Son to condemn the world (condemnation was already the baseline - the earthly things that need to be known are clear from the law that man is in a state of original sin (Guilt, Corruption of Nature, Total Depravity, Constant Transgression) and the need for the gift of Spiritual life.

22) Rather - God the Son was sent in order to save the world

23) The Serpent as a symbol for God's saving power and Christ's work.

24) The overwhelming desire of men to make symbols into objects of worship and to twist even the institutions of God into magical objects or acts.

## **Numbers 21:4-9**

4 Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. 5 And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." 6 So the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.

7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

8 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live." 9 So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

## **2 Kings 18:1-8**

18:1 Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea the son of Elah, king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, began to reign. 2 He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abi the daughter of Zechariah. 3 And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father David had done.

4 He removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars, cut down the wooden image and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan. 5 He trusted in the Lord God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. 6 For he held fast to the Lord; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord had commanded Moses. 7 The Lord was with him; he prospered wherever he went. And he rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. 8 He subdued the Philistines, as far as Gaza and its territory, from watchtower to fortified city.

25) Even lawful things when abused can be necessary to take away when abused at times.

**18 “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. 21 But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”**

26) Condemnation is the current condition - believers are not condemned - they have been pardoned

27) Unbelievers remain in a condition of condemnation rather than pardon.

28) Justification is in time. It is not eternal. Justification is not Election. Do not collapse the distinction.

29) V. 19 - this is the condemnation - the guilty finding is on the basis of the root sin of not believing and thus not valuing (loving) the light. The love of darkness is the hatred of the light. The love of the light is the hatred of the darkness.

30) Antithesis

31) The light is hated because it marks the distinction of things known. Evil deeds are clearly seen because of the light. You can expect people to hate the light. You can also expect God to overcome them with the light.

a) God will push away the haters of the light. (forced retreat of the darkness)

b) God will draw those whom he causes to be converted to rally to the light. (concentration)

32) V. 20 - without conversion this is what will always happen - Gen 3

a) Self Justification - fight with falsehood to disfigure what the light shows

b) Coverup - fight with hiding things that the light would expose - hypocrisy

c) Blame Shift - fight with running from responsibility - Circumstances, Man, God

33) V. 21 - Jesus, the righteous angels, Adam before the Fall, Converted men because of the righteousness of Christ and the progressive work of sanctification.

Q70: What is justification?

A70: Justification is an act of God's free grace unto sinners, in which he pardoneth all their sins, accepteth and accounteth their persons righteous in his sight; not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but only for the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ, by God imputed to them, and received by faith alone.

Q71: How is justification an act of God's free grace?

A71: Although Christ, by his obedience and death, did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice in the behalf of them that are justified; yet inasmuch as God accepteth the satisfaction from a surety, which he might have demanded of them, and did provide this surety, his own only Son, imputing his righteousness to them, and requiring nothing of them for their justification but faith, which also is his gift, their justification is to them of free grace.

Formal Cause of Justification - the form or plan or blueprint by which Justification is brought.

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Effectual Cause of Justification - the powerful thing that brings the justification effectually.

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Instrumental Cause of Justification - the connector, the tool, the second cause, the contract acceptance method.

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The Meritorious Cause - the legal basis, the grounds, the reason the judgment is just.

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The Ultimate Cause - the goal, the reason for which the plan is carried out, the last thing to be accomplished (the ultimate thing).

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Q72: What is justifying faith?

A72: Justifying faith is a saving grace, wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit and word of God, whereby he, being convinced of his sin and misery, and of the disability in himself and all other creatures to recover him out of his lost condition, not only assenteth to the truth of **the promise of the gospel**, but receiveth and resteth upon Christ and his righteousness, **therein held forth**, for pardon of sin, and for the accepting and accounting of his person righteous in the sight of God for salvation.

At least 12 propositions (really more as we will see). List them.

1 - sin

2 - misery

3 - disability of self

4 - disability of creatures

5 - the promise of the Gospel is true

6 - receive Christ

7 - rest upon Christ

8 - receive the righteousness of Christ

9 - rest upon the righteousness of Christ

10 - for pardon

11 - for the accepting of his person as righteous by God

12 - for the accounting of his person as righteous by God

Q73: How doth faith justify a sinner in the sight of God?

A73: Faith justifies a sinner in the sight of God, not because of those other graces which do always accompany it, or of good works that are the fruits of it, nor as if the grace of faith, or any act thereof, were imputed to him for his justification; but **only as it is an instrument by which he receiveth and applies Christ and his righteousness.**

Not the Basis of justification:

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What is imputed?

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What is not imputed?

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What cause of Justification is Faith?

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How is redemption accomplished?

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How is redemption applied?

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