

John 1:35 - 3:21

Jesus Calls His Disciples; The Wedding at Cana;
Cleansing the Temple; Nicodemus Questions Jesus

Day 1

Read John 1:35-51

Jesus calls His disciples

1. How were Andrew and (most likely) John in a position to meet Jesus? 1:35

2. What did John the Baptist convey to them about Jesus? 1:36 (Compare Isaiah 53:7,12)
 - What was their response? 1:37

3. What do you think was at the heart of Jesus' question in 1:38a?
 - What do you think was at the heart of their question? 1:38b

4. From Jesus' gracious invitation to Andrew and John, "*Come, and you will see,*" what would you say about His intent? (What do you think it would have been like to stay with Jesus?)

Andrew and Peter

5. How did Andrew respond to meeting the Lord? 1:40,41
 - What do you think had convinced him of Jesus' identity?

6. Why do you think Jesus gave Peter a new name? 1:42 (See Matthew 4:19 and Mark 1:17 for Peter's formal call to follow Jesus.)

IT'S GREEK TO ME "**Cephas**" Strong's #2786 *Kephas*, of Aramaic origin; the Rock

– Strong's Concordance

"**Peter/a Stone**" Strong's #4074 *Petros*; a (piece of) rock; as a name, Petrus, an apostle:

"John's narrative never fully explains the significance of this encounter or the reason for the changed name. We can observe Peter's character and then speculate based on his transformation, but one guess is as good as another. This, however, is certain: Jesus saw people not as what they were, but as who they would ultimately become. And the same is true today – for you and for me."
– Charles Swindoll (49)

Philip and Nathanael

7. What do you learn about Philip from 1:43-45?

8. Why was Nathanael skeptical? 1:46

For Your Information: "Sometimes Jesus was called a Nazarene, in answer to the prophecy of Isaiah 11:1 (*nezer*="shoot"). His friends used the name in a friendly way (Acts 2:22;3:6), but His enemies used it in scorn (Mark 14:67). Jesus' birthplace - Bethlehem of Judea - was humble, and so was His homeplace - Nazareth of Galilee." - Irving Jensen (21)

"Nazareth was the location of the Roman garrison in northern Galilee. Those who lived there were suspected of compromise with the enemy." - The Nelson Study Bible (1579)

9. What did Jesus reveal about His understanding of Nathanael? 1:47,48

- Why do you think Nathanael responded the way he did? 1:49

For Your Information: "'Under the fig tree' was a phrase Rabbis used to describe meditation on the Scriptures."

- David Guzik (Compare 1 Kings 4:25)

"Nathanael is not mentioned in the synoptic Gospels. But in every list of the apostles in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the name Bartholomew is listed with Philip, as Nathanael is linked with Philip here. It is likely that Nathanael and Bartholomew were the same persons."

- The Nelson Study Bible (1760)

10. What additional revelation did Jesus give Nathanael? 1:50,51

For Your Information: "**You shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man**": "This probably connects with the dream of Jacob in Genesis 28:12, where Jacob saw a ladder from earth to heaven, and the angels ascending and descending upon it. Jesus says that *He* is the ladder, the link, between heaven and earth. When Nathanael comes to understand that Jesus is the mediator between God and man, it will be an even greater sign (you will see greater things than these)."

- David Guzik (*Compare 1 Timothy 2:5*)

IT'S GREEK TO ME "**Truly, truly**"/"**Verily, verily**"/"**I tell you the truth**"(1:51) Strong's #281, *amen*; firm, i.e. (figuratively) trustworthy; adverbially, surely (often as interjection: so be it).

- Strong's Concordance

11. Review the different titles given to Jesus in 1:36-51.

- (John) 1:36
- (Andrew) 1:41
- (Philip) 1:45
- (Nathanael) 1:49
- (Jesus) 1:51

Optional Digging Deeper

What authority and power is associated with the "Son of Man?"

Daniel 7:13,14

Mark 2:10; 13:26,27

Applying the Word: What would your life be like if Jesus had free reign to change you? What kind of name/description would you like Him to be able to give you?

Day 2

Read John 2:1-11

Wedding at Cana

12. What picture does John 2:1,2 give you into Jesus' personal life on earth? (See also 2:12)

For Your Information:

"The wine gave out" (2:3)

[This was] "a major breach of etiquette. To this day in the East, hospitality is considered a sacred duty and, in some rare cases, a cause for legal action if withheld." - Charles Swindoll (57)

"To fail in providing adequately for the guests would involve social disgrace. In the closely knit communities of Jesus' day such an error would never be forgotten, and would haunt the newly married couple all their lives." (Tenney) - David Guzik

13. John 2:4 in the NIV reads: "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come." From John 12:23,27 and 13:1, what is meant by "His hour/His time?"

- Compare this response Jesus made to Mary at the wedding with the one He made to his parents when they found Him in the temple as a boy (Luke 2:41-50). What point was Jesus trying to make?

For Your Information: "'Woman'...doesn't go over well in English. In the culture of first-century Galilee, it was polite, much like addressing a woman as 'Madam' or 'Ma'am.'" (See also John 4:21, 8:10, 20:15) - Charles Swindoll (57)

"My time has not yet come" – "This saying of Jesus occurs with great frequency in the Gospel of John. It typically refers to the time of His atoning death upon the cross and His subsequent exaltation. Yet, here it clearly speaks of the hour of the beginning of His glorious ministry. Or, as Ridderbos exclaims, 'the breakthrough of the revelation of His glory on earth and in the flesh. . . .'" - Mike Calvert

14. Compare Mary's first (2:3) and second statement (2:5). What do you think Mary expected Jesus to do?

15. How did Jesus involve the servants in the miracle? 2:7-8

- What significance do you see in "the good wine" (2:9,10)? (Compare Isaiah 25:6; Jeremiah 31:12)

Optional Digging Deeper

Fill in information about the 1st sign on the chart "Signs in the Gospel of John."

Food for Thought: “The manner in which the miracle was worked deserves special notice. We are not told of any outward visible action which preceded or accompanied it. It is not said that He touched the waterpots containing the water that was made wine. It is not said that He commanded the water to change its qualities, or that He prayed to His Father in Heaven. He simply willed the change, and it took place. We read of no prophet or apostle in the Bible who ever worked a miracle after this fashion. *He who could do such a mighty work, in such a manner, was nothing less than very God.*”

It is a comfortable thought that the same almighty power of will which our Lord here displayed is still exercised on behalf of His believing people. They have no need of His bodily presence to maintain their cause. They have no reason to be cast down because they cannot see Him with their eyes interceding for them, or touch Him with their hands, that they may cling to Him for safety. If He ‘wills’ their salvation and the daily supply of all their spiritual need, they are as safe and well provided for as if they saw Him standing by them. Christ’s *will* is as mighty and effectual as Christ’s *deed*.” R. C. Ryle,

16. What was the purpose and effect of this miracle? 2:11

Optional Digging Deeper

List the phrases describing the purposes for Jesus’ miracles or signs.

John 5:36

Matt 8:16-17

Acts 2:22

John 20:30-31

For Your Information: “**Signs** John prefers this word for Jesus’ miracles. As opposed to words that stress the miraculousness or power of Jesus’ deed, a sign is something that points beyond itself. It teaches a spiritual truth; it points to God and His provision in Jesus. In each of Jesus’ signs, He shows Himself to be sufficient in some facet of human need in which people are inadequate. He shows Himself to be the Son of God doing the works of God.” - John (Life Change Series) (42)

Applying the Word: *Where are you running on empty? What does this miracle say about God’s ability to meet that need?*

Day 3

Read John 2:13-25

Cleansing of the Temple

17. (The 1st cleansing of the temple, 2:12-17, is only recorded in John.)
After beginning His ministry and manifesting His glory at the wedding, why would Jesus go to the temple next?

Optional Digging Deeper

On your scripture sheets, mark the timing and the places that are mentioned so far in John: Bethany beyond the Jordan-1:28; Galilee-1:43; Cana-2:1; Capernaum-2:12; Jerusalem-2:13. (See the map in your supplemental sheets.)

For Your Information: Passover “The Jewish festival commemorating the time when the angel of the Lord passed over the homes of the Hebrews...The lambs or kids used in the feast were killed on the 14th of Nisan (March-April), and the meal was eaten the same evening between sundown and midnight. Since the Jewish day began at sundown, the Passover Feast took place on the 15th of Nisan...**The Feast of Unleavened Bread.** This feast followed Passover and lasted seven days....By NT times the two names for the week-long festival were virtually interchangeable.” - The NIV Study Bible (1522,1582)

“The synoptic Gospels - Matthew, Mark, Luke- concentrate on Jesus’ Galilean ministry. John focuses on Jesus’ ministry in Jerusalem. The different accounts do not contradict each other; instead, they complement each other.”

- The Nelson Study Bible (1761)

18. List the verbs describing the actions Jesus took at the temple. 2:14-16

19. What was the reason for Jesus' actions? 2:16 (Note: How did He refer to the temple?)

20. What did this event communicate to the disciples? 2:17 (See Psalm 69:9)

21. How does this account fit into the gospel's portrayal of Jesus as the "Son of God?" (See Malachi 3:1b-4)

For Your Information: "Throughout the year, but especially at Passover, all Jewish males were expected to visit the temple, to pay the tax required by the law of Moses, and to sacrifice an animal. On Passover, the sacrifice was to be a lamb, and as always, it had to be without blemish or defect. Moreover, the tax had to be paid in shekels, not in foreign currency, which bore images forbidden by the law. (61)...hence the need for moneychangers. The corruption, however, was not in the system but in the exorbitant rate these unscrupulous financiers charged. Adding to the corruption was the way sacrifices were approved. A fee was charged to inspect all the animals brought to the temple for sacrifice. Most of the time, the inspectors found the animal blemished in some way, disqualifying it as a legitimate offering. This forced the out-of-town traveler to purchase an 'approved' animal at the temple for often ten to twenty times the fair market value." (35)

"During the Passover festival, the population of Jerusalem would swell to more than 250,000 males. Josephus put the total number of people (males and their families) close to three million! Obviously the money-making potential of the temple was staggering. This is what Jesus saw each year as He and His family visited the temple to celebrate festivals, observe sacrifices, and glorify God. This year, like all the others, He found, not a place of worship, but a shameless sham - a shrine to greed and a sanctuary for thieves."
- Charles Swindoll (61)

"Matthew, Mark, and Luke each describe another cleansing of the temple Jesus performed, towards the end of His earthly ministry. In both cases, the presence of these merchants in the temple courts spoiled the only place Gentiles could pray. In addition, their dishonesty made their presence all the worse."
- David Guzik

22. Why did the Jewish leaders ask for a sign? 2:18

For Your Information: "The expression *My Father's house* was a distinct claim to messiahship. At the wedding in Cana, Jesus demonstrated His deity and power; here He showed His authority...The Jews apparently refers to the religious authorities of Israel (1:19), who also understood that Jesus was representing Himself as the Messiah; therefore, they asked for a sign."
- The Nelson Study Bible (1761)

23. What "sign" did Jesus point them to? 2:19

- How did the Jewish leaders misinterpret Jesus' words? 2:20,21

24. When did the disciples understand what Jesus meant? 2:22 (Compare 12:16)

25. How were the people responding to Jesus and why? 2:23

- Why didn't Jesus "entrust" (*believe, commit, put in trust with*) to the people? 2:24,25 (Compare John 5:41,42; 6:15)

For Your Information:

"Many believed in His name" 3:23

"Jesus simply presented Himself in truth; some will believe in Him and some will not. He performed miraculous signs...to signal Messiah's arrival. He offered 'signs' to prompt willing, prepared hearts to respond...He wasn't depending on a favorable response from anyone – the religious leaders or the masses- to complete His mission...He didn't entrust Himself, His mission, or His future to humanity; He trusted His Father, and then He invited humanity to trust Him."
- Charles Swindoll (63)

"Jesus knew that this was thin, superficial belief. It wasn't based on anything other than an admiration of the spectacular. Knowing this, Jesus did not commit Himself to them...Yet Jesus still loved the multitudes, though he would not commit Himself to them...Even though God knows exactly what is in us, He still loves us powerfully." - David Guzik

Applying the Word: *We are now the dwelling place, the temple of the Lord (1 Corinthians 6:19,20; Ephesians 2:22) What do you think the Lord needs to cleanse or remove from your temple?*

Day 4

Read John 3:1-15

Nicodemus

26. List the titles given to Nicodemus in 3:1,10. (Optional: Read the article "Pharisees.")

27. By his first statement, what do you think Nicodemus wanted to know? 3:2 (Why do you think he came at night?)

For Your Information: "Ruler of the Jews/Jewish ruling council The Sanhedrin (a council or assembly) - the highest ruling body and court of justice among the Jewish people in the time of Jesus. Headed by the high priest of Israel, the Sanhedrin was granted limited authority over certain religious, civil, and criminal matters by the foreign nations that dominated the land of Israel at various times in its history."
- Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary

"Nicodemus comes, acknowledging that Jesus is a teacher come from God. The proof that he points to are the miracles Jesus performed...you will not find that either the friends of Jesus or His enemies ever doubted His miracles." - J. Vernon McGee

28. What did Jesus' seemingly unrelated response (3:3) indicate about what Nicodemus was seeking and his greatest need?

29. What did Nicodemus think Jesus meant by being “born again?” 3:4

IT'S GREEK TO ME **"again"** Strong's #509 *another*; from above; by analogy, from the first; by implication, anew
– Strong's Concordance

- What did Jesus mean? 3:5,6 (Compare John 1:12,13; 1 John 5:1a)

Optional Digging Deeper

What do the following teach about being “born again?”
1 Peter 1:3-4, 23

2 Corinthians 5:17

For Your Information: Interpretations for the meaning of “water” (3:5):

- Physical birth
- Repentance - as symbolized by John's water baptism (Luke 3:3)
- Cleansing by the Word of God (John 15:3. Ephesians 5:26, 1 Pet 1:23)
- Washing of regeneration by the Spirit (Titus 3:5; 1 Corinthians 6:11; John 7:38,39)
- Water of cleansing prophesied in Ezekiel 36:25-28;

"Born again:" “Whatever the intended meaning, the phrase in its context teaches that the new birth is a supernatural work of God from above, through the Spirit.”
- Irving Jensen (27)

"born of water and Spirit," Only one birth is in view—that which is of “water and Spirit.” ...This same principle is expressed in Titus 3:5 *'he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,' NIV*
- Mike Calvert

30. How did Jesus explain the actions of the Holy Spirit? 3:8

31. List the 3 errors Jesus indicated Nicodemus was making by the phrase “You do not...”.

- 3:10 (*Nicodemus would have been familiar with passages such as Isaiah 44:3; Ezekiel 36:26,27*)
- 3:11
- 3:12 (Compare 1:12)

32. What was Jesus' answer to Nicodemus' question, “How can these things be?” (3:9)? 3:13-15 (Cf. John 2:19; 12:32,33)

For Your Information: **"Lifted up"**
“Another double meaning. The Greek means equally to exalt or to physically lift.”
– John (Life Change Series) (52)

“The Israelites bitten by the serpents needed only to look with faith at God's provision for their sin to be healed. They were not told to concoct some remedy. They were not told to fight the serpents...or make an offering...or pray...or even look to Moses. All that was required was a simple look of faith.”
- Charles Swindoll (EC 42)

Optional Digging Deeper

From Numbers 21:4-9:
What happened with the fiery serpents?

How was a person saved from death?

What parallels do you see between this account and Jesus' death on the cross?

33. What do the following phrases in John 3:16 reveal to you about salvation?

- “For God so loved” (Compare 1 John 3:16)
- “the world,” (Compare Colossians 1:20)
- “that He gave His only begotten Son,”
- “that whoever”
- “believes in Him”
- “should not perish, but have eternal life.”

For Your Information:

“For God so loved the world” (3:16)

“The word translated ‘love’ is the noblest and strongest in Greek. It connotes an act of the will rather than an emotion, whim, or infatuation, and its measure is defined in terms of the result. ‘He gave His only begotten Son.’” - Merrill C. Tenney (89)

“To Nicodemus’ great surprise, Jesus declares, “God so loved **the world**.”...He has made the world of sinners (not just the Jewish nation, as Nicodemus would have assumed) the object of His saving purposes.” - Mike Calvert

“That whoever believes in Him” “To a man who spent most of his life honing his religious skills, meticulously fulfilling every perceived expectation of goodness and righteousness, this news could have come either as a wonderful relief or an exasperating disappointment...When one trusts in God’s gift rather than his or her own merit, eternal life flows like water...Life – eternal, incorruptible, abundant life – is offered to all who will receive it through faith.” - Charles Swindoll (73)

34. Why didn’t Christ come to earth to judge? 3:17 (See also Luke 19:10)

- According to 3:18, what judges/condemns an unbeliever? (Compare John 8:24; 1 John 5:12)

Optional Digging Deeper

Mark the words “but” and “rather” in 3:16-19 and note the contrasts.

Light and darkness

35. Why do men resist the light and the truth of God’s word? (What do they admit?) 3:19,20

- What is the attitude of those who practice the truth? 3:21a

Optional Digging Deeper

Memorize John 3:16-17

Applying the Word: How do you see the wind illustrating the work of the Spirit? (i.e. Who controls it? In what ways is it hidden? In what ways is it apparent?)