



LESSON 36 - John's Ministry Ends

The next thing in the order of events was that John the Baptist got arrested.

From Matthew 14:1-12, we read that King Herod's sister-in-law disliked John the Baptist very much and manipulated Herod into arresting John and eventually having John executed. However, while John was still alive, but in prison, Jesus was in Galilee. John sent two of his disciples to Jesus to get assurance that John had preached God's message rightly. Jesus, in that same hour cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind He gave sight. John's disciples also saw Jesus raise the dead (Luke 7:11-18). Jesus sent this message back to John: **"Go and show John again those things which you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached unto them. And blessed is he that does not find cause of offence in Me."** (Matt 11:2-6, Luke 7:19-23)

Principle: Sometimes bad things happen to good people. We must trust God when the attacks of Satan come against us. We learn to be overcomers during difficult times, if we remind ourselves of Who God is, His character, and how He has helped us in the past.

Mark 1:14-15 In Galilee, Jesus moved His residence to Capernaum (Matthew 4:13) and continued to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

"The time is fulfilled." What do you suppose that means? It was time for the promised Messiah to be revealed. It was time for the good news of salvation to be published to all the people. This was the time of the visitation of God's Son to Israel.

Principle: God's timing is always perfect and He always fulfills His promises to us.

What is the "kingdom of God?" It is the place where God is King, where He rules. Remember the Lord's prayer in Matthew 6? **Verse 10 states, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."** The kingdom of God is wherever His will is being obeyed.

How do you get into the kingdom of God? Jesus told Nicodemus, an important Jewish man, that he must be born again, or he could not see the kingdom of God. (John 3:1-3) Nicodemus didn't understand Jesus' statement. He said a person can't be born twice. Nicodemus thought that Jesus was talking about a second physical birth, but Jesus meant that Nicodemus needed to be born of the Holy Spirit. Jesus taught him what that involved and told him that he could have eternal life, which is part of the many benefits of kingdom citizenship, if Nicodemus believed in Him as the Messiah and Son of God. (John 3:15-21) Nicodemus did come to believe in Jesus as his Savior and Lord.

So how does anyone become a citizen of the kingdom of God? Repent of your sins and believe all that Jesus is and has said. Accept Jesus as Lord and Savior. He is the Door (John 10:9) and the narrow Way into the kingdom of God. We enter through faith in the sacrifice Jesus Christ made on the cross and in the blood He shed there for the remission

(forgiveness) of our sins. If you have done that, and He is your King, you are part of the kingdom of God.

How should you act so that you show that you are a loyal subject of your King? Some of the characteristics of a kingdom citizen are given in Jesus' sermon on the mount in Matthew 5-7: being humble, one who mourns over sin (whether personal or those that others commit), being meek (waiting on God for justice -Psalm 37:9-11), hungering and thirsting after righteousness, being merciful, having purity of heart, being a peacemaker, having the right attitude if unbelievers persecute you because you are a Christian. (You can read Matthew, chapters 5, 6, and 7 to get more characteristics (and benefits) of a citizen of the kingdom of God.)

1 Timothy 1:17 "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever." Let everything you think, say and do be that which honors and glorifies your King.

LESSON 37 - Mark 1:15 cont.

Jesus said, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."

Last week's lesson discussed the first two phrases, now let's look at the last statement. "Repent and believe the gospel." "Repent" was discussed more thoroughly in Lessons 6, 7, and 8, so review those if you need to. "Repent" is coupled with several other elements in the scriptures.

Acts 2:28 Men and brethren, what shall we do? 38Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out,

Acts 26:20 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: 20But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance

Luke 24:47 Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47And that repentance and remission (forgiveness) of sins should be preached in his name among all nations,

Luke 13:3 except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Repent and believe or be judged...**Acts 17:30 God... now commandeth all men every where to repent: 31Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.**

Now let's look at the phrase "believe the gospel." "Believe" includes the idea of receiving facts in your mind, accepting them as truth in your spirit, and living daily in accordance with them thereafter. One writer compacted that into, "Yield, trust and obey." "Yield (your will), trust (Jesus), and obey." Surrender to the Lord as revealed in the gospel, trust Him as to His character, words and deeds, and obey Him as Lord and King. Do you remember hearing or singing the songs, "I Surrender All" and "Trust and Obey?"

I Surrender All

All to Jesus, I surrender, All to Him I freely give

I will ever love and trust Him, In His presence daily live.

All to Jesus I surrender, Humbly at His feet I bow

Worldly pleasures all forsaken, Take me Jesus, take me now.

Chorus: I surrender all, I surrender all

All to Thee, my blessed Savior, I surrender all.

Trust and Obey

But we can never prove the delights of His love, until all on the altar we lay

For the favor He shows and the joy He bestows are for them who will trust and obey.

Then in fellowship sweet we will sit at His feet, or we'll walk by His side in the way

What He says we will do, where He sends we will go-- never fear, only trust and obey.

Chorus: Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

In case some of you might like to do a study of the passages about Jesus' early ministry in John 2-3 that are not recorded in the gospel of Mark, I'm sending you these questions and statements to fill in. Refer to John 2:1-12.

1. On the third day, after Jesus got back to Galilee, He was invited to a _____. Jesus was probably either a close relative or friend of the engaged couple.

What other time is the "third day" important in the Bible? (See Matthew 16:21). Who else was invited? (v 2) (We don't know how many were with Jesus at this time.) What town was it in? (This town was about 7 miles north of Nazareth.)

2. We know the Lord Jesus healed multitudes of people, and the Holy Spirit had John write at the end of his gospel that **30... many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 31But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. (John 20:30-31)**...and in **John 21:25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.** This first miracle of turning water into wine is one of more than 35 that Jesus did that is written in specific detail. This miracle was only recorded by John, not Mark, Luke or Matthew. Why would John write about it and not the others?

3. At the wedding reception or party, they ran out of _____.

4. Does Mary actually ask Jesus for anything? (v3)

5. Why does Jesus call His mother "woman"? He did it again in John 19:26. (Hint: Gen 2:23) It

seems strange to us today, but in that time it was a polite way of addressing a female.

6. What did Jesus mean when He said to Mary, "My hour has not yet come"? (Read John 12:27)

7. What does Mary do? (v 5) Do you see a powerful message in the seven words that Mary speaks? How can you apply them to your life? These were the last recorded words of Mary in the Bible, even though we see her from time to time in later passages. (Acts 1:12-14)

8. If one firkin equals about 7-9 gallons, how much did each container hold, if it was filled to the brim? Approximately how many gallons of water in all did the servants bring (v 6)?

9. It must have taken some time to fill all six pots with water. What attitude do the servants display toward Jesus?

10. What are the servants asked to do next? (v 8)

11. In verse 10 the master of ceremonies makes a comment to the bridegroom about the quality of the wine. What does he say? How does his comment about the wine contrast with God's way of doing things? In the Bible water and wine can represent several things. Look at Ephesians 5:25-26. Water can represent _____. See John 7:37-39 Water can also represent _____. Read Matthew 9:17. What might the "new wine" represent? See Acts 2:1-18, Ephesians 5:17-20)

12 The host didn't know where the good wine came from. Who did?

13. This was the first miracle that Jesus did, after beginning His public ministry. (v 11) Why do you think that Jesus did it in Cana, a small town in Galilee? Why didn't He wait and perform it in a big city, like Jerusalem?

14. On this third day this miracle manifested His glory. What does this mean? (v11) What resulted from this? (v 11)

15. What are some of the principles that this passage teaches you?

16. The common substance of water is changed by the word of Jesus into a new substance, much better than before. Can you see an analogy to your salvation? What has God changed in you? (2Cor 5:17, Ezekiel 36:26-27, Ephesians 4:24, Luke 5:37-39) What happens to everything that we give to Jesus?

2 Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Did you have any problems answering last week's questions on John 2:1-12? Here's the set on the next verses in John 2:

John 2:13-22

1. What time of the year was the passover feast held? (Hint: Jesus celebrated the passover feast with His disciples the day before He was crucified.)

2. In what city was Jesus at this time?

3. What building did He visit?

4. Why did He go there?

5. What problem did He find there?

6. As a concession and as a convenience for the people who came long distances to worship at the temple, the priests kept animals there to be bought and used as sacrifices. The priests made extra income from this buying and selling. The moneychangers were what we'd call bankers. Since the money for the temple tax of each male who attended had to be silver coin, the moneychangers would, for an exorbitant price, exchange whatever foreign money the visiting worshipers brought so that they would have the proper silver coin for the tax. Both priest and moneychanger took advantage of the poor, who were required to pay, but couldn't easily afford the expensive temple prices.

Jesus said two different things at the two times, once at the beginning and once toward the end of His 3-1/2 years of ministry, that He cleansed the temple court of these profiteers. Read John 2:16 and Matthew 21:13. What is the difference in what He said?

b. Can you see the change that has occurred in 3-1/2 years?

7. Back to John 2:15, What was a scourge?

b. How long do you think it took Him to make it?

c. What did He do with it?

8. Note how careful and controlled He was. He instructs the owners to remove the doves' cages from the area. Why didn't He throw the cages out?

9. Was Jesus angry? (v 17, Ps 69:9 "eaten up" means passionate about, consumed by)

b. If you answered yes, then do you believe He was doing His Father's will to cleanse His Father's house of the merchandisers? Look at John 6:38, 8:29, 14:10

If you answered no, what tells you He wasn't angry?

What are the restrictions to being angry? (Psalm 37:8, Ephesians 4:26, Proverbs 14:29,16:32, James 1:19-20)

10. Why did Jesus call the temple His Father's house? A building cannot contain the bigness of God.

11. Referring to verse 16, some churches believe that there should be nothing sold within the church building. Do you think that is what this passage teaches?

b. Why?

12. Jesus wanted His Father's house to be a place of purity and proper worship. Read Matthew 21:13 again. What is the house of worship suppose to be known for?

b. Is your church a place of prayer?

c. Since your body is also the temple of the Holy Spirit (1Corinthians 6:19,20), are you a house of prayer?

d. Why?

e. How does someone become a house of prayer?

John 3:1-12

You may want to divide this lesson into several parts. There are a number of scriptures to review. If you aren't sure about an answer, you can e-mail me to discuss it.

1. (Vs 1-2) Who came to Jesus? What was his position with the Jews? (vs 1,10, master = teacher)

At what time of the day did he visit Jesus? (v 2)

b. Why do you suppose Nicodemus came at night to see Jesus?

Most people would answer "fear of the other Jews, "because of a statement in John 19: 38 about Joseph of Arimathaea, but what might be other explanations as to why he came by night?

If you want to read about the group called the Pharisees, look at the following: Mark 7:1-13, Matthew 23:1-23, Acts 23:6-8 , Luke 18:9-14 and list the good and bad principles they lived by.

2. What did Nicodemus already know about Jesus? (v 2)

3. Nicodemus didn't ask Jesus anything, yet Jesus starts talking about being born again. Why?

Jesus says being born again gives a new kind of sight.

4. Nicodemus thinks Jesus is talking about physical birth (v 4), but Jesus is talking about being born ____?

5. In verse 5, Jesus says that being born from above requires water and the Spirit. Since He is discussing spiritual birth, the water must also be of a spiritual nature. Let's look at some verses that might help us figure out what "water" in this context means. According to John 7:37-39, water could represent _____?

In Ephesians 5:26, water represents the _____?

a. If the water represents the Holy Spirit, then Jesus was emphasizing the need for the Holy Spirit to conceive the new birth in Nicodemus. Only God can create a new man. 2 Corinthians 5:17

The passage could read, "Except a man be born of water, even (in other words) the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

b. If the water represented the Word of God, then Jesus was expressing the two parts needed for the new birth, the Word and the Holy Spirit. Romans 10:8, 17, 1 Peter 1:23, Romans 8:9, Ephesians 1:13-14

c. Some think that water refers to natural birth and Spirit refers to spiritual birth. In other words,

a man must be born as a baby into the human family and be born again spiritually into the family of God. This view would exclude any who weren't human beings.

d. A few think that "water" refers to water baptism, that it is absolutely essential for salvation. However, the Bible teaches that salvation is not by anything that we do as part of salvation. We simply receive what was done for us in full by Jesus on the cross. We receive by faith, not works of any kind. Remember the hymn, "Jesus Paid It All?" Look up Ephesians 2:8-9, John 3:36, Titus 3:5

Also remember that Jesus Himself never baptized anyone in water (John 4:2). If water baptism was necessary for salvation, Jesus Himself would have been baptizing as many as He could.

e. Some think the "water" of verse 5 represents John the Baptist's ministry of repentance. We've studied that in earlier lessons. John stirred the people's awareness of the need to repent of their sins, in order to be prepared for the coming of the Messiah. Look for the word "repent" or "repentance" in the following verses: Matthew 3:1-3,8, Mark 1:1-4,

Which view(s) do you think is correct?

In verse 5, Jesus says that being born again brings new privileges...List some Ephesians 2:18 _____, John 14:16 _____, 2 Peter 1:3-4 _____ Can you think of or find some others? You might want to read the short book of Ephesians and, as you read, look again for the blessings and privileges of the child of God.

6. In verse 6, Jesus makes a statement about flesh and spirit. Let's see what God says about each.

Romans 8:1-17 contrasts the flesh and the spirit. Read this passage and list the things it says about the one who has not been born from above and who does not obey God. Then go back through the passage again and list all the characteristics of the person who is born from above and is a child of God. I'll help you get started:

Rom 8:1 The one who isn't in Christ is condemned to judgment. See John 3:15-21

The person who is in Christ, a believer, will not be condemned to perish -- no condemnation.

The one who walks after (obeys) the flesh does the works of the flesh. See Galatians 5:19-21

The person who obeys the Holy Spirit will exhibit the fruit and works of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-26, Ephesians 2:10)

8:2 The sinner is under the law of sin and death. The believer is free from the law of sin (Romans 6:3,18,22) and its power. (Romans 6:11-14) He is also free from the sentence of death in hell. (Romans 8:22,23, John 3:16)

Now continue to go through the rest of the verses (through v 17). You may prefer to do a 2-column list: flesh ... spirit ... rather than the sentence form that I used.

7. In verses 7-8 Jesus repeats His statement of verse 3, but what is different this time?

8. Jesus compares the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation to the wind. (v 8) What qualities of

the wind are like the work of the Spirit?

Who controls the wind? Can you see it? What do you see, when it is windy? Are you ever surprised by wind gusts you didn't expect? How is this like the Holy Spirit?

9. Nicodemus is confused. (v 9) He is not questioning because of unbelief, but of a lack of understanding. He is ignorant of what Jesus means. He is still thinking in the "natural", when Jesus is talking about the "spiritual". Can you remember a time in your life, when God was telling you about spiritual things, but you didn't get what He meant? Are you understanding more about spiritual things now than then? My Sunday School teacher says that he prays Ephesians 1:17-19 every morning. He asks God to give him the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, and to open the eyes of his understanding. He makes sure he spends time in the Word of God, too, because there is much wisdom in it.

10. Jesus answers Nicodemus' question with a question. In the Greek, it says, Are you "THE teacher" of Israel and don't know this? What point is He trying to make?

11. Who does the "we" refer to? Read John 1:6-8, 5:33-40

Do you see the contrast between these two teachers?

12.(V 11) Why didn't the leadership of Israel, whom Nicodemus represents, receive Jesus as their Messiah? John 1:9-11

Later on in the book of John, Jesus will say that the world hated Him (John 15:23-25) What were they trying to hold on to ?

(John 3:19-20,12:17-19,11:45-53)

13. (V 12) What "earthly things" is He referring to?

Jesus also shows us here a principle of learning. The basics must be understood before one can go on to learn of greater things. This is true in our regular education and it's true in our spiritual education. Read what the writer of Hebrews penned in Hebrews 5:8-14,6:1-2) These had not graduated to a higher level of spiritual learning, even though they should have. In fact they had regressed to a "milk" stage of spiritual learning in the principles of the things they should have understood. What do the following verses tell us :2 Timothy 2:15, Joshua 1:8, Psalm 1:1-3, and Psalm 119 ?

14. It is thought that the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus may have ended at verse 12, because of the way the last part of verse 13 reads, "...the Son of man Who is in heaven." When the Holy Spirit through the apostle John had this gospel written, the Lord Jesus had already ascended to His throne in heaven. After telling of the encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus, John takes up in verse 13 the teaching on how to be born from above and continues it through verse 21.

15. Other verses that refer to Nicodemus are John 7:50-51, 19:39-42 Do you think he became a believer?

16. What principles do you see in this story?

Why do you think the Holy Spirit included this particular story in the written account of the life

and words of Jesus? John said at the end of his gospel that there were lots of things that Jesus had done that he hadn't been directed to include in this gospel. (John 21:24-25) Why this one?

