

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN 2:23-3:15

False Faith, True Faith

1

Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.

Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 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." Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

2

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?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

3

Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

(John 2:23-3:15)

4

### THREE LESSONS ABOUT FAITH

1. There is a kind of faith that does not meet with Jesus's approval (2:23-3:2)
2. The only way to receive Jesus's approval is through a complete rebirth by God's Spirit (3:3-7)
  - Q: What is the logical connection between the inadequate faith that Nicodemus represents, and Jesus's statement about entering the kingdom of God?
  - A: Entry to the Kingdom of God requires Jesus's approval since he is the one who judges all people. (John 5:22)

5

### WHAT IS THE NEW BIRTH?

- It is a work of total renewal: it is the beginning of an entirely new life
- It is a work of cleansing from all sin ("water" and "Spirit" in Ezekiel 36:25-27; Jer 31:31ff; etc.)
- It is a work of the Spirit of God (John 16:7-15)

6

THREE LESSONS ABOUT FAITH

1. There is a kind of faith that does not meet with Jesus's approval (2:23-3:2)
2. The only way to receive Jesus's approval is through a complete rebirth by God's Spirit (3:3-7)
3. The signs of spiritual rebirth can be observed: belief in the Son of Man (3:8-15)