

Jesus and the Baptist Testify to the Light: John 2:23–3:36
Jaunting thru John: Message

Grace Chapel

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION TO JOHN'S GOSPEL TESTIMONY

AUTHOR: THE APOSTLE JOHN: beloved to the Lord

DATE OF WRITING:

1. **Prior to A.D. 70:** John 5² . . . *there is a pool*. It does not say “There was a pool.”

2. **Prior to A.D. 44 (Acts 10)**

Absence of reference to Jesus' ministry to Gentiles

AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE FOR WRITING:

The readers/hearers (*you*) need to believe in Christ and they need life. In other words, the intended readers/hearers were unbelievers.

20³¹ But these [eight signs] are written that you may believe **that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God**, and that by believing [this] you may have life in His Name.

REVIEW OF THE PROLOGUE (John 1:1–18)

THE FIRST DISCIPLES (John 1:19–51)

FIRST SIGN WITNESSED BY JOHN (John 2:1–11)

FIRST CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE (John 2:13–22)

BACKGROUND: MANY, INCLUDING NICODEMUS, BELIEVE (John 2:23–3:21)
Chronology of John 2:13–3:21

During the eight-day feast, many believed in His name (2:23)									
	Passover (1 day)	Feast of Unleavened Bread (7 days)							John 3:22
Cleanse Temple	Fri 4–7	Sat 4–8	Sun 4–9	Mon 4–10	Tues 4–11	Wed 4–12	Thur 4–13	Fri 4–14	Baptize Nearby
What Sign?	Signs?	Signs?	Signs?	Signs?	Signs?	Signs?	Signs?	Signs?	Who is baptized?
<i>Nicodemus (+ friends?) visit Jesus</i>									

The first cleansing of the Temple was just before Passover (2nd cleansing = 3 years later)

After seeing Jesus' signs during the eight-day feast many believed in Jesus' name

Jesus did not leave Jerusalem until John 3:22, when He went to *the Judean countryside*

John 3:1 starts with *Now/But*, so Nicodemus came to Jesus during the eight-day feast

Connection between John 2:23–25 and John 3:1ff. (Bad chapter break)

Note the two uses of *man* in 2:25 and the one use of *man* in 3:1

The implication is that Nicodemus is one of these new believers (mentioned in 2:23)

A new look at Nicodemus:

He leads a group of Pharisees who recognize that Jesus is God-sent

John 3:2 *we know*

John 3:3 & 3:7 *y'all must be born again*

John 3:10 & 3:11 *earthly versus heavenly*

Nicodemus rebukes his fellow Pharisees (John 7:50): *Do not lynch Jesus*

Nicodemus risks his life to give Jesus a royal burial (John 19:38–39)

Jn 12:42–43 is about those who believed thru Nicodemus. It is not about Nicodemus

EXPOSITORY REVIEW:**Many believed during the eight-day feast because of the signs (2:23)**

The verse mentions Passover explicitly, but implies Passover + Unleavened Bread
 e.g., Christmas vacation for school usually = Christmas + New Year's vacation

Jesus did not entrust Himself to these new believers, because He knows everyone and has no need for anyone to testify of humanity (2:24–25)

A revision of my view: my old view (held for 25 + years) was that Jesus did not entrust Himself to new believers for ministry

However, I have concluded that it refers, instead, to Jesus' practice of disclosing Himself to individuals who are responsive to truth they have received.

Let us consider John 3:11ff. as support

Let us also consider John 14:21ff.

Now, specifically, there was one man (of those who came to believe), Nicodemus, a Pharisee who ruled in the Sanhedrin (3:1)

Nicodemus perceived from the signs that Jesus was God-sent (3:2)

Jesus made everlasting life the core issue: the new birth (3:3)

Nicodemus admitted that he did not understand Jesus' point (3:4)

**Jesus reiterated the need for everlasting life and personalized it (3:5–7)
Explanation of being born of water and the Spirit**

This verse has nothing to do with water baptism

Jesus acknowledges Nicodemus' puzzlement over the new birth (3:8)

Nicodemus admits again that he does not understand (3:9)

Jesus tells Nicodemus that (as a teacher of Israel) he should know these things (3:10)

Jesus told Nicodemus that He (and His disciples) can testify of these things that Nicodemus admitted that he could not testify about and that Israel (s a whole) does not accept (3:11)

Jesus has told Nicodemus of things within his reach (that he has not yet believed), so he would be overwhelmed, if Jesus were to tell him things that are beyond his reach (3:12)

Jesus provides an explanation of Proverbs 30; which Nicodemus should grasp (3:13)

Jesus compared receiving everlasting life through faith in Christ to people being delivered by looking at the bronze serpent lifted by Moses (3:14–15)

Looking at the serpent in Numbers 21 spared one alive; those who believe in Jesus are spared alive eternally

The way that God loved the world was by giving His only begotten Son so that believers LIVE forever, rather than continuing to DIE for all eternity as unbelievers will do (3:16)

The word *so* (in this verse) does not mean *so-much*, but it means *thus, in this way*

Furthermore, God's purpose in sending the Son (first time) was not to condemn the world, but that unbelievers might be saved (have everlasting life) through believing in Him (3:17)

Believers (have everlasting life, so they) are not condemned, but unbelievers are already under the condemnation of death because they lack everlasting life (3:18)

The explanation of their condemnation under death is that men loved darkness, not Christ's enlightenment: that they could only have everlasting life by believing in Him (3:19)

Evildoers fear reproval by Christ, so they avoid Him (at their own risk) (3:20)

I see a partial chiasm in 3:20–21, because 3:20 addresses two types of people who avoid Christ, but verse 21 only explicitly discusses rewardable believers. The bracketed A' statement discusses unbelievers at the Great White Throne. This passage (I would argue) anticipates John 5:28ff).

A Unbelievers who avoid Him refuse His enlightening message of everlasting life

B Bels who avoid Him refuse His enlightening message of abundant life

**B' Deeds of bels who come to Him (for abundant life) = *done in God* (3:21)
(rewardable)**

**[A' Deeds of unbels (who avoid Him) are not done in God: worthless at GWT]
(such works merit nothing. Certainly, they do not merit life)**

3:22–24 Both Jesus & John were baptizing near each other, since John was not in jail yet
 Chronology of Jesus' life & the Baptist: (1) John free, (2) John in jail, (3) John dead
For next week note Mat 4:12 & 4:18–22. 4:18ff. happens while John is in jail

3:25–26 A dispute with a Judean about purification rites prompted questions about Jesus' growing popularity (at the expense of John's ministry)

The fact that Jesus and John are baptizing in close proximity enables three things:

1. The apostle John knows about the dispute

2. The Judean (who may have been a Pharisee: [John 4:1–2]) knew that Jesus' ministry was growing at the Baptist's expense

3. John's disciples knew that Jesus' ministry grew at the Baptist's expense

3:27–29 John told everyone that the growth of Jesus' ministry was a God-given increase and he had already testified that he is not the Christ, but points to Christ, so John rejoices at the bridegroom's happiness, just as a best man would

3:30–31 Christ is supposed to overshadow John, because He is from heaven and (unlike John) lacks human limitations

3:32–34 Christ directly testifies of what He has seen and heard with God, but most reject His testimony, but those who believe His testimony agree with God, because Christ speaks God's words without the normal limitations of prophets (who received the Spirit by measure)

3:35–36 The Father has lovingly placed all into Christ's hands, so He gives believers everlasting life, but unbelievers lack everlasting life and experience God's present wrath

CONCLUSION