



SESSION 12 | JOHN 2:23-3:5

JOHN 2:23-25 | THE FIRST PASSOVER: JESUS DOES NOT COMMIT

- Verse 23 –
 - This is the first of three Passovers mentioned in the fourth Gospel.
 - From this verse we learn that Jesus clearly was performing more miracles than the single miracle we have recorded.
 - This is verified also by John 2:11 and John 3:2.
 - The miracles of Jesus were always *convincing* miracles. That is, designed to prove that Jesus was Messiah. The particular supernatural result was secondary.
 - Many who **saw the miracles which he did** soon **believed in his name**.
 - Did this make them “Christians?”
 - Did they have eternal life?
 - Did they trust in His completed work (death, burial, and resurrection)?
 - One who makes such a conclusion is guilty of eisegesis. In truth, those who believed recognized Jesus as the Promised Messiah, and nothing else. Salvation was not being offered nor had it been promised in any manner other than the Theocratic/Messianic Kingdom.
- Verse 24 –
 - The word **commit** is the exact same word as **believed** in verse 23. Thus verses 23 and 24 could be paraphrased to say, “though many committed themselves to Jesus, Jesus did not commit Himself to them.”
 - At this first Passover many people are already recognizing Jesus as Messiah, but Jesus is not allowing them to move forward in their faith. It is not time for the establishment of the Kingdom. No Kingdom is yet being offered.
- Verse 25 –
 - Jesus **knew all men** (v. 24) and also **knew what was in man** (v. 25) and thus **needed not that any should testify of man**.
 - That is, Jesus didn’t need a sociology expert to know that the celebration of the people was not going to last.
 - Note that the the knowledge of **what was in man** is given both universally (v. 24) and individually (v. 25, where **man** is singular). This is beyond intuition to Messianic knowledge. Compare Jeremiah 17:10.

JOHN 3:1-21 | THE FIRST PASSOVER: JESUS AND NICODEMUS

- Verse 1 –
 - Do not fail to connect the Lord’s knowledge of **man** (singular, v 25) to **a man** in verse 1. Jesus knew what was in Nicodemus before Nicodemus even spoke it.

- Who was this man? There is a Nicodemus ben Gorion mentioned in Josephus and several rabbinical sources who lived at the time of Jesus, and who was mentioned as one of the most wealthy and powerful men of Jerusalem at the time. It is mentioned that his family was impoverished at the time of Titus just prior to the destruction of Jerusalem. (See more at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicodemus_ben_Gurion)
- Verse 2 –
 - Nicodemus makes an admission almost as clear as that of Nathanael (Jn. 1:49), but with some qualification.
 - While Nathanael said **thou art the Son of God**, Nicodemus said **thou art a teacher come from God**. Notice again that it was **these miracles that thou doest** that convinced Nicodemus and his companions (notice the plural pronoun, **we know**).
 - The miracles were each designed to prove the Messiahship of Jesus.
- Verse 3 –
 - The phrase **Jesus answered** is often found in the Gospels, and shows the Hebrew context of the original. No question has been asked, but Jesus spoke to the situation at hand.
 - This verse (and this passage) is often used in evangelistic settings. Doing so, however, introduces unnecessary difficulty to comprehending the Gospel and the Christian life.
 - The issue to which Jesus speaks is **the kingdom of God**.
 - Only if one equates the kingdom to our salvation (an amillennial position) can this passage be used evangelistically. If (as I contend) the kingdom is the future, physical, and fraternal kingdom (Messianic / Davidic), then we cannot / should not use this verse evangelistically.
 - The term **born again** is literally *born from above*. It refers to the need for a *spiritual* birth.
- Verse 4 –
 - Nicodemus takes the phrase literally, and of the mother, rather than spiritually, and of the father.
 - When the plain sense doesn't make common sense, only then can we seek another sense.
 - While Nicodemus should have been more perceptive (as one of Israel's rulers, v. 10), at this point we can only commend him for seeking to understand the meaning.
 - The best way to do this is to do exactly what Nicodemus does: *ask questions*.
 - We ask questions of the printed word, Nicodemus asked questions of the spoken word.
- Verse 5 –
 - The need is to be *born from above* so that the flesh problem could be overcome.
 - Paul later explained that **flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God** (1 Cor. 15:50).
 - To overcome this problem, new birth is necessary.
 - This happens to Israel **at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed** (1 Cor. 15:52).