



Three Years That Changed the World

Jesus - There's Just Something About That Name
(John 2:13-3:36)

Jesus

There's Something About That Name

John 2:13-3:36

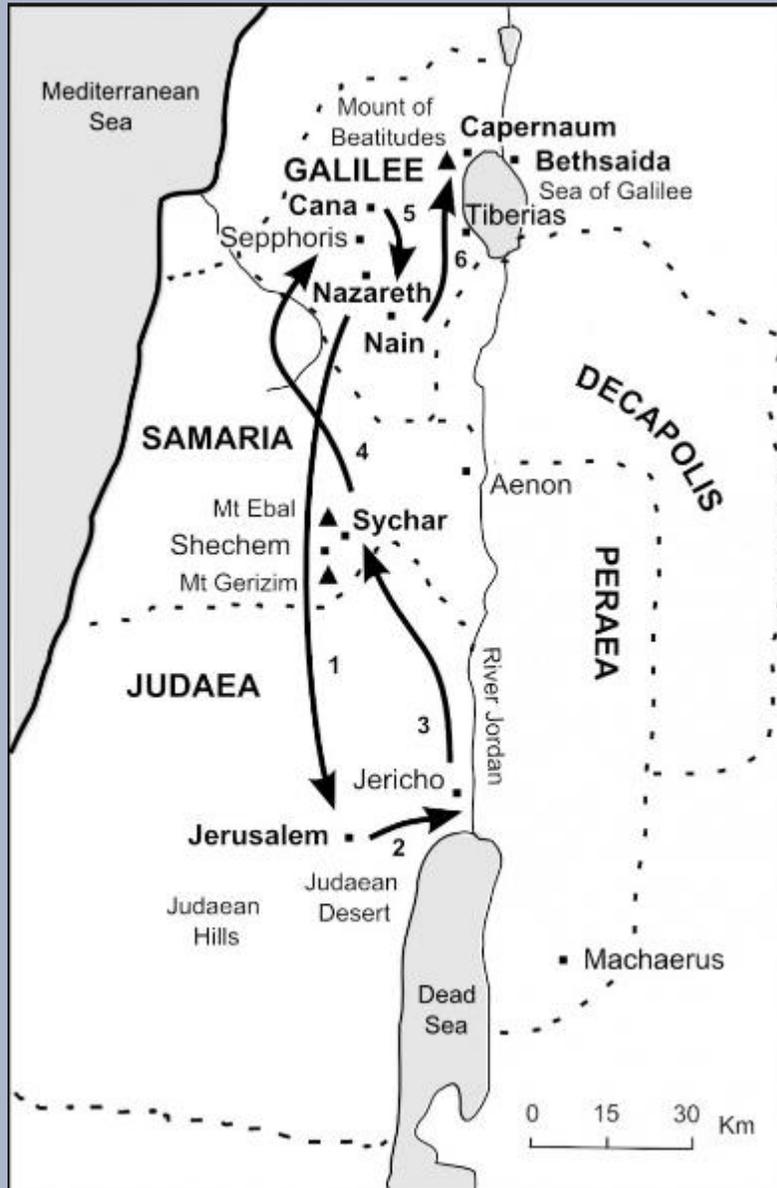


Part 5 of the series – Three Years That Changed the World

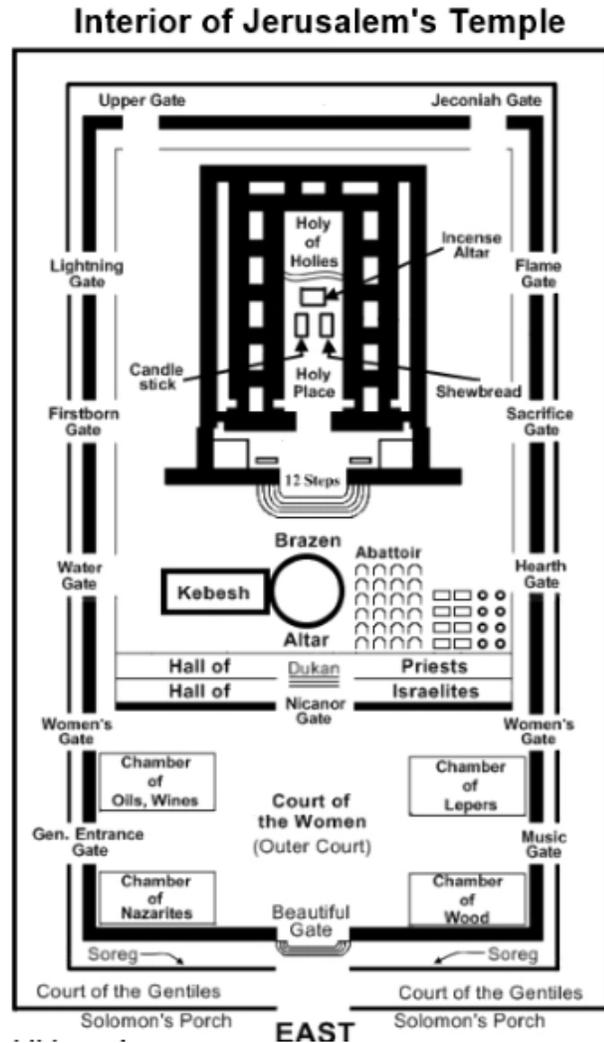
Introductory Remarks:

- ✓ After spending some time in Capernaum, Jesus goes to Jerusalem for the Passover festival in the spring of 27 AD (see #1 on the map).
- ✓ The Feast of Passover was celebrated annually on the 14th day of Nisan (March/April)

*“After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days. **When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem.”** (John 2:12-13)*



“ In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So, he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, “Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father’s house into a market!” His disciples remembered that it is written: “Zeal for your house will consume me.” (John 2:14-17)

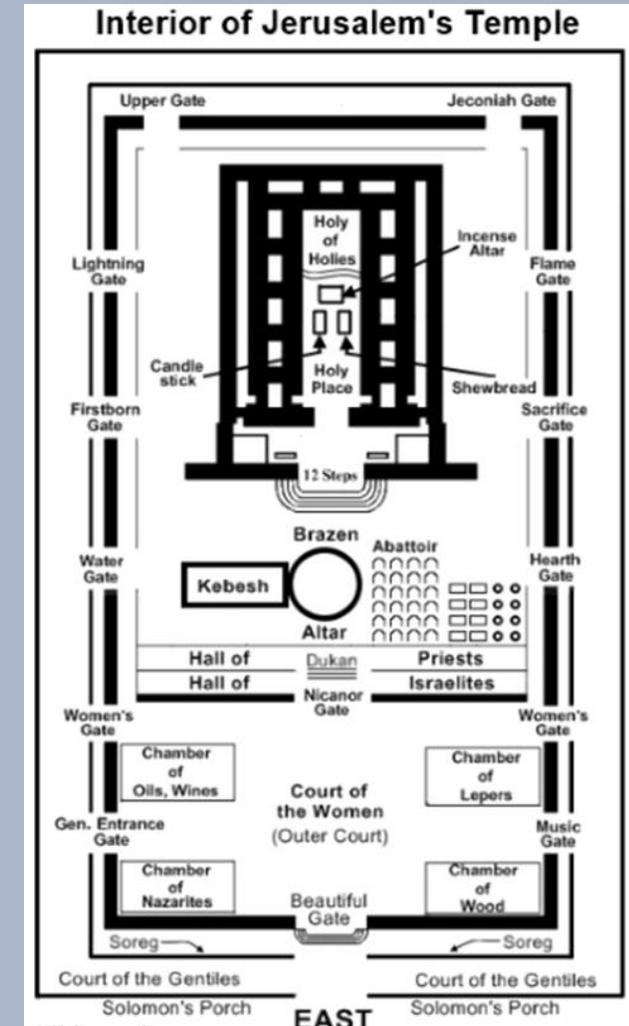


A model of Jerusalem during the time of Jesus’s ministry
 Compliments of the Casual English Bible



Noteworthy Items

- ✓ The temple during the time of Jesus was not the same temple built by Solomon. The temple originally built by Solomon was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C
- ✓ The temple was rebuilt during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah (515 B.C) although not to the grandeur of temple built by Solomon
- ✓ Herod began an extensive reconstruction project of the temple (20 B.C.) and that project was fully completed just shy of its destruction by the Romans General Titus in 70 A.D.

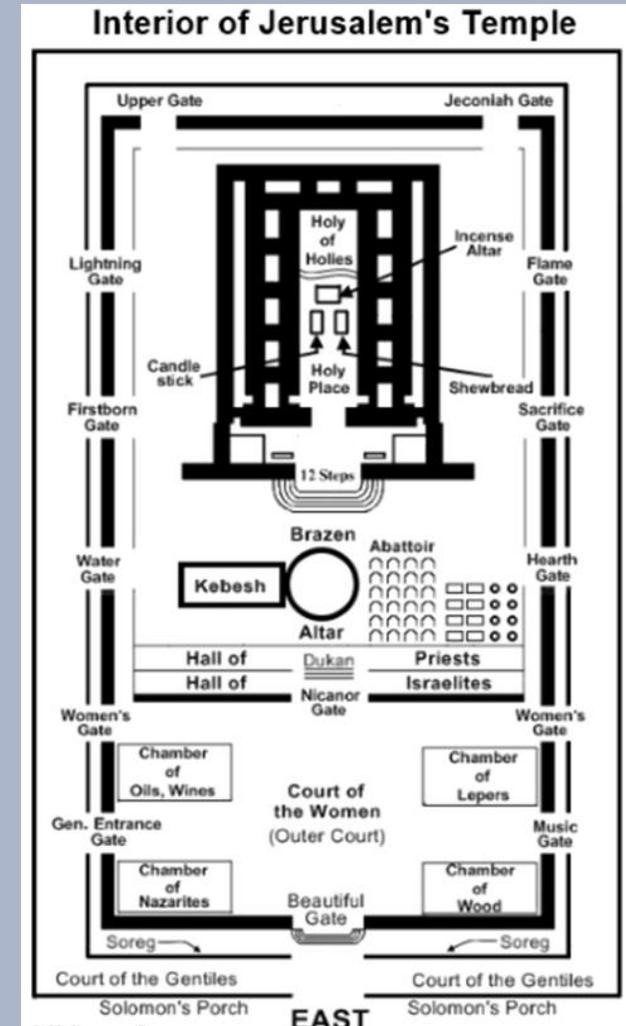




Noteworthy Items

- ✓ The area where Jesus was driving these merchants and money changers from would probably have been the temple courtyard. This is a model of what it might have looked like.

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- ✓ Because it was the Passover (the most significant feast celebrated by the Jews), the city of Jerusalem would have naturally been bustling with people, merchants (selling and trading their wares) and pilgrims from various regions of Roman Empire.
- ✓ The merchants (those selling cattle, sheep, doves etc.) and “money changers” were probably setup in the area known as the Court of the Gentiles.
- ✓ This was not the intended use of the Temple (the religious leaders knew that), regardless of the fact it wasn’t the original Temple, and the merchants, money changers, religious leaders, and others are about to taught a lesson by the One who provided the very instructions on its intended use for true and proper worship.

“In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. **So, he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, “Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father’s house into a market!”** His disciples remembered that it is written: “Zeal for your house will consume me.” (John 2:14-17)

- ✓ If this was just some random, ordinary rabbi/teacher creating this pandemonium then his actions should have been met with opposition, but no one stopped him.
- ✓ These actions (**righteous indignation**) by Jesus carried with it a recognized authority (though probably not to the extent it should have) and the passion displayed by Jesus no doubt caused concern to those who were effectively polluting the temple and bringing shame to what should have been true and genuine worship.
- ✓ The statement; “**Stop turning my Father’s house into a market**” was intentional and put them all on notice he was not some random ordinary Rabbi – **his name was Jesus** and **there is something about that name**!

“The Jews then responded to him, “**What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?**” Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.” They replied, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?” But the temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.” (John 2:18-22)

- ✓ The religious leaders who had control of the temple would have had their own “Temple Police” and they could have stopped him but didn’t.
- ✓ Jesus was in the early stages of his public ministry and his followers (at this point) were not as large as they would become so it begs the question; why didn’t they stop him?
- ✓ They should have revered him since he is God in human flesh but that was yet to be fully revealed and something the religious leaders didn’t accept as we will see over time
- ✓ Instead, they chose to challenge his authority and requested a sign

What sign were they expecting

“Here is my servant, whom I uphold, **my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations.** He will not shout or cry out or raise his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness **he will bring forth justice**; he will not falter or be discouraged **till he establishes justice on earth**. In his teaching the islands will put their hope.” Isaiah 42:1-4)

- ✓ Perhaps the religious leaders saw Jesus in the same way they saw John the Baptist
- ✓ Perhaps they were trying to determine for themselves if Jesus was the chosen one
- ✓ Regardless of what their motivation in asking; “**What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?**” – some will believe and follow Jesus while others will completely miss the point Jesus makes in his response and won’t believe and follow him

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- ✓ The religious leaders were **spiritually blind**; “*They know nothing, they understand nothing; their eyes are plastered over so they cannot see, and their minds closed so they cannot understand.*” (Isaiah 44:18) and missed the whole point of the response by Jesus.
- ✓ They were only thinking of the physical temple (something they had been remodeling for 46 years) because they were blinded to who Jesus was.
- ✓ **Jesus knew they didn’t believe but his response was not for them** but instead for those who did/would believe in him and witness his resurrection (3 days after his death). Those who believed will remember this exchange between Jesus and the religious leaders.

“Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival, many people saw the signs he was performing and believed in his name. But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all people. He did not need any testimony about mankind, for he knew what was in each person.” (John 2:23-25)



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- ✓ The religious leaders must have chosen to not take any further action but were probably perplexed by Jesus and some (like Nicodemus) will want to know more about him while others (those blinded and influenced by the evil one) will begin to find a way to stop Jesus.
- ✓ Jesus will perform a number of miracles during this stay in Jerusalem although none of the 4 gospel writers will specifically list them. This will result in many people believing in his name.
- ✓ Although many people saw and believed, the context here lends itself to the possibility that not everyone had a genuine faith and belief in him.



The teacher questions The Teacher



What does it mean to be Born Again (John 3:1-21)

“Now there was a **Pharisee**, a man **named Nicodemus** who was a **member of the Jewish ruling council**. He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.” (John 3:1-2)

What do we know about Nicodemus?

- ✓ He was a Pharisee and a teacher/rabbi
- ✓ He was a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin (The Jewish ruling council). The Sanhedrin was responsible for Jewish religious decisions and Jewish civil rule within the Roman Empire
- ✓ Although there is no written record of a formal conversion by Nicodemus, he was aware of the Old Testament prophecies of a promised Messiah and his inquisitiveness and interest in Jesus may have been impacted by that knowledge.
- ✓ Nicodemus will later rebuke the Pharisees for condemning Jesus (John 7:50-51) and will help Joseph of Arimathea provide a proper burial for Jesus (John 19:39-40) and though there is no mention of him placing his faith in Jesus it doesn't mean he didn't - just no record of it.

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- ✓ Why did Nicodemus meet Jesus at night:
 - Perhaps the fear of being out of favor from his associates in the Sanhedrin
 - Perhaps a nighttime visit would allow for uninterrupted conversation
- ✓ The main point is that Nicodemus came to Jesus; but in doing so did not mean he was yet convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, but he was certainly interested
- ✓ Luke (Luke 18:18-23) records a story of the rich young ruler who wanted to gain eternal life but wouldn't part with his wealth to obtain it. Nicodemus will also be confronted with the truth of eternal life and will need to choose to follow his friends and colleagues or follow Jesus. Time will tell which one he embraces.

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- ✓ Although the use of the term “Rabbi” would have been polite and even flattering, the consensus is that Nicodemus didn’t fully comprehend who Jesus was
- ✓ He almost gives the impression that he wants to talk with Jesus as one Rabbi to another and Jesus was just not on the same level as Nicodemus which we will see.
- ✓ Its very likely that Nicodemus didn’t share many of the hostile thoughts and vehement opposition that the other members of the Sanhedrin held and even acknowledges Jesus must be a teacher and one even sent by God
- ✓ He even recognizes the divine power manifested in the miracles performed by Jesus

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- ✓ Jesus does not seem to be interested in discussing the signs (miracles) that he was performing but instead he chooses to address the core issue which is; **who does Nicodemus believe Jesus is.** (See Matthew 16:13-18)
- ✓ There really isn’t a question raised by Nicodemus – but Jesus knew the heart of Nicodemus and was going to teach him something he should already know
- ✓ The reality is - **Nicodemus was struggling with whether Jesus was God**

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- ✓ Nicodemus (like his fellow religious colleagues) practiced a “works” based religious system to earn them a place in the kingdom which included; circumcision, being a descendant of Abraham, observing the law, performing external religious rituals among other things.
- ✓ However, Jesus declares to Nicodemus that no one can see (enter) the kingdom unless they are “born again” because spiritual birth (like physical birth) is something one experiences, and it happens (through faith), and it is not something one can produce (through works or human effort).

“Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, **no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit.** Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So, it is with everyone born of the Spirit.” (John 3:4-8)

- ✓ Jesus adds some clarification for Nicodemus and uses two words he would have been familiar with – water and Spirit. Both terms would have been understood by Nicodemus to be connected to “spiritual renewal” which is precisely what Jesus wanting Nicodemus to fully understand.
- ✓ “For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. **I will sprinkle clean water on you**, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and **put a new spirit in you**; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And **I will put my Spirit in you** and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.” (Ezekiel 36:24-27)

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- ✓ Jesus is emphasizing to Nicodemus that human effort (the flesh) has zero to do with “spiritual cleansing”. The spiritual transformation needed to enter the kingdom is “wholly” the work of God (the Spirit) and accomplished through faith in Christ.
- ✓ The example that Jesus uses is the “wind” which can be observed by humanity but can’t be controlled by it.
- ✓ The same is true of the Spirit; the work of the Spirit (something completely outside human control) is evidenced/observed in the transformed lives of all believers (those born of the Spirit).

“How can this be?” Nicodemus asked. “You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things? Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still, you people do not accept our testimony. I have spoken to you of earthly things, and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.” (John 3:9-15)

- ✓ There is no excuse that Nicodemus wasn't getting it – he should have dropped to his knees and responded like Peter (when asked by Jesus who they thought he was); “You are the Christ – the Son of the Living God”
- ✓ Standing before Nicodemus was the One (the only One) who came from heaven to earth to accomplish what the Old Testament prophets declared would take place (Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 9:6-7, Isaiah 53:1-12) and all he had to do was believe in Him.

Jesus

There's Something About That Name

John 3:16-21



“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.” (John 3:16-18)

- ✓ It’s not altogether clear whether these are John’s words or the words of Jesus
 - It could be a continuation of the dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus
 - It could be a commentary by John (the author of this Gospel) about Jesus
- ✓ Whether it’s John’s words or the words of Jesus – the message of God’s love is the main point of this passage.

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- ✓ Eternal life becomes a focal point of the Gospel (Good News) for Jesus would give his life so that we might be saved (not perish).
- ✓ **“But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, 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, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:4-7)**

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- ✓ **God’s love is broad enough to cover the worst of sinners** (Paul the Apostle); “Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: **Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.** (I Timothy 1:15)
- ✓ **God’s love is narrow enough to exclude those who reject His Son**; “Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son” (John 3:18)

“This is the verdict: **Light has come into the world**, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. **Everyone who does evil hates the light** and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. **But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light**, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.” (John 3:19-21)

✓ Notice the contrast that Jesus uses:

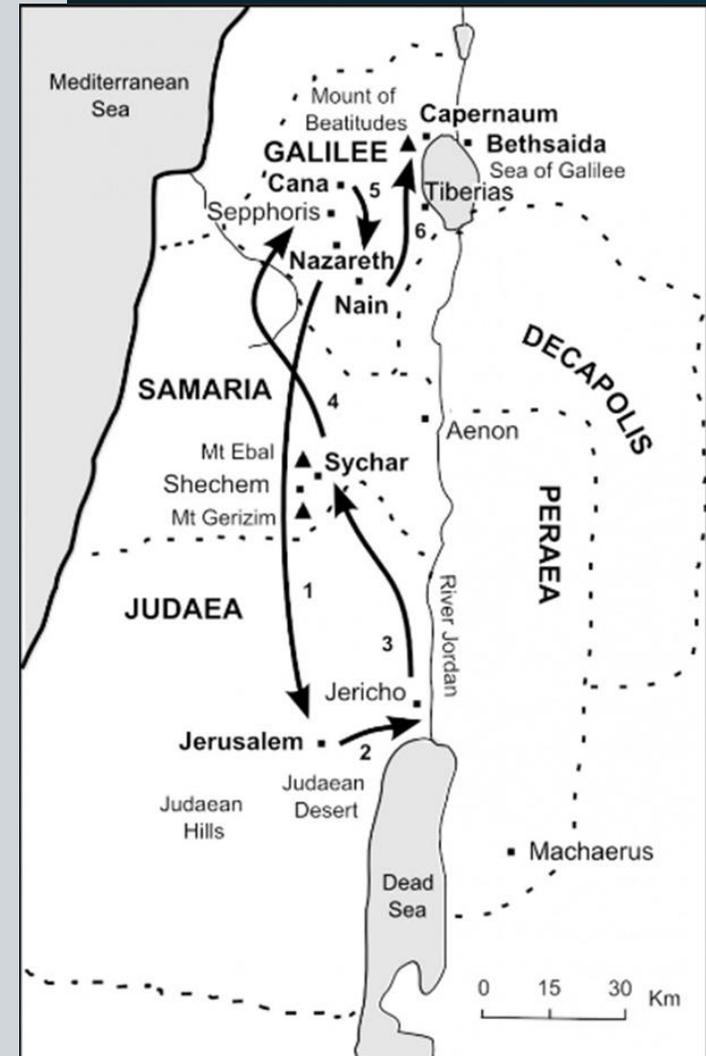
➤ Those who **practice truth** love the light and **run to it**

➤ Those who **practice evil** hate the light and **run from it**

✓ “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God not by works, so that no one can boast. **For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.**” (Ephesians 2:8-10)

John the Baptist testifies of Jesus

“After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them, and baptized. Now John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were coming and being baptized. (This was before John was put in prison.) An argument developed between some of John’s disciples and a certain Jew over the matter of ceremonial washing. They came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan the one you testified about look, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him.” (John 3:22-26)



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- ✓ The events recorded here follow these two previous events:
 - The **cleansing of the temple by Jesus** and **his performing of miracles** in Jerusalem that caused **many there to believe in his name** (John 2:13-25)
 - The dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus that will eventually lead to Nicodemus **believing in Jesus**
- ✓ Jesus leaves Jerusalem and heads to the Judean region where John the Baptist is continuing the work he was called to do – **point others to Jesus**.

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- ✓ The disciples of Jesus were baptizing those who heard the message and repented
- ✓ The disciples of John the Baptist were also baptizing those who believed the message that John preached of the one who would come; “The Messiah”, and they too repented of their unbelief.
- ✓ These forms of baptism (requiring the action of repentance) **looked forward to the cross**, while the baptisms (after Jesus died and rose again) practiced by the Christian church **look back to the cross** and testify outwardly of an inward repentance brought about by faith, trust and belief that Jesus is the Savior.

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- ✓ It is worth pointing out that this reference (“**This was before John was put in prison**”) made by John (the Gospel writer and Apostle); is helpful when piecing together an accurate chronology of events recorded in all four gospel accounts.
- ✓ The other 3 Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke – referred to as the “Synoptics” which means “see the same”) don’t record the early events where Jesus spent time in the Judean region.
- ✓ Since the other 3 gospel accounts (which were already in circulation before John writes his gospel record) begin recording the public ministry of Jesus after John the Baptist is imprisoned, he doesn’t want to confuse his readers and clarifies the timing of events.

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- ✓ We aren’t told who this “certain Jew” was that chose to point out that John’s disciples were not following the “purification rituals” but this will also be a recurring complaint the religious leaders have with the disciples of Jesus as well – more on that topic later!
- ✓ John’s disciples even complained about the size of the crowd following Jesus and perhaps the lesser size of the crowd following them to which John the Baptist will speak to.
- ✓ The lesson learned here is that sometimes we let our personal preferences, personal rituals, and even personal jealousies get in the way of what God is doing – its best not to let that happen.

To this John replied, “A person can receive only what is given them from heaven. You yourselves can testify that I said, ‘I am not the Messiah but am sent ahead of him.’ The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom’s voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. **He must become greater; I must become less.**” (John 3:27-30)

John the Baptist testifies of Jesus

There is Something About That Name



“He must increase, but I must decrease”

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- ✓ John knew since childhood that his primary task was to point others to Jesus
- ✓ John knew that he wasn’t the Messiah and never attempted to usurp the authority that he was given.
- ✓ The bride (something the church would become known as) belonged to the bridegroom (Jesus) and the “friends of the bridegroom” (John and his disciples) have now heard his voice and his joy is complete – The ministry of Jesus would become the focal point (He must become greater) while John’s would become less

John the Baptist testifies of Jesus

“The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth and speaks as one from the earth. **The one who comes from heaven is above all.** He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. **Whoever has accepted it has certified that God is truthful.** For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. **The Father loves the Son** and has placed everything in his hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on them.” (John 3:31-36)

- ✓ Christ’s origins are from heaven and since God is above all - Christ is God
- ✓ Christ’s words are truth and since God’s words are truthful – Christ is God
- ✓ Christ is eternal and without limit and since God loves the Son – Christ is God