

**1114 Twice cleansing of the temple, rebirth, and God's love for the world – Book of John (3)
(Verses refer to those in NASB95 unless otherwise specified, and by Whirlwind.)**

First, let's talk about why there were two cleansings of the temple and their contents. We also saw that for those who can read the Bible, reading the Bible is indispensable. From the Jewish reaction, we also see that faith must come from the heart. Second, we talked about the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus about rebirth, and saw that those who are regenerated are those who are justified by faith, and those who are saved once by faith are the first step in the plan of salvation. We discussed that once saved we are saved forever. If we do not forcefully interpret the Bible, we would not think it would be unfair. We also discussed what salvation means in the plan of salvation, and how we must look up to the Lord Jesus to obtain eternal life. Finally, we discussed God's love for the world, salvation and damnation, and (true) light. The Bible clearly says that God loves the world, and those who believe in the name of His Son will not be condemned, but those who do not believe are already condemned! But we cannot use this sentence to judge people, and think that those who do not believe now are already condemned, because we do not know how God works. People who do not believe today may believe tomorrow. For those people who will still not believe until their coffins are sealed, the sin has already been condemned! It is noted that the translation in Chinese Union Version translates the word judgement in different ways for various occasions, such a translation causes confusion! So, we discussed this in detail. In the end of this paragraph, we also briefly mention (true) light.

1. Jesus cleansed the temple twice

"The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables; and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business." His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house will consume me." The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" But He was speaking of the temple of His body. So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken. Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man."(John 2:13-25)

This is the first time Jesus cleansed the temple. The second time He cleansed the temple was after preparing the last supper. This scripture makes it clear that the time was after preparing the last supper, "As they approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples, and said to them, "Go into the village

opposite you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here."(Mark 11:1-2) Then "Jesus entered Jerusalem and came into the temple; and after looking around at everything, He left for Bethany with the twelve, since it was already late."(Mark 11:11) "On the next day, ...they had left Bethany, ..." (Mark 11:12) "Then they came to Jerusalem. And He entered the temple and began to drive out those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves; and He would not permit anyone to carry merchandise through the temple. And He began to teach and say to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a robbers' den.'"(Mark 11:15-17) This is the second time He cleaned the temple, and we'll talk about the first time later.

The same thing is recorded in the Gospel of Matthew, "And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves. And He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer'; but you are making it a robbers' den.'"(Matthew 21:12-13) This is a very important thing which is recorded in the Gospel of Luke, "Jesus entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling, saying to them, "It is written, 'And My house shall be a house of prayer,' but you have made it a robbers' den.'"(Luke 19:45-46) Jesus clearly said that the house of God is a house of prayer, and He had to clean it up because it was now a robbers' den.

We see these verses in John's Gospel refer to Jesus' first cleansing of the temple, before His second cleansing of the temple, at the Passover after the wedding at Cana. If we compare the time for these two cleansing, they are quite different and there is no way to refer to the same event. Since some people are confusing about these two, we want to make it clear. As for why He needed a second time, it is obvious that the Jews did not repent the first time and fell back into their old ways after He cleansed the temple the first time. Please note that the first time, the disciples remembered the words of the Bible. Here we see that the disciples He mentioned at that time knew the Old Testament. If the disciples did not know, how could they remember it? Therefore, Christians must know the words of the Bible before they can obey them.

The Jews were not angry about the cleansing of the temple, but wanted Him to show them a sign (G4592). This led to the words of Jesus which talked about using His body as a temple. "So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken."(John 2:22) We once again see the importance of "remembering". So, it is very important to understand what happens in the Bible. For those who can read the Bible, how can they not read the Bible! A person who cannot read the Bible due to illiteracy can also understand the Bible from other people's words. Therefore, do not forcefully interpret the Bible and thus lead people astray. This is something you must be responsible to God for.

Some people may believe in the power of God when they see a miracle, but regret it when there is no miracle. This was true then, and it is true today. Therefore, "But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, and because He did not need

anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man."(John 2:24-25)
We should not be this kind of person. We must have faith from our hearts.

2. The conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus about rebirth

"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 have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into 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 be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus said to Him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things? Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony. If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life."(John 3:1-15)

From here we can see the situation of Judas at that time. Nicodemus was an official and did not dare to see Jesus during the day. He could only come at night. We can learn from the fact that he believed that Jesus was from God as a teacher. Jesus told him that in order to be saved, a person must take the first step on the road of faith and be justified by faith. So Nicodemus asked a worldly question that normal people at that time would ask, that is, how can a man enter his mother's womb and be born again? Jesus explained to him how to enter the kingdom of God. He must be born of water and the Spirit. Therefore, being baptized with water is necessary for ordinary people, and being baptized with the Holy Spirit is mandatory.

We can see this in the special case of the criminal who was crucified with Jesus. He did not have the opportunity to be baptized by water, but he was baptized by the equivalence. Jesus Himself said to him, "...Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.""(Luke 23:43) (see Luke 23:39-43). Most people will have the opportunity to be baptized by water. Of course, not everyone can be baptized like Jesus. Some people's physical conditions cannot be immersed in water and they have to be baptized in different format. Can these baptized people in different format be saved? Absolutely yes. The important thing is to declare that you belong to Christ Jesus, as the scripture says, "Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."(1 Peter 3:21)

This also brings out the concept of the Holy Spirit being like the wind. We really don't know how the Holy Spirit works. He is one of the Trinity God and has absolute sovereignty. People often ask what does it mean to be born again? It is the first step to salvation in the plan of salvation. The Bible clearly explains what the first step is, which is what the book of Romans says, "for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation (G4991).(Romans 10:10) The word G4991 here refers to salvation through Jesus in the plan of salvation, as in the scripture says, "For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation (G4991)through our Lord Jesus Christ."(1 Thessalonians 5:9) The same word is used here. The environment at that time was more difficult than today's general environment, but the principle was the same. In today's general situation, at least they will be regarded Christians as aliens, but in special cases, some will risk their lives or even lose their lives.

The Bible is very clear. No matter what people say, God will not deceive people. Once saved, you are saved forever, because "If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved (G4982), yet so as through fire."(1 Corinthians 3:15) Please note that the word used here is G4982. The meaning of this word can be seen from the following scriptures. "Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, "Unless these men remain in the ship, you yourselves cannot be saved (G4982).""(Acts 27:31) "For whoever wishes to save (G4982) his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save (G4982) it."(Mark 8:35) "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save (G4982) Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour."(John 12:27) We can see that G4982 refers to salvation in general, or to salvation in the plan of salvation.

It is impossible to talk about the general salvation in 1 Corinthians 3:15. It is very clear that it is talking about salvation in the salvation plan, which means once saved and eternally saved. However, some people try to look at it from a human perspective and think it is unfair. In fact, this is because such a people don't understand the Bible correctly! The Book of Revelation clearly says that when the New Jerusalem comes down from heaven, not everyone will be able to enter the city, "...only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life."(Revelation 21:27) This does not mean that everyone who is in the book of life can enter the city, only "Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying."(Revelation 22:14-15) Those outside the city are those Christians who have fallen, but once saved, they are saved forever. Although they are much better outside the city than the non-Christians who went to the lake of fire and brimstone, they can only live in the environment with weeping and gnashing of teeth outside the city!

Let's look at the word G4991 (salvation), salvation in the plan of salvation, which appears 43 times in total. The meaning of the word G4992 is the same as G4991, appearing only 5 times. If we look at all the scriptures, it is clear that it refers to salvation in the plan of salvation. For example, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation (G4991) to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."(Romans 1:16) "And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation (G4991) has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham."(Luke 19:9) And "And all flesh will see the salvation (G4992) of

God."(Luke 3:6) Finally, "Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?"(John 3:10) Of course, he would not understand what Jesus said at that time, because he became His disciple later, we can see this from what he did after Jesus' death, "Nicodemus, who had first come to Him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight. So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews."(John 19:39-40)

Please note that in John 3:13, it says "No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man." Unlike what is translated in the Union Version translation, it contains the words (Jesus) "still in heaven." In the original text, it only says that Jesus is in heaven, so it means that He came down from heaven as in this translation says. It does not mean that His avatar was still in heaven when He became flesh. Such an avatar is not a complete human being. However, during that time, Jesus still had the inherent identity of the Son of God, so He was also fully God.

As for the matter of Moses lifting up the snake in the Old Testament, "...if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived."(Numbers 21:9) This requires faith that need only be looked up to. Jesus was crucified on the cross, isn't it similar to the bronze serpent? We must look up to Him through faith and gain eternal life. When we believed, God "...rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."(Colossians 1:13-14) It's just that for a person who is on the road to sanctification, it is absolutely impossible to stay in Christ all the time at the beginning, and he will often slip out of being in Christ. For example, how can it be possible for a Christian who has sinned and refused to repent to be in Christ? Therefore, we must remain in Christ forever.

3. God loves the world, salvation and condemnation, and light

"“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.””(John 3:16-21)

We know that God so loves the world that those who believe in the name of His Son will not be condemned, but those who do not believe are already condemned! I don't know why some people think that everyone has a new spirit. Aren't those who don't believe already condemned? Our old spirit has long been tainted and dead by sin, as we can see from the first few chapters of Genesis. Those who do not believe are already condemned. This is not

a wrong saying. However, if they believe at any time, the precious blood of the Lord can cleanse them and forgive their sins.

We are all descendants of Adam, tainted by sin from birth, just like Seth, "When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth."(Genesis 5:3) At that time, Adam was tainted by sin be already, so Seth was tainted by sin when he was born. No one believed in the Lord when he was born, so before all people believe in the Lord, we All have been convicted.

We cannot use this sentence to judge people and think that those who do not believe now are already condemned and must go to hell, because we do not know how God works. People who do not believe today may believe tomorrow. Only when a person still doesn't believe it when the coffin is sealed, then can I be sure that the person is the one who has already been convicted! I saw a man who finally figured out the he wanted to be baptized, a little while before he died. According to his wife, she became very peaceful after being baptized until he died. So we really don't know how God will work.

So, "'Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; ..."(Luke 6:37) Let's take a look the word judgment, so let's look at another verse, "But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment (G2919) on those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment (G2917, noun) of God?"(Romans 2:3) Let's look at the verses that Jesus said, "You judge (G2919, verb) according to the flesh; I am not judging (G2919) anyone. But even if I do judge (G2919), My judgment (G2920, noun) is true; for I am not alone in it, but I and the Father who sent Me."(John 8:15-16) Please note that the original text here uses the same word G2919, but in Chinese it is sometimes translated differently, which confuses people and causes misunderstanding. It is very clear here why Jesus' judgment is true, because God the Father was with Him during His incarnation, and His judgment is the judgment of God the Father.

Let's look at this verse, "But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern (G1253) good and evil."(Hebrews 5:14) This word G1253 only appears three times, and the other two times are "Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment (G1253) on his opinions."(Romans 14:1) and "and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing (G1253) of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues." How can one be able to discern (G1253) without doing judgement? How could it not be true that a person who has grown up is a person filled with the Holy Spirit, and it is the Holy Spirit who really judges? Just don't judge people by yourself. This is a judgment that may be wrong and often leads to disputes.

Finally, it talks about (true) light. The scripture says, "In Him (Jesus) was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."(John 1:4-5) The verses here clearly explain the reason for not loving (true) light but loving darkness. We have shared it before, so we won't discuss it here.