

**The Word Became Flesh
(Week 7)
John 3:16 - 3:21
“Nicodemus Part 2”**

Introduction

For God loved the world in this way: He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will 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.
John 3:16-17

These words of Jesus spoken to Nicodemus that fateful night are among the most quoted if not THE most quoted verses in all of Scripture. Those of us who grew up in church had **John 3:16** memorized, before we knew of any other verses. And understandably so, for in this wonderful declaration from The LORD Himself, we are shown the full measure of God's love. "**For God so loved...that He GAVE**". And what did He give? His One and Only Son to die for our sins... in our stead. No one has ever loved like God loves. But we must also remember that it is not love that saves us. God loved the world, but we know that all the world will not be saved. So love alone will not save the world. This love of God, that gave us this wonderful gift of His Son, can only be realized by faith. For it is through faith in Jesus that the love of God is accepted and manifested in marvelous grace.

For you are saved by GRACE through FAITH, and this not from yourselves: it is God's gift — not from works, so that no one can boast.
Ephesians 2:8-9

Nicodemus was so very close to realizing just what was required for salvation that night. And later, when he saw Jesus die upon the cross, he understood full well the gift that God had given. This was the gift that Jesus had spoken of that night. Nicodemus saw the Gift nailed to Calvary's cross, and he believed and received it by faith. This is how any sinner can be saved. By hearing the word of Jesus, believing in His promises of forgiveness and salvation, and being transformed or "born again" by the Spirit of The Living God, as a result of that faith. It is a work begun in God's love and fully realized by faith in order to receive the grace that God has offered through Christ. It has been offered to the "whole world", but all of the world will not receive it, only those who will believe.

So today, I would like for you to examine your own heart as we study these wonderful words of Christ. It is so very easy to take just one of these verses by itself and neglect the entirety of the subject. It is easy to memorize and quote **John 3:16** and miss the rest of the message. **John 3:16** speaks of so many things. It tells us of God's love for the world. A love that was so amazing and undeserved, and yet, it gave the most precious thing that God had to offer. But even though God offered this wondrous gift to "everyone", not everyone will receive it.

What a tragedy would it be for someone to miss out on God's wonderful offer of salvation? And yet many will miss it. Many will find themselves condemned to an eternity in hell, far away from the presence of God. Some have asked, "But how is that possible if God so loved the world?" The answer is right here, in the following verses. God's love requires a response from us. It requires belief in order to be accepted.

Jesus came to offer us an escape from the condemnation that is ours because of sin. But many will choose to remain in sin and reject the love of God offered in **John 3:16**. If a person rejects the gift that God has offered, there is no one to blame, but themselves. For this gift was offered to everyone. Let us look at the this passage in its entirety this morning and see: *Those Who Receive No Condemnation, Those Who Are Already Condemned, and The Confirmation (proof) of Those Who Are Lost and Those Who Are Saved.*

No Condemnation (vs. 16-17)

For God loved the world in this way: He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will 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. **John 3:16-17**

Everyone loves **John 3:16**. You see it on signs held up in the end zones at football games. You see it on billboards. You see it virtually everywhere. And many love the next verse as well, for in it Jesus says that He did not come to condemn the world. Those who like to have their theology of the more liberal persuasion LOVE this verse. They use it to say things like, "You see, Jesus loves me just like I am. He didn't come to judge me. He just came to save me. I don't have to change my sinful lifestyle, for He did not come to condemn me. It's all about the love, not judgment."

In fact, there was a time in this country that the most favored *Bible* verse of the masses was **John 3:16**, but now that verse is **Matthew 7:1** which reads:

Do not judge, so that you won't be judged.

This is the way of the world these days. Sinners convince themselves that God will just ignore their sins and allow them into heaven no matter what. And when you try and explain to them that the way that they are living is displeasing to God, they will often respond with something like "Who are you to judge me? What does *The Bible* say about judging? Do not judge, so that you won't be judged." They have no earthly idea what they are talking about, but sadly, that rarely stops them from talking.

If we read **John 3:16-17** and that is all we read, we might have to agree with them. But this, unfortunately for them, is not all Jesus had to say on the subject. Many have never bothered to look at the rest of this passage in John. While it is true that God did not send His only Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save, there is much more to the story. It is imperative that we look to Jesus by faith in order to be saved. There is no disputing this fact. But does believing in Jesus allow us to go and live according to the lusts of our sinful nature? Certainly not. Paul addressed this particular issue in his letter to the church at Rome.

What should we say then? Should we continue in sin so that grace may multiply? Absolutely not! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Or are you unaware that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore, we were buried with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of The Father, so we too may walk in newness of life. **Romans 6:1-4**

For you see, what Paul was speaking of here is exactly what Jesus was telling Nicodemus that night. To have faith in Christ is to be "born again" by the Spirit of God. We cannot live the way that we used to live and claim to be "made new" in Jesus! The sin for which He died must be removed from us. The word "Christian" literally means "little Christ". We cannot be like Him and be living in sin at the same time! This isn't "judging" my friends. It is simply a statement of fact. To be born again from above is to be changed here below!

So to sum it up, those who look to Jesus by faith will not be condemned. They are forgiven and born again from above. And those who have been born again can boldly claim this most wonderful verse found in Romans:

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus, because the law of The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death. **Romans 8:1-2**

However... while there is in fact no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus, there remains much condemnation for those who have chosen not to submit themselves to His Lordship. Let us finish looking at the portion of this text which so many have chosen to ignore.

Condemned Already (vs. 18-19)

Anyone who believes in Him is not condemned, BUT anyone who does not believe is ALREADY CONDEMNED, because he has not believed in the Name of the One and Only Son of God. This is the judgment: The light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. John 3:18-19
(emphasis added)

God did not send Jesus into the world to condemn it. This is absolute fact, which is completely verified by Scripture. God did not need to send His Son into the world to condemn it. Why? Because it was ALREADY CONDEMNED! Adam and Eve saw to that. Jesus didn't need to condemn the world. That had been done long before He came. He came to offer us a way out of the condemnation that we had already received.

The Greek word used repeatedly here for condemned is *Krino* (pronounced Kree'-no), and it means to receive condemnation or judgment. For you see, God has already judged this sinful world and found it guilty. Every man carries a sentence of death upon himself. It was already pronounced, before Jesus came. Look at it this way, we have already been judged for our sins. Now, all we are doing is awaiting the sentence for that judgment to be carried out. And this my friends is our sentence:

For the wages of sin is death...

Romans 6:23a

But listen to the rest of this verse:

...but the GIFT of God is eternal life IN Christ Jesus our LORD.

Romans 6:23b

This world is already under a death sentence. Jesus didn't come to re-condemn it. He came to offer us a pardon from the condemnation that we had already received. He is our only hope of escape from the judgment that is sure to come, if we do not accept God's gift by faith and receive the grace that we so desperately need. Those who reject this offer of grace are already on death row waiting for their sentence to be carried out. This will happen at the Great White Throne Judgment of God.

Then I saw a great white throne and One seated on it. Earth and heaven fled from His presence, and no place was found for them. I also saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the Book of Life, and the dead were judged according to their works by what was written in the books. Then the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them; each one was judged according to their works. Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And anyone whose name was not found in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.
Revelation 20:11-15

So you see, any who are not born again in Christ will be judged on that day according to their own righteousness. And *The Bible* tells us that **"our righteousness is as filthy rags"** (*Isaiah 64:6*). But those who are in Christ will be judged by His righteousness, which is absolute perfection! I for one would prefer to be in Christ when that day comes. How about you? Make no mistake. If you have not placed your faith in Jesus and been born again from above by The Spirit of God, then you are condemned already.

The one who believes in The Son has eternal life, but the one who rejects The Son will not see life; instead the wrath of God remains on him.
John 3:36

The Confirmation (vs. 20-21)

For everyone who does evil hates the light and avoids it, so that his deeds may not be exposed. But anyone who lives by the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be shown to be accomplished by God. **John 3:20-21**

In this last portion of Jesus' discussion with Nicodemus, He reveals the difference between those who are already condemned and those who have been saved from condemnation. Just as a child can often be identified by the way that it favors its parents, the child of God will show the attributes of their heavenly Father. And conversely, those who remain under condemnation will prove by their deeds that they are the children of the devil. In short, those who are born again will live in the light, while those who are still under condemnation will long for the darkness of their sin.

When I was a kid, my dad used to take me Walleye fishing on Norris Lake. Walleye are a predatory fish that lurk in dark and murky water to wait for their unsuspecting prey to swim too close to where they are hidden by the shadows. The way that we used to catch these fish was to go out at night and hang a light over the edge of the boat. Small minnows would be drawn to the light and would come to the surface of the water beside the boat.

The walleye, who despised the light, would also be drawn to the boat by the movement of the minnows, and would swim to the light, but remain just under its glow in the shadows below. We would catch these fish by dropping our bait (in this case a minnow on a hook), just beneath the lighted water and into the murky shadows beneath the reach of the light. This was exactly what the walleye were hoping for, and they would pounce upon the unsuspecting minnow thinking that it had accidentally strayed into their darkened hideout. Little did they know that it was all a trap that would lead to their demise. And when they took the bait, we would quickly reel them to the surface and take them home to have for supper.

This is exactly what will happen to those who reject the light of Christ, preferring to live in the darkness of their sin. They have no idea that this choice will eventually lead to their destruction. Those who love the darkness and hate the light will say things like, "Who are you to judge me?" When what they do not understand is that they have already been judged. The wrath of God remains upon those who refuse to repent of their sin and come to Jesus and live in His light.

Those who have been truly born again will long to live in the light. They will look and act like the born again children of God. The darkness will no longer appeal to them. Listen again to the words of Christ:

But anyone who lives by the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be shown to be accomplished by God. **John 3:21**

This simply means that God has done a work in them, and they are no longer the same. They have been reborn in the image of their Heavenly Father. No one who continues to live in darkness has ever truly come to the light and life of Jesus Christ. And that is not judging my friend. It is simply pointing out that their lives prove that have already been judged. So come out of the darkness and put your faith in Jesus while there is still time. Look to Jesus... and live. Have you been born again? If you have, then the darkness no longer appeals to you. Only the light of Christ can satisfy the child of God.

Any let all those who live in His light, say... TRUTH!!