

John – A Devotional Commentary from God's Daily Word Ministries

Chapter 3

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Scripture references for lessons on John: The New King James Version.
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John 3:1 - Lesson #22

When the original manuscripts of the Bible were written, there were no chapter or verse divisions. Chapter breaks were introduced about one thousand years after Christ and verse numbers did not appear until the mid 1500's. The break in John between chapter two and three is an unfortunate one because it can cause us to lose the flow of the message.

Jesus was teaching in Jerusalem and "many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did" (John 2:23). However, Jesus did not "commit Himself to them" (John 2:24) or believe those who began to follow Him because "He knew what was in man" (John 2:25). It's with this teaching on the deception in the heart of man - a deception capable of even deceiving ourselves - and the potential shallowness of professed belief that we are introduced (without a break) to a man named Nicodemus.

John 3:1

"There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews."

Most of us have a very negative impression of the Pharisees. The name has come to identify someone who is prideful, legalistic, and hypocritical. And this is how the Gospels usually portray the Pharisees. But we should also understand that being a Pharisee required you to devote every aspect of your life to something you believed was pleasing to God. Being a Pharisee was much more than an attitude, it was absolute submission to rules which consumed and controlled everything in your life.

Nicodemus was also a ruler of the Jews, a member of the Sanhedrin. The Romans controlled the civil government, but the Jews still maintained a religious government led by the seventy members of the Sanhedrin. They were also given wide ranging authority by the Romans in maintaining civil obedience. They were the supreme enforcers of the Law of God and one of their duties was to examine anyone who claimed to be a prophet.

Nicodemus had heard of the miracles - maybe even seen them for himself - but he had given his life to obtaining righteousness through living and defending the Law. His road to eternal life was perfection - life without a flaw - and if this miracle worker was really from God He would first need to answer a few questions. The motives of Nicodemus may not have been as pure as many believe, but we'll see that the encounter certainly had a purpose.

What defines who we are? Many times this becomes the baggage which hinders our relationship with Christ. Are we good? Successful? Religious? Or extremely sinful? Some do not believe they need a Savior, and some believe they are too far gone for a Savior to rescue. But the truth of the Gospel is that we must come to Jesus for eternal life, and He is there for ALL who will come in faith. Today, we are being called to lay aside all that would keep us from Jesus and keep us from really hearing what He has to say. Today, we are being called to lay aside all and simply come.

Have A Great Day!

John 3:2-3 - Lesson #23

In our last lesson we were introduced to "a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews" (John 3:1). We considered Nicodemus as a Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews, and a man in search of truth.

John 3:2-3

"This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, 'Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'"

Nicodemus came to Jesus as a man desiring truth. However, he came as a man who believed he had found truth in an overly strict system of rules. He also came as a ruler - a member of the Sanhedrin, the supreme enforcers of the Law of God. And as an enforcer, or protector, of this Law, it was his duty to examine anyone who claimed to be a prophet.

Why did Nicodemus come to Jesus at night? In his role as examiner, Nicodemus needed to see Jesus when He was available, and also when Jesus was most likely to be "caught" with His guard down. Nighttime would give Nicodemus the best opportunity to see who Jesus really was. This evaluation practice of meeting people when they are emotionally and physically tired is still in use all over the world today.

The fact that Nicodemus used words which were polite and respectful cannot be inferred to mean he actually believed the words he was saying. This again would be consistent with someone on an evaluation mission. He reveals his motives when he says "no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." The signs of Jesus pointed to Him being sent from God, but signs can never be the sole basis for judging a prophet - and Nicodemus knew this very well.

"If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods' - which you have not known - 'and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God is testing you" (Deuteronomy 13:1-3).

Nicodemus knew that signs were not the only criteria; but with the right conditions and a little flattery, perhaps he could uncover the truth about Jesus. And, not surprisingly, Jesus saw right through Nicodemus' mask and into the true intentions of his heart. Jesus graciously received Nicodemus; but rather than even acknowledge his false flattery, Jesus responded with truth about being born again and the kingdom of God.

False prophets abound today. But any who claim to be from God must always stand the test of the Word of God. If someone is speaking a message contrary to the Word of God, they are not from God - it's that simple! This testing is commanded by God's Word and we are even called to put Jesus to the test. When we do, He will welcome us in, pierce our heart, reveal Himself as truth, and lead us into the kingdom of God.

Have A Great Day!

John 3:4-6 - Lesson #24

In our last lesson we began examining one of the most important discussions in all the Bible. In this discussion, Jesus explains to Nicodemus essentials about the kingdom of God; "Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

This statement came as quite a shock to Nicodemus, but not because this was a new concept. When someone came to Judaism from another religion they were said to be reborn. There was even the idea that life was completely new the moment someone became a Jew. What must have been a great surprise was that Jesus would suggest that he - Nicodemus, "a ruler of the Jews" - would need to change from what he was, be made new, before he could see the kingdom of God. How boldly absurd!

John 3:4-6

"Nicodemus said to Him, 'How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.'"

Nicodemus was one of the most highly educated people in all of Israel. He knew what Jesus was implying, but he needed clarification about His message. Was Jesus from God or just another false prophet?

As Jesus patiently continued with Nicodemus, He directly linked being "born again" with being "born of water and the Spirit." This is not a first birth through water plus a new birth through the Spirit. Rather, Jesus uses water and Spirit together to define the new birth - the birth where we are born again.

Perhaps at this point Nicodemus began to understand. Perhaps he recalled the words of Ezekiel which spoke of God's future promises: "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you" (Ezekiel 36:25-26). Was this the new birth which would allow him to see the kingdom of God? Was Jesus speaking about the cleansing and Spirit given by God?

To make Himself even more clear, Jesus says the birth of flesh can only yield flesh. No matter how hard we try - with all our strength and good deeds, all our attempts to follow rules - we can still be nothing more than flesh. We must experience the Spiritual birth from God before we can see His kingdom. Through this birth God will wash us clean by the forgiveness of sin and give us His Spirit to guide and strengthen us in all truth.

Jesus has not yet told Nicodemus how this new birth takes place, He has only revealed his need. And this is where we must also begin. Seeing His kingdom is not a matter of cleaning up who we are, it's a matter of being made completely new - a matter of being born again.

Have A Great Day!

John 3:7-8 - Lesson #25

In the last few lessons we've looked at the initial discussion between Jesus and Nicodemus - a leader of the Jews, a teacher and devout follower of Jewish law. Jesus told Nicodemus that if he wanted to enter the kingdom of God he could not remain as he was - he must be "born again." Jesus continued by explaining this new birth, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6).

Peter writes about being born again as being born "not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever" (1 Peter 1:23). Peter then quotes from Isaiah 40 in explaining why this incorruptible new birth is necessary: "because 'All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls away'" (1 Peter 1:24). All the wonderful things we do can perhaps make the field look pretty for a season, but in the end it all withers and falls away.

John 3:7-8

"Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Nicodemus had a difficult time understanding that someone in his position - with all the "correct" things he had done - could not enter the kingdom of Heaven. Paul said, "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17). A Christian cannot be made with human hands nor legislated by human degrees. A Christian is only one who is born of the Spirit as a new creation. The failure to understand these few passages has been a plague on the Church for nearly two thousand years.

At the beginning of the fourth century, the Emperor Diocletian sponsored some of the worst persecutions of Christians of all time. A few years later Constantine became Emperor and professed faith in Christ. In 324 he made Christianity a legal and favored religion. What began was the disastrous merger of church and state. By 380 the Emperor Theodosius made belief in Christ an imperial command - everyone must believe.

Throughout Church history, whole nations have been "declared" Christian on the way to Heaven, while other nations declared non-Christian on the way to hell. Empires have gone to war in an effort to "make" Christians, "Become a Christian or die!" Then during the Reformation of the 1500's professing Christians put other professing Christians to death because of their definition of Christianity. Our history is very sad!

Jesus said very simply, you must be born again - a Spiritual birth by the work of the Spirit. He then says we will never fully understand how this process works, and we can certainly never recreate the process with our own effort. We may see the effect of a Spiritual birth, but, just as we cannot tell where the wind comes from or where it goes, we will never be able to fully understand the Spiritual birth. We cannot control the wind nor the working of the Spirit; and yet, we CAN believe, receive, and be eternally thankful!

Have A Great Day!

John 3:9-13 - Lesson #26

Jesus had just told Nicodemus the requirement to enter heaven, "unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). He also said this new birth was not earned through works of the flesh but given as a work of the Spirit, "That which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). No matter how hard we try, works of the flesh yield flesh - new birth MUST be of the Spirit.

John 3:9-13

"Nicodemus answered and said to Him, 'How can these things be?' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.'"

Nicodemus had dedicated his entire life to working his way into heaven through the observance of laws and good deeds. This Spiritual birth would require a new system of authority - one he was not yet ready to receive or even understand. And yet, Jesus said that as a Jewish teacher he should have known - known from the very scriptures from which he taught.

The prophets often spoke about the need for a new heart; "Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit" (Ezekiel 18:31). Nicodemus should have known about the promised new covenant gift from God, "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Jeremiah 31:33).

We must never assume that one who teaches is also one who knows; truths processed within our head are simply facts, but truths received in our heart lead to eternal life. Nicodemus was exposed to truth, but he failed to believe and understand, he failed to "know these things" (at least not at this time).

The "We" of which Jesus spoke may have included the prophets, John the Baptist, or the Father and the Spirit; but, whoever this group included, they proclaimed the truth based on what was seen. And until the basic truth of the need for a new birth is received, further truths will never be understood. Receiving by faith always proceeds true understanding, "By faith we understand..." (Hebrews 11:3).

Jesus then began to tell Nicodemus the most profound truth of all; the truth that He was the Son of God who came to die so others could live. And the only one capable of knowing and proclaiming this truth was the One who had indeed come from Heaven. He's still proclaiming this same message today. Let's receive His message by faith deep within our heart and begin to know the absolute reality of His loving truth!

Have A Great Day!

John 3:14-15 - Lesson #27

After telling Nicodemus that the kingdom of God can only be entered by those who are "born again" by a work of the Spirit and not through any work of the flesh, Jesus begins to explain that belief - belief in Him - is the means through which the Spirit works.

John 3:14-15

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."

This is a reference to the Israelites wandering in the desert after being led out of Egypt by Moses and after refusing to enter into the promised land of Canaan. Not surprisingly, life in the desert was difficult. And also not surprisingly, the people began to complain; "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread" (Numbers 21:5).

In response to this complaint, which was really a complete rejection of trust in God; "the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died" (Numbers 21:6). The people recognized their sin and cried out to Moses so he would ask God to take away the serpents: "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.' So Moses made a bronze serpent, put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived" (Numbers 21:8-9).

Jesus was telling Nicodemus that in the same manner in which people were saved from death by looking at the bronze serpent, they could now be saved by believing in Him when He is lifted up.

Consider the credibility which Jesus gave to what we now call the Old Testament. The Scriptures, which were already honored by the Jews, were validated by Jesus as the inspired Word of God. The story in Numbers 21 to which Jesus referred was a historical event recorded by Moses. But the details of the story were determined by God for the purpose of teaching far-reaching truths leading to Salvation through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus for the forgiveness of sin.

God could have used many different methods to save His people from the death inflicted by the serpent's bite, but He chose a method void of all human effort. They were not told to fight the serpents, apply healing ointments, or to perform any other ritualistic acts. The people simply needed to recognize they had been bitten and in need of healing. They then needed to believe in God's plan for salvation from death.

This truth communicated over 3000 years ago is the same truth for people throughout the world today. We have been bit by sin, and are in grave need of healing. When we recognize this need and believe in God's plan through the One who has been lifted up, we will be healed and given the gift of eternal life.

Have A Great Day!

John 3:16 - Lesson #28

In our continuing study of the gospel of John we now come to the central passage of Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus - perhaps the central passage of the entire Bible. More material has been written, more sermons preached, and more people have memorized this verse than any other. It has been called the "life verse" for everyone...and for good reason!

John 3:16

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Let's remember that Jesus is talking with Nicodemus where the topic has been how one can enter the kingdom of God. We have seen Nicodemus, who has placed all his trust in a religious system and a set of rules, hear Jesus say that he must be completely changed, "You must be born again" (John 3:7). Jesus said that the kingdom of God is not obtained through works of the flesh but as a transforming work of the Spirit.

Jesus confirmed this message by pointing Nicodemus back to the Scriptures which showed this method of grace and faith has always been the way of God. When Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness (Numbers 21) the people of Israel lived when they looked at the serpent because they believed God. They knew they were dying, knew they were without hope, knew God was the only way. And God, in a very gracious act of love, provided a way - but He provided only ONE way!

Jesus said, "even so {or, in this same manner}, must the Son of Man be lifted up" (John 3:14). Notice He said "must." Why? Because this was God's gracious act of love - the ONLY way!! There would be no other way provided, no other hope. Man was lost and dying in sin, and even the religious system was working for what could never be earned. And yet, God's love prevailed, "But God demonstrated His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

The world is full of many difficult situations; from disease and poverty to natural disaster and relational torment. In each of these it's natural to cry out and wonder where is God. Where is His love? Pain in this world is very real. Confusion, anguish, despair - all very real emotions which require our sincere compassion. But somehow, through a process and timing determined by the Spirit of God, the answer will be found back at the cross. For only there do we really understand His love, "because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)" (Ephesians 2:4-5).

God loved us so much that He gave and He gave and He gave: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). And He continues to give today so that whoever believes may have the wonderful gift of everlasting life.

Have A Great Day!

John 3:17-21 - Lesson #29

We now come to the end of perhaps the best gospel presentation in all the Bible. Jesus has explained to Nicodemus that eternal life is only for those who are "born again" by a work of the Spirit through faith in God's "only begotten Son" (John 3:16). He continues by explaining why His coming was essential.

John 3:17-21

"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

The first point we ought to see is that the entire message of Jesus is one of love, "For God so loved the world that He gave..." The life of Christ, and even more His death, were God's gift of love. He reached down "while we were still sinners" (Romans 5:8) and gave us the gift of His Son. This is a message of love completely void of judgment or condemnation.

Many people talk about this first point and use it as a reason to not speak of sin or judgment: Even Jesus didn't come to condemn the world so how can we talk about condemnation, isn't that being judgmental? My answer is that it is never a judgment to speak the absolute unquestionable truth. I don't have the understanding nor the authority to pass judgment on anyone, but I can state with conviction this absolute truth: The judgment has already been given, all who are without Christ are already condemned!

This then is the second point we must understand. Christ came to save because we have ALL sinned and are ALL condemned. We often say things like: We stand at a crossroad, one path leading to life with Christ and the other path leading to sin and death - choose the path of Christ. The problem with this statement is that it allows for a third option: I'll choose neither path and just stay where I am, a basically good person.

This person believes that eternity will be judged on a balance of good and bad. But the truth is that without Christ, no matter how good we may be, we stand in a position of condemnation. The verdict is already in and we have been found guilty. Our only hope is for a complete and total pardon from the sentence of death. And that pardon is the gift of love and grace and salvation through faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of sin. Let's receive His full pardon, today! Then, let's speak the complete and true gospel message, God loved the world so much that He sent the light of Jesus to save....because the world without Him is in darkness and condemned. Let's clearly call others to step out of darkness and death and into light and eternal life.

Have A Great Day!

John 3:22-26 - Lesson #30

Our last lesson concluded the discussion between Jesus and Nicodemus, "a ruler of the Jews" (John 3:1). We saw Jesus present the gospel of salvation through faith in His sacrifice on the cross. He presented an absolute need, "You MUST be born again" (John 3:7), and He presented only one way to fill this need, "even so MUST the Son of Man be lifted up" (John 3:14). But the discussion suddenly ends with no information about how Nicodemus responded to the message. And perhaps that's an important point.

Jesus presented the truth. There was no emotional appeal to make a decision, say a prayer, or sign a form - Jesus simply presented the absolute truth and continued His ministry.

John 3:22-26

"After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized. Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized. For John had not yet been thrown into prison. Then there arose a dispute between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purification. And they came to John and said to him, 'Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified - behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!'"

Jesus travelled east from Jerusalem to the Jordan River and continued teaching and baptizing, "though Jesus Himself did not baptize but His disciples" (John 4:2). This portion of Jesus' ministry was similar to the ministry of John the Baptist. And since Jesus was attracting people in an area close to John and his followers, a concern arose from some of John's disciples, "He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him."

Notice the concern doesn't come from John but from those close to him. John will demonstrate his understanding of true Godly service, but those closest to him do not share this same understanding. This also happened to Moses when others in the camp were prophesying and Joshua said, "Moses, my lord, forbid them!" (Numbers 11:28). John's disciples, as with Joshua, felt threatened that someone else was doing the work they believed was reserved for the one they followed. If someone else could do the work, the status of their leader might begin to fade - which could reduce their own position, their own value and self worth.

John's response will teach us what it means to serve with humility - that quality which is easy to teach, enjoyable to hear, but nearly impossible to live. But let's first consider how this might apply today. As a ministry leader, how do we respond when another ministry moves in just down the road? How do we respond if the popularity of our ministry leader begins to fade? How about when someone demonstrates they can do our area of service more effectively? It could be a painful lesson, but it's essential we learn the proper response of our heart. We must live and serve such that, regardless of how others may protest, we can truly say: In ALL things, to God be the glory!

Have A Great Day!

John 3:27-30 - Lesson #31

We continue with our study of the gospel of John. In our last lesson, we saw the disciples of John the Baptist express their concern that people were now coming to Jesus to be baptized. It's possible his disciples were feeling threatened, perceiving a reduced significance caused by this new minister named Jesus.

John 3:27-30

"John answered and said, 'A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, "I am not the Christ," but, "I have been sent before Him." He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.'"

Notice John's leadership in this situation. His disciples were greatly mistaken. They had just revealed issues of pride, insecurity, loss of focus, and a general misunderstanding of ministry. But rather than beat them down for their lack of understanding, John used this opportunity to build them up with some wonderful truths.

John begins with a general truth which can be applied to all areas of life: ALL we have is by the grace of God. This means all our abilities as well as our perceived lack; it means the grandness of our ministry as well as our apparent insignificance. We are given our ability, our task, and our position by God. And using what He gives to glorify His name makes whatever we do very grand indeed! Jesus would teach this same lesson later in His ministry; "without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

This is something we need to be reminded of over and over again - I speak from experience! "And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?" (1 Corinthians 4:7). The moment we begin to think we have accomplished anything in our own strength, watch out!

John reminds his disciples that from the very beginning he has been saying he was simply the voice crying, "Make straight the way of the Lord" (John 1:23). John always knew his role was to prepare the way for Christ. Just as the friend of the bridegroom makes the wedding plans and brings the bride and groom together, so John was sent to bring together Christ and the children of Israel. Once this is accomplished, the friend of the bridegroom is content to decrease and allow the bridegroom to increase.

How foolish when we think we are more than we really are - and how foolish when we think we are less. We are who we are, for the purpose of glorifying God by bringing others to His Son. Let's diligently give Him our all, using all He has provided in every opportunity He makes available. Let's glorify Him by keeping Jesus as our only focus and continually lift Him higher and higher!

Have A Great Day!

John 3:31-35 - Lesson #32

In our last lesson we saw John the Baptist respond to his disciples when they questioned him about people coming to Jesus to be baptized. The focus of John's reply was that "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). The passage which follows may be the continued words of John the Baptist, or it may be words written by John the Apostle as a way of further explanation. In early Greek writing there are no quotation marks so we really can't be sure; but we CAN be sure that these are the inspired words of God with a purpose of giving credible and superior authority to the witness of Jesus.

John 3:31-35

"He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true. For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand."

The first reason why the witness of Christ is superior is that He comes from heaven. All other witnesses - from the prophets to John the Baptist - came from the earth. And though they spoke the words of God, their understanding was in terms of the world and their testimony was flawed by a body of sin. But Jesus came directly from heaven, without sin, and spoke as one with first hand knowledge - an eye-witness of the truth. In ANY court, this testimony is to be preferred. And yet, no one believed Him.

We strive to interpret the Bible in what is called the normal literal sense - literal as understood by the original audience in a normal reading. In this sense, the phrase "no one received" doesn't actually mean "no one." Rather, it is used to signify a relatively small number as compared to those who should have received His testimony. But when anyone does receive, they understand the truth of God and approve His message.

The second reason why His witness is superior is that Jesus was given full authority. Other witnesses received only what was necessary to accomplish God's purpose, but Jesus received ALL - not a measured amount; "For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9). Jesus is the complete declaration of God on earth (John 1:18). And full declaration required full gifting. He was given the fullness of the Spirit as well as all else; "All things have been delivered to Me by My Father" (Luke 10:22).

The entire gospel of John was written so we "may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (John 20:31). And this message is presented with great clarity in this third chapter. Jesus Christ is the true gospel message - He came from God, speaking the word of God, with the full authority of God. The power of His witness is greater than ALL. Let's be ones who receive His word without reservation. Let's submit to the authority of His truth and believe.

Have A Great Day!

John 3:36 - Lesson #33

We now come to the end of the third chapter. At the beginning, Jesus talked to Nicodemus about eternal life; "unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Jesus said being born again was a Spiritual birth given to "whoever believes in Him" (John 3:16). We saw how Christ is to be lifted up; "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30), and how the testimony of Christ is above all; "For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God" (John 3:34). It's fitting we leave this chapter with one last look at the absolute seriousness of the gospel message.

John 3:36

"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

We've seen this language earlier in the chapter: "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already" (John 3:18). And John used similar words when writing his letter; "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life" (1 John 5:12). Though these words are consistent and clear in meaning, I doubt we give much thought to what they truly imply.

The first part of the verse represents the positive side of the gospel, truly the good news. Jesus Christ came to die for the forgiveness of sin. Those who believe in Him have eternal life. Notice we have eternal life at the moment of belief, not at a future time, or after performing certain tasks, but right now!

But there is another side. Not really part of the gospel, more like the necessary reason for the gospel. For why did Christ have to die? Because the sin we all inherited from Adam put us in a state of condemnation with no hope of life. Without Jesus, there is no good news - none!

Many seem to think Jesus is for those who need extra help, for those who can't quite do it on their own. The strong and self-assured don't really need Jesus. Or maybe Jesus is for those who want to add Him to their bag of blessings. And if I'm content with my life, maybe Jesus is a blessing I can do without.

I pray we can see these views as perversions of what is clearly stated in Scripture. The truth is that without Christ we are condemned, right now. The message is not: Believe or you will be condemned. The true message is: You are condemned, so believe. The wrath of God is His utter hatred of sin. Without eternal life through belief in Jesus, God's wrath abides or remains on us because sin also remains.

There is no middle ground. There is no option for trying your best, no grace granted for being cleaner than most. Either we believe, and live forever; or we refuse to believe, and remain dead - forever! The choice is clear, choose life. Believe He died as a sacrifice for our sin and live forever. Receive His forgiveness, be born again, and live!

Have A Great Day!