

## WE HAVE SEEN HIS GLORY

### The Glory of Christ in the Judgement of the World

#### INTRODUCTION

One of the things that John emphasizes is that ***Jesus came into a world to save justly condemned people***. This emphasis is important because it changes how we view the world we live in. Let me explain. There is a worldview, a world religion, a spirituality of this world that in the main says things like this:

- #1. Everybody is good, it's just that some people are 'gooder' than others.
- #2. In the words of an actual person: What we desire is "to be selfless and kind to each other; to see the good in one another and to be our best selves."
- #3. Certainly, they believe that if there's a god, this god knows if "you've been naughty or nice".
- #4. If there's a god, this god is totally loving and totally empty of any anger, wrath or justice.
- #5. Everyone believes that we are all going to die; and if there is life after death and if there is a god, it's all good because he/she/it is all good. Everybody goes, "to a better place".
- #6. If there is no god it doesn't matter anyway, you just cease to exist.

All of this contradicts holy Scripture. The fact is that no one is good. There isn't even a spark of good in anyone; and no one will be judged based on naughty or nice for everyone is born naughty and judged now, condemned now, perishing now. So, when John writes, "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world"<sup>1</sup>, it's not that there is no condemnation ("*For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son,*" (John 5:22, ESV), it is because the world is already condemned and is need of being saved.

#### TEXT

The text this morning is from John 3:17-21. Let us read it.

#### OUTLINE

You will notice that verse 17 starts with the conjunction "for" ("*For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.*" (John 3:17, ESV)). In verse 16 I taught that the "for" ("*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*" (John 3:16, ESV)), provided the reason why Jesus left the glories of Heaven and came to earth to die (to be lifted up)<sup>2</sup>. The word "for" in verse 17 does the same thing, except John is phrasing it in the negative. For example we could say:

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<sup>1</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#). (2016). (Jn 3:17). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>2</sup> "*No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.*" (John 3:13–15, ESV).

Why did Jesus come and die?

- a. Positively, because God so loved the world; and
- b. Negatively, not to condemn the world.

Verse 17 is just the mirror image of verse 16. God did not send His Son to condemn, but to save – and John repeats -- in order to save the world through His Son. (There's that one and only option again). There is only one salvation and that is through His Son.

Now John gives a commentary on this aspect of the Gospel. I see 3 points:

- #1. Believe or not believe, that is the question (v18);
- #2. The Basis of Condemnation (v19); and
- #3. The Correctness of the Condemnation (v20-21).

### **#1. BELIEVE OR NOT BELIEVE, THAT IS THE QUESTION (v18)**

*“Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.”* (John 3:18, ESV)

This is not new doctrine to Elk Point Baptist Church. We preached on this in the last sermon of this series. The result of not believing in the name of the only Son of God is condemnation. The question we need to answer and be sure of as a Church is what does John mean by believing? Notice the phrase: “believed in the name of the only Son of God.”<sup>3</sup> The phrase “believe on the name” is unfortunate. That little preposition is better translated “into, in or toward”. The idea is that it is not just a mental understanding it includes such ideas as trust and commitment. John MacArthur comments that “It called for whole-hearted commitment of one’s life as Jesus’ disciple”<sup>4</sup> as described by Jesus in these words: *“Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me”* (Matthew 16:24, ESV).

So, we see that when a sinner’s heart is awakened by the Holy Spirit to see their plight of condemnation and He, the Holy Spirit, presents Christ in all His glory in the Gospel, He, the Holy Spirit miraculously creates faith in the sinner enabling him or her to believe “into” the name of Jesus. The name of Jesus means “Saviour”. The sinner entrusts himself or herself into Christ’s saving power. Only that genuine saving faith will extract the sinner from the flames of condemnation and bring them into a state of eternal life.

### **#2. THE BASIS OF CONDEMNATION (v19)**

*“And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil”* (John 3:19, ESV).

<sup>3</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 3:18). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>4</sup> MacArthur, J., Jr. (Ed.). (1997). [The MacArthur Study Bible](#) (electronic ed., p. 1580). Nashville, TN: Word Pub.

God's verdict on humanity is not some super complicated system of justice. Any person who has any common sense can agree with John: people love to sin. You say, "How can you know if a person loves to sin?" Answer! Look at their behavior! Must we not agree with the writer to the Hebrews that there is a pleasure in sin?<sup>5</sup> The primary disposition of the unredeemed world is to sin. Why? Because it is enjoyable. It's fun. We take great pleasure in it. It makes us feel good.

When Eve sinned, she had a good reason. *"So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate."* (Genesis 3:6, ESV)

People sin, not because there is "light" not to sin, but because they love sin. Information or education cannot inhibit people from sinning. We sin because we like to. This is not an isolated truth in the Bible. Let me read a few other passages:

- Psalm 4:2 (ESV), <sup>2</sup> O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame? How long will you love vain words and seek after lies? *Selah*
- Psalm 11:5 (ESV), <sup>5</sup> The LORD tests the righteous, but his soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence.
- Psalm 52:3-4 (ESV), <sup>3</sup> You love evil more than good, and lying more than speaking what is right. *Selah* <sup>4</sup> You love all words that devour, O deceitful tongue.
- Proverbs 1:22 (ESV), <sup>22</sup> "How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple? How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing and fools hate knowledge?"
- Isaiah 66:3b (ESV), <sup>3</sup> ". . . These have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations.
- Micah 3:1-2 (ESV) <sup>1</sup> And I said: Hear, you heads of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel! Is it not for you to know justice?— <sup>2</sup> you who hate the good and love the evil, who tear the skin from off my people and their flesh from off their bones
- 1 John 2:15 (ESV), <sup>15</sup> Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.
- 2 Timothy 4:10 (ESV), <sup>10</sup> For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.

A.W. Pink is profoundly correct on this:

"God saves us from the pleasure or love of sin before He delivers us from the penalty or punishment of sin." Pink goes on to show that God would neither be holy or fair if He were to totally forgive our sin but leave us in a state of rebellion to Him; leave us loving what He hates. God is a God of order and orderliness. So the question is "How does God save His people from the pleasure of sin?" The answer is "By giving them a new nature; a nature that hates sin and loves holiness."

I'm sure it is a great offense to someone to be told that their problem is not so much that they "do" sin, but they "love" sin. Our only hope is to have our affections changed by the Holy Spirit. In order to

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<sup>5</sup> *"choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin."* (Hebrews 11:25, ESV)

overcome our love of sin, we must be granted a love that is superior, more valuable and greater – a love for the Lord Jesus Christ – a love for righteousness – a love for holiness.

**#3. THE CORRECTNESS OF THE CONDEMNATION (v20-21)**

*“For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”* (John 3:20–21, ESV)

Verses 20-21 do not discuss how to become a Christian, nor do they explain how to be saved. Here’s John’s reality check. Here John seeks to show that God’s verdict is correct. He is right! He contrasts two groups of people: the wicked and the righteous – the unbeliever and the believer. The reason the world is already condemned is because when God looks at the world he sees multitudes who hate righteousness and love evil. God is justified to justify His redeemed people because he sees men and women loving holiness and living the truth.

THE CHARACTER OF THE NONCHRISTIAN	THE CHARACTER OF THE CHRISTIAN
They hate God’s holiness and righteousness. They refuse to let His judgment judge their lives because they fear being exposed and shamed.	They love God’s view of their lives. They love “doing” the truth. They love acting faithfully before God. And they love exposing the reality that all their good works are really God working in them.

The late Grant Osborne writes about Christians, “They become witnesses to the supreme value of doing the will of God. Others can see in them that the God-centered life is the only one worth living.”<sup>6</sup>

**APPLICATION**

John is very concerned that we define “belief” correctly. He is very concerned that people aren’t deceived. He is very concerned that you and I know whether we are truly believers. Grant Osborne has correctly understood John when he affirms: a genuine believer into the Lord Jesus Christ is a person that is so transformed by the Holy Spirit they become testimonies to the supreme value of doing the will of God through the power of God.

Have you ever seen the little plaque that reads, *“Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last?”* The rest of the poem reads: *“Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last. And when I am dying, how happy I'll be, if the lamp of my life has been burned out for Thee.”*

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<sup>6</sup> Osborne, G. R. (2018). [John: Verse by Verse](#). (J. Reimer, E. Ritzema, D. Thevenaz, & R. Brant, Eds.) (p. 87). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

May the ambition of Paul be ours: *“as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death”* (Philippians 1:20, ESV).