

Jesus is the Light of the World

John 3:1-21

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 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 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. 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 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? 11 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. 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. 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. 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."

That's from the book of John, Chapter 3, verses 1-21. We usually hear and quote John 3:16 and sometimes add 17. "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. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." Just like with all passages of Scriptures in the Bible we have to look at it in context of what the whole text

reveals, what is being said overall in the message not in just the lone verse that we try to extrapolate to say what we want it to say.

In a summary of what Jesus is saying in His dialogue with Nicodemus, who was a ruler of the Jews and as Jesus said, "a Teacher of Israel" and therefore should have had enough understanding of the Torah, the Jewish law, to know what Jesus was saying. Jesus had more than 1 point that He was making. He told Nicodemus, "unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." He elaborated that one must be born-again. Jesus was telling Nicodemus that He was the Messiah, the Savior of mankind that the Jews were waiting for but he was not seeing that. Then Jesus said, "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. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." That is sometimes where the preaching stops. Believe on Jesus and you will be saved. **Believe what and be saved from what?** That is most important for us to ask because many people have heard the message that Jesus died on the cross for their sins and they go away from that saying, "awesome, I'm good, I'll join the people that say I believe so that I can have eternal life." Believing on Jesus and being saved from our sins. It seems to answer the questions of believing on what and being saved from what but yet the whole picture is left out of their hearts and minds. How is that? The dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus didn't end there so the presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ shouldn't end there either. Yes Jesus says to believe on Him and you will be saved. The next thing that Jesus says though, to further elaborate on what He had already said, 1. that one must be born-again, 2. that if one believes on Jesus, the Son of God they will be saved and have eternal life. But then He continues, "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." That alone certainly supports what Jesus previously said, to "believe in Jesus." Those who don't believe are already marked as condemned and He says that those who believe are not condemned. Very well then, believe on Jesus and you won't be condemned. Let's ask the questions again. Believe what and be saved from what? That's where reading Scriptures in context is imperative. What exactly are we believing in and being saved from? "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." Prior to that part of what Jesus was saying, Jesus said that you are not condemned for believing on the light (that's Jesus). But now He is saying that those who practice evil and love doing their evil deeds are the ones who really aren't coming to the light, those are the ones who are not

going to be saved, those are the ones who will not inherit eternal life. Tying that to the beginning of their dialogue Jesus said that it is those who are born-again, born of the Spirit.

When Jesus said, "He who believes in Him is not condemned", an example of that could be compared to someone being told that if they read a treasure map that they will become rich. It may very well be that the treasure map has the directions and location of the treasure but just believing that the treasure map will make you rich without doing anything else is a bit short-sighted. You would of course have to follow the map to where the treasure is and then make the effort to obtain the treasure. You could say what Jesus was saying, in regards to our analogy of the treasure, that only those who want to find the treasure can be rich. That means, those who don't want to be poor anymore can be rich in following the treasure map. Those who want to be poor are already doomed to be poor for they didn't want to be rich. So with what Jesus was really saying in all that is, those who don't want to practice evil anymore, those who don't want to be in darkness anymore, those who want to follow after truth (that's Jesus) will come to Him, believing on Him to save them from their sins, and He will give them a new-birth in the Spirit (in Christ) so that they can have eternal life in Christ.

Another analogy that can be made, and that is, of the choices that are presented to us in Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus. There's a show on tv. called Let's Make a Deal. At the grand finale of the show, contestants who had won something during the show can trade it in to participate in the Big Deal. It would generally be where they choose between three curtains to which the curtains are pulled back to reveal the prizes they won. For our illustration we'll call the show "This is Your Life" and the gist of the show finale is to decide between one of three curtains to choose how your life plays out. Let's first suppose that the host would say that what they see and hear coming from in front of and behind the curtains are hints at what is behind the curtain, which is their eternal destiny. In front of the curtains is their life for the present. Now suppose that the first curtain was full of fiery flames, but in front of that curtain is a group of people drinking, hooting and hollering like they're having the time of their lives yet screams of torment and agony came from behind that curtain. You wouldn't think that they would choose that curtain would you? Then in front of the next curtain is a group of shady-looking lawyers all arguing with each other about why they should be believed while each of the lawyers is trying to convince the contestant to join them and they should pick that curtain. Yet behind that curtain were once again screams of horror and shrieks of terror. Raging flames can be seen rising up from behind the curtain as well. Finally the third curtain is glowing with a beautiful light and there's a paved walkway of gold leading up to it and from behind the curtain you can hear laughter, shouts of joy, and the most

beautiful music you have ever heard. In front of the curtain are people who are genuinely acting in love with one another, there is a calm peace about them and a real joy of anticipation within them. Some are chatting, some are encouraging one another, some are sitting alone and reading a book, and some are praying. All the while those in front of the last curtain, is calling to the ones in front of the other curtains, seemingly begging them to join them. If those were the curtains one had to choose from for where they would spend eternity, which one do you think they would pick? What if God Himself was in front of that curtain telling them to pick that one, don't listen to the others. Would that make a difference?

Well, He is! Jesus said, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (**Matthew 11:28**) In **Revelation 3:20** Jesus says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me." Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (**John 14:6**) He is the Way to eternal life. Whoever believes in Jesus will have everlasting life. Jesus also said, "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." God wants us to believe in Jesus Christ His Son and for us to know Him and His Son, Jesus. Jesus also said, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." Jesus said, "I am the Good Shepherd", (**John 10:11**) "and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice." (**John 10:4**)

Jesus, the Son of God was sent by the Father, God Almighty, to die on a cross for our sins to give eternal life to all who will believe. Believe what? That Jesus died for our sins so that we CAN then know God and His Son Jesus and to have fellowship, a relationship with Him. That Jesus is the light of the world, that He is saying to all who will believe on Christ, "you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who **called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.**" And to believe on Jesus when He said, "**I am the bread of life.** He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst." (**John 6:35**) He's talking spiritually.

Believing on Jesus is also believing that He alone is Righteous and only God alone, through His Son Jesus could pay the penalty of our sin that would lead to death. The Israelites rejected Jesus because they were stuck in thinking that the following of the law would save them. As Romans 9:31-32 points out that the Jews could not attain righteousness from the law only by faith in the Giver of the Law, the One who would be the Deliverer from the law. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin

and death." (Romans 8:2) Only Jesus could fulfill the requirements of the law leading to eternal life.

Jesus is calling to each of us, pick me, pick me! That is where we cry back to Jesus, "Save me Lord Jesus!" As many as call on the name of the Lord will be saved. Jesus alone. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, He is the Light of the World, He is the Good Shepherd, He is the Bread of Life

I've read where people that had near death experiences say that when they died they went toward the light. Some who went toward the light ended up in hell while others who said they went toward the light ended up going to a nice place. I don't know what all that means but if you know Jesus, and Jesus knows you, He won't leave you hanging. He is the light of the world. There is no mistaking His light. He is the Way. No other Way leads to eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Psalm 33:18-22 says, "Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His mercy, to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine. Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield. For our heart shall rejoice in Him, Because we have trusted in His holy name. Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us, just as we hope in You." All that we are looking for is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Everything else will pass away. Jesus is standing before you at the curtain of eternal life and grace and peace and hope. He's calling you with full assurance that He has what you need. Jesus is calling, shining His light upon you, wanting to lift you out of the darkness into His marvelous light. Amen.