

Week 9

Jesus said

John 3:19 “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.

John 3:20 “For everyone who does evil hates the Light and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

These verses form the practical application of the previous verses, they tell us that those who do evil hate the light, Jesus is the Light of the World according to John 1:3. Hating the Light that exposes our sin, pride and disobedience to God is natural, no one enjoys having his evil deeds exposed however, and rejecting Christ is an evil deed. Anyone who rejects Christ shrinks from the light and is lost. But the Bible says, “as many as believe on Him will have eternal life”.

Is there anything holding you back from coming to the Light of the world for salvation? Today is the day to come to Jesus.

V21 He who practices truth, or does what is right
Comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested (shown) as having been wrought in God (doing what God wants)

V22 After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He was spending time with them and baptizing.

V23 John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there; and people were coming and were being baptized.

Now we have John’s commentary about Jesus’ and John the Baptist activities. We see that Jesus has left Jerusalem and is teaching and baptizing. Another group was also there baptizing, John the Baptist and his disciples. Also they were in Aenon near Salim because water was plentiful for baptizing. Of course, water is always a concern in Israel.

V25 Therefore there arose a discussion on the part of John's disciples with a Jew about purification.

Now we will study the record the last testimony of John the Baptist and there is important truth for us to consider.

V26 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".

John's disciples were clearly disturbed that more were going to Jesus than to them. They evidently forgot that their mission, lead by John, was to prepare the way for the Messiah, to point people to Jesus. And the unspoken truth was they needed to get out of the way. Now we will study the record the last testimony of John the Baptist and there is important truth for us to consider.

V27 John said "a man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven". John knew his place in the plan of God. If Jesus ministry was expanding and all the people were going to Jesus, then that must be God's plan. Aren't you amazed at his humility and obedience?

John was happy that people were going to Jesus even if it meant the loss of his own ministry, John did not have an ego problem. Numbers in his audience were not important, he kept his eyes on God's plan for him. He reminded his disciples that no one would be going to Jesus rather than him unless that was part of God's plan. You see, John knew he had a definite role and that it was finite, it would end. As God drew people to Jesus, John's ministry would be finished. The bible says God appoints each man's work.

V28 You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, "I am not the Christ, but I have been sent ahead of Him". This is exactly what he said earlier, John 1:20 and he is reminding them that this has been his mission all along and he has stated it before.

V29 He who had the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stand and hears Him, rejoices greatly because of

the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made full.(I am filled with joy about His success)

What is this all about?

John gave a metaphor to describe his relationship with Jesus. He said he is a friend of the Bridegroom, or like the "best man". He served the Groom and directed attention to Him. John enjoyed seeing Jesus honored, Jesus is the Bridegroom the church is the Bride of Christ.

V30 He must increase, I must decrease.

John the Baptist realized his work was destined to decrease and he accepted that as God's will for his life. Doesn't it just make sense that after John introduced Jesus at the beginning of His public ministry John's own prophesized ministry would decrease since he was to prepare the way?

V31 "He Who comes from above is above all, he who is of the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all."

John is stating Christ's superior position over himself. Jesus is the one who comes from above and we are those who must be "born from above" in order to see the kingdom of God. John, who Jesus called the "greatest man born among men" Matt 11:11 was a man of the earth. John then says Jesus is from heaven. The words "Came From above" emphasizes Jesus divine nature, "from heaven" shows preexistence just as we studied in John 1:1-18

V32 "What He has seen and heard, of that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony".

John is constantly reminding us that Jesus has a message to us from God the Father that He brought from heaven. In other words, when Jesus talked about heavenly things, as we discussed last week, He was telling us truth from His own personal experience. Just think of this great condemnation, they heard Jesus Himself, sent from heaven with a message from God and rejected Him.

Are you rejecting Jesus and His message? Maybe you don't like to hear that "you must be born again".

Never forget that these are Jesus words, His command, He said you **MUST** be born again. This is a message to you from heaven. You cannot have eternal life any other way, no matter what anyone else says. It may not be popular but it is truth.

V33 "He who has received His testimony has set his seal to this, that God is true". (God cannot lie)

Here is the contrast, some heard Jesus and did believe in Him. To confirm that those who believed had "set their seal" to this that God is true. They stated and were willing to be identified with this as truth from heaven. In those days a person would put his personal mark on a piece of wax to seal a document and that would identify it as his personal belonging. It said "this is what I believe", it is like a signature.

Someone has said the gospel is our personal invitation to stake our lives on Christ and His truth. Will you set your seal on Jesus? Have you staked your eternal existence on Him or are you doing it your own way?

V34 "For He Whom God has sent speaks the Word of God; for He gives the Spirit without measure".

John is authenticating His previous statement God did give the Holy Spirit in infinite amount to Jesus for His work here on earth.

V35 "The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand". In other words, God gave Jesus authority over everything. By the end of His ministry Jesus stated in John 17 that He had accomplished everything the Father had sent Him to do. It never ceases to amaze me that Jesus was able to say "I only do what my Father says to do and I only say what He says to say". Total obedience.

In the next verse we see that the word believes is interchangeable with the word “obey”. I think that is a sobering thought. If you are not obeying God, you are stating your unbelief.

V36 “He who believes in the Son has eternal life’ but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him”. Here we see that the believer does not have to wait until death to find out if they have eternal life, how could God let anything that important be uncertain? Friend, if you have the Son, you have eternal life right now, it begins at the moment of spiritual rebirth. If you are born twice, you will die once. If you are born once you will die twice.

Friend does your way of life show that you expect to live forever? Notice the contrast; To disobey the Son, is to reject Him. To not see life means to not experience eternal life with God, not going to heaven. No, not everyone is going to heaven.

John has been telling us that Jesus is the true Son of God and Jesus is now giving you and me the most important choice we will ever make. We must decide today whether whom we will obey. God wants us to choose Him, and He has made eternal life possible for us.

God’s wrath is his judgment and final rejection of the sinner. If you put off the decision to follow Christ, you have decided against Him. Indecision is a fatal decision. Understand this, you are an eternal being. The second death described in the bible is eternal separation from God. You will live forever, the question is where? The price for your eternal life has already been paid and given to you as a free gift, why would anyone turn this down?

To quote JC Ryle

This last verse, verse 36, is very instructive to answer some errors in current thinking. His commentary on John was published in 1869 just proving things never change.

1. It condemns the notion that God is only love, mercy and compassion and nothing else. Here we learn the truth; God hates sin. There were people saying that in 1869 and there are people saying that now.

Friend, There is hell. God can be angry. Unrepentant sinners ought to be afraid.

2. We are told plainly that if a man does not believe on the Son of God, God's wrath abides on them. There is no justification until belief. There is no one especially elected or justified before they believe. There is no justification until there is faith.
3. It condemns the idea that Christ, by His death justified all mankind and that all men and women are justified though they do not know it and will all finally be saved. This sounds very nice, but is not what scripture plainly teaches.
4. It condemns the false love of some who say we should never talk about God's wrath or about hell. The last words of God's faithful servant John the Baptist declares the danger of unbelief. To warn of God's wrath and the danger of hell is love, not judgment.

Last but not least as we leave this chapter 3, please note that John the Baptist equates believing with obeying, I find that a sobering thought without obedience, there is no real belief. In other words, mental agreement without a change of heart, followed by a change of behavior, is not conversion.

How are you doing in your bible study? Friends if you expect to be taught by God, you must be obedient to God. Why should God teach you truth if you have no intention of responding to it, believing it, or obeying it? He does not give you His truth or His will for your consideration, He gives it with expectation you will apply it to your life. Have you learned anything today you need to apply to your life?

Light received brings more light. Light rejected brings darkness. If you have been disobedient to God's Word, you need to confess it and return to that point of obedience and say yes to God.

As you read and reread the bible, have an attitude of prayer and dependency on God, the Holy Spirit. It is His work to reveal to you the things that belong to God. The key is not human wisdom, education or cleverness, but it is giving the Holy Spirit the time and opportunity to teach you. Friends, gaining the illumination of the Holy Spirit takes time. He will not rush.

I pray that each and every one of you will begin to understand the importance of seeing the truth of the bible for yourself. This study is to get you started. I am telling you what God has revealed to me but friends, He has revelation for you too.

Get started today to seek Him for yourself. Get a quiet place and spend some time in His Word. I have found it is worth the sacrifice of a few minutes in bed in the morning. Reading the good news of God's word instead of all the bad news in the newspaper is an uplifting way to start the day. Since I made the decision 20+ years ago to seek Him early in the morning, I have never been sorry. Keeping a journal of your prayers, thoughts and bible verses is a blessing. To look back over time and see how you have experienced trials and then to see how God worked it all together for good builds faith.

I begin a new journal each year. Toward the end of the year I begin to ask God to give me some spiritual goals for the next year and I record those in my journal. I can look at those throughout the year and check myself out to see how I am doing. God will meet you whenever you will make time for an appointment with Him. Please make a commitment to begin today to seek His face. It will be life changing and the best decision you ever made. The ruler of the universe is waiting and He has a lot to tell you.