

JOHN

Lesson 4 w/Answers

John 3:11-36

All of us have seen hundreds of examples of public events where someone in the crowd holds up a sign with "JOHN 3:16" on it. Today let's look at that verse - only let's do it within the context it was written, meaning that we will look at all of the verses surrounding it and see if God reveals a deeper understanding of this critical passage in the Bible.

I'm also sure that all of you who study on-line with us have heard the expression "born again believer", or "are you born again?" or "you must be born again". This week we will look at what that means. It's a question going all the way back to Nicodemus and his meeting with Christ, and it is still relevant today for all who meet with Christ the first time: "What do you mean I must be born again? How is that even possible?"

Let's pick up our study where we finished last, with two questions about Nicodemus found in John 3:1-10; then we'll look at John 3:11-21.

1. Read John 3:1-10, the story of Nicodemus and his encounter with Christ. What does Jesus tell him about "seeing the kingdom of God"? What is the requirement?
 - a. ANSWER: "You must be born again." You must be born of the spirit if you want to see the kingdom of God. Why? Because "God is spirit and must be worshiped in spirit and in truth."
2. Does Nicodemus ever accept Jesus as his savior; and if we believe that he did, what would we base this on?
 - a. ANSWER: Most people believe that he did, based on two sets of verses also found in John. See John 7:50-52. In this passage, Nicodemus argues for a fair hearing for Christ. See also John 19:39. Here, Nicodemus comes to help provide a proper burial for Jesus.

Now read Chapter 3:11-21 and consider the following questions:

3. What is Jesus trying to explain to Nicodemus about Nicodemus' thinking and why he can't understand Jesus? (see John 3:11-13)
 - a. ANSWER: Jesus was trying show Nicodemus that his thoughts and reference points were all carnal, i.e., earthly. Nicodemus was trying to use man' logic and thinking within the material world to understand things that were spiritual, and concerned both the spiritual and physical. Christ could do this because he was from both, and he saw things in both contexts.
4. What on earth is the relevance between Moses lifting up a serpent in the wilderness with Jesus' statement that you must be born again? Why is Christ comparing the Son of Man with the serpent in the desert? (see John 3:14 - 15) (To answer this, you will need to read Numbers 21:7-9.)
 - a. ANSWER: Just as sin brought death to the Israelites in the desert, who would not lift their eyes up to God for help; so it is with mankind today. We need to lift up Jesus for all to see, and call on everyone to behold Jesus as the savior. Those who do look up and see Jesus will be saved. Those who continue to live in darkness and sin and will die eternally.
5. What is the name of God's only son referenced in John 3:16? This is important, because this verse tells us that whoever believes in him will not die but have everlasting life. I want to make sure that I'm putting my faith in the right person, so I had better know who he is. So who is he, and how do I know it for sure? (see John 20:30-31)
 - a. ANSWER: John leaves no doubt that it is Jesus who is the Messiah, the Christ whom God has sent to save us and to bring us into an eternal life with Him.

6. Did Christ come to condemn the world? If so; is this why mankind rejects him? (see John 3:17, plus 1 John 4:8-14)
 - a. ANSWER: This is an important point: Christ DID NOT come to condemn the world, and neither should we. He came to save the world, and spreading that Good News should be our primary mission and, our permanent goal in life.
7. Continuing from the above, why didn't Jesus come to condemn the world? It's a mess! Shouldn't Christ have condemned all of the injustice that he saw, all the sin, all the wicked ways of man? Shouldn't we as his ambassadors do the same? (see John 3:18 and 1 John 4:15-21)
 - a. ANSWER 1: First, Jesus did not come to condemn the world, because the world is condemned already.
 - b. ANSWER 2: Second, He is of God, as are we. This means that He and we should reflect God's love and mercy; just as God's love - his great grace - saved us, even though we were sinners. Similarly, we should love and show great mercy and grace to those who live and work around us. It's not our job to condemn; but it is our job to love and, with loving kindness, show the lost the Light that is Jesus.
8. What does John 3:18-21 tell us about the wicked? Have you ever experienced what Christ is talking about in these verses in your own life?
 - a. ANSWER: I'll let you answer this one for yourself. For me, I knew immediately that I had been way described in this passage myself, and I continue to be like this whenever I let sin enter my life. None of us wants the sin in our life to be revealed, to be let into the light; but thanks to God's infinite mercy, he forgives us our sin and lets Christ's light shine in and through us.
9. What great assurance in all of God's Holy Word do we, as Christians, have that the lost of the world do not have? What is it that gives us a hope and a peace that passes all understanding, even in our darkest hour? Read 1 John 5:1-5.
 - a. ANSWER: We have the assurance that, without a doubt, Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ and that through believing in him - no matter how bad we have sinned - we are saved and will spend an eternity with him. Death has no grip on us and no claim to our souls. Jesus is the Christ, and we are saved through Him. This is our eternal promise from God and our eternal hope in Him.
10. How can we be absolutely positive that what we believe is correct, and that our eternal destiny is assured through our faith in Christ? Read 1 John 5:13-14.
 - a. ANSWER: Because the Apostles, including John, have seen him, lived with him, worked with him, and saw him Resurrected for forty days before they saw him lifted into heaven. John's record of what they saw, heard, and experienced has been carefully written down "so that you may know you have eternal life and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God."

Christ is the hope of the world and the rock of our salvation. Knowing this beyond a shadow of doubt is the good news we are to proclaim to others. Christ did not come to condemn but to proclaim the good news: there is salvation; He has paid the price; you can be free from the death sentence that comes with sin. All you must do is confess that you're a sinner and believe on the name of Jesus as God's one and only Son, who came and died for your sins and lives today, resurrected from the grave and sitting at God's right hand.

Jesus is coming back, and what a day that will be! But for now, for this moment, we need to be about proclaiming the good news of his death and resurrection. Tell everyone you know that Jesus is the answer, Jesus is the Messiah, Jesus is the Christ that we so desperately need. Jesus is coming again!

Have a great week everyone, and thanks for studying with us.

Yours in Christ,

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