

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN | John 3:17-21

**17** "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. **18** 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. **19** 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. **20** For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. **21** 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 3:17-21 ESV**

### I. DID JESUS COME TO THE WORLD FOR JUDGEMENT?

**16** "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**

**18** 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**

There is an obvious parallel between John 3:16 and John 3:18. Both verses describe the results of believing and not believing. However, the difference is that the result of believing and not believing in verse 16 is described in terms of perishing and eternal life, but in verse 18 the result is described in terms of being condemned or not condemned. In other words, verse 18 shifts from the language of life and death to the language of guilt and innocence. In verse 18, Jesus begins using legal language - the language of judgment.

Understanding this use of legal language in light of verse 17 raises this question: If Jesus did not come to condemn the world, why are some condemned? The answer to this question is displayed clearly in verse 18. This verse clearly states that even though some are condemned, it is because they are "already" in that condition when Jesus came. This understanding is vital. We see the same point being made again later in verse 36.

**36** "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God **remains** on him." **John 3:36 ESV**

Christ did not come into a neutral world causing some to oppose him and others to join him. Not one person was neutral during Jesus' earthly ministry 2,000 years ago, and not one person is neutral even to this day. We have all sinned. Therefore, we all begin our lives under the just wrath of God. We all begin our lives as criminals who stand condemned. Whether or not we stay that way depends on how we respond to Jesus.

*"[Jesus] came not to make neutral people into pro-Jesus people, but to make guilty people non-guilty, condemned people not condemned, and to make dead people eternally alive. God does not owe anybody acquittal or life. That Jesus came to offer it, and that some accept it, is all undeserved grace."* -John Piper

### II. WHY DO MANY NOT BELIEVE?

In verses 19-21 Jesus clearly explains why some people choose to believe while others do not. Here we find a description of the type of judgment that actually does occur when light comes into the world. What we see is that those who are condemned by this judgment are condemned already by what they love and what they hate. Jesus is revealing to us that he fully understands the inner workings of unbelief. He knows exactly why some people choose not to come to him.

The reason why people choose to not believe in Jesus is because they are still in love with certain thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that are incompatible with the infinite beauty of God. This is what evil is. Evil is loving what God hates and hating what God loves.

*“When Jesus Christ, the light of the world, begins to shine on a person’s life, it will either break him and lead him to repentance, or it will drive him even further back into the darkness. It is simply intolerable when our sinful works and thoughts and feelings are forced out into the light of Christ. Sin is so ugly and so monstrous and so hideous that it must surround itself with darkness. It must live in illusion and deceit. It hates the light and loves the darkness and will not come to the light. This is the inner working of unbelief.” -John Piper*

**III. WHY DO SOME BELIEVE?**

Verse 21 is not meant to simply describe a single act of righteousness but the principle of ongoing action. We could say, “Whoever *goes on doing* what is true (acting in accordance with the light) will always come to the light and not run away from it. And the reason they will come to the light is in order to make it clear that this *ongoing behavior* (the doing of what is true) has never been their own work, but the work of God.”

**Unbelief is our fault, and belief is God’s gift.** If we do not come to Christ we will perish, and our eternal existence will simply serve to magnify God’s justice. However, if we do come to Christ we will receive eternal life, and our eternal existence will serve to magnify God’s grace.

True Christians come to the light with a profound sense of humility, understanding that every good thing they ever do is only possible because of God's grace. One of the surest signs of a true believer is that they have a deep love for anything and everything that causes God's free grace to be more clearly displayed.

**FIRST RESPONSE - COFFEE WITH THE PASTORS**

DAY/TIME	LEADERS	LOCATION	CONTACT INFO
The First Sunday of Every Month at 7PM	Joel Webbon Rony Renfrow Stacy Craft	3240 Lowell St San Diego, CA 92106	469-487-6298 joel@theresponsechurch.com

**MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES**

DAY/TIME	LEADERS	LOCATION	CONTACT INFO
Tuesday at 7PM	Joel & Megan Webbon	3240 Lowell St San Diego, CA 92106	469-487-6298 joel@theresponsechurch.com
Wednesday at 7PM	Jacob & Ally Merkey	3062 Malaga St. San Diego, CA 92110	713-385-6940 jacob@theresponsechurch.com
Thursday at 7PM	Rony & Danielle Renfrow	1676 Chatsworth Blvd San Diego, CA 92107	925-348-0128 rony@theresponsechurch.com
Thursday at 7PM	Stacy Craft	3328 Stern St. San Diego, CA 92106	704-778-2609 stacy@theresponsechurch.com