

## John 3:16-21 **The Conversation With Nicodemus Continued:**

### The Great Contrast:

- I. What John gives us in the continued conversation with Nicodemus cannot be missed!
  - A. The Big Picture:
    1. Ultimately, in the theological discourse between Nicodemus—attempting to exercise his “religious authority” over Jesus—is Jesus demonstrating His own authority as the Life giver in the darkness of man.
  - B. The Theological Balance:
    1. Nicodemus gets a handful of something, again, he did not assume or insinuate (v. 2).
    2. However, Jesus—utilizing His authority as God—communicates to Nicodemus (in v. 16-21) the love of God and the just condemnation of God for the darkness of humanity.
    3. There is balance here in the nature of God—God’s love does not supersede His just condemnation but His condemnation does not, equally, overcome His love.
    4. God exercises both, perfectly, and justly.
    5. Thus, there is need for clarified balance between the love of God and the just wrath of God (v. 36).

### Exegesis of John 3:16-21:

#### **I. The Love of God**

- A. Jesus as the Manifestation of God’s Love
  1. In His Offering Eternal Life (v. 16)
    - a) Jesus comes as the manifestation of the glory of God (1:14) and as the one whom humanity must look at for life (vv.14-15); this is because Jesus is *life* itself (1:4)
  2. In His Coming to the World (v.17)
    - a) Jesus comes as the Son of Man (v. 13)
      - (1) the significance of Jesus as the Son of Man is found in Daniel 7.
        - (a) It is interesting that we see the beginning of the balance of God’s nature seen through the person of Christ.
        - (b) That is, Daniel 7 tells us of the ultimate victory of the Son of Man and the people He will have for Himself with His unending kingdom.
        - (c) This is not as bright a picture John paints for us in John 3:16-18.
        - (d) Jesus as the Son of Man is the balance of the pure love displayed in John’s gospel.

- (e) While there is balance, emphasis is appropriate!
- (2) See below!
- 3. In His Light of Life (v. 19)
  - a) Jesus comes not merely to offer eternal life but life, equally, in the present.
  - b) Notice v. 21.
    - (1) This verse is not in a vacuum!
    - (2) That is, this verse is based upon those who “believe in him” (v. 16).
    - (3) Thus, the one who is doing what is true (v. 21) is practicing their new life in Christ—in His light, and no longer in the darkness!
  - c) God loves us so much that we not only obtain eternal life, but we obtain a new life in the Light of the Son of Man.
  - d) What this verse is giving us is *theological foundation*:
    - (1) That is, we are seeing that God not only gives life (1:4) but that true life—life as it was to be from the beginning (1:4 cf. 3:19).
    - (2) Thus, the only way man is to live as He was made to live (in the light of The Word) is by believing in the Son of Man—the Word of God (v. 16).
    - (3) What we have is a theological foundation for life as humanity!

## II. The Condemnation of God

### A. The Good News and the Bad News:

- 1. Light and Darkness.
  - a) What do we mean?
    - (1) Light, in this case, has to do the manifestation of God in the person of Christ into the world.
    - (2) Man saw their sin in light of who God is and decided to love their sin more than the light of their life (1:4).
  - b) Jesus’ primary issue for humanity by Him coming to earth (v. 16-17) is so that salvation may be made available and some believe in that salvation, of which a benefactor is eternal life (v. 15-17).
  - c) Belief in Jesus (via v. 14-15) for what He will do—for us, has done—gives eternal life with the Life Giver.
  - d) However, unbelief results in furthered darkness and a hatred for the light (implied) or a love for the darkness (v. 19).
- 2. God’s Just Condemnation.
  - a) God is both just in His punishment because of the way humanity treats the Light and right to do so because of His love!

- b) God's love compels Him to justly punish the darkness of the world in the heart of humanity.
- c) Notice v. 20:
  - (1) The sheer hatred for God because of their love for their sin constitutes a just punishment for their actions.
  - d) There is no lack of love here from God—just as there is no unjust punishment.
  - e) God's attributes are beautifully pictured in the gospel!

### III. The Position of Humanity:

#### A. Darkness.

##### 1. Piecing Things Together:

- a) If we think back to the prologue (John 1:1-18, specifically v. 4-5), we will see the first instance of “darkness.”
- b) The Darkness was implied by John the Baptists words to Jesus, “behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (2:29).
- c) Darkness is not merely sin, but unbelief.
  - (1) This was seen in the Pharisees (2:20) and the people who “saw” Jesus but did not truly believe in Him (2:23-25).
- d) The ultimate implication is found in chapter 3 with men, ultimately loving their darkness of sin and unbelief to the point where they hate the light—Jesus, Himself (3:20).

#### B. Light.

##### 1. Piecing Things Together:

- a) Light shows up in the prologue also (1:4).
- b) Jesus is the light that came to the world in the flesh to extend the blessing of being a child of God (1:12-13).
- c) Jesus came to extend grace upon grace (1:17).
- d) Jesus does see genuine belief in the heart of the disciples (2:11, 2:22).
- e) And it is in Jesus' death that the light is extended to humanity for eternal life and for a life in the Light itself (3:16, 3:21).

Question we have to ask, always, is where do we stand with Christ? Are we lovers or haters of Him?

> What does this passage teach me about:

- God? Humanity? The Gospel?