

The Mind of Christ - Lesson 30

September 25, 2019

We're going to pick up in John 3 and I will read verses 15 and 16. I hope to get further than that, but I want to take this a bit at a time. Actually, I'll need to go back to verse 14 because it's one sentence.

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; ¹⁵ so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life. ¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

Let's talk about those two verses. It should be noted that Jesus says that our belief is “**in Him**”. All these things are significant which implies that we set Jesus apart to a unique place in our lives. It's not just simply that we ‘have belief’ but that we have **in Him**. No one else should occupy that place. Just as there was only one approved, unduplicatable snake on a pole to which they were to look, so no ‘**one**’ or no ‘**thing**’ can stand in for Jesus. Without Him, the show will not go on.

But ‘**in Him**’ also implies that we believe what He says as **authoritative** for our lives. I think sometimes we miss that...that to believe in Him is an implication that there is authority. The authority is **in Him**; there is a sphere in which ‘belief’ exists...that *legitimate* belief exists. That legitimate belief exists in the sphere that is “**in Him**”. He will be even more explicit about this as we'll see later.

Verse 15 says, “Whoever believes may, **in Him**, have eternal life. Life is only ‘in the Son’”. **1 John 5:11** says, “And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.” This exclusive nature of faith in Jesus is found everywhere in the New Testament and reflects the mind of Christ. There is no ambiguity in the mind of Christ relative to salvation. There is only salvation **in Him**.

Again, if we're going to understand the mind of Christ, it is exclusive. Jesus cannot be just a *good man*. That's an insult to just call Him a *good man*, or even a *prophet*. To put Him in a category with someone else is an insult to what He said and how He portrayed Himself.

Let's go to John 3:16. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” This is the best known verse in the New Testament, competing with Psalm 23, probably, in the Old Testament. So I ask the question, why does this verse hold the attention of so many? The word “**hope**” comes to my mind.

Jesus expresses **hope** for the world otherwise destined to perish. No part is really new except the motive of love, but this verse has all the essential ingredients of salvation theology. If you really tear this verse apart, you can find so much said about the nature of salvation within this one verse. Does it say everything? No, it doesn't say everything, but it has the basic ingredients for salvation.

God initiates salvation. That's one aspect. It talks about His motive, which is unconditional, agape love, which only desires what is best for the person being loved. The object of His love is the world, or the cosmos – i. e. the inhabitants of the world – people who stand in desperate need of His love. God does not leave *anyone* out, and gives *everyone* an opportunity to believe.

His love was put into action by sending Jesus, His **only begotten, one of a kind, no one like Him, unique**, and sufficient sacrifice which shows the *depth* of God's love to mankind. He could give no greater gift, no more perfect gift; nothing else would meet our need or accomplish His purpose. And again, it's essential that we understand that Jesus was not one option among many, His death was not one option among many, or even among two or three ways to get to the Father. It was *exclusively* the **only** way to get to the Father. He separates the world into two camps: believers and nonbelievers. That is the way Jesus viewed the world.

You might say there are other ways: Jew and Gentile. Yes...ethnically and historically they were divided, but in regard to salvation, Jesus sees the world as black and white; light and darkness; believers and non believers. He sees no gray in the area of salvation. You either are, or you're not. (It's like we say about 'being pregnant'. Either you are or you're not.)

But only a certain **kind** of believer is one who is saved. So even once we divide the world into two classes: believers and unbelievers, we have to define what *kind* of believer—those who believe in *Him*, who *trust* Him for their eternal life and salvation from perishing. Jesus assumes the point that people without belief in Him are perishing. Jesus never **argues** the point. Jesus never really tries to **prove** the point that people are perishing. He knows that that's just the way it is. Without Him, people are in a state of perishing; they are in peril. What a verse!

So, what was in the mind of Christ concerning the destiny of men? Jesus uses various terms, positive and negative to describe it. Among the positive, in the book of John, how does He describe those who are in a saved place or a saved relationship? He describes it as *the Kingdom of God* in John 3:3 and 5; He describes it as *eternal life*; and He describes it as *being saved*. Those are three ways He describes it.

The negative of that includes “*not entering*” or “*not seeing*” the Kingdom. He calls it *perishing* in verse 16, and in verses 17, 18 and 19 He is going to use the word *judgment*. If you want to know the negative terms or, what is the negative fate of man; it is *not entering*, *not seeing* the kingdom, *perishing* and *judgment*. On the negative side of things, should we think of being ‘outside the kingdom’ or ‘perishing’, and ‘judgment’ or ‘condemnation’ as being equivalent? If you are outside the Kingdom, if you are perishing, if you are under judgment, then all of those three things are equal to one another. They are equivalent phrases.

It just seems to me that when we talk about these things, we have a bit of an “*anemic*” kind of way of talking about salvation. We don't talk about the ‘fullness’ of the salvation. Of all the terminology that is actually used in the Bible to describe these *two* different ways of looking at things, the positive and the negative, if you will.

So it seems reasonable to me that they are different aspects of the same thing. Indeed, Jesus speaks of those who are **outside** or **cast out** in **Matthew 21:39**, “They took him, and **threw him out** of the vineyard and killed him.”

A person can be cast out, or someone who is “outside”. Paul talks about those who are “**outsiders**” in **Colossians 4:5**, “Be wise in the way you act toward **outsiders**; make the most of every opportunity.” **1 Thessalonians 4:12** talks about “...lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you, ¹² so that you will behave properly toward **outsiders** and not be in any need.” Jesus said that there is a place of **outer darkness** in **Matthew 22:13**, ‘Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the **outer** darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ In **Matthew 22:14** he equates these as “**not chosen**”. For many are called, **but few are chosen**.” So the outsiders are those who are **not chosen**. And there has been a whole lot of theology rolling around that idea of what it means to be **chosen** or **not chosen**.

The five foolish virgins found themselves “**shut out**” of the wedding feast. The lazy slave in Matthew 25 was “cast out into **outer** darkness”.

The word “**perishing**” is the word *apollumi* (απολλυμι) meaning to “**destroy fully**” or “**to lose**” {622 in the concordance}. Apo (απο) gives it the force of completely or fully. “Apo” is the idea of perishing fully or completely.

In 1 Corinthians 1:19 Paul says, “For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are **perishing**, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will set aside.” It means, “To bring to naught”. It renders something – void. If something is rendered void, it is cancelled out. It **has no value any more**. It doesn’t exist in the sense of any “**value**”.

Regarding the ultimate destiny of the wicked, it is **eternal death**. The word means to “die forever”. The “apo” part of the word means completeness. It is the second death of **Revelation 20:14** “Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.” In the sense of one **losing their reward**, you no longer have it. Here is an offer of it, but when you have lost it, you no longer can have it. You have lost the reward. It is like a lost sheep in **Luke 15:14**, a lost coin in **Luke 15:8-9**, or to lose a **life** or a **soul**.

Matthew 16:26

“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” NASB

“What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?” NIV

To gain the whole world and lose your eternal soul ... This is the “apo” idea {p. 2106 – #575 Key Word Study Bible}. The loss is **complete**. It is irrevocable. It is “done”. Once it’s lost, it’s done.

Satan is called “Apollyon” (απολλυων) in Revelation 9:11 because he is the destroyer. All of this has the preface to it. The “apo” preface to all of these words talk about a completeness of a condition. Now, that doesn’t mean, as in the case of the lost coin or the lost sheep that God can’t do something to reverse that completed condition, but while they are *in* that condition, it is a **complete** lostness. They are not *almost* lost; they are not *maybe* lost; they are not *just a little* lost; they are **completely** lost. Jesus came down to reverse the *lostness* people experience. He didn’t *create* the lostness. The lostness was established because of **sin**, but it’s a **complete** lostness.

You know, in our minds, we have this comparative thing going on. **This** person is better than “*this*” person. We compare ourselves among ourselves, which Paul says is not a wise thing to do. Even at the point of someone’s death, there are some people that we will give a whole lot more (in our mind ... as if we had a vote) a will give them a little more credit as “maybe they might be saved even though I don’t know that”. Somebody over there is like, “probably not...” And we might not say that out loud, but we’re thinking it in our heads, and it’s just a wrong way to think because either they **are** or they’re **not** ... because if they’re lost, it is a complete lostness. There is no purgatory here. There is no limbo, there is no ‘middle place’ over here...it’s either / or. It’s a ‘completeness’.

The debate often is to the **nature** of this destruction. I am not going to open **that** can of worms tonight. But is the idea of “ceasing to exist” or is it a kind of lostness that is a continual, painful death that never ends kind of lostness? The book that I have read on the subject is “*The Fire that Consumes*” by Edward Fudge. He takes a position in the book, and I think he makes a very good case in the book.

But Paul speaks in contrast of the one being saved. When we look at how Paul treats this whole subject of lostness, he contrasts it to the one being saved and the ones perishing...the odor of death. The ones who are being saved and the ones who are perishing (2 Cor. 2:15-17) he says, “For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved **and** among those who are perishing; ¹⁶ to the one an aroma from **death to death**, to the other an aroma from **life to life**. And who is adequate for these things? ¹⁷ For we are not like many, peddling {for profit – NIV}, the word of God but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.”

It seems that we are in one of two paths. In the extremes, it is wither to “fullness of life” or to the “absence of life”. So, if we contrast this, if the “apo” part of lostness is **completeness**, then what is the **fullness** of eternal life on the other side? We have to give a lot of thought to the idea of what “**fullness**” means. If “**lostness**” is the absence of **any** life, then what is the “**fullness**” of life...the abundant life that Jesus promises?

I think that as Christians, we have to get this squarely down in our heads, because I believe that the world on one hand, doesn’t want us to talk in terms of absolutes of life in **any** way. When we **do** talk in terms of absolutes, the world certainly doesn’t want us to proclaim that anyone is absolutely lost. We have to hold out a little bit of hope that “maybe everybody will be saved; that maybe ‘universalism’ is the right doctrine”.

But that flies in the face of so many things that the Word says. But, on the **other** hand, we don't need to '*short sell*' the abundance of the life we have in Christ either. These are the two ends of extremes that we have before us. We don't dwell in the middle part somewhere between life and death. We are just *totally dead* or we are *totally alive*. There is no middle ground.

The idea of judgment in the future versus salvation in the present shows that Jesus understood the opportunity that He afforded. He understood that He was offering or affording someone an opportunity. Secondly, He understood the urgency of people accepting this escape from judgment.

John 3:17-21, "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. ¹⁸ He who believes in Him is not judged; but he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 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. ²⁰ For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. ²¹ But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

I want to talk about this idea of judgment. The idea of judgment in the future, as I've said, versus salvation in the present shows that Jesus understood the opportunity that He afforded **and** the urgency of people accepting this escape from judgment. The word for judgment is "krino" (κρίνω). It means "*to properly distinguish*" implying to *try* someone, to *condemn* someone, and to *punish* someone and it is all wrapped up in the idea of judgment. Judgment is not simply a 'discernment' thing. It can be used in that context, but that's not what He's talking about here. Jesus is talking about *trying* someone, *condemning* someone and *punishing* someone. It's the whole gamut. You might say it is all the way from the arrest to the indictment, to declaring someone guilty, pronouncing sentence, and carrying out the sentence – whatever that is. It's all wrapped up in the idea of judgment.

So the difference between saving someone and judging someone is really simple. God is no respecter of persons. He's impartial. Imagine 100 people in a boat which is sinking, and the rescuers making no distinction among the group. Everyone is a candidate for saving. But imagine someone among the 100, for whatever reason; insist that the ten black people on the boat can't be saved and threatens with a gun to shoot any black person who tries to get in the lifeboat. Now, the rescuer is no longer this man's savior.

The rescuer is in the lifeboat and he's pulling people into the boat; and for those who are being pulled into the boat, he's their savior. But for the person who he doesn't allow you into the boat – he's no longer a savior but he is his *judge* ... he's the one who condemns. The people may shout for him to save the ten, but judgment ended with a decision or a determination. Judges and juries listen to the evidence presented, and they decide. Judgment implies a decision that has to be made. That is why judgment is being put into the hands of the only One who can make **that** decision. Jesus knows the evidence against us, offers to cancel out the evidence or suppress it, forgive it, and render it inadmissible in court. This done, there is no basis, then, for judgment.

What Jesus does on the cross is make a way to *dismiss* the evidence and not allow it to be *admissible* in court because if it **is** admissible, it *must* be the basis for the judgment. If it is not admissible in court, there is nothing to base the judgment on, and the case must be dismissed. That's why Paul says that now "there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (**Romans 8:1**). For those in Christ who are repentant, as new evidence is produced, it is expunged and harmless.

Just as in society, only certain people are required to make judgments according to the law, so, we are not qualified to make judgments. Therefore, **we** stay in the *salvation* business, to offer the free gift of salvation.

Once the threat of condemnation is lifted, we are free, then, to live a new life in the hope of salvation. We are no longer under the penalty. We can do **useful** things with our lives because now, we're free! The person who thinks they're going to jail for the rest of their life thinks, "there goes my life. How can I ever do anything useful?" Then someone says, "You're not going to jail. You get to live!" and he thinks, "Wow. You just gave me my life back." Now they are free so they can actually live their life.

Jesus makes several points about this ideal or reality of judgement. And we will explore these in the next few classes. (This was from October 7, 2010)

Macy: I was just thinking about your statement of the boat. I like that image and I can see how we don't have the right to judge. I was taking that image into my head and it's not so much the lifeguard or the person with the big boat who is pulling people out saying *these 10 people don't get to come*. But it's like other people who are on the sinking boat are saying that those people can't come, but they don't have the right to judge. But if those 10 people **believe** the people that don't have authority, the people will **act** upon that and miss the opportunity.

Rod: Yes. Again, there has to be some type of cooperation. You can't save someone who doesn't want to be saved like you can't pardon somebody who doesn't want to be pardoned.

Macy: But I see the warning our part, if we're making judgments that God doesn't make, and those people are listening to us and not God ...

Rod: Yes. Exactly. And that's why it is so important for us not to stand in the place of God or even give anybody the *idea* that we're standing in the place of God when it comes to their salvation. We are not in His place. Now, that doesn't mean that we cannot teach them exactly what Jesus **said**. We're **supposed** to **do** that. But teaching them what Jesus said is **not** standing in His place... it's not taking that judgment upon ourselves. Just like I cannot **save** anybody, I cannot judge anybody or condemn anybody.

Jean: But Jesus had made judgements; and we can agree with Him.

Rod: Oh, absolutely. I think it may be foolish *not* to agree with Him, but some of these judgments are yet to come. In other words, if I assume He's already *made* the judgment on your life, then I can agree with Him. But I may prematurely agree with Him because I think I know what He's going to say.

Jean: But God has judged that we should not lie, should not kill. So we **agree** with Him on that.

Rod: Okay, but there is a difference between agreeing that something is right and something is wrong; and the difference between the condemnation that goes along with that. The **condemnation** is the pronouncement of sentence. It is the whole gamut of things going **from accusation all the way to sentencing and carrying out the sentence**. We are not in that spot to do that. I can point out that something is a crime. It's like a policeman who stops you. He has a certain job. But his job is not to be the judge. He must realize that he is not the judge. If he sees somebody doing something wrong, he can tell you to stop it, he can arrest you for it and stop you from doing it, but at that point, he has done his job. For him to go further and to carry out whatever sentence he thinks it should be, he's taking authority he doesn't have.

Jean: Jesus told the Pharisees in John 7:24 to judge righteous judgment.

Rod: Right. He did. And again, this is a complicated subject and let me unpack it a little bit more.

There are several judgment statements in John 3. **First** of all, Jesus was not sent, He says, to judge the world. That wasn't why He was sent. That is one statement that's made. (3:17) He did not come to judge the world. But He **did** tell people what was right and wrong. So did He do something that He didn't come to do? So I am saying judgment is something different than what you are talking about.

Secondly, those who believe in Jesus are **not** judged. They are not judged! There are **some** who avoid judgment.

Thirdly, the one who does **not** believe is judged already (John 3:18). How is he judged if Jesus didn't come to judge?

Fourthly, the pronouncement is that men love darkness more than they love light because their deeds are evil (**John 3:19**).

Let's unpack all of these.

Jesus purpose in being sent the **first** time was **to save the world**, not to judge or condemn the world. He did not come for the purpose of condemning the world. The world is **already** under threat of condemnation. And the opportunity to believe in Jesus will **lift** the threat by bringing salvation. So the issue of judgment is so sensitive with folks today. It is essential that we address this matter exactly as Jesus did.

Jesus' purpose for being sent is **our** purpose. We're not sent to condemn nor judge the world, but to lift up Jesus (as the snake on the pole) so all can be saved. **But doesn't this imply that all are lost without believing in Jesus?** Therefore, the offer of salvation is really the revelation of condemnation! When I offer someone salvation, I am implying or revealing to them that they're condemned! What is the source of condemnation?

The doctor who offers a cure for a disease that a patient did not know that he had **didn't** cause the disease. He might get blamed for it, you might get mad at him, but he's just revealing what is already true and giving a way out or a cure.

If a criminal were to turn themselves in, would they have to be caught, tried and judged by others? But whether they turn themselves in or not, they're still guilty (if they actually did the crime). And thus, they are under condemnation and the consequences that go with that condemnation. In other words, once a person has sinned, they are immediately under condemnation. **The sin puts him under condemnation.** It's a state of being. It's the threat of it and unless that threat is 'lifted' somehow; unless there is some remedy for it. It stands over them. It's like a person whose head is in a guillotine. Unless they can get their head out from under the blade; that threat just hangs over them, if they have not yet believed in Jesus.

Jesus is also dealing with **intent**. His intent was to save; not judge. He would much rather wear His Savior robes than his Judge robes. But you can't save someone unless they need saving.

John 8 is a good illustration of this. The woman caught in the act of adultery was under condemnation because she was committing adultery. "At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. ³ The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group ⁴ and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. ⁵ In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" ⁶ They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. ⁷ When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." ⁸ Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

⁹ At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. ¹⁰ Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

¹¹ "No one, sir," she said.

"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

She was **already** under condemnation. She was **already** breaking the law. The *purpose* or the *intent* of the **Jews**; what was **their** purpose or intent with this woman?

Brain: They wanted to judge her, try her, condemn her and punish her.

Rod: Their intent, ultimately, was to **condemn**. Jesus' intent was to **forgive** her. They had two different intents. But just because one intended one thing and the others intended another, it didn't change her condition. She was still under condemnation ... because she was a sinner. But Jesus did not ignore her sin or pretend she was innocent. We often *pretend* when we should *intend*. He told her, "Neither do I condemn you." He didn't say, "Neither do I determine whether or not you have sinned". He didn't say whether or not He accused her. He said, "I don't *condemn* you!"

Carole: In a sense, didn't He say she was guilty when He told her to go and sin no more? Didn't he say to the people, "You who are without sin cast the first stone"?

Rod: He was just stating the obvious. He even by saying, "go and sin no more" – Him saying that did not *make* her a sinner. He was just recognizing that she *was*.

What Jesus **did not** do, that they **wanted** him to do, was condemn her. But **He** had the power on earth to forgive *in view of* his coming death, burial and resurrection. The admonition to go and sin no more, in our case we can neither save nor condemn. We can't do either. It's not our jobs. We're only representatives of the Savior **and** the Judge.

In verse 18, "He who believes in Him is **not** judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" the verb "judged" is in the present, indicative, passive tense indicating **continuous** action. So when it says in verse 18 "he who believes in Him is not judged", he is not continuously judged. The one who believes in Him – the judgment does **not** continue. It's not a continuous action any more. In this case, the person who believes (present participle) in Jesus will **continue** to receive no judgment.

That's exactly what Paul says in there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus in **Romans 8:1** above. In other words, they will continually **not** be judged or condemned. Just as those who will look upon the snake will have continual protection from the snakes and their poisonous venom. **Condemnation is** the poisonous venom. Once you look at the snake, you won't die. Do you want to put your faith on the snake on the pole, or do you want to die?

When Jesus says in John 3:18 that the person who does not believe in Him has already **been** judged, it is the perfect, indicative, passive tense. In other words, He is indicating that he **was** in a state of judgment in the past and **continues** in that state because *he does not believe* in Him. A person who has been judged will continue in a state of condemnation **until** they believe in Jesus. And at the point when they believe in Jesus, the state of condemnation is interrupted and now they can enjoy salvation. Their unbelief did not cause their condemnation, it merely continues it. When a person continues to un-believe, it just continues the condemnation. It doesn't **produce** it, because they were already condemned because of their sin. Being under the law of 'sin and death' produces condemnation. Go back to Romans 6:23, and 7:8.

This is a good illustration of how the mind of Christ is exactly the same as the teachings of the Apostles. In other words, the truth He holds; the way He sees things, is exactly the way the Apostles saw them. There is no difference between the mind of Christ and the 'mind of Christ' in the Apostles or the way they saw it. The mind of the Apostles, as in the case of Paul in Rom. 7:8 who said, "But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment produced in me every kind of coveting. For apart from the law, sin was dead." Paul elaborates on this very point Jesus is making and harmonizes the very *details* of the tenses of the verbs. He uses **exactly** the same tenses of the verbs that Jesus uses back in John 3:18. There is consistency.

So the point continues to be made in verse 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.](#)” Lack of faith in Jesus did **not** put man into the darkness. They were there {in the darkness} before He said, “Believe in Me.” **As the Light**, He offered them a place **in** the light through faith, but their lack of faith kept them in the darkness. They desired to stay there **because** their deeds were evil and they did not want to repent. They didn’t want to change. It was **their evil deeds** that kept them in the darkness. In a sense, Jesus merely **highlighted** their sin by offering them a solution. And because they did not accept the solution, they proved that they were more in love with their **sin** than with the means of **Life**. Jesus was the contrast to all they were and valued. Those who embraced Him fled darkness and condemnation.

There was / is the idea that in the deep dark jungles of Africa there are people who have never heard of Jesus. Will they be lost because they never heard of Jesus? That was supposed to be a really hard question. Well, I don’t think it’s a hard question at all! If **that** were the case, then why in the world did Jesus tell us to go into ‘all the world’ and preach the gospel to every creature? **Why would we do that?** We would be just condemning them to death! We would need to **keep it quiet!** If we **do** hear about Jesus and we know He’s a savior and if somebody doesn’t know Him, and they going to be **saved** because they didn’t know Him, **don’t tell them** because they might turn it down! And if they never heard of Him they are going to be okay.

Now look how ridiculous that is. It **is** just a ridiculous idea! The only reason why we go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature is because **people are lost!** They are going to **die** in their sin if we don’t give them Jesus! Now, there is a whole lot more to be said about that and ‘to what are they accountable’. Read Romans one, two and three. It’s pretty clear in Romans one, two, and three how that works and how God holds them accountable for the things that they do that are wrong.

Back to **John 3:18**, this may be the first time Jesus uses the phrase “**believe in the name**”. It won’t be the last time. The word “**name**” implies **authority**. It also implies **character**. Here are some passages:

John 5:43 Jesus says, “[I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him.](#)” The evidence of that was that there had been many people who had come in their own name, and people **did** receive them. But when Jesus came in His **Father’s** name, by His Father’s authority, many people rejected Him.

John 5:46 He says, “[For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me.](#)” Jesus associates this with glory in verse 44. “[How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God.](#)” I want us to think about the idea of glory and how it relates to this whole idea. We’ll come back to that in a minute.

John 10:25 Jesus said, “[I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father’s name, these testify of Me.](#)”

John 14:13 Jesus said, “Whatever you ask **in My name**, that will I do, *so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*” There is a tie in Jesus’ mind between the idea of believing in the name of God, and the glory that follows that. We have to discover what that connection is in the mind of Christ because He **connects** these things.

While I've been studying the mind of Christ, I see that when He connects two ideas, I want to know **why** He connected them. I want to know why He connected “believing in the name” and “glory” that follows. This **name**, which is above all other *names*, the name at which people will bow to... what is the name? Well, the **name** is **Jesus**. His *title* was **Christ**, or **Lord** and many other things. But His name was Jesus. It is at the name of **Jesus** than every knee will bow. And I can tell you from experience, having been out in this community, and in certain groups, that you can be fine all day long when you talk about God, the Lord, all kinds of phrases that people can interpret almost any way they want to interpret it, but when you say “Jesus” the entire room changes. Ooh, you got **too exclusive** now. You boiled it down to an individual with a name. I don't think that's a mistake.

John 14:26, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send **in My name**, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.” The Father will send the Holy Spirit **in My Name**. The Holy Spirit will be sent **in the name of Jesus**. Why not in the Father's name? **The Father gave all authority to the Son**. He said in **Matthew 28:18**, Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” In **Matthew 28:19** it says that baptism is in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. In using the term, “only begotten son” Jesus invokes the uniqueness in **John 3:16**. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

When Jesus talks about Himself as the “only begotten Son” He speaks of His own uniqueness making ‘*name*’ and ‘*authority*’ unique to Jesus. **Exclusivity** is written throughout this dialogue with Nicodemus. Remember: one birth, one snake on a pole, one Son, one name, one judgement; we might even add one light, one truth...it's all found in His talking to Nicodemus. It would be a dialogue but I guess it's really a monologue since Nicodemus isn't saying much after his first few things where he wasn't getting it right.

So, what was Jesus thinking? He certainly knew who He was, and how important for every person to draw the right conclusion on this. So much of Jesus' ministry involved proving His identity. Everything hinged on His identity ... **who is Jesus?** This question is **worth** all the rest. **Get this wrong; nothing matters. Get it right; everything else follows.** If you get the idea that **Jesus is “Who” He is**, then **everything** follows from that. But if you get that wrong, nothing follows from it. You can go in all kinds of directions. It is the **one** stake in the ground that that chain is attached to; that everything leads back to Him. If you don't have that stake in the ground, you can wander all over the yard and never find the bone. The ‘**belief part**’ of this is the “perfect indicative” tense in the negative. Therefore there is no action of belief in the past that has consequences in the present. Once belief is established, it will continue to establish a relational outcome. In other words, if I **believe** in Him, then there is set in motion a continual action going forward that has an outcome of being in relationship **with** Him. It is the **belief part** that causes us to **continue** to have the relationship.

That is why there is so much in Scripture about growing our faith, making faith stronger, solidifying that faith. Yes, you can have that faith with a grain of mustard seed faith, but you do not want just a thin, tenuous line between you and Jesus when your whole salvation is *dependent* on Him. Why would I want to hold on with a **thread** of faith? Give me one of those huge cables that ties up one of the ships at the dock. I mean, I want as strong a faith as I can get to be tied to Jesus so that there is no possibility of that being severed. And that's the way Jesus is talking about this continual relationship based on **faith**. For the relationship to be deepened, the **belief** or the **truth** has to be nurtured. Greater intimacy results in greater benefits, or glory, results. Here's the connection with the glory. Does this not work in most relationships, physical and spiritual? The more you solidify the relationship the more **glory** there is in it.

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.” This verse gives two truths, and one explanation for the second truth. Here are the two truths, and they form the basis for Jesus' thought regarding man. The partial solution to follow, the practice of truth, shows the path out. All of this provides the basis of judgment.

1. Light has come into the world

John includes this truth in **John 1:4-5**. Jesus' life was the Light that shines in the darkness and the darkness did not comprehend it. For Jesus to proclaim the presence of the light to the world removes man's excuse. Later Paul made a similar point in **Romans 3:19-20**.

“Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. ²⁰ Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.” Law brings knowledge of sin and makes people accountable to God, and therefore, to judgment. Where there is no law, there is no sin. Where there is no sin, there is no judgment.

But when truth comes; and don't think of “**law**” as just the **Law of Moses**”. But when God institutes law into the world, **truth** in the world, truth in the world now holds man accountable. And when we violate that truth, we are held accountable for violating that truth whether it's Adam and Eve in the Garden, or whether it's some pagan looking up at the stars and saying, “You know, this was created by some tree over there” that they fall down and worship. It's the same way light brings knowledge of darkness and makes people accountable to light, or to God, and therefore, to judgement. If the person has only known darkness and never saw light, he would not understand if we spoke of Light. This is why we must lift Jesus up; so the light can shine into darkness to get them an alternative.

Because there is a general revelation, there's a general light that shines in the world, according to **Romans 1:20**, we can understand God through some of the things He has made.

“For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.”

But if we're going to get to the *specific light that is going to bring salvation*, it has to be **Jesus**. So a person who denies God; based on not drawing the right conclusions from the sun, moon and stars ... the creation..., they are still someone who has turned his back on God and God holds them accountable for that.

But if we're going to bring salvation to them, then we will have to shine Jesus into their lives so they can be saved.

Here's truth number two. Men love darkness rather than light. So truth number 1 is, "Light has come into the world. Truth number 2 is men love darkness rather than light.

2. Men love Darkness rather than light.

Light brings responsibility. We also have to *think* about things. *Make decisions*. We are directed in a clear way instead of by impulse. It matters what we **say** and **do**. But the word love, from agape (αγαπε) shows the deep-seated nature of sin. Sin provides a degree of satisfaction ... plainly, it feels good. Sin feels **good**. Sin unleashes endorphins to the brain and we get 'high' on sin. We like to feel good by doing what seems **free**.

But can something be **free** if it **controls** us? To be hooked on a feeling (you remember that pop song) produced in the darkness instead of one produced in the light, is the nature of sin.

The true things of light can also produce spiritual and physical 'highs' but they may not be as instantaneous, and may require more *discipline* than *focus*. In other words, I believe that we can have a higher 'high' in the spiritual realm than we can **ever** have in the physical realm, if we give that 'high' time to develop. The instantaneous highs that people get from sin in this world keep them coming back for it because it's instant gratification. Intoxication of the love of your wife in the long run is **much** more satisfying than the 'high' one gets from someone who is not your wife. It might be a one-night stand.

Which 'high' would you rather have? Would you rather have that satisfaction after fifty years of marriage of saying, "Wow, this was great." But you may not have that same degree of satisfaction in your five, six or seven that you have at fifty. But it's going to come if you're faithful and if you're nurturing that relationship in Christ. There is a huge payoff from it.

That's one of the reasons why we're told to grow, to endure, to go through the suffering, to persevere, because there is reward. There is glory on the other side. There is satisfaction. We learn the secret of being content in every situation of life, but we don't learn that by finding gratification of the things we find of this earth. We never get to that *real* life...the *fullness* of life we talked about. We're just dabbling in the fullness of life.