

## “Darkness Runs from the Light”

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 8:13-22; John 3:18-21

Text: John 3:18-21

There are basically two types of people in the world. Indeed, these two types of people have existed since the Fall of our first parents, Adam and Eve, or should I say their sons, Cain and Abel. **There are those who are God’s Elect from eternity, chosen for no other reason than God’s love for them; and then there are those who are the reprobate; that is, those left in their Fallen condition, condemned to suffer the eternal wrath of God in Hell.** Those who are God’s Elect, according to the Scriptures are the ones the Holy Spirit will the work in their heart through the preaching of the Gospel to make them a new creation; they will be made alive from being dead in their trespasses and sins so that they are able to see the kingdom of God, and embrace with true faith all of the benefits of Christ obtained by Him on their behalf and be saved from the curse and condemnation that they themselves were under, because they were born in sin and corruption. **In other words,** if anyone is to see the kingdom of God or have eternal life, and be saved from eternal damnation, then that person must repent and believe in the only begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ. And those who believe are the one who are born from above, born of God, by the Holy Spirit. **Therefore,** believing in Jesus and His work on the cross on his or her behalf is evidence that he or she is born from above by the Holy Spirit, which is the point that Jesus was making in

verses 14-17, the third part of the discourse between Jesus and the Pharisee, Nicodemus, as it is recorded in the first 21 verses of John Chapter 3.

The distinction between the true believer and one who is not a true believer is further drawn out in Part Four of the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus. **This distinction between the unbeliever and true believer becomes even clearer when the life of one person is distinguished from another, which is what Jesus does in verses 18 through 21.**

While believing in Jesus is evidence of a person who has been born again; belief in Jesus is more than a bare confession of faith; **it is also evidenced in a life that is distinguished dramatically from the life that has not been renewed by the Holy Spirit.** In verses 18, 19, and 20, Jesus describes for us the unbeliever, the unregenerate man, his natural state or condition, and how he responds to the gospel message. In contrast, the first part of verse 18, Jesus succinctly states the state or condition of the true believer; then, later in verse 21, He briefly describes the believer, the person born from above, and how that person responds to truth, as revealed in the written word of God.

In verse 18, Jesus begins to describe the unbeliever by contrasting his state or condition with that of the believer in Christ. Jesus says, "**He that believeth in Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is**

**condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."** The distinction made here is of a legal nature. Jesus is stating that all who are true believers in Him no longer stand legally condemned before God; **the required payment for their sins has been discharged**, released from their obligation to pay what is due, because the obligation has been fully paid; they are no longer condemned to pay for their sins, which is eternal punishment in Hell. **The present tense of the verb** used here indicates that the condemnation that they were under ceased immediately when they came to true faith in Jesus Christ, who paid in full the due penalty, the due payment for their sin in His one atoning blood sacrifice on the cross. This truth is also expressed in Romans 8:1, where we read, **"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."**

This state or condition of the true believer is the exact opposite to that of the unbeliever, which is the contrast that is being made in this verse. It emphasizes the pitiable or sorrowful state of the unbeliever. **In fact**, it is the state of all men, who are all sons of Adam. In Ephesians Chapter 2, the state of all men **before** coming to Christ in true faith is described as being, **"sons of disobedience,"** who by nature are **"children of wrath,"** children who are under the wrath of God's severe and eternal punishment. **They are legally under condemnation.** This is what is meant when Jesus said in our text in John, **"he who does not believe is condemned already."** Jesus did not come to condemn men, because all men are already under the severe judgment of God's wrath; they are already

condemned. **Unbelief does not condemn them;** it merely confirms them in their existing state of condemnation.

**Further,** not only are all men condemned because all men are conceived and born sinners (Psalm 51:5), all men are condemned because they also sin. In the justice of God all men are declared condemned as sinners, as we learn from Romans Chapter 2, "**For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law**" (v. 12). Whether a person sins ignorantly without knowing the law of God, or sins in rebellion to the law, that person has been judged, condemned and will perish.

**Further,** since every single person that has lived, and is living, live sinful lives, rebelling and disobeying God's Law; they will stand before God as guilty sinners for their actual sins (Romans 3:19). The **ONLY** exception is Jesus Christ, of course. He lived a perfect life without sin, without blemish; He didn't even have a sin nature.

The reason people **remain** condemned is because they do not believe "**in the name of the only begotten Son of God,**" as we see from the last part of verse 18 of our text. Every human being will perish in Hell, except those who look to the only remedy that God has provided, **Jesus Christ,** who was lifted up on the cross shedding His blood for our sins, who was lifted up from the grave for our justification, and who was lifted up to heaven securing our hope of eternal life. **It is because the unbeliever does not look to Jesus as the remedy to the deadly poison of sin, they remain condemned to certain eternal death.**

As long as they refuse the payment of Christ's death on the cross in the shedding of His blood for their sins they continue to be subject to the just requirements of the law; the obligation of the law remains in full force, authority and virtue against them, an obligation that no man is willing to fulfill; **indeed, no man is able to fulfill even if willing.** By refusing to put their trust in Jesus Christ, unbelievers are refusing to look to the only remedy to save them from their death sentence, under which they live.

Though the gospel of truth, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed, pointing them to the only remedy to their perilous condition, they refuse to look to Him and believe. In verses 19 and 20 of our text, Jesus tells us of their contempt for the only begotten Son of God, who is described in verse 19, as the Light. **The Light is understood as the very essence of Truth.** The unbeliever's condemnation is confirmed by how he responds to the Light, to Jesus Christ, who has come to them. We read in verse 19, **"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."** **Instead of loving the Light,** who has come into the world, men love the darkness; **they love their ignorance.** They love man's wisdom and his way of salvation. They love their unbiblical prejudices rather than the light of the knowledge of the life that is in Christ Jesus, as revealed in Scripture. They would rather believe in a **"Christ"** or **"Messiah"** made up in their own imaginations, either in a man, government, technology, or some other idol of man's corrupt imagination.

John made a similar statement in the first Chapter of his Gospel. Beginning with verse 9, he wrote concerning the true Light, which is the

incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, **"That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. <sup>11</sup> He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him."**

**Men did not know Christ, nor did they want to know Him.** Even His own people, according to His Jewish bloodline, would not receive Him as the true Light, their only remedy to their condemnation of death under which they all stood. The world loves its superstitious service and worship of various man-made gods, rather than loving Jesus Christ in service and worship to Him by faith. Rather than embracing the truths that are revealed in Jesus Christ being convicted of their evil ways; **they cling to their ignorance and errors** being married to their lusts and ungodly wisdom, which encourages them in their sins. Many of the Jews in Jesus' day clung to their pagan Judaic oral traditions, just like the Talmudic Satanists of today. **Further,** the Jews loved the shadows of the law, and the instructions of men being blinded by their own prejudices, human opinions and humanist philosophies, rather than the doctrines of Jesus Christ, as He personally revealed them to them and are recorded in the New Testament Scriptures. It is because of their unbelief they rejected the life that is in Christ alone and embraced man's wisdom and the pleasures of sin. They **"did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness,"** as it says in 2 Thessalonians 2:12.

This is what it says in verse 19 of our text in John Chapter 3; the unbeliever loves darkness because he prefers his evil deeds. **In darkness** the unbeliever hides his sin by encouraging himself, and emboldening

himself in his own wisdom. **In darkness** he thinks he can justify his sin, consoling his soul, and appeasing his conscience. He says to himself; it's okay; **everyone is doing it.** So and so says it is okay to be homosexual; it is okay to sleep with a person to whom I am not married; it is okay to get drunk every once in a while; its not harming anyone. **So goes the denials** and justifications, preferring their evil deeds, suppressing the truth rather than trusting in the truth of God's word, rather than repenting and coming to Jesus Christ, the true Light, and revelation of God to mankind.

The biggest tragedy is that there are many who actually and sincerely believe they can be a Christian, and even go to heaven, and still unrepently practice these things. **However,** Scripture specifically tells us in Galatians that those practice these things, amongst other "**works of the flesh**" listed in Galatians 5:19-20, **WILL NOT** inherit the kingdom of God. **In fact,** there are others, who claim the name "**Christian,**" who don't practice these things, but deny the grace of God in Jesus Christ by adding to and along side of His work on the cross by seeking the forgiveness of sins in ceremonies and rituals, or by seeking to gain God's favor by their works. **Either way,** they deny the truth revealed in Scripture, which says that no man is justified by the works of the law (Romans 3:20). Only by looking with true faith to Jesus Christ, the only remedy to the deadly poison of sin, will they be justified before God. **In denying this truth,** unbelievers console one another in their sin by avoiding the truth, suppressing the truth in their unrighteous, evil deeds.

**Further,** in denying this truth, they call God a liar loving darkness, running to their darkness like a husband to his mistress, a wife to her lover,

because they have convinced themselves that there is no judgment, no condemnation for sinners, that there will be no accounting for their sins.

**The unbeliever thinks that there is life without Christ**, or even if they profess faith in Christ; they remain in love with their sins never seeking the truth revealed in Scripture, never seeking to repent and correct their evil ways. Job tells us that unbelievers are so fond of living in darkness that they would say to God, "**Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways**" (Job 21:14). Isn't that what we hear today, even?

**Isn't this what Jesus is telling Nicodemus in our text in John Chapter 3?** Jesus says in verse 20, "**For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.**" Jesus is saying that not only does the unbeliever love darkness rather than the light, because his deed are evil, and he loves his sin more than Jesus Christ, who is the Truth that speaks of the life that He gives. **The unbeliever hates the light.** The unbeliever doesn't just run from the light, but aggressively opposes the light, opposes the truth that in Jesus Christ alone. They scorn the truth; they sit in judgment of God's revelation, picking and choosing what they want to believe, rejecting what they have decided in their own wisdom what is true and not true, and embracing the so-called warm fuzzy parts of the Scripture. Unbelievers boldly contradict the truths of the Scriptures, as they seek to justify the sins they practice. **However,** God says to them in **Psalms 50:16-17**, "**What hast thou to do to declare My statutes, or that thou**



**shouldest take My covenant in thy mouth, <sup>17</sup> seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest My words behind thee?"**

The light exposes darkness; truth exposes lies. Christ exposes our sinfulness and condemnation, the consequence of our sin nature. **Yet**, like certain crawling insects when exposed to the light the unbeliever quickly runs into the crevices of the walls to hide in the darkness [Istanbul]. The unbeliever doesn't want their evil deeds exposed. **In fact**, by nature, no man desires to have his evil deeds exposed. Even as Christians, don't we oftentimes, bristle when we are corrected? Being exposed to the light of God's word includes exposing our true nature; that we are all prone to hate God and our neighbor.

The Heidelberg Catechism asks, "**But are we so depraved that we are completely incapable of any good and prone to all evil?**" And the Catechism simply expresses the biblical answer this way, "**Yes, unless we are born again by the Spirit of God.**" Only the person who is born again by the Spirit of God, born from above, will welcome the truth, and embrace the light that exposes sin, and practices the truth, as he or she looks by faith to the only remedy to his or her condemnation, which is Jesus Christ. **Isn't this what Jesus tells Nicodemus in his final few words to Nicodemus?**

Jesus concludes his discourse to Nicodemus with these words in verse 21, Chapter 3, "**But he who doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought (done) in God.**" The one who is born again by the Spirit of God comes to the light,

comes to the revelation of God, which is recorded for us in the Bible, to know the truth and to walk by faith in the way of God, as revealed in it; even if it means being convicted of sin. In God's word we see ourselves for who we really are; rebellious sinners, and prone by nature to all sorts of evil. From God's word we see our hopeless and pitiful natural estate, the judgment under which we live, condemned to eternal darkness, eternal separation from the light of God, from His grace and goodness; condemned to eternal suffering in Hell where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, forever. **Further**, for the person who is born again by the Spirit of God the truth that is revealed drives him with a repentant heart to Jesus Christ, his only hope, his only salvation, his only remedy. He looks to Jesus Christ by faith embracing so great of salvation from certain death and torment, because of the eternal torments of hell Jesus suffered for him on the cross and before, having our sins, our iniquities laid on Him by our heavenly Father (Isaiah 53:6). **Moreover**, the person born again by the Spirit practices the truth, as he looks in repentance to Jesus Christ as the only remedy to sin's curse and condemnation; he also looks daily to Jesus for strength from the Holy Spirit to conduct His life by faith, in humble submission to His word, being more and more conformed to the image of Jesus Christ – to His character and following His way of life.

**John**, in his first epistle, Chapter 1, verse 6, reminds us, "**If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.**" If we say that we have fellowship with Jesus Christ and unrepentantly walk in darkness, we are hell bound, our soul is in jeopardy of eternal separation from God, since we do not practice the truth. **On the**

**other hand**, the one who has true fellowship with Christ, the one born from above, practices the truth (1 John 2:27-29). The person, who does the truth, as our text in the Gospel of John says it, desires to ensure that his deeds are done in God. He is the person who says to God, as the Psalmist prayed in Psalm 139:23-24, **"Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; <sup>24</sup> And see if *there is any* wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting."** **The person born from above doesn't run from the light**, but seeks to have his deeds exposed for what they are, tested by God in His word, and his heart tested by God with trials and tribulations, whereby he will seek the strength of the Lord to change any wicked way that is in him to conform his way more and more to the way everlasting, so that his deeds and his heart may be clearly seen, and be assured that they are, **indeed**, done in God; that they are done in the strength of God's grace by faith alone.

The deeds that are done in God are **"Those only which proceed from true faith, and are done according to the Law of God, unto His glory, and not such as rest on our own opinion or the commandments of men,"** as the Heidelberg Catechism expresses it. Works are done in God that are approved by Him, according to His word, and His rule, which are done in faith; **that is**, with a thankful heart for the salvation that is found in Jesus Christ alone, by grace alone.

How do you respond to the truth, to the light? Do you run from it like the unbeliever? **Do you avoid reading the God's word? Do you avoid church to hear the word of God preached?** Do you run to darkness,

listening rather to the opinions of men and the wisdom of the world? Let's listen carefully to what the Lord declared to the Jews, who did just that. We read in Isaiah 8:22 this very frightening warning concerning those who rejected the light and sought their own way, **"They shall look unto the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness."** To rebel against the light, and to reject the true light will bring trouble and darkness, **"dimness"** or gloom of anguish, and will drive you into darkness; **that is,** God will send a strong delusion driving you deeper into the darkness of sin you love so much, as it says in 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12.

**On the other hand,** for those who come to the light, those who believe in Jesus Christ with true faith embracing Him as their only Savior and Lord, there is hope, there is life. **For those who come to the light of Scripture so that their deeds may be clearly seen that they have been done in God, done by faith, there is the assurance that they belong to God, and have been born from above by the Spirit of God.** For as Jesus has taught Nicodemus in the first 21 verses of John Chapter 3, though the work of Holy Spirit in regenerating the heart of a person is invisible, we can still know that we are born again by the sound of it, by the evidence of it in the conduct of our lives. The evidence that a man or woman has been born from above, Jesus tells us, is that that person will believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God, the true Light that has come into the world to save the world; **that is,** all who look to Him alone as the only remedy for the punishment of their sin, embracing with true faith the righteous, salvation, and life everlasting that is in Christ

alone and in no other. **The other evidence** that a person is born from above is that he will come to the light, so that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they are done in God; not rejecting correction when their deeds are exposed to the light of Scriptures, but embracing correction from God's word knowing that all things must be done in faith to the glory of God.

**Finally,** let us who are in Christ by faith alone find comfort and courage in the words found in I John 2:28 and 29, "**And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. <sup>29</sup> If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of Him.**"

**May God grant us His grace to walk in the light as He is in the light and is the true Light, looking to Jesus Christ alone for our salvation from the death sentence of sin, to give us everlasting life;** and to grant us grace that we might take delight in His word as we walk by faith, testing our deeds with light of Scripture to ensure that they are done in God, praying that God would also test our hearts to expose any wrong way that is in it, so we might live by faith in the confidence and comfort of the life that is found in Jesus Christ alone to the glory of God — **To Whom alone belong all glory, honor, wisdom and power, forever!**

**AMEN!**