

VBS 2019



1st-5th Grade

FRIDAY LESSON PLAN

God Speaks through His Son

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The Objective is the key concept for this weeks lesson. It should be the main focus of the study

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The “Main passage” is the basis of the study, where the other verse support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the “reward box” found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God’s Word

Objective This lesson will show that the ultimate way that God has spoken to us is through His Son Jesus Christ, and if we listen and believe, we will be given eternal life.

Key Verses

John 3:1-21—Main Teaching Passage

John 12:49

Romans 10:9

Memory Verse - John 3:36

“He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

Hook

Review yesterday’s memory verse, John 14:26.

In your room you will find a picture of a parachute, a life jacket, and the cross. Show them to the kids and them tell them they have fallen out of a plane. Which one do they need to save them? Repeat with asking which saves when drowning. Finally, hold up the cross and ask what this saves us from.

Be certain to give a good definition of sin. “Sin is everything we think, say, or do that displeases God.”

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

In John 3, one of the Pharisees, Nicodemus, went to Jesus to ask Him some questions. Nicodemus was not trying to trick or trap Jesus like so many of the other Pharisees, but rather went honestly. He made the statement that he knew that Jesus was sent from God, because no one could do the signs and wonders that Jesus was doing. Jesus, however, didn't talk at all about the things that He had done. Instead He talked to Nicodemus about his need to be born again.

Three times Jesus looked at Nicodemus and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you..." This shows us that the words that Jesus spoke can be trusted and should be listened to. Jesus spoke, and He spoke truthfully, and as Nicodemus stated, He spoke from God.

Jesus told Nicodemus that if he wanted to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, he must be born again, not in the same way that a baby is born, in an earthly way, but to be reborn in the Spirit, in a heavenly way. When Nicodemus struggled to understand this, Jesus told him that He was speaking of things that He had seen, witnessed, and knew. He had descended from Heaven and had come to be lifted up so that anyone who believes in Him can have eternal life.

It is here that Jesus speaks one of the cornerstone truths of the Bible, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3 tells us that Jesus was sent into the world by God to speak to those who were perishing, and that if they believe in the message that He brought from Heaven, they will be saved and have life eternal.

LOOK

Over the course of this week, we have looked at several different ways that God speaks to us. We have seen that God speaks to us through people (like the prophets, our parents, and even our Sunday School teachers), through His Word (the Bible), and through the Holy Spirit. Today we are looking at how God spoke to us in a very special way, through His Son Jesus Christ.

In John 12:49, Jesus said, "For I have not spoken on my own, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment about what to say and what to speak" (NRSV). Jesus tells us that every word that He spoke on Earth, every word that we read in that Bible that came out of His mouth, was given to Him to speak by His Father. When Jesus said, "Love your neighbor as yourself," it was God the Father speaking through Jesus.

Every word that Jesus said can be trusted and believed. In fact when Jesus was talking to Nicodemus, He was saying things that were so incredible that he actually told Nicodemus three times, "truly, truly." Jesus

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK (Continued)

did this to show Nicodemus that He really meant what He said, and that He really wanted Nicodemus to believe Him.

What were these words that were so fantastic, so outrageous? Jesus said that there was a way that we could be forgiven of our sin and spend eternity with God in Heaven. Jesus told Nicodemus, and He says to us today, that there is a way that we can enter into God's Kingdom called Heaven. We don't have to be alone, we don't have to be far away from God. We can be with Him forever by believing in Jesus Christ. Jesus said that anyone who believes what He said, anyone who trusts in the Son of God, will have eternal life. Jesus made a way for all of us to be saved and be with Him forever. Jesus didn't come into the world to point his finger and look down on us because we have done the wrong thing. He came to earth so that all the people of the world could be saved.

The words that Jesus spoke weren't just for Nicodemus, they were for you. Jesus wants you to be saved, because Jesus wants to be with you! If you ask Jesus to forgive you for your sins, and ask Him to be the King over your life, not only will you get to spend eternity in Heaven, but Jesus will be with you today. Jesus will help you and you guide you through every choice and decision that you make. He wants you to be saved. Are you ready to listen to Him? Are you ready to trust Him? Are you ready to believe in Him?

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

As a class, memorize John 3:36.

Friday is our Gospel presentation day. Please spend time making sure that every child in your room clearly hears that Jesus lived a sinless life, was crucified according to the Scriptures, was buried and rose again, according to the Scriptures. Present the kids with an opportunity to respond in faith, remembering that, "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."

Pray: Pray with the students who desire to commit their lives to Jesus. Finish with a time of prayer for any requests that the children might have.

Parent Question: Jesus said we could be born again. Are you born again? What does it mean to be born again?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on John 3:1-21 by David Guzik

THE NEW BIRTH

"If we were asked to read to a dying man who did not know the gospel, we should probably select this chapter as the most suitable one for such an occasion; and what is good for dying men is good for us all, for that is what we are; and how soon we may be actually at the gates of death, none of us can tell." (Spurgeon)

A. Nicodemus and the new birth.

1. ([Jhn 3:1-3](#)) Nicodemus comes to Jesus by night.

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

a. **Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:** Nicodemus was one of those impressed by Jesus' signs ([John 2:23](#)), and a member of the ruling Sanhedrin. He was religious (**of the Pharisees**), educated (**Nicodemus** is a Greek name), influential (**a ruler**), and earnest enough to come **by night**. Nicodemus came to Jesus as a representative of *all men* ([John 2:23-25](#)), and in a sense he represented what is highest and best in men.

b. **This man came to Jesus by night:** Perhaps Nicodemus came **by night** because he was timid, or perhaps he wanted an uninterrupted interview with Jesus.

c. **We know that You are a teacher come from God:** It is difficult to know if Nicodemus spoke of himself, of the Sanhedrin, or of popular opinion. "It is possible, however, that *oidamen, we know*, signifies no more than, *it is known, it is generally acknowledged and allowed*, that thou art a teacher come from God." (Clarke)

d. **No one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him:** We understand the sense in which Nicodemus meant this, but his statement was not entirely true. The Bible tells us that deceivers and false prophets can sometimes perform remarkable signs ([2 Thessalonians 2:9](#) and [Revelation 13:13-14](#)).

e. **Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God:** Jesus' reply to Nicodemus shattered the Jewish assumption that their racial identity – their old birth – assured them a place in God's Kingdom. Jesus made it plain that a man's first birth does not assure him of the **kingdom**; only being **born again** gives this assurance.

i. It was taught widely among the Jews at that time that since they descended from Abraham, they were automatically assured of heaven. In fact, some Rabbis taught that Abraham stood watch at the gate of hell, just to make sure that none of his descendants accidentally wandered in there.

ii. Most Jews of that time looked for the Messiah to bring in a *new world*, in which Israel and the Jewish people would be pre-eminent. But Jesus came to bring *new life*, in which *He* would be preeminent.

iii. Nicodemus addressed Jesus as a **rabbi** and **teacher**; Jesus responded to him as the one who announced new life. "Our Lord replies, It is not *learning*, but *life* that is wanted for in the Messiah's Kingdom;

and *life* must begin by *birth*.” (Alford)

f. **Born again:** The ancient Greek word translated **again** (*anōthen*) can be also translated “from above.” This is the sense in which John used this word in [John 3:31](#) and in [John 19:11](#) and [19:23](#). Either way, the meaning is essentially the same. To be born *from above* is to be born again.

i. “The word rendered ‘anew’ might equally be translated by ‘from above’. Both senses are true, and in the Johannine manner it is likely that we should understand both here.” (Morris)

ii. Essentially, this means to *have new life*. A theological term for this is *regeneration*. It isn’t simply a moral or religious reform, but the bringing of new life. “To belong to the heavenly kingdom, one must be born into it.” (Tenney)

iii. Jesus clearly said that without this – that **unless one is born again** – he cannot enter or be part of (**see**) the **kingdom of God**. Moral or religious reform isn’t enough. One must be **born again**.

iv. This isn’t something that we can do to ourselves. If Jesus had said, “Unless you are washed, you cannot see the kingdom of God” then we might think, “I can wash myself.” A man might wash himself; but he could never *birth* himself.

v. “All over the New Testament this idea of *rebirth*, *re-creation* occurs.” (Barclay)

• 1 Peter speaks of being born anew by God’s great mercy ([1 Peter 1:3](#))

• 1 Peter speaks of being born anew from an imperishable seed ([1 Peter 1:22-23](#))

• James speaks of God bringing us forth by the word of truth ([James 1:18](#))

• Titus speaks to us of the washing of regeneration ([Titus 3:5](#))

• Romans speaks of dying with Jesus and rising anew ([Romans 6:1-11](#))

• 1 Corinthians speaks of new believers as new-born babes ([1 Corinthians 3:1-2](#))

• 2 Corinthians speaks of us being a new creation in Jesus ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#))

• Galatians says that in Jesus we are a new creation ([Galatians 6:15](#))

• Ephesians says the new man is created after God in righteousness ([Ephesians 4:22-24](#))

• Hebrews says that at the beginning of our Christian life we are like children ([Hebrews 5:12-14](#))

2. ([Jhn 3:4](#)) Nicodemus answers: How can this be?

Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”

a. **How can a man be born when he is old?** Nicodemus’ reply may not have been out of ignorance, but from thinking that Jesus meant a moral reformation. His question may be “How can you teach an old dog new tricks?” One way or another, Nicodemus clearly did not understand Jesus or the truth about the new birth.

i. “Had our Lord said: ‘Every Gentile must be born again,’ he would have understood.” (Dods)

b. **How can a man be born when he is old?** In His description of new birth, Jesus recalled a familiar theme from Old Testament promises of the New Covenant ([Deuteronomy 30:1-6](#), [Jeremiah 23:1-8](#), [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#), [Jeremiah 32:37-41](#), [Ezekiel 11:16-20](#), [Ezekiel 36:16-28](#), [Ezekiel 37:11-14](#), [37:21-28](#)). These passages essentially made three promises in the New Covenant:

- The gathering of Israel.
- The cleansing and spiritual transformation of God's people.
- The reign of the Messiah over Israel and the whole world.

i. In Jesus' day, the common teaching among the Jewish people was that the first two aspects of the New Covenant had been fulfilled. They saw Israel gathered – at least in part – after the Babylonian exile. They saw strong spiritual movements like the Pharisees, which they believed fulfilled the promise of spiritual transformation. All they waited for was the reign of the Messiah.

ii. That's why Jesus' statement about the new birth was so strange to Nicodemus. He *thought* that the Jewish people already had it; they certainly weren't looking for it. They only looked for a triumphant Messiah.

3. ([Jhn 3:5-8](#)) Jesus explains the new birth.

Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

a. **Most assuredly... you must be born again:** Jesus was emphatic in saying that man does not need *reformation*, but a radical conversion by the Spirit of God. We must be **born of water and the Spirit**.

i. "In [verse 3](#) Jesus has spoken of 'seeing' the kingdom of God, whereas here He speaks of 'entering' it. There is probably no great difference of meaning." (Morris)

ii. **Most assuredly:** "The words add solemnity to and underline the truth of what follows. The modern expressions, 'In truth I tell you', 'Believe me when I say', 'I do assure you', convey the meaning." (Tasker)

iii. **Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God:** If a nation passed a law that said no one could live there except those who were born in that nation, and someone wanted to live there who was not born there.

- It wouldn't matter if he took a name that was common in that nation.
- It wouldn't matter if he spoke the language.
- It wouldn't matter if he observed some of the customs.
- It wouldn't matter if he dressed like those in that nation.
- It wouldn't matter if he practiced some of the religious traditions of that nation.
- It wouldn't matter if his parents were born in that nation.
- It wouldn't matter if his children were born there.
- It wouldn't matter if he had many friends in that nation.
- All that would matter was if he was actually **born** there.

iv. "A man may cast away many vices, forsake many lusts in which he indulged, and conquer evil habits, but no man in the world can make himself to be born of God; though he should struggle never so much, he could never accomplish what is beyond his power. And, mark you, if he could make himself to be born again, still he would not enter heaven, because there is another point in the condition which he would have violated —

‘unless a man be born of the *Spirit*, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’” (Spurgeon)

b. **You must be born of water:** We know from [John 3:10](#) that whatever being **born of water** was, it should have been familiar to Nicodemus from the Old Testament.

i. Some have thought **born of water** means to be baptized. Water here may represent baptism, but there is no real Old Testament foundation for this.

ii. Some have thought that **born of water** refers to our physical birth, since we come forth from a sack of water. This approach is more attractive, but doesn't it simply state the obvious? However, it does make a good parallel with the idea of *that which is born of the flesh* in [John 3:6](#).

iii. Some have thought that **born of water** means to be born again by the Word of God. In other passages of Scripture, water represents the Word, as we are *washed by the water of the word* ([Ephesians 5:26](#)).

iv. Some have thought that **born of water** means to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit, the *living water* of [John 7:38-39](#).

v. Some have thought that **born of water** means to receive the water of cleansing prophesied in [Ezekiel 36:25-28](#) as part of the New Covenant. This is the approach that has the most weight (though it is a tough call), because of its firm connections to Old Testament prophecy – which Jesus says Nicodemus should have known to understand these things.

c. **That which is born of the flesh is flesh:** Without the new birth of the Spirit, the flesh taints all works of righteousness. Yet, everything that a Spirit-led man does can be pleasing to God.

i. “In this **flesh** is included *every part* of that which is born after the ordinary method of generation: even the spirit of man, which, receptive as it is of the Spirit of God, is yet in the natural birth *dead*, sunk in trespasses and sins.” (Alford)

d. **Do not marvel that I said to you, “You must be born again”:** Again, Nicodemus *did* marvel at this statement, because he – like most all Jews of his time – believed they *already had* the inner transformation promised in the New Covenant. Jesus wants him to take hold of the fact that *he does not have it*, and **must be born again**.

i. We should not forget *whom* Jesus said this to. Nicodemus was a religious leader, a Pharisee, an educated man, and an earnest man. By all outward appearance, he was *already* transformed unto God – yet he was not.

ii. “These solemn words for ever exclude the possibility of salvation by human merit. Man's nature is so gripped by sin that an activity of the very Spirit of God is a necessity of he is to be associated with God's kingdom.” (Morris)

e. **The wind blows where it wishes:** Jesus' idea to Nicodemus was “You don't understand everything about the wind, but you see its effects. That is just how it is with the birth of the Spirit.” Jesus wanted Nicodemus to know that he didn't have to understand everything about the new birth before he experienced it.

i. Since we can't control the Spirit, “It should lead us to be very tender and jealous in our conduct towards the Holy Ghost, so that we do not grieve him and cause him to depart from us.” (Spurgeon)

4. ([Jhn 3:9-13](#)) Jesus responds to the question “**how can these things be?**”

Nicodemus answered and said to Him, “How can these things be?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak

what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, *that is*, the Son of Man who is in heaven.”

a. **How can these things be?** Nicodemus was confused. He was so set in his thinking that the new birth has already happened to him and all of faithful Israel, that he had a hard time thinking differently. Jesus had to keep explaining.

b. **Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?** Jesus chided Nicodemus for not being aware of the need and the promise of the new birth, because these were plainly laid out in the Old Testament. Nicodemus knew these passages well, but believed that they had been fulfilled in regard to the new birth. He should have known better.

i. **Are you the teacher of Israel:** “Nicodemus’s exact position in the theological circles of Israel is not defined, but the language suggests that he was a very important person. Jesus implies that as the outstanding teacher of the nation, Nicodemus should have been familiar with the teaching of the new birth.” (Tenney)

c. **If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?** A simple look at **earthly things** – like the illustrations Jesus used, and even a look at his own life – should have made the point plain to Nicodemus. If he could not see that he needed this spiritual transformation, what more could Jesus tell him?

d. **No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven:** Jesus “makes it clear that He can speak authoritatively about things in heaven, though no one else can.” (Morris)

i. “In short, we have here the basis in Christ’s own words of the statement in the prologue that the Word was in the beginning with God, and became flesh to be a light to men.” (Dods)

ii. **No one has ascended to heaven:** “This seems a figurative expression for, *No man hath known the mysteries of the kingdom of God*; as in [Deuteronomy 30:12](#); [Psalm 73:17](#); [Proverbs 30:4](#); [Romans 11:34](#). And the expression is founded upon this generally received maxim: That to be perfectly acquainted with the concerns of a place, it is necessary for a person to be on the spot.” (Clarke)

5. ([Jhn 3:14-15](#)) Jesus and the brazen serpent.

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”

a. **As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness:** Jesus made a remarkable statement, explaining that the serpent of [Numbers 21:4-9](#) was a picture of the Messiah and His work.

i. Serpents are often used as pictures of evil in the Bible ([Genesis 3:1-5](#) and [Revelation 12:9](#)). However, Moses’ serpent in [Numbers 21](#) was made of bronze, and bronze is a metal associated with judgment in the Bible, because bronze is with fire, a picture of judgment.

ii. So, a *bronze* serpent does speak of sin, but of sin judged. In the same way Jesus, who knew no sin became sin for us on the cross, and our sin was judged in Him. A bronze serpent is a picture of sin judged and dealt with.

iii. We would have wanted to diminish our sense of sin, and put the image of a man up on the pole. Our image of man might represent “both good and bad” in man. But a serpent is more apparently sinful, and shows us our true nature and true need of salvation.

iv. In addition, if the serpent lay horizontally on the vertical pole, it is easy to see how this also was a *visual* representation of the cross. However, many traditions show the serpent being wrapped around the pole, and this is the source for the ancient figure of healing and medicine – a serpent, wrapped around a pole.

v. In the [Numbers 21:4-9](#) account, the people were saved not by *doing* anything, but by simply *looking* to the bronze serpent. They had to trust that something as seemingly foolish as looking at such a thing would be sufficient to save them, and surely, some perished because they thought it too foolish to do such a thing.

vi. As it says in [Isaiah 45:22](#): *Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.* We might be willing to do a hundred things to earn our salvation, but God commands us to only trust in Him – to *look to Him*.

b. **Even so must the Son of Man be lifted up:** Even though Jesus bore our sins, He never *became* a sinner. Even His becoming sin for us was a holy, righteous, act of love. Jesus remained the *Holy One* throughout the entire ordeal of the cross.

i. “Nicodemus had failed to grasp the teaching about the new birth when it was presented to him in terms drawn from Ezekiel’s prophecy; now it is presented to him by means of an object-lesson, from a story with which he had been familiar since childhood.” (Bruce)

ii. **Must be lifted up:** “He *must* die because He *would* save, and He *would* save because He *did* love.” (Maclaren)

c. **Lifted up:** This is a term later used to describe both Jesus’ crucifixion ([John 12:32](#)) and His ascension ([Acts 2:33](#)). Both meanings are in view, His suffering *and* exaltation. Jesus was **lifted up** in both ways.

i. The Son of Man is to be lifted up. Yes, but not on a throne in Herod’s palace. He was to be conspicuous, but as the brazen serpent had been conspicuous, hanging on a pole for the healing of the people.” (Dods)

d. **Should not perish but have eternal life:** The idea behind **eternal life** means much more than a *long or never ending* life. **Eternal life** does not mean that this life goes on forever. Instead, **eternal life** also has the idea of a certain *quality* of life, of God’s kind of life. It is the kind of life enjoyed in eternity.

i. “The nature of the belief is implied in the illustration of Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness. Belief consists of accepting something, not doing something.” (Tenney)

6. ([Jhn 3:16](#)) God’s gift of salvation.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

a. **For God so loved the world:** [John 3:16](#) has long been celebrated as a powerful, succinct, declaration of the gospel. Of the 31,373 verses in the Bible, it may be the most popular single verse used in evangelism.

i. We learn the *object* of God’s love: **For God so loved the world.** God did not wait for the world to turn to Him before He loved the world. He loved and gave His only begotten Son to the world when it was *still* the **world!**

ii. What Jesus told Nicodemus in [John 3:7](#) (*You must be born again*) refuted the popular Jewish idea regarding the way to salvation. Now Jesus refuted the popular Jewish idea regarding the *scope* of salvation: **for God so loved the world.**

iii. The Jews of that day rarely thought that God **loved the world.** Many of them thought that God only loved *Israel*. The universal offer of salvation and life in Jesus was revolutionary.

iv. “The Jew was ready enough to think of God as loving Israel, but no passage appears to be cited in which any Jewish writer maintains that God loved the world. It is a distinctively Christian idea that God’s love is wide enough to embrace all mankind.” (Morris)

v. Morrison suggested that there are three centers of love:

- *God so loved the world* ([John 3:16](#))
- *Christ also loved the church* ([Ephesians 5:25](#))
- *The Son of God, who loved me* ([Galatians 2:20](#))

b. **He gave His only begotten Son:** This describes both the *expression* and the *gift* of God’s love. God’s love didn’t just *feel* for the plight of a fallen world. God *did* something about it, and He **gave** the most precious thing to give: **His only begotten Son.**

i. **He gave his only begotten Son:** “These words seem to carry a reference to the offering of Isaac; and Nicodemus in that case would at once be reminded by them of the love *there required*, the *substitution there made*, and the *prophecy there uttered to Abraham.*” (Alford)

c. **Whoever believes in Him:** This describes the *recipient* of God’s love. God loves the world, but the world does not receive or benefit from that love until it **believes in** Jesus, the gift that the Father gave. **Believes in** means much more than intellectual awareness or agreement. It means to *trust in*, to *rely on*, and to *cling to*.

d. **Should not perish:** This describes the *intention* of God’s love. God’s love *actually saves* man from eternal destruction. God looks at fallen humanity, does not want it to **perish**, and so in His love He extends the gift of salvation in Jesus Christ.

e. **Everlasting life:** This describes the *duration* of God’s love. The love we receive among people may fade or turn, but God’s love will never change. He will never stop loving His people, even unto the furthest distance of eternity.

i. “If there is one sentence more than another which sums up the message of the Fourth Gospel, it is this. The love of God is limitless; it embraces all mankind. No sacrifice was too great to bring its unmeasured intensity home to men and women: the best that God had to give, he gave – his only Son, his well-beloved.” (Bruce)

7. ([Jhn 3:17-21](#)) Sin’s condemnation.

“For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”

a. **God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world:** Jesus revealed the heart of God the Father in sending God the Son; to bring *salvation* – rescue, hope, healing – to the world **through Him.**

i. “Some men will, in fact, be condemned, and that as the result of Christ’s coming into the world ([John 3:19](#)). But the purpose of His coming was not this.” (Morris)

b. **He who does not believe is condemned already:** [John 3:16](#) is the most gracious, wonderful offer conceiv-

able – eternal life for all who believe. Yet the offer has inherent consequences, for any who reject, who refuse to **believe**. Their refusal makes their condemnation certain.

i. A significant issue regarding those who do **not believe** is, “What about those who never had the opportunity to believe because they never heard the good news of Jesus Christ?” This is an important but separate question, addressed best by the Apostle Paul in [Romans 1](#) and [Romans 2](#). Here, the focus seems to be on those who *deliberately reject the message*, as those who heard and encountered Jesus in the first century had opportunity to do.

ii. “No explicit mention is made here of those who have never had the opportunity of believing in Christ, those on whom the light in its fullness has never shone. But John’s words probably unfold the principle of their judgment too. As the eternal Word came to men and women before becoming incarnate in Christ, so it is with the light of God. If men and women are judged by their response to the light, they are judged by their response to such light as is available to them.” (Bruce)

c. **This is the condemnation:** Jesus came to bring salvation, but those who reject that salvation condemn themselves. We never need to leave the *reason* for anyone’s **condemnation** at God’s door. The responsibility is theirs alone.

i. “Heaven is too hot to hold unregenerate persons; no such dirty dog ever trampled on that golden pavement, it is an undefiled inheritance.” (Trapp)

d. **Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil:** Jesus explained what keeps people from faith and rescue in Him. It is because they are drawn to darkness, and love it more than the light. There is a critical *moral* dimension to unbelief that is often denied or ignored.

i. Those who consciously reject Jesus often present themselves as heroic characters who bravely put away superstition and deal honestly with deep philosophical problems. It is far more often true that there is a *moral* compromise at the root of their rejection.

ii. Many opponents of Christianity have a vested interest in fighting against the truth of Jesus, because they love their sin and don’t want to face it, or face a God who will judge their sin.

iii. When we think of the *love of sin* that sends people to hell, we often other think of notorious sin. But the simple demand to be lord of my own life is enough of a sin to deserve condemnation before God.

e. **Everyone practicing evil hates the light:** Some express their hatred of the truth by actively fighting against it, and others express their hatred by ignoring God’s truth – by saying to Jesus “You are not worth my time.” In contrast, **he who does the truth comes to the light.**

i. **He who does the truth:** “To do the truth’ is at any rate to live up to what one knows; to live an honest, conscientious life.” (Dods)

ii. “They chose to walk in the darkness, that they might do the works of darkness—they broke the Divine law, refused the mercy offered to them, are arrested by Divine justice, convicted, condemned, and punished. Whence, then, does their damnation proceed? From THEMSELVES.” (Clarke)