John 3

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The Gospel Of John

Chapter 3

Introduction:

A. This outline is not perfect, as it has not been completely proofed beyond Internet publication.
B. Here is excellent and precious doctrine taught both by Jesus and John the Baptist to the Jews.
C. Agreeing well with John's purpose is much exhortation to believe (I John 5:13; John 20:31).
D. This very popular chapter is loved much by Arminians by misunderstanding 3:3,5 and 3:16.
E. If they had read the previous chapters with understanding all would be well (1:13; 2:23-25).
F. For John 3:5 rightly explained (2008) … John 3:5.
G. The truth about being born again … Born Again Truth.
H. Regeneration and conversion compared … Regeneration and Conversion.
I. Baptism is not involved in salvation … Baptism: Proper Design.
J. For John 3:16 rightly explained (2000) … John 3:16 Revisited.
K. For John 3:14-21 rightly explained (2016) … Restoring John 3:14-21.
L. Eternal life is unconditional … Seven Proofs of Unconditional Salvation.
M. Salvation in five phases … Five Phases of Salvation.

Outline:

A. 1-8 Jesus taught Nicodemus about regeneration.
B. 9-13 Jesus exalted His doctrine over Jewish learning
C. 14-18 Jesus prophesied His death and legal salvation by it.
D. 19-21 Jesus taught Nicodemus about total depravity.
E. 22-24 Jesus and John the Baptist in proximity in Judea.
F. 25-30 John denies his disciples' envy on his account.
G. 31-36 John further exalts Jesus as His divine superior.

1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

There was a man.

A. Every individual person, man or woman or child, is uniquely known by God.

1. This is one of the most hope-filled facts of our existence to excite our souls.
2. You are not alone; believers know they will never be forsaken (Heb 13:5-6).

B. Keep in mind the last section of John chapter 2, where Jesus avoided some men.
1. Many believed on Him for His miracles, but He avoided them (Jn 2:23-25).
2. But we have here a man that believed by miracles but was received by Jesus.
3. Not only did Jesus receive him, but Jesus also committed deep truth to him.
4. We cannot prove absolutely that Nicodemus was God's elect, though the evidence is in that direction, and either way it does not alter interpretation.

C. However, there is another category of men that Jesus pursues and commits to.
1. It is very encouraging to consider how Jesus visited them in their situations.
2. The woman of Samaria appears next; Jesus talks to her at length (Jn 4:1-26).
3. Consider the Gadarene (Mark 5:19-20), the Canaanite woman (Matt 15:21-28), the thief (Luke 23:39-43), a blind man (John 9:1-38), Lazarus and sisters (Jn 11:1-5), the eunuch (Acts 8:26-40), Saul (Acts 9:1-6), Cornelius (Acts 10:1-6), Lydia (Acts 16:13-15), the jailor (Acts 16:25-34), etc.

D. Whatever conviction or opportunity you have toward Christ, run with it, now!
1. You can come to Jesus Christ today in humble submission as Saul of Tarsus.
2. Do not turn away from Him that is present today and speaking by His word.

E. There are other foolish men like Agrippa (Acts 26:28) and Felix (Acts 24:25).

Of the Pharisees.

A. The Pharisees were the greatest enemies of Jesus Christ during His ministry.

B. They were most conservative of the Jewish sects or religious denominations.
1. Paul referred to them as the straitest sect of the Jews' religion (Acts 26:5).
2. The liberal Sadducees denied angels, the spirit, and resurrection (Acts 23:8).
3. The Pharisees had numerous traditions they had added to the word of God.
4. We need to remember that more conservative than scripture may be worst.

C. Jesus despised their conservative, ceremonial, sinner-hating, manmade religion.
1. He condemned their religion by their righteousness (Mark 7:1-13; Ecc 7:16).
2. Jesus used a short parable to exalt a publican over a Pharisee (Lu 11:9-14).
3. Jesus mocked them for tithing herbs but ignoring real religion (Luke 11:42).
4. These self-righteous ones despised Jesus for seeking out sinners (Lu 15:1-2).
5. They denied God values mercy over sacrifice (Matt 12:7; Pr 21:3; Hos 6:6).
6. They had no compassion to allow healing on their Sabbath Day (Jn 7:21-24).
7. They trusted the lineage of Abraham over his character (Matt 3:9; Jn 8:33).
8. Their abuse of the man born blind and his parents is typical (John 9:1-38).
9. The rejection of Lazarus' resurrection shows severe blindness (Jn 11:47-48).

10. They tried to trick Jesus, from divorce to civil rulers (Mat 19:3-9; 22:15-22).
11. Common people justified God by baptism but not Pharisees (Luke 7:29-30).
12. They justified themselves rather than God and His commands (Lu 16:13-18).
13. They hated Jesus themselves and stopped others (Jn 12:42-43; Luke 11:52).
14. God hated scorners in their O.T., but they were addicted to it (Lu 11:53-54).

D. Some considerations to identify and despise similar conservative imposters.
   1. Look for any commandments that are manmade but put beside God's rules.
   2. Do not judge by appearance, because they may appear righteous (John 7:24).
   3. Noble sounding reasons do not justify any alteration to God's words at all.
   4. Most men will justify themselves rather than submit to God and His words.
   5. Reputations of conservative and religious are worthless compared to Bible.
   6. Foolish or scornful questions are rejected (II Tim 2:14-16,23; Titus 3:9-11).
   7. The higher the education the more likely spiritual ignorance, pride, rebellion.

E. Yet Saul of Tarsus was a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee (Ac 23:6; Phil 3:5).

F. Josephus was a Pharisee; the Lord used him to show Jesus' prophecies fulfilled.

G. About the Pharisees … Problems With Religious Conservatives.

Named Nicodemus.

A. Nicodemus. Conqueror of the people.

B. He was a master, or teacher, in Israel, as Jesus made reference to it (John 3:10).

C. We have three events recorded by our writer only of this man of the Pharisees.
   1. He came to Jesus by night to inquire more of him without the Jews (3:1-19).
   2. He defended Jesus to the Pharisees in one of their discussions (7:32,45-53).
   3. He assisted Joseph of Arimathaea burying the body of Jesus (19:38-42).

A ruler of the Jews.

A. Authority comes with a price and responsibility as the Bible teaches (Jas 3:1).

B. Some rulers were fearful of the Pharisees and their persecution (John 12:42-43).

C. Remember the courage of Elihu in Job 32:6-10 and David in Psalm 119:98-100.

D. Nicodemus will expose his ignorance several times in the exchange (Jn 3:4,9).

E. This nation had been turned over to ignorance in righteous judgment (Is 6:9-13 cp Matt 13:10-17 cp John 12:40 cp Acts 28:26-27).

F. God does send famine for the word of God even to His people (Amos 8:11-12).

G. It is the perilous times of the last days … truth traded for fables (II Tim 4:3-4).

2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him.

A. The Jews were afraid to admit or confess whatever faith they had (Jn 12:42-43).

B. We commend him for coming to Jesus rather than going along with the crowd.

Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God.

A. Rabbi. A title of respect (first century BC) given by Jews to doctors of the law.

B. The Bible internally compares it to master (John 1:38; Matt 23:8; John 13:13).

C. The Jews rather accused Jesus of the power of Beelzebub (Matt 9:34; 12:24)!

For no man can do these miracles that thou doest.

A. Belief in Jesus' miracles was not enough to prove regeneration (John 2:23-25).

B. The Pharisees did not care about miracles, proving blindness (John 11:45-48).

C. The Jews rather accused Jesus of the power of Beelzebub (Matt 9:34; 12:24)!

Except God with him.

A. This is much different than saying the power of Beelzebub (Matt 9:23; 12:24)!

B. Nicodemus was at least a believer in Jesus by His miracles as limited here.

C. Jesus said His devil-casting power indicated the kingdom of God (Luke 11:20).

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee.

A. Verily. In truth or verity; as a matter of truth or fact; in deed, fact, or reality; really, truly. Placed in front of a sentence or statement as an emphatic asseveration of its truth or accuracy.
   1. There are 25 occurrences in the gospel of John; no others in the whole Bible.
   2. The word verily occurs 49 other times by itself in the N.T. (63 in the Bible).
   3. The earlier use of a double verily by Jesus was for angelic activity (Jn 1:51).

B. Jesus addressed Nicodemus personally and specifically by the singular pronoun.

C. Jesus answered him, or responded to him, for his declaration of Jesus from God.

Except a man.

A. The use of except indicates an axiom of truth concerning kingdom perception.
   1. Without the following event, no man is able by nature to see spiritual things.
   2. If he continues as a natural man, then he is a reprobate on his way to hell.

3. If any man can perceive the reign of Jesus Christ, he is already born again.
4. If he is born again, God has an eternal purpose and result in glory for him.
5. The eternal purpose began in election and results in glorification in heaven.
6. Jesus did not make an offer – there is nothing a man can do to be born again.
7. You cannot and will not accept, believe, receive, or trust Jesus for this birth.
8. There is absolutely nothing anyone else can do to improve your odds for it.

B. Therefore, regeneration becomes an incredibly important matter for each of us.
1. You are not a child of God in His redemptive purpose without it (John 1:12).
2. There are only two kinds of men – sons of God or sons of the devil, elect or reprobate, vessels of honor or dishonor, vessels of mercy or wrath, etc.
3. The first, great priority is to prove whether you have been born again or not.
4. The second goal is to live as a child of God to glorify your Father in heaven.
5. The third goal is to gratefully rejoice you have been born again by His grace.
6. It is of much lesser importance that we clearly grasp how it actually occurs.
7. It is of much lesser importance that we expose and destroy others' heresies.

C. Spiritual discernment and living is of great importance (I Cor 2:15; Rom 8:5-8).

Be born again.

A. Here is a crucial and profound event already introduced by John (Jn 1:12-13).
1. This is the event by which a rebel sinner becomes a child of God by nature.
2. It is giving a new spiritual nature that chooses and loves the things of God.
3. It gives us a new existence and life as a child of God with abilities Godward.
4. It gives us a new will that exists alongside our fleshly will, thus true freewill.
5. It is a vital event … not justification (legal) or sanctification (practical).
6. How much power (Jn 1:12)? Resurrection and creation (Ep 1:19-20; 2:1,10).
7. You got a human nature and became a son to parents by your first birth, and you got a spiritual nature and became a son of God by this second birth.
8. It gives you a new nature and connects you vitally to God and Christ (John 3:6; Eph 2:1-7; 4:22-24; Gal 4:6-7; 5:17; I Jn 2:29; 4:15; Rom 8:14-16; etc.).
9. You will never be given this spiritual nature unless God elected you to it.
10. If you are given this spiritual nature, you will most assuredly be glorified.
11. It is the middle, vital phase of the five phases of adoption and of salvation
12. Phases of salvation … Five Phases of Salvation.
13. Phases of adoption as sons … Sons of God.

B. We start with the earlier doctrine in John's preamble of how we are born again.
1. No man should come to John 3:3 without perfectly grasping John 1:12-13, or he exposes himself as

ignorant, malicious, and/or partial in the word of God.

2. The most definitive Bible passage about regeneration was already presented.
3. Most Christians ignore John 1:13, though part of John 1:12 and explains it.
4. They then rush to John 3:3 and 3:16 without defining God's role in the birth.
5. Well over 99% of all Christians are condemned as heretics by John 1:12-13.

C. Racial regeneration, an ancient heresy defying John 1:13, is corruption we hate.
   1. John and Jesus had to deal with this heresy often (Matt 3:9; John 8:33-44).
   2. Paul had to deal with it (Rom 4:1-16; 5:12-19; 9:7-8; Gal 3:16; 4:22-31).
   3. We also reject racial regeneration by Acts 17:26 and Galatians 3:16,29.
   4. In our day are British-Israelites, Neo-Nazis, and other heretics by race.

D. Decisional regeneration, a modern heresy defying John 1:13, is a thing we hate.
   1. These heretics will do anything to elicit a choice by the flesh to get saved.
   2. Not only is the will of the flesh denied, but it is impossible for it to so will.
   3. A man in the flesh cannot and will not please God; he is a depraved rebel.
   4. God's compassion and mercy are by His own will, not man's (Ro 9:15-16).
   5. If you ever will good to God, it is He that worked it in you (Phil 2:12-13).
   6. Only God's will is active (John 3:8; 5:21; Eph 1:5; Jas 1:18; Heb 10:9-10).
   7. The will of the flesh is all you have before regeneration – the sinful you.
   8. Therefore, John 1:13 denies any choice or act of will before regeneration!
   9. Until you are born again, this is the only will you have – that of the flesh.
   10. Paul denied that anything you do in the flesh can please God (Rom 8:7-8).
   11. It is further rejected by God's statement that His will rules (Rom 9:15-16).
   12. If John 3:6 is true, then this heresy demands the flesh to work to be spirit!
   13. The Spirit lusteth against the flesh, so how can it occur this way (Gal 5:17).
   14. These corrupters are so bad they war over Lordship salvation as legalism.
   15. We reject invitations and any evangelistic efforts that appeal to man's flesh.
   16. For more, Why No Invitation?
   17. Why Preach the Gospel?

E. Baptismal regeneration, an ancient heresy defying John 1:13, is a thing we hate.
   1. Being born again has fully nothing to do with the will of anyone outside you.
   2. This phrase condemns parental efforts to save infants as Roman Catholics.
   3. By far the most popular method of salvation of Christians is infant baptism.
   4. Parents take children to some priest to be baptized to become God's child.
   5. The parents choose godparents to guarantee the child of God will be taught.
   6. There is nothing a parent can do to assist or help for salvation (Ps 49:6-9).

7. The work of salvation is all found in one man's obedience (Rom 5:12-19).
8. There is no place for parents, pastors, priests, or soul winners for eternal life.
9. In Him was life! He is the Life! He is resurrection and life! He has the keys!
10. If it is not by the will of man, then it refutes any parents acting for a child.
11. If it is not by the will of the flesh, then it refutes believer's baptism for it.
12. It is also rejected by Titus 3:5 and Ephesians 2:9 … our works all excluded.
13. I Peter 3:21 categorically refutes both infant and believer baptism for birth.

F. Then proceed to words chosen by the Holy Ghost to reveal deep truth of God.
1. It is truly deep truth, because Nicodemus as master-teacher did not know it.
2. Solomon made reference to several hidden operations in the world (Ec 11:5).
3. Paul taught that the Holy Spirit reveals God's things by words (I Co 2:6-13).
4. It is called a birth, and we take it as a birth, for again makes it like our first.
5. If it is like our first birth, we obtain existence, life, ability, and action by it.
6. If it is like our first birth, we have no personal permission or action involved.
7. If it is like our first birth, it is the will and works of others (parents) over us.
8. If it is the same birth earlier, it makes God our Father, not man (Jn 1:12-13).

G. How did you become the child of your parents? By what process did it occur?
1. They generated and procreated you by a choice of lovemaking to conceive!
2. You were entirely ignorant and passive in the activity, both spirit and body.
3. In the same way you become God's Son, by His loving choice to regenerate!
4. You are no more involved in your second birth than you were in your first.
5. Your desire, approval, or permission were all entirely rejected by God's will.

H. We progress to the other words chosen by the Holy Ghost to identify this event.
1. Begetting is comparable to born again or regenerate (I Pet 1:3; James 1:18).
2. Regenerate is to reproduce, to generate again, or be born again (Titus 3:5).
3. Quicken means to make alive a dead thing (Eph 2:1-5; Col 2:13; I Pet 3:18).
4. Resurrection is giving life to a dead corpse (Rev 20:6; Mat 19:28; Jn 5:25).
5. Creation is to powerfully make something of nothing (Eph 2:10; Jas 1:18).
6. Renew is do over again; to restore as new, young, fresh (Tit 3:5; Col 3:10).
7. These terms require divine choice, divine power, man's passivity, instantaneous act, giving of life, deny any creature activity, creature death.
8. The terms exclusively require God's sovereign choice and man is passive.

I. We progress to the condition of man prior to being born again or regenerated.
1. You must always begin discussions of salvation with total depravity first.
2. Man is totally unable and unwilling to cooperate or assist with regeneration.
3. He is dead, which requires more than help (Gen 2:17; Eph 2:1,5; Col 2:13).

4. He is without strength, which means he cannot assist himself in it (Rom 5:6).
5. He is an enemy of God, so he will not cooperate (Rom 8:7; 5:8; Luke 19:14).
6. He is not subject to God in his carnal mind, so he will not submit (Rom 8:8).
7. He cannot please God in his flesh condition, so he cannot respond (Ro 8:8).
8. He is blind spiritually, so what will you show him (John 3:3; II Cor 4:3-4).
9. He is deaf spiritually, so what will you say to him to move him (Jn 8:43,47).
10. He is without understanding, so forget it (I Cor 2:14; 1:18,23; Rom 3:11).
11. He will not seek after God, so how will you get him to seek Him (Ro 3:11).
12. He has no fear of God, so he will not humble himself (Rom 3:18; Ps 36:1).
13. He is at war against the Holy Spirit so cannot repent (Gal 5:17; Acts 7:51).
14. He is beyond even the Spirit's reach until he has a spiritual man (I Cor 2:14).
15. Environmental changes will not help, for his nature is the same (Is 26:10).
16. No persuasive techniques will help, according to the Lord Jesus (Lu 16:31).
17. Without faith, he cannot please God (Psalm 10:4; II Thess 3:1-2; Heb 11:6).

J. The Bible denies man's involvement by will or works in any part of eternal life.
   1. Willing and running by man does not obtain God's mercy (Rom 9:15-16).
   2. If you will or do things pleasing to God, He worked it in you (Phil 2:12-13).
   3. Works are expressly denied, and faith is a great work (Titus 3:5; John 6:29).
   4. Regeneration is by grace, by definition excluding works (Ep 2:5; Rom 11:6).
   5. Only God's will is operative in regeneration (Jn 3:8; 5:21,26-27; Rom 9:15).

K. We progress to the plain statements of scripture about the Source or Agent of it.
   1. Of course, if we simply cheat ahead to verses 5, 6, and 8, truth is right here.
   2. Becoming God's son by another birth is His monergistic, sovereign work.
   3. Regeneration is ascribed to God the Father (John 1:13; II Cor 4:6; I Pet 1:3).
   4. Regeneration is ascribed to God the Son (John 5:21,25-29; 17:2; I Pet 1:23).
   5. Regeneration is ascribed to the Spirit of God (John 3:8; Ecc 11:5; Titus 3:5).

L. Regeneration should never be considered outside the full operation of salvation.
   1. It is the third, or vital, phase of five phases of salvation taught in the Bible.
   2. If God does not quicken a person, they will never receive Christ (I Co 2:14).
   3. If you ever will good to God, it is He that worked it in you (Phil 2:12-13).
   4. God only quickens some, so they are those elected to eternal life (Ac 13:48).
   5. Only those chosen, elected, and predestinated will be glorified (Ro 8:29-30).

M. We progress to resulting ability obtained by the gift of a new spiritual nature.
   1. Faith results from regeneration (Acts 18:27; Gal 5:22; Eph 1:19; II Pet 1:1).
   2. The man born of God can hear the words of God (John 8:47; Rev 2:7; etc.).

3. The spiritual man is unlike natural man; he can and will discern (I Cor 2:15).
4. They believe the gospel they had thought foolish (I Cor 2:14-15; John 5:24).
5. They love the brethren, which they did not do before (I John 3:14; 4:7; 5:1).

N. We progress to sample texts abused by some to teach heresies of regeneration.
1. John 3:5 has nothing to do with H2O or baptism (John 7:37-39 cp Titus 3:5).
2. Hebrews 4:12 is not the written word or preached word, but living Word!
3. I Peter 1:23 is not the written word or the preached word, but living Word!
4. James 1:18 is not the written word or the preached word, but living Word!
5. I Corinthians 4:15 is not regenerating them, but converting them (Gal 4:19)!

O. We progress to examples of those born again by various proofs without means.
1. John Baptist leaped for joy by the Spirit before he was born (Luke 1:41-44)!
2. Cornelius feared God and was righteous before Peter (Acts 10:1-2,34-35).
3. Lydia's heart was opened to Paul's preaching before she heard (Acts 16:14).

P. The purpose of the gospel was never intended to give life but bring it to light.
1. The gospel reveals the power of God to those already saved (I Cor 1:18,24).
2. The gospel brings life and immortality to light, not existence (II Ti 1:9-10).
3. Paul tried to preach the gospel to saints already full of faith (Rom 1:15-17).
4. The gospel is to give men assurance of eternal life already had (I John 5:13).
5. The gospel is to convert saved men from error to the truth (James 5:19-20).
6. The gospel is to get men fellowship with God and His Son (I John 1:1-5).
7. The gospel is never a savor of death unto life (II Cor 2:14-17). Believe it!
8. Ministers are to feed sheep (John 21:15-17) and perfect saints (Eph 4:12).

Q. Ordinances cannot help and were never intended to assist with regeneration.
1. Baptism is the answer of a good conscience – already born again (I Pe 3:21).
2. The Lord's Supper (damn the RCC Mass) is only a symbolic remembrance.

R. God's glory is the goal of all His works including salvation and regeneration.
1. Regeneration, a key part of salvation, is all for God's glory (I Cor 1:26-31).
2. God will not allow men to boast or to obligate Him at all (Rom 4:4; Ep 2:9).
3. The purpose of salvation is God showing His kindness, not ours (Eph 2:7).

S. We must correct all notions Jesus intended for Nicodemus to initiate it himself.
1. Most read John 3:3, due to conditioning, as an exhortation to save himself.
2. There is nothing you can do to initiate or complete your own regeneration.
3. There is nothing in you that could ever desire to do such a thing to yourself.
4. There is no Bible mention to look back at any such decision for assurance.
5. Bible evidence for assurance is present godly and holy living (II Pet 1:5-11).

6. Paul looked back at his faithful works, not at Damascus Road (II Tim 4:7-8).
7. II Corinthians 6:1-2 is abused … yesterday, today, or tomorrow? Grow up!

T. Are we to help others get born again? Is it our evangelistic duty to regenerate?
1. We cannot help, so the question lacks any spiritual intelligence or integrity.
2. There is nothing in the Bible here or elsewhere for us to assist regeneration.
3. There is much about initial conversion e.g. John 1:41, 45; Romans 10:1-3.
4. There is much about subsequent conversion e.g. Gal 6:1; James 5:19-20.
5. An error here creates human arrogance, manipulation, and a heavy burden.

U. Decisional regeneration + once saved, always saved … is a double heresy.
1. No man is saved by a decision for Jesus. No man may presume on such.
2. But then to tell him that he can live any way he wants is a double heresy.
3. We believe in the certainty of salvation far more than they can conceive.
4. Once Saved, Always Saved.
5. Salvation by Works.

V. We must divide and separate regeneration from conversion as different things.
1. Correct doctrine is by rightly dividing concepts in scripture (II Tim 2:15).
2. Regeneration is the supernatural gift of spiritual life to a dead sinner by God.
3. Conversion is the educational process of learning truth and conforming to it.
4. Confusion about these terms shows Bible ignorance and leads to heresy.
5. This distinction is a main distinguishing doctrine of our church and faith.
6. After his failure at the crucifixion, Peter needed to be converted (Lu 22:32).
7. Our work is converting brethren, bringing them back to truth (Jas 5:19-20).
8. Compare the two … Regeneration & Conversion.
9. Compare the two … Regeneration & Conversion Compared – Slides.

W. Other thoughts regarding this great doctrine of being born again can profit us.
1. How does the age of accountability work with being born again? Two ways?
2. Must infants be born again without means or do they sneak in by innocence?
3. How can or does God save infants … the way described above for all elect.
4. Easy-believism is due to faulty soteriology or doctrine, not merely methods.
5. False doctrine saddens the righteous and strengthens sinners (Ezek 13:22).
6. Going forward, so popular in many churches, is not salvation in any sense.
7. Truth – God sovereign and man responsible by regeneration and conversion.
8. Food is never to obtain physical life … any more than truth is for spiritual.
9. Children of God by evangelistic or financial means is way outside scripture.
10. If regeneration were not preaching's goal, profitable content would result.

11. Will the flesh choose to be spiritual … if fed a warm meal when hungry? … if allowed to play on the church basketball team? … if it hears, "Just As I Am," fifteen times? … if it watches a horror film about hell?

X. We must prove we are born again, or the doctrine is a vain intellectual exercise.
    1. You must believe the gospel concerning Jesus Christ (John 5:24; I Jn 5:1,4).
    2. You must love the brethren, especially the least for Him (I Jn 4:7; 3:14; 5:1).
    3. You must do righteousness, for that is part of His character (I John 2:28-29).
    4. You must not sin habitually, for the regenerate seed will not (I Jn 3:9; 5:18).
    5. You must choose and do God's pleasure, as given in context (Phil 2:12-16).
    6. You must be a new creature with good works (Ep 2:10; Ga 6:15; II Co 5:17).
    7. You must walk in the Spirit bearing His fruit (Gal 5:16-25; Romans 8:1-14).

Y. Why were you born again? So that you may fulfill your glorious destiny as son.
    1. You were born to bring forth specific good works pleasing God (Eph 2:10).
    2. You are to show the world the character of God as His son (Phil 2:14-16).
    3. You are to show the world the character of God as His son (Matt 5:43-48).
    4. For you to please your Father as dear, obedient children (Ep 5:1; I Pet 1:14).
    5. For you to purify yourself as one truly appreciative of adoption (I Jn 3:1-3).
    6. For you to have intimate and personal fellowship (Gal 4:6-7; Rom 8:14-17).
    7. For you to glorify God by showing forth praises for His love (I Peter 2:9).

Z. What should we do about it? What must we do as a result of this great doctrine?
    1. We should purify ourselves like Him for His great love for us (I John 3:1-3).
    2. We are bound to give thanks always for His choice to save us (II Thes 2:13).
    3. We should see the blessing as transcendent favor (Rev 20:6; Luke 10:20).

AA. These documents are very important to rightly identify and time the new birth.
    1. Five phases.
    2. Regeneration and Conversion.
    3. When was Cornelius Saved?
    4. Calvinism Corrected.
    5. For right order of the Three 'B's.
    6. Grammar of Salvation.
    7. Regeneration compared.
    8. Invitations.
    9. Why Preach the Gospel?

He cannot see.

A. Without being born again, a man cannot discern or perceive the reign of Christ.

1. Recall how John introduced universal blindness in his preamble (John 1:5).
2. Jesus taught in prayer about God hiding and revealing truth (Mat 11:25-27).
3. Men varied greatly on how they viewed miracles of Jesus (Luke 11:14-23).
4. Peter knew it before, but God had to reveal basic information (Matt 16:17).
5. Only the spiritual man resulting from a new birth can discern (I Cor 2:6-15).
6. The devil blinds men's minds so they cannot see without God (II Cor 4:1-6).
7. Until God grants repentance, men are taken captive by Satan (II Ti 2:25-26).

B. Jesus condemned the Jews for discerning weather but not Him (Matt 16:1-4).
   1. The signs of the times were fulfillment of prophecies about the Messiah and the incredible signs and wonders He performed (Matt 3:1-3; 4:17; 11:1-6).
   2. Why did they not understand Daniel's simple prophecy of 483 years to Him?
   3. They knew His birthplace in Bethlehem but did not follow up to find Christ.
   4. How could they miss obvious miracles (John 11:45-48; 18:4-9; Acts 6:15)?
   5. Even the stupendous events of His crucifixion and resurrection did not help.

C. It is God that makes hearing ears and seeing eyes in both respects (Prov 20:12).
   1. Proverb 20:12 commentary.
   2. Moses explained seeing without seeing or perceiving (Deu 29:1-4; Jer 5:21).
   3. There is hearing/seeing, and there is real seeing that is different (Job 42:5-6).
   4. You may see men like trees; you may see every man clearly (Mark 8:24-25).
   5. There is ordinary depraved blindness and divine judicial blindness (Is 6:9-13; 29:9-16,18,24; Matt 13:14-15; 15:7-9; John 12:37-41; Acts 28:23-29).
   6. There is regenerative sight and also conversion sight (Acts 26:18; Eph 1:18).
   7. Jesus declared only those of God could hear with understanding (Jn 8:43,47).
   8. He said while preaching that only hearing ears could (Matt 11:15; 13:9,43).

D. The kingdom of God is mainly spiritual, invisible to the eyes (Luke 17:20-21).
   1. Though there were stupendous signs and wonders that could easily be seen.
   2. But the connection between miracles, prophecies, and Jesus escaped them.
   3. The spiritual truth of the Son of God and His spiritual realities were hidden.

E. What will you show a man before being born again in order to be born again?
   1. Will you show him the wordless book, which he cannot see and cannot see?
   2. Will you show him John 3:16 and tell of heaven and hell – he cannot get it.
   3. If he cannot see without being born again, seeing cannot be the means of it.
   4. Jesus or the apostles never used any gimmicks or manipulation to help sight.

F. If this is true, we must be thankful for seeing any truth (Gen 32:10; Matt 13:16).

G. If this is true, we must beg God for sight to see precious things (Psalm 119:18).

H. A PowerPoint sermon, Right Side Up.

I. A PowerPoint sermon, Vain Thoughts.

The kingdom of God.

A. What reign and rule of God did Jesus intend as a thing natural man cannot see?
   1. A kingdom is the domain of a king; his royal, monarchial reign over things.
   2. Nicodemus did not ask about heaven, so do not force that one (II Tim 4:18); there is no reason to leap to eternal glory when another kingdom was there.
   3. Nicodemus had made an observation that was purely kingdom (Luke 11:20).
   4. There was real kingdom power then present that was missed by most, and many miss the same kingdom today by prophetic corruptions to pervert it.
   5. A kingdom was there, which men entered, though most could not perceive it.
   6. This kingdom and its King had been prophesied (Ps 2:6; 45:1-7; 110:1; Is 9:6-7; 55:3-4; Jer 23:5; 30:9; 33:15-18; Ezek 34:23-24; 37:24-25; Dan 2:44; 7:14; 9:24-25; Hos 3:5; Am 9:11; Mic 5:2; Hag 2:6-9; Zech 9:9; Matt 2:1-6).
   7. Nicodemus was talking to the King of the kingdom without fully grasping it.
   8. John and Jesus declared it; men entered it (Matt 3:2; 4:17; 11:12; 21:31-32).
   9. Jesus identified His kingdom different from other kingdoms (Luke 17:20-21; John 6:15; 18:36; Acts 2:36; 5:31; Rom 14:17; Rev 1:5-6).
   10. This kingdom comes in degrees of power and manifestation (Matt 13:31-33; 28:18; Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:33-36; I Cor 15:24-28; II Tim 4:18; Heb 2:5-9).
   11. Jesus has been reigning over all as David (Matt 28:18; John 3:35; Acts 10:36; Rom 9:5; Eph 1:20-23; Phil 2:9-11; Heb 1:1-4; Rev 3:7; 5:5; 22:16).
   12. The crucial issue is whether you see this King and kingdom and live like it!
   13. More of this kingdom … Gospel Millennium.
   14. Is Jesus your Lord?

B. The kingdom of God here is also the kingdom of Christ, for He is the King of it.
   1. God gave Jesus a kingdom by putting Him on David's throne (Luk 1:32-33).
   2. It is one and the same kingdom – all rule of God put under Christ (Eph 5:5), the only exception to Christ's rule is God Himself (I Cor 15:27; Heb 2:8).
   3. The Jews knew Messiah the Prince was to be king (Dan 9:24-25; Mat 2:1-6).
   4. Jesus referred to the kingdom of God as His own kingdom (John 18:36-37).

C. The universal kingdom is God's rule over all things anywhere (I Chr 29:11-12).
   1. God's dominion and kingdom is eternal over heaven and earth (Da 4:34-35).
   2. God reigns as King over this kingdom (Ps 47:7-8; 103:19; 145:13; Je 10:10).
   3. This kingdom begins and ends in eternity and has unconditional citizenship.
   4. Jesus reigned at His ascension (Ps 2:1-12; Ep 1:20-23; Heb 2:5-9; Rev 2:27).
   5. Jesus is the Blessed and Only Potentate over all the authority in the universe, including angels good

and bad, the spirits of believers in heaven, and so on.

D. The Israelite kingdom was God's rule over Jews as a nation (II Chr 9:8; 13:5,8).
   1. The Israel kingdom began at Sinai and ended with John Baptist's generation.
   2. It was visibly the congregation of the LORD or church (De 23:1-3; Ac 7:38).
   3. Citizenship in this kingdom was by physical birth and/or by circumcision.
   4. This kingdom was taken from the Jews for Gentiles (Mat 21:43; Acts 15:16).
   5. Scofield teaches Israel will yet have her greatest glory (SRB, p. 1204, 1206).

E. The regenerate kingdom is the Christ's rule over and with His saints (Col 1:13).
   1. When the elect are regenerated, they reign with Christ (Ep 2:4-6 cp 1:19-23).
   2. This kingdom is based on Christ's vital relationship to saints and churches.
   3. At His return, Christ gives this kingdom to God (I Cor 15:23-25; Heb 2:13).
   4. This vital kingdom begins and ends with the plan of salvation (Re 1:6; 20:6).
   5. This distinction seeks to identify the truly elect from merely false professors.

F. The heavenly kingdom is Christ's final rule over all from heaven (Rev 19:16).
   1. The heavenly kingdom begins at the Second Coming (Re 11:15; I Co 15:24).
   2. At this time it will be clearly evident who is King of kings (I Tim 6:15-16).
   3. Citizenship is by election and the book of life (II Peter 1:10-11; Rev 21:27).
   4. We apply "inherit" here (I Cor 6:9-10; 15:50; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:5; James 2:5).
   5. Here is where other verses fit (II Timothy 4:1,18; I Thess 2:12; Acts 14:22).
   6. Here is where other parables of the kingdom are applied (Matt 13:24-43).

G. The kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven are clearly identical kingdoms.
   1. Since the God of heaven set up the kingdom, either name works (Dan 2:44).
   2. C.I. Scofield teaches these two kingdoms are not the same (SRB, pg. 1003).
   3. Jesus Christ used both expressions to teach the same lesson (Matt 19:23-24).
   4. Luke used kingdom of God for quotes Matthew used kingdom of heaven (Mat 5:3 cp Lu 6:20; Mat 8:11-12 cp Lu 13:28-29; Mat 10:1-7 cp Lu 9:1-2; Mat 11:11 cp Lu 7:28; Mat 11:12 cp Lu 16:16; Matt 13:11 cp Lu 8:10; Mat 13:31-33 cp Lu 13:18-21; Mat 18:3 cp Luk 18:17; Mat 19:14 cp Lu 18:16).

H. The gospel kingdom is Jesus Christ's reign over all for His saints and churches.
   1. This phrase is not in the Bible but is to help identify or connect the kingdom.
   2. The phrase gospel of the kingdom is clearly in the Bible (Matt 4:23; 24:14).
   3. The preaching of the gospel was connected to it (Mat 24:14; Acts 28:23-31).
   4. This kingdom replaced the Israelite kingdom by John (Luke 16:16), though the two kingdoms ran parallel to each other for 40 yrs (Heb 9:10; 12:26-27).
   5. It is made up primarily of Gentiles in rebuilding David's kingdom (Acts 15:13-18), but Jews are also included as part of one body (Eph 2:11-22).
   6. It included destruction of offenders by Jesus the King in 70 A.D., when He ground to powder His

rebel enemies (Matt 21:33-45; 22:1-7; Lu 19:14,27).

7. This kingdom is connected to the universal kingdom, because Jesus now reigns over all God had reigned over alone (Ps 8:1-9; He 2:5-9; I Cor 15:27).
8. This kingdom is connected to the regenerate kingdom, because of the vital qualifying for this kingdom (John 3:3,5; Eph 2:1-3; Col 1:13; Rev 20:6).
9. There is a spiritual aspect for elect only (Mat 22:8-14; I Cor 12:13; Ac 2:47).
10. This kingdom is connected to the heavenly kingdom, for that is where it ends and we go, and we are related to the king and church there (Heb 12:22-24).
11. Citizenship is by repentance and baptism (Luke 7:29-30 cp Matt 21:31-32).
12. By baptism, we answer God with a good conscience of Jesus' resurrection that led to His seat on heaven's throne over all principalities (I Pet 3:21-22).
13. Ordinances and men in authority are its character (Matt 19:28; Lu 22:29-30).
14. It included supernatural power of God to cast out devils and heal (Lu 11:20).
15. Membership in this kingdom makes us strangers and pilgrims here, for we are a holy nation unseen by the world (I Pe 2:9-12; I Co 2:14-16; I Jn 3:1-3).
16. This kingdom is not of this world and was invisible (Lu 17:20-21; Jn 18:36).
17. Here is where many kingdom parables are to be applied (Matt 13:44-46).
18. Here is where other verses also fit (Rev 1:9; 12:10; I Cor 15:24; Rom 14:17).

I. The crucial issue is whether you see this King and kingdom and live like it!

J. Dispensationalists and most conservative or fundamental Christians do not believe Jesus is reigning now on David's throne or that the kingdom has come.

1. They foolishly look for a carnal millennial kingdom of Jews in Palestine with animal sacrifices and Jesus on a throne as fulfilling these prophecies.
2. They heretically claim Jesus offered it to the Jews, and when they rejected it, He had to stick in the church age of Gentiles as a reactive step to save face.
3. The carnal Jewish Dispensationalists tried to make Jesus king, but He refused their carnal ideas and drove them away with hard doctrine (Jn 6:15).
4. John and Jesus announced the kingdom at hand (Matthew 3:1-2; 4:17; 10:7).
5. Men pressed into it through John (Matt 11:12; 21:31; Luke 7:29-30; 16:16).
6. Jesus declared, No doubt! the kingdom had come (Lu 11:17-20; 17:20-22).
7. He charged His apostles to administer rules and ordinances (Luke 22:16-30).
8. The apostle Paul preached the same kingdom as then present (Acts 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23,31; Rom 14:17; I Cor 4:20; Col 1:13; Heb 12:28-29).
9. John preached the kingdom as then present (John 3:1-3; Rev 1:9; 12:10).
10. The thief on the cross, divinely inspired, knew where Jesus went (Lu 23:42).

K. For kingdom and millennium … Gospel Millennium.

L.

M. Jesus Christ as Son of David took the gospel kingdom God set up during Rome.
    1. This kingdom had been long prophesied, but Daniel identified it (Dan 2:44).
    2. It was literally and specifically set up under the Roman Empire (Luke 3:1-4).
    3. John and Jesus preached this kingdom, and men pressed into it (Luke 16:16).
    4. It takes violence to enter this kingdom, the violence of repentance, for God's approval by turning your life upside down (Matthew 11:12; Luke 19:8-10).
    5. The apostles preached Christians under another king, Jesus; but His kingdom was different from Caesar's, so there was no threat to Rome (Acts 17:7).
    6. When Paul wrote Timothy epistles, he called Christ, King (I Timothy 1:17).
    7. The kingdom is much more than little rules of Christian liberty (Rom 14:17).
    8. The N.T. gospel is the covenant and terms of your King; it describes what He has done for you, what is awaiting you, and what you can do for Him.
    9. The kingdom was taken from the Jews and given to Gentiles (Mat 21:33-45).
    10. Jesus as King gave N.T. offices, which is why Paul charged Timothy with aspects of Christ's reign (Mark 13:34; Eph 4:8; I Tim 6:13-16; II Tim 4:1-2).

N. This King is also your Advocate, Apostle, Bishop, Bridegroom, Captain, Cornerstone, Counselor, Deliverer, Desire of all Nations, Everlasting Father, Executioner, Firstborn from the dead, Great High Priest, High Priest, Judge, Life, Lord, Master, Mediator, the Mighty God, Potentate, Priest, Prince, Prophet, Propitiation, Ransom, Redeemer, Resurrection, Saviour, Second Adam, Shepherd, Stone, Truth, and the Way.

O. King Jesus raided the kingdom of Satan, where you were a willing captive, and delivered you from his palace (Luke 11:20-22; John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Eph 2:1-3; Col 1:12-14; 2:13-15; Heb 2:14-15; I John 3:8; Rev 9:11; 12:7-11).
    1. There was a conflict and war like you have never read anywhere else, which was a spiritual and literal battle between Jesus and the devil.
    2. This is the gospel: Satan captured Adam and took our race captive, where we were held helpless until our Prince delivered us by death, and He is coming again to raise our bodies and take us home with Him forever!
    3. The conflict is not yet over, but we know the certain outcome (Rev 20:7-10).

P. When was the kingdom of God set up in the earth under the reign of the Christ?
    1. In the days of the Roman Empire, just as Daniel had prophesied (Dan 2:44).
    2. Luke was careful to describe John and Jesus under Rome (Lu 2:1-7; 3:1-3).
    3. Any idea to the contrary is heresy and destroys Daniel's prophetic integrity.
    4. John and Jesus taught kingdom time at hand (Matt 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; Mk 1:15).
    5. Righteous and wise men by the Spirit expected it then (Lu 2:25,38; 23:51).
    6. Men pressed in under John and Jesus (Luke 16:16; Matt 11:12; 21:28-32).
    7. Did Jesus cast out devils? The kingdom had come (Matt 12:28; Luke 11:20).
    8. Some living at that time would see the kingdom in greater power (Mark 9:1).

9. Jesus promised the apostles a role and table in His kingdom (Lu 22:28-30).
10. Peter used his keys on Pentecost and put Christ on a throne (Acts 2:30-38).
11. Paul knew the Colossian saints were already in the kingdom (Col 1:13).
12. John was confident the believers he wrote were in it with him (Rev 1:6,9).
13. A loud voice said the kingdom to arrive with Christ's ascension (Rev 12:10).
14. If the kingdom is yet future, then these are next to last days, not last days.

Q. How did men and do men get into this kingdom of God and of Jesus Christ?
1. Repentance and allegiance to Lord Jesus (Mat 11:12; 21:31-32; Lu 7:29-30).
2. You submit to Jesus Christ as your King by repentance, faith, and baptism.
3. Peter preached the same message on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:33-39).
4. Philip preached the very same message to the men of Samaria (Acts 8:12).
5. Paul preached the kingdom (Acts 19:8; 20:25; 28:23,31; Heb 12:22-29).

R. Is any other kingdom described or foretold in the Bible like men propose?
1. No, Paul told Jews that the gospel kingdom was the last one (Heb 12:22-29), which only changes in location as it is delivered up to God (I Cor 15:24-28).
2. The heavenly kingdom is this kingdom's eternal realization (II Tim 4:18), when the citizens on earth and those in heaven shall meet to part no more.
3. The kingdom Jesus will deliver to God is the final phase (I Cor 15:24-28).

S. How does the kingdom of God or of Christ relate to the church and churches?
1. The kingdom of Christ is larger than local churches, to account for saints in heaven, angels good and bad, bad churches, saints between churches, etc.
2. Local churches of Jesus Christ are visible outposts of His invisible kingdom.
3. Local churches are subsets of the kingdom of Jesus Christ but not equal to it.
4. Baptized believers between churches for various reasons are in the kingdom.
5. Thus the superset of the kingdom includes Christ's churches and believers.
6. The kingdom was present with John, but local churches not until years later.
7. Baptized believers entered His kingdom, but local churches did not exist yet.
8. You enter kingdom by repentance and baptism to Christ before membership.
9. The kingdom is always singular, but local churches are always plural usage.
10. The only kingdom = church identity is the general assembly (Heb 12:22-24).
11. What happens to a man between churches? Is he outside Christ's kingdom?
12. If he obeys Christ His King to separate from a disobedient church, does He lose his place, power, and presence of Christ and His Spirit for obeying?
13. When men make the kingdom of God equal to a local church or denomination, they involve themselves in various heresies and problems.
14. Kingdom = local church: baptism is door to church without mutual consent.

15. Kingdom = local church: nonresident member heresy with no N.T. function!
16. Kingdom = local church: perversions of scripture like I Corinthians 6:9-11!
17. Kingdom = local church: ministers are neutered outside church (see Tit 1:5)!
18. Kingdom = local church: you lose the Spirit to obey Him to leave a church!
19. Kingdom = local church: those above are in no local church (Heb 12:22-24)!
20. Kingdom = local church: death severs church relationship but not kingdom!
21. It is shameful idolizers of local churches have the least functional churches.
22. What about churches without their candlestick? Still in the kingdom, or not?
23. A division must be made among legal, spiritual, and practical local churches.
24. It is wrong to say local churches combined are a church e.g. “PB Church.”
25. When will or did Jesus build His church on the confession of Peter?

T. Questions to be answered in order to more fully understand Christ’s kingdom.
    1. When does a person enter each of the kingdoms?
    2. How extensive and inclusive is each of the kingdoms?
    3. Which includes heaven’s saints and angels (Heb 12:22-29; Eph 1:10,20-23)?
    4. How does the family of God relate to the kingdom (Eph 3:15)?
    5. What is the connection of kingdom and church (singular) in Matt 16:13-20?
    6. Are local churches the visible manifestation of the gospel kingdom?
    7. Is the universal church or body of Christ (singular) the family of God?
    8. Is the universal church or body of Christ (singular) the redeemed kingdom?

U. Much more could be written of God’s kingdom, church, family, churches, etc.
    1. There are many aspects or phases of God’s kingdom for us to rightly divide.
    2. A full study of the kingdom in all aspects is beyond the scope of this study.

V. The crucial issue is whether you see this King and kingdom and live like it!

W. These documents are important to rightly identify and appreciate the kingdom.
    1. Gospel Millennium.
    2. Two Parables.
    3. Witness of 70 A.D.
    4. Five Kingdoms.
    5. Baptism and Membership.
    6. Jesus Our King.
    7. King and His Kingdom.
    8. Kingdom Duties.
    9. Kingdom Warfare.
    10. Kingdom Priorities.

11. What of the Land?
12. The Israel of God.
13. Acts 15:16 and Futurists.
14. The Seed of Abraham?
15. Jesus is Lord of All.

4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

Nicodemus saith unto him.

A. Nicodemus had heard metaphorical language for a doctrine he had never heard.
B. Men always have questions and "solutions"; they should listen to learn wisdom.
C. The value of his response is to (1) listen and (2) think spiritually (I Cor 2:13).

How can a man be born when he is old?

A. Like the Futurists and Dispensationalists today, the Jews tended to be literalists.
B. By his use of born and old, Nicodemus is only thinking about a biological birth.
C. He should have wisely asked, "Lord, what do you mean by being born again?"
D. Recall how long Elihu listened to Job and his friends before giving his opinion.
E. Wisdom receives truth with a ready mind, not preformed or skeptical questions.

Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

A. What an absurdity by trying to press a natural perspective on spiritual words.
B. Lord, help us believe the Spirit's use of words and not jump to natural ideas.
    1. The Jews' idea of an earthly, civil kingdom caused them to miss their King.
    2. Jesus had already confused their literal folly by His "temple" (John 2:18-22).
    3. The Spirit uses words differently than Webster or Oxford (I Cor 2:6-16).
C. Much folly in interpretation could be avoided by ending a literal obsession.
    1. Charismatics cannot believe Acts 2 is fulfilled, since the moon is not blood.
    2. Futurists cannot believe Matt 24 is fulfilled, for they have not seen lightning.
    3. Dispensationalists cannot believe Abraham desired heaven over Palestine.
D. Bible prophets used similitudes and signs, so beware (Hosea 12:10; Rev 1:1).
    1. We want the Holy Spirit's use of words, not our literal, naturalistic usage.
    2. The Bible is a spiritual book with many spiritual metaphors for us to learn.
E. Was Nicodemus foolish, scornful, or skeptical? Or ignorant of new doctrine?
    1. In light of John 2:23-25, Jesus honored Nicodemus with detailed doctrine.
    2. In light of many Bible warnings against sharing wisdom with fools, our Lord's continued explanation

to him indicate good character and motives.

3. Jesus did not deal this way with other Pharisees or other rulers of the Jews.
4. Therefore, we conclude Nicodemus was ignorant of Christ's new doctrine.
5. There is no need to ridicule him based on what follows in John 3:9-13.

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee.

A. Our Lord had to answer a ruler of the Jews that was foolishly literal and carnal.
   1. Just as earlier, the Jews did not understand His metaphors (John 2:18-22).
   2. Nicodemus is about to hear the gift of truth by divine revelation from Jesus.

B. Those following the Jews today, futurists or Dispensationalists, are the same.
   1. They are strict literalists (where it fits their scheme) and carnally minded.
   2. They despise spiritual fulfillments for the kingdom, Israel, prophecy, etc.
   3. They can only see the kingdom as a carnal reign for Jesus in decrepit Israel.
   4. They can only see Israel or Jews as the biological children of Abraham.
   5. They see prophecies like Isaiah 11 or Haggai 2 as needing literal fulfillment.
   6. Yet, they will not be literal where they should be (Mat 24:32-35; II The 2:3).

Except a man be born of water.

A. This phrase here has been the inspired noose to hang many foolish interpreters.
   1. John 3:5 and water has been abused for more heresies than likely all others.
   2. Well over 90% of world professing "Christians" (2.2 billion), think baptism.
   3. The center-column references in your Bible likely connect to baptism verses.
   4. Here is a danger of study Bibles, for the words of man redirect God's words.
   5. Since being born again is the argument, then baptismal regeneration results.
   6. Could God have written John 3:5 differently? Of course, but He chose not!
   7. We know God could have worded it differently to avoid the heretical usage.
   8. But He also inspired Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Gal 3:27; and I Pet 3:21.
   9. For confusion … Is God the Author of Confusion?

B. Once the necessity of baptism for eternal life is assumed, other heresies result.
   1. Many infants used to die, so infant baptism was invented to save them, for these heretics believed the truth about original sin from Romans 5:12-14.
   2. Since much water was not always available for immersion, then any use of water was acceptable for baptism by sprinkling, pouring, rubbing, etc.
   3. Since believers' baptism is obvious to some, they must get rid of original sin and/or invent an age of

accountability to get all dying children into heaven.

4. For a cult like Mormonism of very recent origin (1830), they had to invent baptism for the dead in order to connect dead ancestors to Joseph Smith.
5. If water was impractical, Rome has baptism of desire and baptism of blood.
6. If you were fearful of a miscarriage, Rome invented intrauterine baptism.
7. Most of these heresies clearly would have comforted women (II Tim 3:6-7).
8. Yes, it is true, these heresies all arose from the error of baptism for salvation.
9. Some PB pastors think the water is baptism for Spirit entry to a local church.
10. Baptists relating water to baptism here play with a blowtorch in a refinery!

C. There is no baptism here for numerous reasons that honest Bible students grasp.
   1. Ignore the center column references or other such helpful hints suggesting it.
   2. This phrase cannot teach what is denied by the rest of scripture (II Pet 1:20).
   3. We know baptism is not involved in us being born again (John 1:13; 3:8; 5:21,24-25; Rom 8:15; 9:15-16; I Cor 2:14-16; Eph 2:1-10; Titus 3:5; etc.).
   4. Since the will of man is ruled out, how will you be baptized without man?!
   5. I Peter 3:21 rejects any cleansing of sin and requires birth before conscience!
   6. Let us restate for our children's sakes that the saved thief was not baptized.
   7. The three B's are important here … Three B's of Baptism.
   8. Baptism is far too late to help … for it follows belief, which follows birth.
   9. The only washing we need is that legal washing by Christ's blood (Re 1:5).
   10. The only washing we need is the vital washing by the Spirit's word (Tit 3:5).
   11. This must be the most abominable, profane perversion of true doctrine ever.
   12. We are confident in God's word against it (Ps 119:128,98-100; Job 32:6-9).
   13. Yet, we know the most important question is our evidence of regeneration.
   14. Against baptism regeneration … Proper Design.
   15. Consider the situation with John's baptism … years from Pentecost.

D. There is no natural birth here for very valid reasons both natural and scriptural.
   1. Some think Jesus said we must be born of amniotic fluid to get into heaven.
   2. But … we are not born of water … maybe after, from, with … but not of it!
   3. Since it is compared to birth of the Spirit … we know of means by the Spirit.
   4. In no sense are we born by water, for it does not assist birth but hinders it.
   5. The usual events are for the sac to break and fluid to gush out before labor.
   6. Nowhere in the Bible is there any hint of language supporting such usage.
   7. Should we find doctrinal value in mucus plug or bloody show? I trow not!
   8. Furthermore, by taking such a view, are all aborted children then reprobates?
   9. Yet, we believe John the Baptist born again before being so born of water.

10. There is no reason to assume Jesus accommodated Nicodemus naturalism.
11. There is no contextual need for such, as 3:6 refers to 3:4 for one again birth.
12. Does not such instinctive, literal thoughts follow Nicodemus' hermeneutic?

E. There is a very good interpretation of these words that exalts the Spirit's role.
   1. The verse is only a repetitive construction referring to the Holy Spirit twice.
   2. It is not uncommon in the Bible – one you are familiar with is Abba, Father.
   3. Jesus, in this very book, defined water as symbol for the Spirit (Jn 7:37-39).
   4. Earthly birth produces only flesh; birth by water and Spirit produces spirit.
   5. There are more uses of water for Spirit in the Old Testament, which Nicodemus would have been familiar with (Isaiah 44:3-4; Ezek 36:25-28).
   6. Limit marginal uses of water for Spirit to avoid misuse (Jn 4:14; Re 22:17).
   7. A nearly identical repetition is in Titus 3:5 with washing and Holy Ghost!
   8. Instead of the agent of water and Spirit, it is action of water and the Spirit.
   9. There is only one event in both places; there is only one operative Source.
   10. The spiritual interpretation is correct physiologically, scripturally, etc.

F. But does not the AND in this verse and in Titus 3:5 indicate two events?
   1. Titus 3:5 is easier in that both events are clearly vital quickening/creation.
   2. The primary use of AND as a conjunction is indeed connective or additive (meaning besides, side by side with, along with, or in addition to), and this is the general use in the Bible and other usage, which would by connecting two words or phrases indicate that two different and separate things are under consideration.
   3. However, the Oxford English Dictionary also allows these epexegesis senses for AND … II.9. … Introducing an explanatory, amplificative, or parenthetic clause or phrase … and IV.13 … Also, even.
   4. Here is a Bible example using AND and EVEN as synonyms: God AND the Father (Eph 5:20; Col 1:3; 3:17; Jas 1:27) … and … God EVEN the Father (Rom 15:6; I Cor 15:24; II Cor 1:3; Jas 3:9).
   5. According to those preferring Greek, the Greek kai, which is translated AND in John 3:5 is also translated EVEN in other places, as in the previous examples about God the Father. Strong's Concordance indicates that the Greek kai is translated AND 8173 times and EVEN 108 times.
   6. Last, and maybe not least, considering the previous paragraph, these eight commentators all understood one event of regeneration by WATER and SPIRIT, where WATER is the agent for cleansing and a symbol of the SPIRIT that Nicodemus should have known: Calvin, Clarke, Gill, Henry, JFB, Poole, Spurgeon, and Trapp.
   7. Nine commentators ignore a natural birth; water = baptism (Barnes); water = the Spirit (Calvin; Clarke; Gill; JFB; Henry; Poole; Spurgeon; Trapp).
   8. Other uses of water or related words are other phases of salvation (Is 1:16; Jer 4:14; John 6:63; Acts 22:16; I Cor 6:11; II Cor 7:1; Eph 5:26; Jas 4:8).
   9. KAI as explicative.

And of the Spirit.

A. See the notes immediately above that water and of the Spirit are the same thing.

B. The Spirit according to His own will in Trinitarian agreement regenerates men.
   1. It is not the will of the flesh or of man but rather by God Himself (Jn 1:13).
   2. Jesus credits the Spirit in this place with the sovereign will of God (Jn 3:8).
   3. Jesus will later teach the Spirit quickens and the flesh is worthless (Jn 6:63).

C. Rather than question or resent a double reference to the Holy Spirit, embrace it!
   1. He is God, but not God the Father or incarnate, but rather God within us!
   2. Paul gives the Holy Ghost clear credit for regeneration/renewing (Titus 3:5).
   3. Our quickening into life is by the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:18-20 cp I Peter 3:18).
   4. You can call Jesus "Lord," but it only counts if it is by the Spirit (I Co 12:3).
   5. God's Holy Spirit works on men by His own sovereign will (I Cor 12:11).
   6. If alive and living in the Spirit, then you should walk in Him (Gal 5:16,25).
   7. He sheds abroad God's love in our hearts to cry Abba, Father (Romans 5:5).
   8. Do not presume justification unless you live the Spirit over flesh (Rom 8:1).
   9. What do you mind? Think about? It shows regeneration or not (Rom 8:5).
   10. If you lack the Spirit of Christ, you are in the flesh and not His (Rom 8:9).
   11. The real born again sons of God live against the flesh (Romans 8:13-14).
   12. For the Spirit as our earnest and seal … Purchased and Sealed.

He cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

A. See reasons above in notes for 3:3 that it is the gospel kingdom, not heaven.

B. If you cannot enter the gospel kingdom for this lack, you cannot enter heaven.

C. Men were entering the gospel kingdom then (Luke 16:16; 11:52; Matt 23:13).

D. They entered it by first perceiving it and then submitting to its King and rules.

E. The only kingdom in John's gospel is this kingdom (Jn 18:36 cp Lu 17:20-21).

F. Why would we assume any other kingdom than the main one of His teaching, especially at this early stage in His ministry comparable to the other gospels?

G. Why would we assume any other kingdom, since see was used concerning it?

H. Why would we assume any other kingdom, since Nicodemus's words are more closely connected to our Lord's earthly ministry than heaven (Luke 11:20).

I. It is primarily Dispensational heresy that causes men to discount the kingdom.

J. False professors only appear to enter, but they have not truly, for they are not regenerate, and they shall be cast out (Matt 13:24-25; 13:47-50; I John 2:19).

K. Are you born again? Do you see the kingdom? Have you entered? Is it obvious?

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh.

A. There is no need to think Jesus here explained two different births from 3:5.
   1. It has already been proven that there is only one birth in 3:5 – regeneration.
   2. Jesus is instead reaching back to 3:4, where Nicodemus raised natural birth.

B. Nicodemus, there is a second birth totally different from your first natural birth.
   1. The two births have two very different results as to the nature of that birthed.
   2. The fleshly birth by two flesh parents yields a child with only a flesh nature.

C. Flesh is a spiritual term describing depraved humanity (Gen 5:3; Job 14:14; Ps 51:5; 58:3; John 1:13; Rom 8:7; I Pet 3:21; II Cor 7:1).

And that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

A. The real comparison is between John 3:4 and 3:5, a natural vs. a spiritual birth.

B. Jesus used the word Spirit and spirit in two different senses in only one verse.
   1. The words born of the Spirit is the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration.
   2. The words is spirit describes the spiritual nature of a man born again.
   3. He has a new spiritual nature within him compatible and discerning of God.

C. It is a bad heresy to teach steps for a man in the flesh to get himself in the spirit.
   1. Both men – a fleshly rebel man or a spiritual godly man – are born that way.
   2. The flesh is incompatible with the Spirit and will not comply (I Cor 2:14).
   3. John already ruled out any act of the will of the flesh to be born again (1:13).

7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

Marvel not that I said unto thee.

A. Jesus said that all men in general must be born again for eternal life by except.

B. Nicodemus marveled by virtue of his confused, ignorant question about birth.

C. Jesus is telling this ignorant man to simply believe regardless of the difficulties.
   1. Jesus told the ruler of a synagogue with a dead girl, Only believe (Mk 5:36)!
   2. Abraham's faith is exalted for strong faith without questions (Rom 4:17-21).

Ye must be born again.

A. Jesus here laid down a general axiom for all men to be saved, not Nicodemus.
   1. He addressed Nicodemus himself by a second person singular pronoun thee.
   2. But He laid down the axiom about regeneration with the plural pronoun ye.
   3. By this switch from singular to plural, Jesus gave a general rule for all men.

B. Some interpret this text from an Arminian perspective with the sense, Do not be shocked Nicodemus, but you personally need to be born again to be saved.
   1. Yet, after Jesus addressed Nicodemus with thee, He switched to plural ye.
   2. Jesus' words about the new birth were not about the single man Nicodemus.
   3. Arminians misunderstand and think Jesus exhorted Nicodemus to an action.
   4. Jesus did not contradict John 1:13 or proofs against decisional regeneration.
   5. Do not allow anyone to take John 3:3 or 3:5 or 3:7 to require sinner activity.

C. Some interpret this text from a hyper-Calvinistic view with the sense, Do not be shocked Nicodemus, but you personally are already born again and saved.
   1. Yet, after Jesus addressed Nicodemus with thee, He switched to plural ye.
   2. Jesus' words about the new birth were not about the single man Nicodemus.
   3. These Calvinists believe many in the world are unconverted elect/regenerate.
   4. While it may be true Nicodemus was born again, the words do not prove it.
   5. It cannot be proven for sure from this text that Nicodemus was regenerate.

D. We must interpret the text from a correct grammatical view, Do not be shocked Nicodemus, but men must be born again in my religion in order to be saved.
   1. Jesus told Nicodemus personally a rule of all men being again for salvation.
   2. This interpretation is consistent with Bible hermeneutics (Ne 8:8: II Ti 2:15).
   3. Both the Arminian and the hyper-Calvinist have violated the text's grammar.
   4. We may and should believe Nicodemus born again by 3:1-3, but not by 3:7.

E. Our Lord's point here is the axiom that regeneration is necessary to eternal life.
   1. You have no spiritual life or discernment of God without being born again.
   2. While this had to be true in the O.T. as well, it was not part of its revelation.
   3. Men are dead toward God and the things of God before it occurs (Ep 2:1-3).
   4. Men are in Satan's kingdom by nature and must be brought out (Col 1:13).
   5. Their nature must be changed to know God and do His will (Phil 2:12-16).

F. The doctrine of Jesus Christ here was contrary to all that Nicodemus believed.
   1. They assumed that the general rule was that only the Jews would be saved.
   2. They assumed that the way of salvation was the ceremonial law of Moses.
   3. They assumed that the kingdom of God was earthly and civil, not spiritual.

G. Singular and plural pronouns … Thee and Thou.

8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

The wind bloweth where it listeth.

A. Having declared the necessity of regeneration, Jesus then told how it occurred.

B. Wind blows where it chooses or wants to blow without any influence by man.
    1. Listeth. To be pleasing to. I please, choose, like, care, or desire. [OED].
    2. James 3:4 uses the exact same word to describe a ship's governor directing a ship wherever he chooses or desires it to go.
    3. Jesus used an exact variant for what was done to John (Mat 17:12; Mk 9:13).
C. Solomon wrote that wind is so out of our knowledge as to be generally ignored.
    1. Whatever God has chosen for the weather is what will occur (Eccl 11:3-6).
    2. Therefore, ignore your fears and do what needs to be done, trusting Him.
    3. We do not know the providential works of God, so we only do our little part.
D. God sends the wind – it blows where He chooses (Job 37:9-24; Ps 107:23-31).
E. See the last phrase below for Bible proof of the Holy Spirit's sovereign will.

And thou hearest the sound thereof.

A. All we can know is the effect, evidence, or results of the wind already blowing.
    1. We can by our senses discern and perceive that wind is blowing by its effect.
    2. The leaves rustling on a tree have absolutely nothing to do with directing it.
    3. They are only reacting to the wind already sent and already present on them.
B. The wind, or God the ruler of the wind, causes it to blow wherever He chooses.
C. What is the sound we can hear of the wind, when transferred to regeneration?
    1. Here we appeal again to the evidence, results, and proof of being born again.
    2. Sons of God believe the gospel concerning Jesus Christ (Jn 5:24; I Jn 5:1,4).
    3. Sons of God love brethren, especially the least, for Him (I Jn 4:7; 3:14; 5:1).
    4. Sons of God do righteousness, for that is part of His character (I Jn 2:28-29).
    5. Sons of God do not sin habitually, due to the regenerate seed (I Jn 3:9; 5:18).
    6. Sons of God choose and do God's pleasure, as in the context (Phil 2:12-16).
    7. Sons of God, new creatures, do good works (Ep 2:10; Ga 6:15; II Co 5:17).
    8. Sons of God walk in the Spirit bearing His fruit (Gal 5:16-25; Rom 8:1-14).

But canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth.

A. Discerning or perceiving effects cannot help understand origin or destination.
    1. Whence. From which place; from or out of which. From which source or origin (as a product); from which cause (as a result); from which fact or circumstance (as an inference).
    2. Whither. To what place. To what result, condition, action, subject, cause, etc. To what extent, how far?
B. We have no knowledge of where the wind comes from or when and why and as well where the wind is going or when and why.
    1. We are fully ignorant of where wind has been and where wind will go next.

2. The key is wind is sovereign, we cannot know it, and only evidence shows.

So is every one that is born of the Spirit.

A. There are in this verse three keys of comparison between wind and the Spirit.
   1. First, the wind is sovereign and chooses to blow wherever it has decided.
   2. Second, we do not know anything about the wind's origin or its destination.
   3. Third, the only thing we can know about wind is its presence by its effects.

B. We must be born again by the Holy Spirit, but the birth is beyond our influence.
   1. The Holy Spirit is totally sovereign in regenerating whomever He will.
   2. We do not know where the Spirit has been or where the Spirit will go next.
   3. We can tell that the Spirit has done His work by the evidence in the person.

C. Being born again is like how the wind blows – where and when God sends it.
   1. So. In the way or manner described, indicated, or suggested; in that style or fashion. Compare other Bible arguments based on so e.g. Romans 5:19.
   2. We cannot know the origin or destination of wind, neither can we the Spirit.
   3. We cannot find, control, or redirect the wind, neither can we with the Spirit.

D. There are no exceptions to this rule of regeneration: God saves whom He will.
   1. Every one that is born of the Spirit is born the same way – by God's choice.
   2. There is no other way to be born of the Spirit – so we are dependent on God.
   3. Therefore, all human ideas, plans, efforts are utterly vain for regeneration.

E. The Spirit clearly has a will and dispenses His spiritual gifts by it (I Cor 12:11).
   1. This agrees with God's mercy and compassion by His will (Rom 9:15-16).
   2. God works His wonders in men as it seems good to Him (Matt 11:25-26).

9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

Nicodemus answered and said unto him,

A. This ruler of the Jews heard things he had never heard before from anyone.

B. As a student and learner, he was obligated to ask about their truthfulness.

How can these things be?

A. There is no need to assume that Nicodemus was disrespectful or rebellious here.

B. The Jews thought they were the lights of the world in knowledge (Ro 2:17-20).

C. Though a ruler of the Jews, this poor man had never heard such truth before.

D. Let us be as careful as possible when God reveals new truth to us to believe it.
   1. Lets avoid being fools like the two disciples going to Emmaus (Luke 24:25).

10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel.

A. Learn it well, young men! Learn it from Elihu's pain and anger (Job 32:6-9).

B. Learn it well, young men! Learn it from David's confidence (Ps 119:98-100).

C. It is shocking, mostly for young men, to find most professionals are ignorant.

D. Recall God's judgment in ignorance (Matt 11:25-27; I Cor 1:19-20; 3:19-20).

1. Nearly all of those calling themselves Christians cannot figure out baptism.
2. They invent Limbo, age of accountability, or deny original sin for infants.

E. Men confused … Is God the Author of Confusion?

An knowest not these things?

A. Since God had not clearly revealed these things before, they were hard to know.

B. Jesus gently put this inquiring man in his place with all the Jews for ignorance.

11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee.

A. The double use of verily, verily for emphasis is only found in John (25 times!).

B. Verily. In truth or verity; as a matter of truth or fact; in deed, fact, or reality; really, truly. Placed in front of a sentence or statement as an emphatic asseveration of its truth or accuracy.

C. Jesus identified very important doctrine and truth He laid out for Nicodemus.

D. We never apologize for our confidence in the certainty of the truth we believe.

1. Elihu, David, Luke, Paul (Job 32:6-9; Ps 119:98-100; Luke 1:1-4; Ga 1:6-9).
2. Our written Bible is more sure than His voice from heaven (II Pet 1:16-21).
3. We see one-word arguments throughout the New Testament for confidence.
4. This does not mean we cannot change, but we need a tsunami of Bible proof.
5. For one-word arguments.

We speak that we do know.

A. Plural pronoun we included John Baptist, Jesus, apostles (John 1:19-23,32-33).

B. Jesus here declared that their doctrinal preaching was based on understanding.

1. The word that in this and the next clause is a pronoun for what they taught.
2. That. Of things: that = (the thing) that, that which, what.
3. See Job's similar use of that for speaking things he did not know (Job 42:3).
4. The word that does not mean they declared they knew or had seen stuff.

C. The founders of our religion spoke from knowledge, not fanciful speculation.
    1. John and Jesus had the ministry of the Holy Spirit, not seminary rabbis!
    2. They did not spout nonsense as other religions like Islam and Mormonism.
    3. When the Church Fathers often disagree, what can you assume about them?
    4. Ministers that talk about their feelings this way or that are not like the Lord.
    5. Hate words like these: I had a dream …I believe in my heart … some men have suggested … a better rendering might be … what does it mean to you?

D. Ministers of the gospel are to declare the truth without apology (II Tim 4:1-2).

And testify that we have seen.

A. Jesus here declared that their doctrinal preaching was based on visual witness.
    1. The word that in this and the next clause is a pronoun for what they taught.
    2. That. Of things: that = (the thing) that, that which, what.
    3. See Job's similar use of that for speaking things he did not know (Job 42:3).
    4. The word that does not mean they declared that they had seen or knew stuff.

B. The founders of our religion were eyewitnesses of the things that they declared.
    1. John saw the Holy Ghost descend upon Jesus at His baptism (John 1:32-34).
    2. Jesus with the eye of omniscience had seen every operation of the Spirit.
    3. The apostles witnessed transformation of men by Holy Spirit regeneration.
    4. Luke declared he had been an eyewitness of the Word (Luke 1:1-4;).
    5. The apostles had to have been eyewitnesses of the risen Lord Jesus Christ.

And ye receive not our witness.

A. You could not ask for more certain witness than understanding and visual sight.
B. Yet the Jews, especially their rulers, would not believe and submit to preaching.
C. Miracles did not move them, though the earthly phenomena should have.
D. The rejection of Christ is shown before and after this text (John 1:11; 3:32).

12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

If I have told you earthly things.

A. Remember – Jesus spoke to Nicodemus, but He addressed all the Jews or rulers.
    1. We saw this in John 3:7 with the use of the plural pronoun ye for all men.
    2. Notice here that Jesus used the second person plural you and ye four times.

B. Therefore, the doctrines under consideration include things Jesus taught earlier.
    1. Jesus did not mean carnal or worldly things, but spiritual truth of this life.

2. Regeneration is a spiritual truth, but it is an event that occurs on earth.
3. He had illustrated it with earthly metaphors … birth, water, and wind.
4. Since Jesus had used the plural ye for born again truth, we may include that.
5. His body or Jerusalem's temple, they were things of earth (John 2:18-22).
6. Paul heard unspeakable things not lawful for a man to utter (II Cor 12:4)!

And ye believe not.

A. The Jews, especially rulers, did not believe the teaching of Jesus on anything.
B. This statement does not prove Nicodemus did not believe, due to the plural ye.

How shall ye believe, if I tell you heavenly things?

A. Heavenly things transcend earthly things like heaven to earth, so very glorious!
B. No man has ability to believe the things of God without God's gracious work.
    1. By nature man cannot hear the gospel with understanding (John 8:43,47).
    2. There is none – no, not one – that understands or seeks God (Romans 3:11).
    3. Never forget the doctrine of Jesus about a man from the dead (Luke 16:31).
C. If we cannot or will not believe truth that God reveals, He will justly blind us.
    1. Let us not stumble over anything in God's word so He might show us more.
    2. Let us be willing to flush any doctrine or practice no matter how loved.
D. There are other circumstances and factors to hate that hinder us from believing.
    1. The Jews were too conscious of what others thought (Jn 5:44; 9:22; 12:42).
    2. The fear of man brings a snare, so you must fear God the most (Prov 29:25).
    3. The love of man brings a snare, so you must love God most (Lu 14:25-33).

13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

And no man hath ascended up to heaven.

A. Men have ascended to heaven before Jesus Christ but not for divine revelation.
    1. Enoch and Elijah both ascended to heaven, but not to obtain light and truth.
    2. Paul ascended later and was first to return with vague truth (II Cor 12:1-5).
    3. This language is used for getting wisdom (Pr 30:4; Deut 30:12; Rom 10:6).
    4. Earthly men are severely limited when in the presence of One from heaven!
    5. But you have the inspired written record of God in heaven in your language!
B. Fully appreciate the person and ministry of Jesus, Son of God (John 1:18; 6:46).
    1. Jesus Christ came to give us understanding of heavenly things (I Jn 5:19-21).
    2. Eternal life is a gift to know God and Jesus Christ (Jn 17:2-3; Mat 11:25-27).

3. Every ounce of truth is a tremendous blessing (Gen 32:10; Matt 13:11,16-17; Luke 24:45; II Cor 4:6; Eph 1:17-18; 3:16-19; Col 2:2-3; II Thess 2:13).

But he that came down from heaven.

A. Jesus, the Son of God, came down from heaven as the Word of God made flesh.
B. He first descended as Paul reasoned from a prophecy of ascension (Ep 4:8-10).
C. Jesus later confused blind Jews by suggesting He would go back up (Jn 6:62).
D. He came down to give His life for our eternal life (Jn 6:33,38,51; Phil 2:5-11).
E. Jews' words of coming from God were divine mission, not incarnation (Jn 3:2)!
F. Jesus took His person and mission further, descending from God in heaven.
G. Consider what John the Baptist will soon declare of Jesus' doctrine (John 3:31).

Even the Son of man which is in heaven.

A. Why believe these words? Missing in the NIV, NLT, ESV, NASB, HSCB, etc.!
    1. Here is an important proof of the deity of Jesus Christ … yet it is missing!
    2. The phrase is needed to grasp things like Jesus coming from heaven (3:31).
    3. The proper Sonship of Jesus as the Word made flesh came earlier (1:1,14).
    4. The Sonship of Jesus … Sonship Simplified.
    5. The Sonship of Jesus … Sonship of Christ.
B. These words are further proof of the deity or divine nature of Jesus of Nazareth.
    1. This is the great mystery of godliness – God in flesh (Jn 1:1-3,14; I Ti 3:16).
    2. A name of Jesus is Emmanuel – God with us (Isaiah 7:14 cp Matthew 1:23).
    3. Jesus Christ is a human nature and body indwelt by all of God (Col 2:8-9).
C. Confusion of Jesus as Christ, Son, or God is antichrist (I Jn 2:22; 4:3; II Jn 1:7).
    1. See the introductory outline … John: Introduction.
    2. Jesus Christ was fully God and man without compromise of either nature.
    3. But He is not fully Jesus Christ the Son of God without His human body.
D. It is wrong to assume that the title Son of man only refers to His human nature.
    1. Titles for either nature may be used for the whole Christ or the other nature.
    2. God bought the church with His blood … Christ's human body (Acts 20:28).
    3. The Son of God gave His life for Paul … Christ's human life (Gal 2:20).
E. Consider how we use names or titles in a similar way for other times or events.
    1. We say, Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees … but he was Abram (Ge 12:1,4).
    2. We say, Paul persecuted the church … but he was only Saul then (Acts 9:1).
    3. We say, My wife was born in Michigan … but she was not your wife then.
    4. We say, John Doe died and was buried … but his spirit lives on elsewhere.

See following link for correction of the heretical abuses of John 3:14-21.

Restoring John 3:14-21

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness.

A. The account of this event is found only once in the books of Moses (Nu 21:4-9).
   1. The only other reference to it is when Hezekiah destroyed it (II Kings 18:4).
   2. Foolish and superstitious Israel had been worshipping it for 800 years or so.
   3. Good king Hezekiah called it Nehushtan! Nothing but a mere piece of brass!

B. There is no residual value in using ceremonies, rules, or relics of one time or dispensation in another time or dispensation – this is foolish superstition.
   1. Think Israel – took the Ark into battle (I Sam 4:1-11), adored and presumed on the temple (Jer 7:1-15), God had to bury Moses (Deut 34:6; Jude 1:9), they wore phylacteries with scripture but did not obey the Bible (Matt 23:5), and Paul mocked the worthless minor surgery of circumcision (Phil 3:1-3).
   2. Think today – Catholics kiss the Bible but do not obey it, WWJD bracelets contrary to Jesus, Sabbatarians with vegetarian nonsense, crosses and crucifixes, anoint with apostolic oil, the doctrine of election having special value, calling a church a sanctuary, footwashing nonsense, flags, Yahweh or –od for God, musical instruments, etc. Nehushtan! to all these inventions!
   3. Think you today – obedience is better than sacrifice, liberty for anything not specifically stated, family greater than truth, incidental contact with world, words like potluck or Sunday, pagan money, IRS 501(c)3 rulings, etc.
   4. Hezekiah's descendants later married a woman, Nehushta (II Kings 24:8)!
   5. For more about the brass serpent itself … Nehushtan.

C. God told Moses to create and elevate a brass serpent to save living Israelites.
   1. He was mediator of the old covenant between God and Israel (Gal 3:19-20).
   2. Those God had chosen to die for wickedness did die – many (Num 21:4-6).
   3. The brass serpent only helped the repentant living to stay alive (Nu 21:7-9).
   4. The serpent did no good for those God had judged and killed (Num 21:6).
   5. Looking was not a source of life but a way to lay hold of life given a man.
   6. By it, Jesus taught (1) death on a tree and (2) faith to lay hold of eternal life.

D. The grammar of as … even so expressly states a strong similarity of two events.
   1. As. With the clauses transposed for emphasis; as…so: a. In what manner…(in that manner).
   2. So. As…So: Denoting more or less exact correspondence, similarity, or proportion.

3. Even. Exactly, precisely, just. A. of manner; often followed by as, thus, so.
4. See this emphatic construction in I Corinthians 15:22 and John 5:21; 10:15).

E. The comparison being made is primarily of being lifted up for it is stated twice.
1. Lifted up is a phrase of the Bible that indicates the form of death of a person.
2. Jesus used it at least three times in this gospel alone (Jn 3:14; 8:28; 12:32).
3. John, by the Spirit, explained Jesus intended death by crucifixion (Jn 12:33).
4. John, by the Spirit, explained how Roman limits on Israel fulfilled prophecy.
5. Israel's capital punishment was stoning (John 18:31-32), but that would have violated a number of prophecies (Ps 22:16; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28). Hallelujah!
6. Like the brass serpent, Jesus would be suspended on a pole off the ground.
7. He hung between heaven and earth as Mediator and Daysman of His people.

Even so must the Son of man be lifted up.

A. The grammar of as … even so expressly states a strong similarity of two events.
1. As. With the clauses transposed for emphasis; as…so: a. In what manner…(in that manner).
2. So. As…So: Denoting more or less exact correspondence, similarity, or proportion.
3. Even. Exactly, precisely, just. A. of manner; often followed by as, thus, so.
4. See this emphatic construction in I Corinthians 15:22 and John 5:21; 10:15).

B. The comparison being made is primarily of being lifted up for it is stated twice.
1. Lifted up is a phrase of the Bible that indicates the form of death of a person.
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6. Like the brass serpent, Jesus would be suspended on a pole off the ground.
7. He hung between heaven and earth as Mediator and Daysman of His people.

C. His prophecy, consistent with previous doctrine, surely confounded Nicodemus.
1. Jesus had hit this man up with things He had never considered (John 3:1-13).
2. Jews did not see their Messiah had to die (Jn 12:34; Mat 16:21-23; Acts 1:6).
3. They rather expected Messiah to liberate them from the oppression of Rome.
4. They further presumed that the Messiah was only for Israel, not the Gentiles.
5. They further presumed that salvation was by Moses' Law only, not by faith.

D. The gospel is good news of God's plan from eternity of eternal life by His Son!
1. God had promised eternal life in eternity, but it was always and only in Jesus Christ's death (Tit 1:2; II Tim 1:9-10; Heb 9:11-15; 13:20; Eph 1:3-14).

2. Never was there any place or room for Moses' Law (Ga 3:21; Rom 3:20-22).
3. The kingdom is a spiritual one far transcending little Israel (Heb 12:22-24).

E. Jesus saw His lifting up – crucifixion – as judging and saving (John 12:31-33).
1. Forget judgment as punishment here, but rather vindication of His justice.
2. For judgment should not be removed from Satan being cast out of heaven.
3. The devil had long imprisoned the world of Gentiles, but now was changed.
4. The work of Jesus to gather in Gentiles was begun by His crucifixion death.
5. He would by this tremendous purchase price gather together all the elect.
6. Being lifted up is clearly identified as a phrase indicating the kind of death.
7. The terms larger than Israel, world and all men, indicates gathering Gentiles.
8. Did He draw all men by gathering them by His death (Ep 1:10 cp Gen 49:10 cp Eph 3:14-15 cp Eph 2:6-7 cp Heb 12:22-24 cp Rev 5:9-12 cp Ep 1:11)?

F. This sacrificial death was to secure eternal life for all believers in Jesus Christ.
1. The primary point being made is the Messiah's death to secure eternal life.
2. The secondary point – John's purpose in writing – is the evidence of life.

G. Jesus was lifted up – He was suspended on a cross between heaven and earth.
1. Note verses from John about lifted up (Jn 3:14; 8:28; 12:32-34; 18:31-32).
2. He died a horrible death on a tree with nails (I Pet 2:24; Gal 3:13; Ps 22:16).
3. Read all of Psalm 22 for the most graphic description of Jesus' sufferings.
4. He was nailed to the cross on the ground and then dropped into its stand!
5. He was lifted up so that His body weight became a terrible, tearing burden!
6. He was lifted up on that cross fully nude to be fully exposed to any nearby!
7. He was lifted up with arms outstretched and could not find relief for joints.
8. He was lifted up with arms fastened unable to wipe his bloody, sweaty face.
9. He was lifted up and found it very difficult to breathe by the pulling weight.
10. He was lifted up so that His battered face beyond recognition could be seen.
11. He was lifted up so all could see the contradiction with the sign overhead.
12. He was lifted up so His scourged and torn back could rub against the cross.
13. He was lifted up so His naked face from His beard ripped could be viewed.
14. He was lifted up without a chance to sleep after a night of grief and torture.
15. He was lifted up to fully endure crucifixion pain by rejecting the sedative.

H. Lest you think the physical sufferings of Jesus were all, think again carefully!
1. The physical aspects of crucifixion are what most read about and consider.
2. There were also the nonphysical elements of His sufferings often neglected.
3. There was a spiritual conflict He had extensively with Satan and his angels.
4. There were divine consequences for taking our sins; His Father forsook Him.

5. That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

That whosoever.

A. That. Introducing a clause expressing purpose, end, aim, or desire: with simple subjunctive (arch.), or with may (pa. tense might), should, rarely shall. [OED].

B. Whosoever. Pronoun. = whoever. Whatever person or persons; any one who, or any who, no matter who, if any one, if one. Pronoun with generalizing force.

C. Whosoever, here or anywhere, is not a magical word as Arminians often use it.
   1. It is used ten times in John's gospel, two of which are here in 3:15 and 3:16.
   2. It is used 56 times in Matthew, Mark, Luke, but not in such salvation verses.
   3. For usage compare Matt 5:19,21-22; 23:16; Luke 9:48; 16:18; Rev 22:15,17.

D. Jesus Christ was lifted up to die for a very specific purpose – to save believers.

E. This general pronoun reached far beyond merely the Jews to the Gentile world.
   1. The world as distinct from His own people did not know Him (Jn 1:10-11).
   2. Eternal life was not limited to Jewish ceremonial law as Nicodemus thought.
   3. In the next chapter He revealed Himself to Samaritans that believed on Him.
   4. The Jews presumed Gentiles could not be saved (Acts 11:17-18; 15:7-11).
   5. So consider John's further explanation about other nations (Jn 10:16; 11:52).
   6. Paul went much further (Acts 13:46-48; Rom 11:12; I Tim 3:16).
   7. This writer knew much about the population of heaven (Rev 5:9; 7:9).
   8. Bible prophecies extended beyond Jews (Ps 22:27-31; 72:17-19; Is 11:10).
   9. Compare nations of the world to Gentiles for usage (Luke 12:30; Matt 6:33).

F. There is no offer, invitation, possibility, or potentiality in this verse whatsoever.

Believeth in him.

A. John wrote to assure believers that they had eternal life (John 20:31; I Jn 5:13).
   1. Do not assume beyond that basic and fundamental fact of descriptive proof.
   2. There is no offer here or in the next verse that presumes universal ability.

B. God's necessary work for believing on Jesus Christ had already been stated.
   1. The light of Christ shone in the world, which did not comprehend it (Jn 1:5).
   2. He was in the world He had made, and the world knew Him not (John 1:10).
   3. Anyone that did believe on Him had previously been born of God, which allowed for absolutely no cooperation or participation by man (John 1:13).
   4. Without God's work of regeneration, natural man could not see (John 3:3).
   5. God's work of regeneration was by the Spirit without man's help (John 3:8).

C. John will further elaborate throughout his record that faith follows regeneration.

1. John 5:24 has several phases with faith after passing from death into life.
2. John 6:47 teaches that the man that believes is in possession of eternal life.
3. John 8:47 teaches that a man must be of God before hearing God's words.
4. I John 5:1 also teaches by verb tenses that regeneration must precede faith.

D. Faith by a man, requiring a regenerative creation, proves election (Acts 13:48).

E. Is it a condition or evidence? Believers have their names written in heaven.

F. This identification of those that shall be saved was entirely new to Nicodemus.
   1. The Jews were sure they were saved by birth and/or keeping Moses' Law.
   2. Paul had to write both Romans and Galatians to counteract Jewish legalism.

Should not perish.

A. What is the will and work that keeps men from perishing? It is not of the sinner!
   1. They did not give themselves to Jesus or accept an offer to activate anything.
   2. The only reason a few do believe is as a result of the creative power of God.

B. God gave Jesus those He was to give eternal life (Jn 6:38-39; 10:28-29; 17:2).
   1. It was God's will to choose some to salvation in Jesus Christ (Eph 1:5,11).
   2. It was Christ's work of death that secured it for them (Rom 8:32; Heb 9:15).

C. Who will not perish? One giving himself to Jesus, or God giving one to Him?

D. This is stating nothing more than Jesus Christ's work to guarantee God's gift.

E. How smart is preaching the cross to those that perish? Foolishness (I Cor 1:18)!

But have eternal life.

A. Eternal life is a gift based on God's promise and covenant (Tit 1:2; Heb 13:20).

B. For more of eternal life as a gift … Eternal Life is a Gift.

C. God sent Jesus to die a crucifixion death to secure eternal life for all the elect.
   1. His mission was not to make eternal life possible … but to pay for it fully!
   2. There is no possibility of salvation or damnation … only absolute certainty!

D. To have something is to be in possession of it, which Jesus secured for the elect.

E. This sacrificial death was to secure eternal life for all believers in Jesus Christ.
   1. The primary point being made is the Messiah's death to secure eternal life.
   2. The secondary point – John's purpose in writing – is the evidence of life.

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

For.

A. This verse is related to the previous verse, which contains much of its content.

B. Jesus had introduced to Nicodemus that the Messiah would die by crucifixion.
    1. This information was entirely contrary to the Jews' expectation of Messiah.
    2. They assumed Messiah would be like David and live forever as Israel's king.
    3. Even the apostles were confused about this right up to Pentecost (Acts 1:6).
    4. Jesus introduced him to doctrinal considerations he had never heard before.
    5. Proof of eternal life was not circumcision or works, but faith in the Christ.
    6. This also was contrary to this ruler's ideas of salvation by the Law of Moses.
    7. Jesus explained to him the basis in the Godhead for sending Messiah to die.
    8. The broad whosoever also indicated the worldwide scope of God's salvation.
    9. The Jews were certain that God would condemn and destroy all the Gentiles.

C. God's love by giving Messiah for all kinds of men was to secure eternal life.

God.

A. Only the monotheistic Jews could speak intelligently of a supreme divine being.

B. Jesus and Nicodemus were citizens of the only nation He had loved (Amos 3:2).

C. This is the LORD Jehovah of the Bible, without variation at all from eternity.
    1. Thus, He only is I AM THAT I AM, independent of all creatures (Ex 3:14).
    2. No creature can move Him, restrain Him, or even question Him (Dan 4:35).
    3. He is the Potter, and mankind is the clay, without questions (Rom 9:19-21).
    4. He exists, thinks, decrees, and acts in perfect holiness and righteousness.
    5. He is the Potter and chose to make some vessels of mercy (Rom 9:22-24).

D. There is absolutely nothing inherent in wicked man to solicit His benevolence.
    1. Without sin, there is no compulsion in God to love or favor any of mankind.
    2. However, man is not without sin, so he is at once and always God's enemy.
    3. It is a travesty of illogic and pride that men do not fight for the devil's rights.
    4. Why should God love man, when He does not love His far greater creatures?
    5. If you argue about this, you are broken pottery with a big mouth (Is 45:9).

E. Consider the author's sermon series and very extensive outline, Knowing God.

So loved.

A. So. adverb. In the way or manner described, indicated, or suggested; in that style or fashion.
    1. It does not mean so very, very much due to His nature and/or man's value.
    2. It does not mean so very, very much that He must offer salvation to man.
    3. It means in connection with the conjunction that of the goal of His love.
    4. That. Introducing a clause expressing the result or consequence of what is stated in the principal clause: with verb usually in indicative. a. With antecedent so or such, either in the principal clause,

or immediately before that in the dependent clause. [OED].

5. God loved the world in the manner of giving His only begotten Son for it.
6. God's love and Christ's death are co-extensive, one resulting from the other.

B. God's love is limited to those for whom He gave His only begotten Son to die.
   1. God is holy and righteous; He cannot love a sinful being as such (Hab 1:13).
   2. There is nothing in God or in man requiring God to love man over devils.
   3. God hates the wicked and loves the righteous (Ps 5:5; 7:11; 11:5,7; 146:8).
   4. He forgets the sins of some and recalls them of others (He 10:17; Mat 7:23).
   5. There are bastards and there are sons, and only sons are loved (Heb 12:6-8).
   6. His love for the elect cannot be violated, yet many are in hell (Ro 8:28-39).
   7. Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it, not for all men (Eph 5:25).
   8. A universal love of God is cruel and discourages His children (Ezek 13:22).
   9. For details of God's love … Distinguishing Love of God.
   10. God gave His Son for the elect only to save them (John 17:2; Rom 8:28-39).
   11. It is impossible Jesus died for all men; most men suffer in hell for their sins.
   12. For details of Christ's death … Limited Atonement.

C. God's love is part of His everlasting covenant in Christ Jesus for the elect only.
   1. The Bible specifically identifies everlasting love (Jer 31:3; II Thess 2:16).
   2. God chose His elect in Christ in eternity to love them (Eph 1:4; II Tim 1:9).
   3. The love of God and Christ for the elect is from the beginning (Ro 8:28-39).
   4. God's love for them is wrapped up in Christ's book of life (Rev 13:8; 17:8).
   5. Christ and elect eternal union … Eternal Union with Christ.

D. The Bible's description of God's love for His people is far different than man's.
   1. God set His love on His church without regard to value in them (Deut 7:7-8).
   2. God chose His elect in Christ where He could justly love them (Eph 1:4).
   3. God's love and its ultimate benefit is such an incredible thing (I John 3:1)
   4. God's love is defined by His gift (I Jn 4:9-10; Ep 5:25; Gen 22:12; Mk 12:6)
   5. God's love can never be separated from, no matter what (Ro 8:38-39; 8:35)
   6. Comprehending it leads to the fullest relationship with God (Eph 3:14-19)
   7. Comprehending it leads to the greatest service and zeal (II Cor 5:14-15)
   8. God's love leads to the most wonderful care in life (Heb 12:5-8; Rev 3:19).
   9. God commended His love toward us by our condition (Rom 5:8; Tit 3:3-7).
   10. God's great love does not quit until it has fully saved its objects (Eph 2:4-7).

E. Abuses and corruptions of God's love by the next words, the world, are Legion.
   1. God's love by this verse is corrupted to make Him incapable of hating men.

2. He is so loving, in their heresy, that punishment, especially eternal, is wrong.
3. They lose all sight of His holiness and justice toward sinners of any kind.
4. As in I John, they can quickly find God is love while ignoring God is light.
5. They have Him in heaven weeping for all those He loved but must damn.
6. They never think about the consequences of His omniscience creating them!
7. They never think about the damned singing of His love in the fires of hell.
8. The lake of fire is not chastening – it is eternal condemnation and hatred!

F. Questions about God's love might cause a few sober among them to think of it.
1. Did God love Pharaoh (Exodus 9:16; Rom 9:17), and how did He show it?
2. And Amalekites and Canaanites to be exterminated (Ex 17:14; De 20:16)?
3. Did He love the Ammonites and Moabites to be excluded forever (De 23:3)?
4. Does He love the workers of iniquity and lovers of violence (Ps 5:5; 11:5)?
5. Does He love vessels of wrath fitted to destruction He endures (Rom 9:22)?

G. How do I know God loves me? This good question will prove you in John 3:16.
1. Do you love Him? How so? If we love Him, He first loved us (I John 4:19).
2. Do you believe on His Son in a life-changing way? Then John 3:16 says so.

The world.

A. They think world is key to interpreting – God's love, Christ's death, and a simple offer of eternal life to every person that ever lived (lots of exceptions).

B. Honest interpreters know all else in the verse is key to rightly understand world!

C. This word gives many trouble here because they have not considered its usage.
1. Most foolishly assume that world must mean every single human soul ever conceived without exception, world without end, and obviously so.
2. Their intelligence and argumentation is typically, world means world, right?
3. It is shameful to base a doctrine on one very obscure word not clearly stated.
4. There are 249 uses of world and 287 uses of kosmos. Is even one universal?
5. John used the word world 59 times in this gospel; the other gospels only 32.
6. Why would anyone force world to mean every single man against scripture?
7. They do not care for truth but rather for a plan of salvation exalting them.
8. They ignore the apostolic command to rightly divide the word (II Tim 2:15).
9. The use of world in the Bible includes many senses, depending on context.

D. World. I. Human existence; a period of this. II. The earth or a region of it; the universe or a part of it. III. The inhabitants of the earth, or a section of them.
1. The world here is a segment of mankind marked by the act of faith in Christ.
2. The Bible uses the word world with a great degree of latitude and obscurity.

3. There are so many different senses of world in the Bible to preclude a chart.

E. Seeing words love and gift of God's Son, such men require world to be all men.
   1. They are so in love with themselves that God must love each of mankind.
   2. Yet the word of God declares He will deny ever knowing most of mankind.
   3. Yet the word of God declares God's love effectual for adoption (I John 3:1).
   4. Yet the word of God declares His love cannot lose any person (Ro 8:38-39).

F. By the so and that here, we know God's love and Christ's death coextensive.
   1. God cannot and does not love a single person outside Jesus Christ (Eph 1:4).
   2. God does not love a single soul beyond those Jesus died for and redeemed.
   3. Jesus did not die for and redeem a single soul beyond those God had loved.
   4. The evidence and proof of these beloved souls is their belief in Jesus Christ.

G. The world cannot be broader or larger than those God loved and Christ died for.
   1. It is simple and true to read it, For God so loved the world of His elect.
   2. It is simple and true to read it, For God so loved His elect out of the world.
   3. It is simple and true to read it, For God so loved all believers in the world.
   4. The Waldensians wrote (1655), That God so loved the world, that is to say, those whom he has chosen out of the world.

H. A few examples of limited and opposite senses of world can easily be observed.
   1. Caesar taxed all the world (Lu 2:1), yet only a small portion of it, even then!
   2. Paul used the word world to mean Gentiles as opposed to Jews (Rom 11:12).
   3. Did the world hate Jesus? Did they go to heaven? Any exceptions (Jn 7:7)?
   4. Did Jesus give eternal life to the world (Jn 6:33,51)? If so, who are saved?
   5. His brethren and Jesus Himself said the world heard Him (John 7:4; 18:20).
   6. Pharisees said the world had gone after Jesus (Jn 12:19), 1% of Jews only.
   7. Gentiles used the same world (Acts 17:6), but they meant 1% of Gentiles.
   8. Jesus said the world could not receive the Spirit; His apostles did (Jn 14:17).
   9. The disciples were not of the world (Jn 15:19), so did Jesus die for them?
   10. The world would rejoice when Jesus died (Jn 16:20). Did Mary go to hell?
   11. Why would Jesus not pray for the world that He died for (John 17:9; 17:20)?
   12. The apostles were not of the world (Jn 17:14). Did His apostles go to hell?
   13. Did Jesus pay sins of the whole world, or is it in darkness (I John 2:2; 5:19)?
   14. Is Jesus Saviour of the world, or is it deceived by Satan (I Jn 4:14; Re 12:9)?
   15. In each case, this vague word is understood as a portion of man by context.
   16. Can anyone produce even use of world where it is unequivocally universal?
   17. Is giving a sense to world any different than giving a sense to key words in Heb 4:12? Gal 5:4? I Cor 15:29? I Cor 9:22? Acts 22:16? I Peter 3:21?

18. A few extras (Rom 1:8).

I. We understand the world here to be the body of God's elect including Gentiles.
    1. Jesus in 3:17 spoke of condemning the world, indicating more than Jews, for it would only be an issue for a Jew assuming God would judge all Gentiles.
    2. John already introduced a difference between world and Jews (Jn 1:10-11).
    3. The apostles used nations of the world for Gentiles (Matt 6:33; Luke 12:30).
    4. John served the Jews (Ga 2:9), so he used world for Gentiles (I Jn 2:2; 5:19).
    5. Jesus introduced Nicodemus to Messiah's purpose far beyond merely Jews.
    6. There are many prophecies that Messiah's reign would include the nations.
    7. The N.T. confirms this fantastic change in the scope of God's religion (Acts 10:34-35; 11:18; 15:7,14-19; I Tim 3:16).
    8. John identifies this inclusion of the Gentiles (John 10:16; 11:52; 12:31-32).
    9. Eternal life was not limited to Jewish ceremonial law as Nicodemus thought.
    10. In the next chapter He revealed Himself to Samaritans that believed on Him.
    11. The Jews presumed Gentiles could not be saved (Acts 11:17-18; 15:7-11).
    12. Paul went much further (Acts 13:46-48; Rom 11:12; I Tim 3:16).
    13. This writer knew much about the population of heaven (Rev 5:9; 7:9).
    14. Bible prophecies extended beyond Jews (Ps 22:27-31; 72:17-19; Is 11:10).

J. For more about God's love … Distinguishing Love of God.

That he gave.

A. That. Introducing a clause expressing the result or consequence of what is stated in the principal clause: with verb usually in indicative. a. With antecedent so or such, either in the principal clause, or immediately before that in the dependent clause. [OED].

B. God's love was such that He sent His only begotten Son to die for its objects.
    1. God is love (chosen, holy objects), and it is displayed in Christ (I Jn 4:9-10).
    2. By not sparing His own Son, He guaranteed all else as well (Romans 8:32).
    3. It is inherently illogical and impossible for all else not to be given (Ro 8:32).
    4. Therefore, the objects of His love by Christ's death get all (Rom 8:34; 5:10).

C. We measure love by what a person gives in proportion to ability, custom, etc.
    1. Think ability – Jesus ranked a widow's mites more than others (Lu 21:1-4).
    2. Think custom – Jesus drew a distinction of dying for friends (John 15:13).
    3. The relationship between God and David, in both directions, was exceeding.

D. God could not have given more than His only begotten and well beloved Son.
    1. Think ability – God did not give riches to us but nothing to Him (Matt 3:17).
    2. Think custom – God exalted His love by Jesus dying for enemies (Ro 5:6-8).

E. God gave – He did not offer – He did not risk the death of His Son for nothing.
   1. God gave His purpose and grace to redeem the elect in eternity (II Tim 1:9).
   2. God gave His Son in covenant obligation before the world began (I Pe 1:20).
   3. God gave the elect to His Son before the world began (Eph 1:4; Rev 17:8).
   4. God's Son gives each eternal life without fail (Jn 6:37-39; 10:28-29; 17:2).

F. For great details of salvation's gift … Eternal Life is a Gift.

His only begotten Son.

A. This is the Man Christ Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, the only begotten Son.
   1. Gabriel explained the incarnation mystery and sonship to Mary (Luke 1:35).
   2. No other being, creature, or person in the universe is God's Son this way.
   3. Consider how the Lord Jesus described Himself in a parable (Mark 12:6-7).

B. John introduced his readers to the Godman in his preamble to his book (1:1-18).
   1. In His divine nature, the Word of God was and is God and with God (1:1-3).
   2. In time the Word took on human flesh, and then God has His Son (1:14).
   3. The invisible God was revealed by a very visible Son in human form (1:18).
   4. There is no such thing as a begotten God as the NASB and NWT say (1:18).
   5. The ESV is also wrong … "the only God, who is at the Father's side" (1:18).
   6. The ISV errs … "the unique God, who is close to the Father's side" (1:18)
   7. A God that is only and unique is not at the side of another God called Father.

C. Some teach that if God gave only the Godman, Jesus the Christ, He gave little.
   1. They want God emanating another God in eternity to come and die as Son.
   2. The blasphemers deny scripture to confuse the Godhead by eternal sonship.
   3. God did not die on the cross – only the human nature of Jesus Christ died.
   4. Jesus Christ's work on earth was so great as to be promoted far above all!
   5. The entire universe reports to Him with God only excepted (I Cor 15:24-28).
   6. Note in the previous text that Paul declares this Son subordinate to God!
   7. Jesus is in the bosom of the Father (John 1:18).
   8. The Father loves the Son and given Him rule over all (John 3:35).
   9. The Father loves the Son, expects honor of Him as the Father (Jn 5:20-23).

D. It behooves us to consider God giving this wellbeloved and only Son for us.

E. For more of Christ's sonship … Sonship of Christ.

That whosoever believeth

A. See John 3:15 about this phrase, where Jesus first introduced it to Nicodemus.

B. That. Introducing a clause expressing purpose, end, aim, or desire: with simple subjunctive (arch.), or

with may (pa. tense might), should, rarely shall. [OED].

1. There is no offer, invitation, possibility, or potentiality in this verse at all.
2. This extended clause simply states the means by which believers have life.
3. Their eternal life is by God's love for the world giving the gift of His Son.
4. This clause nor this verse is giving the means of eternal life as faith, but rather by the means of God's love and Christ's death for those that believe.

C. Whosoever. Pronoun. = whoever. Whatever person or persons; any one who, or any who, no matter who, if any one, if one. Pronoun with generalizing force.

D. Whosoever, here or anywhere, is not a magical word as Arminians often use it.
   1. It is used ten times in John's gospel, two of which are here in 3:15 and 3:16.
   2. It is used 56 times in Matthew, Mark, Luke, but not in such salvation verses.
   3. For usage compare Matt 5:19,21-22; 23:16; Luke 9:48; 16:18; Rev 22:15,17.
   4. Any believer of any age, nation, race, sex, or whereabouts is saved by Jesus.

E. Only elect believe; nothing has been introduced to alter God's love of His elect.
   1. God has chosen the elect rich in faith, not because of faith (Jas 2:5; Tit 3:1).
   2. Those ordained to eternal life believe, and no others (Acts 13:48; I Pet 1:21).

F. This general pronoun reached far beyond merely the Jews to the Gentile world.
   1. The world as distinct from His own people did not know Him (Jn 1:10-11).
   2. Eternal life was not limited to Jewish ceremonial law as Nicodemus thought.
   3. In the next chapter He revealed Himself to Samaritans that believed on Him.
   4. The Jews presumed Gentiles could not be saved (Acts 11:17-18; 15:7-11).
   5. So consider John's further explanation about other nations (Jn 10:16; 11:52).
   6. Paul went much further than Jews (Acts 13:46-48; Rom 11:12; I Tim 3:16).
   7. This writer (John) knew much about the population of heaven (Rev 5:9; 7:9).
   8. Bible prophecies extended beyond Jews (Ps 22:27-31; 72:17-19; Is 11:10).
   9. Compare nations of the world to Gentiles for usage (Luke 12:30; Matt 6:33).

G. Believe. To have confidence or faith in (a person), and consequently to rely upon, trust to.
   1. There is plenty of infallible proof in writing that has not been proven wrong.
   2. If you are born again, you have a witness inside by the Spirit of Jesus Christ.
   3. There is anecdotal evidence (more than I need) to confirm Jesus of the Bible.

H. Bare belief without fear of God and love of Christ comes far short of evidence.
   1. Fear of God and love of Christ greatly alter a person's attitude and actions.
   2. The devils believe and tremble; Bible examples of faith include much love.
   3. Ballyhoo about John 3:16 while ignoring false believers in 2:23-25 is folly.
   4. Jesus will later provoke such believers into leaving (Jn 6:2,14,29,44,56,66).
   5. John records that these "believers" did not have a real clue of Him (Jn 7:31).

6. Jesus will later provoke such believers into trying to kill Him (Jn 8:30-45).
7. John recorded chief rulers believed on Him without works (John 12:42-43).
8. Faith must come forth in confession and baptism (Matt 10:32; Mark 16:16).
9. True confession of Jesus Christ requires the work of the Spirit (I Cor 12:3).
10. Paul and John teach false believers loving the world (Phil 3:18-19; I Jn 2:4).
11. Jesus challenged men calling Him Lord without works (Lu 6:46; 13:23-30).
12. Surely reprobates that call on Him believe in some sense (Matthew 7:21-23).
13. False professions are not new (Is 29:13; Jer 12:2; Ezek 33:31; Matt 15:7-9).
14. Remember, the devils fully believed Jesus Christ was the Messiah of God.

I. Real believers do things to show their faith is legitimate and certain evidence.
   1. Real faith involves the whole heart of man in affection to Christ (Acts 8:37).
   2. Goofy little decisions manipulated in children are not even close to reality.
   3. James gave a thorough description that real faith has works (Jas 2:14-26).
   4. Continuing in His word, obeying His commands, is discipleship (Jn 8:31).
   5. Real faith does not exist by itself but adds fruit of the Spirit (II Pet 1:5-11).
   6. Real faith, evidencing salvation, has works (Gal 5:6; 6:15; I Thess 1:2-4).
   7. Real faith changes lives – repentance is powerful (II Cor 5:17; 7:10-11).
   8. Abraham's faith, the best, was shown by sacrifice (Gen 22:12; Jas 2:21-24).

J. Real faith that satisfies the Bible criteria as legitimate should be our only goal.
   1. It comes by hearing the word of God and not by other means (Rom 10:17).
   2. It is faith involving the whole heart of full affection and devotion (Ac 8:37).
   3. It is always in connection to godly sorrow and repentance (II Cor 7:10-11).
   4. It changes lives by costly sacrifice or humble change (Mat 11:12; Lu 16:16).
   5. It includes baptism and any duty the gospel requires (Acts 9:36; 16:14-15).

K. Be diligent to reject all vestiges of Arminian decisional salvation and its lies.
   1. We are conditioned to look back at a profession to cover present carnality.
   2. We should look back and reject the profession, if there is no continuance.
   3. Even those taught sovereign grace will take some comfort in their baptism.

L. It is not sincerity that makes the difference; most false believers are "sincere."
   1. They are confident of their sincerity, and they will happily tell you of it.
   2. The prophets of Baal, slashing themselves, were as sincere as Elijah was.
   3. The nuns of Rome are more sincere than the vast majority of Christians.

M. Be critical / skeptical of saving faith terms, for faith cannot save (Jas 2:14-26).

N. Salvation by works.

O. Faith is much more than a momentary decision as shown by all Bible examples.

1. Paul put no stock in his conversion on the Damascus Road (II Tim 4:7-8).
2. The faith recorded in Hebrews 11 has nothing to do with momentary faith.
3. Faith is emphasized by John since that is his reason for writing (I Jn 5:13).

P. Faith requires much more than bare belief – it must have works for saving faith.
   1. Saving faith only means such faith and works that are evidence of salvation.
   2. Saving faith is not a kind of faith that effects any change in heaven or nature.
   3. Add to your faith … because by itself faith is not worth much (II Pe 1:5-11).
   4. Jesus rejected many that believed as John's gospel shows more than others.
   5. Faith is the first evidence of eternal life, for it is the first event of conversion.
   6. For every connection with believe/faith for eternal life, there are many more connections to obedience, works, overcoming, continuing, etc.
   7. Much more than belief is necessary, but this is sufficient for John's purpose.
   8. Who will believe? Who will take the water of life? Who will call on Jesus?

Q. Why would you not believe? The consequences for not believing are horrific.
   1. Whether you are elect or not is beside the point of belief as evidence here.
   2. The expected outcome, even if hellfire is a 1% chance, is beyond measure.
   3. Furthermore, believing on Jesus to obey Him is the best life here anyway.

R. For adding to faith … Salvation by Works.

In him.

A. The faith that is the foundational evidence of eternal life is only in Jesus Christ.

B. We must believe in Jesus Christ just as we believe in God Himself (John 14:1).

C. God has given a heavenly and earthly witness of His Son Jesus (I John 5:4-13).

D. It is belief in the Godman, the Son of God, that is key (Acts 8:37; 16:31; etc.).

Should not perish.

A. Perish. To come to a violent, sudden, or untimely end; to suffer destruction; to lose its life, cease to exist, be cut off. (Chiefly of living beings.) [OED].

B. Bible perishing includes … losing a bodily member (Matt 5:29-30), drowning in a storm (Matt 8:25), pigs drowning in the sea (Matt 8:32), an old wine bottle bursting by new wine in it (Matt 9:17), dying by the sword in battle (Matt 26:52), Zacharias being murdered (Luke 11:51), comparable to dying like under the tower in Siloam (Luke 13:3,5), dying of starvation in a pigpen (Luke 15:17), ruin in the destruction of Jerusalem (Acts 13:41), exhaustion of outward man (II Cor 4:16), decay and dissolution of the universe (Heb 1:11), the ruin of Jericho (Heb 11:31), the effect of the Flood on the world (II Pet 3:6), and so forth, etc.

C. Note the connection of eternal life and everlasting life with perishing (3:15-16).
   1. Therefore, the perishing is of an eternal and everlasting kind of destruction.

2. Since eternal life is beyond this life, then there is perishing beyond this life.

D. There is a perishing, eternal in nature, which far exceeds ordinary perishing.
   1. Jesus mocked perishing physically – dying – compared to hell (Lu 12:4-5).
   2. You were created, without knowledge or approval, with an immortal soul.
   3. Your immortal soul will either suffer in hell or live everlastingly with God.
   4. The rich man was in hellfire immediately after his death (Luke 16:19-31).
   5. Devils, who know far more than you, could tell you about it (Matt 8:28-29).
   6. Another death called the second death involves a lake of fire (Rev 20:11-15).
   7. Eternal torment there was prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt 25:41).
   8. Annihilation is no punishment at all – every suicide hopes for it – so forget the diabolical hallucinations of Charles Russell and the Watchtower Society.
   9. Solomon warned that your life should be lived in light of it (Eccl 12:13-14).

E. There is a perishing, eternal in nature, only a few talk about in this generation.
   1. Is hell no longer preached because we have proven that it does not exist?
   2. Or is hell no longer preached because we do not want to deal with its terror?
   3. If we could, we should deny that it exists, because its terror is far too much.
   4. It is now a common swear word; it is used to describe insignificant things.
   5. Paul knew the terror of the Lord, so he persuaded men by it (II Cor 5:10-11).
   6. In perilous times of the last days, sound doctrine is rejected (II Ti 3:1 – 4:4).
   7. This Doesn't work for mega churches
   8. The fastest growing doctrinal heresy today may be no eternal punishment.

F. Jesus gives eternal life so His sheep cannot perish this way (John 10:28). Glory!
   1. None can perish that God gave to Jesus Christ and that Jesus Christ died for.
   2. Eternal security of believers? Yes! We must mock once saved, always saved.
   3. Teachers of OSAS deny any role for election and belief is a mere decision.
   4. Real belief follows regeneration and results in a changed life, then OSAS.
   5. More about OSAS … Once Saved, Always Saved.

G. God's longsuffering waits for all elect to be born and born again (II Peter 3:9)!

H. For much more about hell … Is There A Burning Hell?

But have everlasting life.

A. The opposite of perishing eternally in a lake of fire is everlasting life with God.
   1. If hellfire and the lake of fire is the second death – then this is the opposite!
   2. Everlasting life with God is as His children, joint-heirs with His Son Jesus.
   3. It is living forever in a perfect universe by creating a new heaven and earth.
   4. God's love in Christ will overpower all charges or resistance (Rom 8:28-39).

5. It has glorification – re-creation of your body (Phil 3:20-21; I Cor 15:50-57)!
6. Physical death is hardly bad – it gets your dying body planted for a new one!
7. . What a glorious prospect for those who truly believe on Jesus (Jn 11:25-26)!

B. There is no offer here in the soteriology lesson that our Lord gave Nicodemus.
1. There is no conditional statement here – and it would be impossible anyway.
2. There is no invitation here – and it would not work no matter how presented.
3. This is a declarative and certain fact of God's love in Messiah to save elect.
4. Believers on Jesus have eternal life – they possess it (John 3:36; 5:24; 6:47).
5. The gospel helps believers know they have it (John 20:30-31 cp I Jn 5:13).
6. The purpose here is the goal, intent, and outcome of God's love in Christ.
7. The value of the verse is evidence for those to be saved – believe on Christ!
8. Note that Jesus did not pray with Nicodemus or play for him, Just As I Am.

C. Can you comprehend and appreciate this gift by God's loving mercy to rebels?
1. God exalted His love toward us by loving us while enemies (Rom 5:6-11).
2. But He did not merely acquit or clear us of our great guilt and punishment.
3. He adopted us as sons and part of His family to live with Him (Ep 3:14-15).
4. This reversal of fortune, noting both directions, is incomprehensibly great.

D. What will you do with the truth of John 3:16? You should praise (Psalm 63:3)!

E. Problem texts … Salvation Problem Texts.

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

For God sent not his Son into the world.

A. It is important that we follow the conjunctions connecting our Lord's sentences.
1. And connects 3:12-13 to indicate Jesus was about to reveal heavenly things.
2. And connects 3:13-14 for Messiah's crucifixion death contrary to the Jews.
3. That connects 3:14-15 to indicate Messiah's goal to surely save all believers.
4. For connects 3:15-16 to indicate the divine basis for the Messiah so dying.
5. For connects 3:16-17 to indicate Messiah came to redeem, not to condemn.

B. The first coming of Jesus Christ was designed and intended for our redemption.
1. Paul wrote to the Galatians of Christ's intent to redeem (Galatians 4:4-6).
2. Jesus came to save sinners, and let us receive this faithful saying (I Ti 1:15).

C. It was a misconception of Jews that Messiah would come to destroy Gentiles.
1. Even the apostles still thought related fantasies before Pentecost (Acts 1:6).
2. Before criticizing too much, read O.T. prophecies (Is 9:6-7; Je 23:5-6; etc.).

3. Jews preferred race to grace and national glorification to soul glorification.
4. Rome bothered them more than sin, death, hell, and the devil. God forbid!
5. Read Zacharias's summary of prophecies of Christ and John (Luke 1:68-80).
6. Nations are blessed by Abraham's Seed in justification (Gal 3:8; Ge 22:18)!

D. Here we go again with this vague word world, inspired by God's providence.
1. It leads to all kinds of wild heresies when not loosely interpreted by context.
2. We know that every word of God is pure, some being chosen to confound.
3. All kinds of examples could be raised to entertain with this very broad word.

E. We understand the use of world here as the earthly realm of human existence.
1. John had already used this sense of world in his opening preamble (Jn 1:10).
2. He will record this sense many times (John 10:36; 11:27; 16:21,28; 18:37).

To condemn the world.

A. Why the correction? Who would have this notion? What would the notion be?
1. Nicodemus certainly had no delusion that Messiah would condemn the Jews.
2. But the Jews certainly had the idea that Messiah would destroy the Gentiles.
3. Jews did not see Gentiles being saved (Matt 10:6; 15:24; Ac 5:31; 10:28,34-35; 11:1-3,18; 13:44-48; 15:10-11,13-19; 22:21-24; I Tim 3:16; etc.).

B. Jesus did not need to correct an idea of condemnation of elect viewed as elect.
1. If world in 3:16 is strictly elect as elect, no reason to deny condemnation.
2. But if the world in John 3:16 includes or emphasizes Gentiles, yes indeed!
3. A slight distinction had already been introduced by John earlier (Jn 1:10-11).
4. Luke and Paul used world for Gentiles (Luke 12:30; Rom 11:12; I Ti 3:16).
5. The reprobate world was already condemned as the next verse plainly says.

C. Jesus did not condemn directly at His first coming, though He did indirectly.
1. His mission and purpose was salvation, but rejection was to condemnation.
2. Consider how Jesus pointed out indirect accusation via Moses (Jn 5:45-47).
3. Consider how Jesus separated direct from indirect judgment (John 9:39-41).
4. Consider how Jesus separated the two judgments elsewhere (John 12:47-48).

D. Jesus did not condemn at His first coming, but He certainly did at other times.
1. He brought tribulation without comparison (Matt 24:14-22; Luke 21:20-24).
2. See Witness of 70 A.D.
3. He will come with mighty angels and flaming fire to condemn (I Cor 11:29-32; II Cor 5:9-11; II Thes 1:7-10; Jude 1:14-15; Rev 20:11-15).
4. See Judgment Seat of Christ.
5. See Is There a Burning Hell?

E. Jesus corrected the sons of thunder about a Samaritan village (Luke 9:51-56).

But that the world through him might be saved.

A. This must be an elect world of some distinction, for He came to save only them.
   1. The scriptures plainly teach that God sent Christ to save His elect people.
   2. It was God's will Jesus save those God gave Him (Jn 6:38-39; 10:15,26-29).
   3. God gave Jesus power over all flesh to give eternal life to some (John 17:2).
   4. It was those foreknown and predestinated Christ died to justify (Ro 8:28-34).
   5. It was the elect that were chosen to receive benefits of His death (I Pet 1:2).
   6. An angel told Joseph He would save His people from their sins (Matt 1:21).
   7. Jesus did redeem all God gave Him (Eph 1:3-12; II Cor 5:18-21; Heb 2:13).
   8. Jesus died for the elect only … Limited Atonement.
   9. The early Baptist confessions like 1644, 1689, and 1742 declare it plainly.

B. Christ's purpose in coming was the actual salvation of the world of His people.
   1. Use of might reflects certain ability and intent to accomplish what is designed or planned (John 9:36; 10:17; 11:4; 17:12; 18:32; 19:28).
   2. There is no chance, maybe, offer, or possibility in the Spirit's use of might.
   3. Note how John, same writer, applies this world to elect believers (I Jn 4:9).
   4. The world of all men ever conceived is not saved, thus it cannot be intended.
   5. Any man charged with sins at Judgment did not have them paid by Christ.

C. If this includes elect Gentiles, we have a very understandable choice of words.

D. Salvation is through Him … through Jesus … as means of eternal redemption.
   1. There is no salvation outside Jesus Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; I Cor 1:30).
   2. Eternal inheritance is by means – the means of His death (Hebrews 9:12-15).

See following link for correction of the heretical abuses of John 3:14-21.

Restoring John 3:14-21

A. Therefore, we give senses to uses of world in 3:17 to make it understandable.
   1. Would Jesus correct a notion of condemning elect from the loved of 3:16?
   2. There is a group He does not need to condemn, for they are such already.
   3. Belief in Christ is the overriding theme of 3:15 to 3:18. It must be included.

B. We remember inspired ambiguity where shades of difference hardly even count.
   1. It is clear that use of world in the N.T., especially by writer John, is vague.
   2. An example of this phenomenon is shades of explanation for I Cor 15:29.

C. Therefore, we give senses to uses of world in 3:17 to make it understandable.
    1. #1 – realm of human existence … #2 – world of reprobates … #3 – world of the elect.
    2. #1 – realm of human existence … #2 – the world considered at large … #3 – the world considered at large.
    3. #1 – realm of human existence … #2 – the Gentile world … #3 – the elect Gentiles in the world.
    4. #1 – realm of human existence … #2 – all the unbelievers in the world … #3 – all the believers in the world.
    5. #1 – realm of human existence … #2 – unbelievers among the Jews and Gentiles … #3 – believers among the Jews and Gentiles.

D. Therefore, we may combine John 3:16 and 3:17 with applied worlds as follows.
    1. For God so loved His elect among Jews and Gentiles, that He gave His only begotten Son to guarantee eternal life for Jews or Gentiles believing on Him.
    2. For God sent not His Son into the realm of human existence to condemn the unbelievers among Jews and Gentiles, but to save the believers among them.

18 He that believeth on 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.

He that believeth on him is not condemned.

A. Condemnation is two-fold in the Bible – Adam's sin in Eden and our own sins.
    1. Paul wrote that even infants are sent to hell for Adam's sin (Rom 5:12-14).
    2. Why do babies die (Rom 6:23)? This important question proves imputation of a strong kind, and it precludes such notions as an age of accountability.
    3. Imputation is legal counting of guilt, not corruption or depravity of nature.
    4. God's commands, like Moses' Law, further condemn (Rom 5:20-21; 6:23).

B. We understand verb tenses here to indicate a previous lifting of condemnation.
    1. He that believeth on him is a present tense verb, as used elsewhere (Jn 5:24).
    2. Such a man is not condemned, a perfect tense verb, stating prior deliverance.
    3. Peter judged Cornelius to already be accepted with God (Acts 10:34-35).
    4. Belief by gospel preaching is a savor to God of life unto life (II Co 2:14-17).

C. Faith in Jesus Christ proves a prior work of grace including legal justification.
    1. Faith in Jesus Christ is the evidence or proof that a person has been justified.
    2. The order of salvation is election, justification, and then man's regeneration.
    3. Faith in Jesus Christ is the result of regeneration, which follows justification.
    4. John wrote showing faith as proving possession of life (Jn 3:36; 6:47; etc.).

D. Yet, there is a future salvation from condemnation in Judgment Day (Jn 5:24).

But he that believeth not is condemned already.

A. Condemnation is two-fold in the Bible – Adam's sin in Eden and our own sins.
    1. Paul wrote that even infants are sent to hell for Adam's sin (Rom 5:12-14).
    2. Why do babies die (Rom 6:23)? This important question proves imputation of a strong kind, and it precludes such notions as an age of accountability.
    3. Imputation is legal counting of guilt, not corruption or depravity of nature.
    4. God's commands, like Moses' Law, further condemn (Rom 5:20-21; 6:23).

B. A person that does not believe shows the evidence and proof of condemnation.
    1. He is condemned already for the two reasons shown immediately above.
    2. His lack of faith in God's Son denies the evidence and proof of justification.

C. He that believeth not (present tense) is condemned (perfect tense) … already.
    1. Arminians will argue that Jesus died for all sins of all men except unbelief.
    2. However, the Bible record shows men condemned for their sins (Rev 21:8).
    3. And this verse right here shows men are condemned already before unbelief.
    4. And this agrees with the rest of scripture about Adam's and their own sins.

D. The lack of faith shows no prior work of grace of justification or regeneration.

E. Disbelief of preaching is a savor to God of death unto death (II Cor 2:14-17).

Because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

A. What you do with Jesus the Christ says very much about your eternal destiny.
    1. There was a division among Jews because of Jesus (John 7:43; 9:16; 10:19).
    2. Many Jews did not believe Him because they were not sheep (Jn 10:26-29).

B. Notice that Jesus is the indirect source of condemnation by virtue of evidence.
    1. His ministry and purpose on earth was redemption as stated clearly (3:17).
    2. Each man's reception or rejection of Him either condemns each man or not.

C. God has given incredibly witness of Jesus Christ and only fools reject Him.
    1. There are three earthly and three heavenly witnesses of Christ (I John 5:6-9).
    2. If we believe God's record, we show a witness inside us (I John 5:10-12).
    3. The faith to believe on Jesus Christ is itself born of God (I John 5:1-5).
    4. The Spirit is an internal witness (I Jn 4:13; 3:24; Rom 5:5; 8:16; Gal 4:6).
    5. We have gospel accounts in writing of eyewitnesses that saw Jesus risen!
    6. There is anecdotal witness by pagan historians about Jesus of Nazareth.

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.

And this is the condemnation.

A. This is not primary condemnation, but secondary condemnation by evidence.

B. Jesus did not come to condemn (3:17), but response to Him condemns or not.
   1. His ministry purpose was to provide the sacrifice to redeem His people.
   2. But the reaction of men to Him either proved them saved or condemned.
   3. Paul described death unto death or life unto life by Christ (II Cor 2:14-17).
   4. Paul declared the Jews proved condemnation by the gospel (Acts 13:46-48).

That light is come into the world.

A. Jesus is the light here, just as John had introduced in his preamble (John 1:4-5).

B. Jesus did not visit all nations, but He did not need to in order to make this proof.
   1. The world here is as in 3:17 meaning the realm of human existence on earth.
   2. By visiting the most gifted and taught nation, it is perfect evidence for all.

C. The light of the gospel includes exposing sin by preaching against it (John 7:7).

And men loved darkness rather than light.

A. The Jews, the most privileged and taught nation on earth, rejected Jesus Christ.

B. The light shone in this dark world, and the world comprehended it not (Jn 1:5).

C. This is the doctrine of total depravity – men prefer ignorant rebellion over light!
   1. There would be no exception to this rule without God regenerating men first.
   2. God examined our race and found none seeking Him (Ps 14:1-3; Ro 3:9-11).
   3. The light of the gospel is rejected by Jews and Greeks (I Cor 1:22-24; 2:14).
   4. This is not loving darkness a little more than light – they hate light (3:20)!

Because their deeds were evil.

A. Why do men prefer ignorant rebellion in folly? They are committed to their sin!

B. They do not become evil by rejecting the light of Christ, for they are already so.

C. The light of the gospel includes exposing sin by preaching against it (John 7:7).

20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

For every one that doeth evil.

A. He is evil long before hating the light – man hates the light because he is evil.

B. By nature man is committed to doing evil in every part of his life (Rom 3:9-18).

C. Therefore, his reaction to the light of Christ's gospel is evidence of reprobation.

Hateth the light.

A. Note the enmity! There is enmity between the flesh and spirit (Romans 8:7-8).
B. Note the enmity! There is enmity between the flesh and Spirit (Galatians 5:17).
C. It is important to remember depravity is not of intelligence but rather of motive.

Neither cometh to the light.

A. Of course, if man hates the light of Christ and His gospel, he will not come to it.
B. There are two faults here – the fault of perverse hatred and the resulting actions.
C. Contrast regeneration – both to will and to do of His good pleasure (Phil 2:13).

Lest his deeds should be reproved.

A. All men are fools and scorners by nature – they do not want to be corrected.
B. Can you prove your justification here? How much do you love to be corrected?
    1. Paul warned Thessalonia against despising prophesying (I Thess 5:20).
    2. But the word of the Lord was unto them … a damnation (Isaiah 28:9-13).
    3. Solomon's many warnings in Proverbs should cause you to love correction.
    4. Love hard doctrine to correct your errors like common Jews (Matt 7:28-29).
    5. Preaching is warfare against your own thoughts – embrace it (II Cor 10:4-6).
C. The light of the gospel includes exposing sin by preaching against it (John 7:7).

21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

But he that doeth truth.

A. However, there is another kind of man – one living by truth rather than by evil.
    1. Thanks be to God for all the inspired disjunctives in the Bible like this but!
    2. Truth here is to be understood by godly and righteous choices and actions.
B. A big question here is whether doing truth is a choice and action of man or God.
    1. Can a man in the flesh choose to change his life and commit his life to truth?
    2. Jesus already taught Nicodemus that before regeneration he cannot see truth.
    3. All that man has within him is lies and the poison of asps (Romans 3:9-19).
C. Only the born again seed and nature of the new man can and will choose truth.
D. Those receiving Jesus showed themselves very different – by God (Jn 1:11-13)!

Cometh to the light.

A. This is to believe on Jesus Christ and to repudiate all sins displeasing to Him.
B. In this context, he comes to Christ not to get truth but because he is of the truth!

That his deeds may be made manifest.

A. Rather than avoiding any correction of his God-hating life, he wants exposure!
B. Whether conscious or unconscious, it does not matter, he reveals a new nature.
C. True children of God have deeds of truth that assure their hearts (I Jn 3:18-19).

That they are wrought in God.

A. It is worked by God's grace and power, for that is what all scripture teaches.
B. You cannot believe until you are God's workmanship in regeneration.
C. You can only work out what God already worked in (Phil 2:12-13).
D. The godly actions of the children of God are to God, for God, by God, etc.

22 After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.

After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea.

A. Where was Jesus before going into the land of Judea? In Jerusalem (Jn 2:13,23).
B. The things are Passover (2:13), driving out moneychangers (2:14-17), answering Jews (2:18-22), miracles (2:23-25), and helping Nicodemus (3:1-21).
C. The disciples traveled with Jesus; they were now constant laborers with Him.
D. Rather than invent missionary work in a foreign place, they labored at home.

And there he tarried with them, and baptized.

A. Jesus showed here His authority and sanctioning of the ordinance of baptism.
    1. The disciples or apostles were ministerial laborers of the Lord Jesus Christ.
    2. They, like John, were Baptist preachers requiring repentance and baptism.
    3. John the Baptist was the first Baptist preacher – sent from God (John 1:6).
    4. Jesus was younger and followed after, but His authority for it is far greater.
B. Jesus did not baptize, but His apostles baptized (John 3:26 compared to 4:1-3).
    1. There is a duty to rightly divide scripture, which we embrace (II Tim 2:15).
    2. The subject of the clause is Jesus, and the verb intends Him, but indirectly.
    3. Action done by others may be assigned to a person when done by those under his authority or influence (I Sam 26:11-12; John 19:1; Acts 7:52).
    4. Jesus submitted to baptism Himself, and He also ordained other baptizers.

23 And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.

And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim.

A. Both Jesus and John were in Judea preaching and baptizing as preachers should.
    1. The also here indicates that both Jesus and John were baptizing in Judaea.
    2. Though they were not contemporaries for long, they were at their calling.

B. We are told two very important things for a clear and unavoidable conclusion.
    1. The activity in Aenon was water baptism by the first Baptist preacher John.
    2. The reason for baptism occurring there was the availability of much water.

C. Aenon. Greek version of Chaldee. Springs. Fountains. A city or body of water.
    1. The exact location of these places is disputed today, but known historically.
    2. There is evidence for the meaning of Aenon, confirming the much water.
    3. John baptized in Jordan, in Bethabara, and here, in Aenon near to Salim.

D. This is one of the last encounters recorded about the life of John the Baptist.

Because there was much water there.

A. The baptism mode of immersion is required by the example of John baptizing.

B. If we are Baptists, and why would we be anything else, then Baptists immerse.
    1. The first Baptist was John, named so by Jesus Christ, the ultimate authority.
    2. Any baptized by a Baptist preacher are Baptists, so why be anything else?
    3. Jesus was a Baptist, and so were his mother and apostles and their followers.

C. The true mode of baptism is proven by two criteria – practice and symbolism.

D. How did John, Jesus, and apostles practice baptism? They immersed persons.
    1. John baptized in the Jordan, which can only mean submerging (Mark 1:5).
    2. Jesus went to Jordan for John and went down and came up (Matt 3:13-17).
    3. John baptized at Bethabara – the place of the ford – to dip men (John 1:28).
    4. John baptized in Aenon – where there was much water – to dip (John 3:23).
    5. Philip and eunuch both went down into the water and back up (Ac 8:38-39).
    6. Could John have licked a thumb to touch foreheads at the third eye chakra?
    7. Could the eunuch have offered his canteen? Or asked Philip to spit on him?
    8. John dipped, plunged, submerged men in a watery grave to resurrect them.

E. What must baptism symbolize? It is a figure of death, burial, and resurrection.
    1. The most definitive verse says it figures Christ's resurrection (I Peter 3:21).
    2. Water baptism is a practical burial and resurrection with Christ (Rom 6:3-4).
    3. Water baptism is a practical planting and resurrection with Christ (Rom 6:5).
    4. Water baptism includes a burial and resurrection by faith in God (Col 2:12).
    5. Since baptism symbolizes a resurrection, our lives should reflect it (Col 3:1).
    6. Baptism symbolizes resurrection of dead bodies from the grave (I Co 15:29).

7. Baptism is a washing, which sprinkling or pouring cannot do (Heb 10:22).
8. Baptism shows three resurrections! Christ's! Our changed lives! Our bodies!

F. What Greek authority do we have for immersion? The Greek Orthodox Church!
   1. Instead of Latin Catholics or Americans, let the Greeks interpret the Greek.
   2. The Orthodox baptize infants by trine immersion … OrthodoxWiki: Baptism.

G. What Bible authority, no matter how weak, is there for baptism by sprinkling?
   1. There is none whatsoever in the New Testament beyond scornful mocking.
   2. Presbyterians and such use the O.T. for the N.T. ordinance (Ezek 36:25-27).

H. What do commentators that are baby-sprinkling heretics do with this passage?
   1. Albert Barnes declares the water was for all livestock brought by converts.
   2. Adam Clarke declared that any water and body have the essence of baptism.
   3. Calvin contradicted himself coming and going about the apostolic method.
   4. Others painstakingly lie about standing in the water in order for a pouring.

I. For more of mode of baptism … Proper Mode.

J. Denominational confusion … Denominational Summary.

And they came, and were baptized.

A. They came and were baptized – passive – rejecting baptism without authority.
   1. Some have imagined they could baptize themselves or anyone can baptize.
   2. The people in order to be baptized had to travel to get to John's much water.
   3. Subsequent Christians must also put forth effort at times for much water.

B. The pronoun has no clear antecedent, but it must mean the people of Judaea.
   1. These are not antecedents – Jesus and apostles – they were already baptized.
   2. It must be people of Judaea as described elsewhere (Matt 3:5-6; Mark 1:5).
   3. For an exercise in pronouns and antecedents, find them for Psalm 105:36-37.

24 For John was not yet cast into prison.

A. Events considered here were very early in the ministry of Jesus (Matt 4:12-13).

B. Events considered here were some of the last of John Baptist's limited ministry.

C. The greatest man born of a woman had severe trials in his life, even unto death.
   1. There are few that want the strait gate and narrow way like John described it.
   2. He demanded godliness of hearers from soldiers to the king (Luke 3:7-20).

25 Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.

Then there arose a question.

A. The gospel of Jesus Christ by its revelations will cause questions and divisions.
   1. No one had ever seen or heard quite the likes of John the Baptist's ministry.
   2. Consider our Lord's Sermon on the Mount and its denial of popular religion.
   3. Jesus had to answer many questions due to the novelty of His true religion during a time of reformation from O.T. worship and due to Jewish factions.
   4. Think … from allowable divorce to taxes … from the Sabbath to eating with sinners … from definition of a neighbor to the nature of the resurrection, etc.
   5. It is our duty and privilege to learn consistent, clear, concise answers for all.
   6. How is this done? By study and use (Prov 15:28; 22:17-21; Heb 5:12-14)!

B. Jesus came not for peace, but rather a sword, which most deny (Matt 10:34-37).
   1. This book identifies numerous divisions by Him (John 7:12,43; 9:16; 10:19).
   2. Preaching Jesus or His gospel brings enmity (II Co 2:14-17; Gal 5:11; 6:12).

C. The Jews had questioned John about his authority to do dipping (John 1:19-25).

D. Questions we do not know may be mentioned to introduce a setting (I Cor 7:1).

Between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.

A. The Jews then were obsessed with various ceremonial washings and purifyings.
   1. At the wedding in Cana, there were large stone vessels for purifying (Jn 2:6).
   2. Jews had washings from Moses or the Pharisees (Heb 9:10; Mark 7:8,13).
   3. They must have argued his baptism of repentance versus their purifications.

B. The Jews had questioned John about his authority to do dipping (John 1:19-25).
   1. The ones that should have most appreciated John gave him the hardest time.
   2. Gentiles received Paul's preaching as the Jews should have (Acts 13:42-48).

C. Jesus was now close by, entering Judaea to baptize; John now had a competitor.
   1. There had been exclusivity to John's baptism by John the Baptist himself.
   2. John's ministry was about to close, and then there would be no competition.
   3. The question must have involved our Lord's baptisms due to the next verse.

D. The context clearly shows a controversy about the baptisms of John and Jesus.
   1. See references to baptism both before and after this verse (3:22-23 cp 3:26).
   2. Recall also in 3:23 indicating close proximity of Jesus and John baptizing.
   3. The issue presented by John's disciples to him was about Jesus baptizing.
   4. John's baptism offended legalistic Jews; they could now counter with Jesus.
   5. Jews might contend – we have our washings, you claim John, what of Jesus?

26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.

And they came unto John, and said unto him.

A. We assume it was John's disciples that came to inquire of him about the matter.
B. How could inquirers have gotten between John and his disciples to have asked?
C. They had some historical knowledge of a relationship between John and Jesus.
D. It would have been hard for objecting Jews to refer to wild John as a rabbi.

Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan.

A. A common term of respect, meaning master or teacher, is used by his disciples.
B. Recall that Jesus did not condemn Nicodemus for using Rabbi with him (3:2).
    1. It is not wrong to call a man a rabbi in personal exchange or as a description.
    2. The error is allowing others to publicly call you by lofty titles (Mat 23:7-12).
    3. Elihu condemned flattering titles, far beyond acceptable use (Job 32:21-22).
C. They were in Judaea, to the west of Jordan, not where John had been (Jn 1:28).
D. John's disciples raised an exchange with Jesus we already studied (Jn 1:29-37).
E. It is a shame they could not name Him, honor Him, or agree with John's praise.
    1. They could only think that Jesus had come to their master, not the other way.
    2. They could only see that their master had baptized Jesus, not the other way.
    3. They only saw the honor Jesus got from John, making John greater (He 7:6).
    4. They ignored numerous aspects of Jesus' superiority to exalt their master.

To whom thou barest witness.

A. They remembered the very lofty things John testified to Jesus and about Him.
B. They remembered that their master baptized Jesus to fulfill all righteousness.
C. They forgot that their master had told Jesus he needed to be baptized by Him!
    1. John and God had glorified Jesus Christ over John in several different ways.
    2. Jesus had a true reputation for miracles that John did not have (John 10:41).

Behold, the same baptizeth.

A. Master, you are no longer the only one baptizing in Israel. Jesus is now doing it.
B. John held a monopoly on baptizing for the time while Jesus called His apostles.

And all men come to him.

A. The disciples of John saw the ministry of Jesus increasing and John's declining.

B. Jealousy for a leader or teacher is quite normal and to be mercifully understood.
    1. See the exchange between Joshua and Moses about prophets (Nu 11:26-29).
    2. Solomon saw the evil of a man being envied for doing good things (Ec 4:4).
    3. The church at Corinth had foolish preacher factions and envy (I Cor 3:3-5).

C. Here is another example of an absolute expression with very relative force.
    1. Did John go to Jesus for baptism? Did John's disciples? Did George Custer?
    2. Where are Arminians? They cower in a crib when verses like this are found.
    3. Was Paul a practicing sodomite to win sodomites by virtue of I Cor 9:22?
    4. What about Matthew 3:5? 5:34? Acts 2:44? I Timothy 6:10? Hebrews 13:4?
    5. Eph 1:22 and Heb 2:8 have all things under Christ, but what of I Cor 15:27?
    6. Thus, we know it is a larger crowd here (3:26) and all kinds in I Tim 2:4.

D. John corrected this jealous exaggeration with a generalization opposite it (3:32).

E. For more absolute or relative.

27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

John answered and said,

A. With the setting given, John's disciples jealous for his popularity, he answered.

B. What will the greatest man born of a woman say about Jesus and his own role?
    1. There was strong inducement here to agree with followers and envy Jesus.
    2. It would have been only natural to make some comparisons to exalt himself.
    3. But John was a true and faithful servant of God and Christ and did not envy.

A man can receive nothing.

A. The reception here is not active but passive – what another may give to a man.

B. Ministerial ability or success is not one's choice but rather the choice of God.
    1. Of course, this rule only intends those with legitimate ministries from God.
    2. Even holding an office legitimately, even Jesus, gets it from God (Heb 5:4).
    3. Jesus could have no office worthy of my witness without it being God's gift.
    4. Jesus could have no ministerial success without it being God's gift to Him.
    5. Jesus could have no miraculous power by the Spirit without God giving it.

C. Consider the holy terror resulting from men ignoring or rejecting divine choice.
    1. Judgment of Miriam and Korah.
    2. David identified God's choice of him and then son Solomon (I Chr 28:4-5).

D. The office and its success is by God's choice of the man and audience response.
    1. This was true of Paul, Peter, and Apollos (I Cor 3:5-10; 9:1-2; Gal 1:10-24).

2. God may send a man to warn without any fruit (Ezek 2:3-5; 3:7; 33:30-33).
3. On the other hand, Apollos was very effective very quickly (Acts 18:24-28).

E. This has nothing to do with regeneration before faith or anything close to such.
1. There is a fault to take verses as standalone statements of truth as preferred.
2. With John 1:12 based on John 1:13, there is reason to explain men receiving.
3. Context is master of interpretation, and context here is ministerial success.

Except it be given him from heaven.

A. The only ones involved were John and Jesus – thus only the truest ministers.
1. This is very important so that you do not misapply this key kingdom axiom.
2. John was sent directly by God and was very popular – by God's blessing.
3. Jesus was incarnate God and identified highly by John – by God's blessing.

B. An office, title, role, ability, performance, or popularity does not prove favor.
1. False teachers have ministries that are entirely corrupt or mostly corrupt.
2. There are many today without any legitimacy that are incredibly popular.
3. Benny Hinn's popularity in Kenya or India does not prove any divine favor.
4. Joel Osteen's popularity in Houston and around the world is very deceptive.
5. Jesus condemned highly esteemed men for evil evidence (Luke 6:26; 16:15)!

C. So, the axiom only applies to true ministers; false teachers are still condemned.
1. False teachers will count cars in a parking lot to justify doctrine and practice.
2. They proudly ignore that many take the road to destruction (Matt 7:13-14).
3. The large crowds listening to apostates is evidence and proof of their errors.
4. The small numbers following the truth is evidence and proof of orthodoxy.

D. This has nothing to do with regeneration before faith or anything close to such.
1. There is a fault to take verses as standalone statements of truth as preferred.
2. With John 1:12 based on John 1:13, there is reason to explain men receiving.
3. Context is master of interpretation, and context here is ministerial success.

28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.

Ye yourselves bear me witness.

A. He appealed to their memories to confirm his relationship to Jesus the Christ.

B. They had just admitted that they remembered some of the holy exchange (3:26).

C. John did not introduce a new thing – he had from the beginning honored Jesus.

That I said, I am not the Christ.

A. Here is the key – John was not the Christ, but Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah.
B. He declared plainly as possible, recorded earlier, he was not the Christ (1:20).
C. If John was not Christ, then Jesus must be Christ, and His success appropriate.

But that I am sent before him.

A. Here is the key – John was not the Christ, but Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah.
B. He declared very plainly, recorded earlier, he was a preparing messenger (1:23).
C. The scriptures identify two – the Christ and His forerunner (Is 40:3; Mal 3:1).

29 He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

He that hath the bride is the bridegroom.

A. The most important person at any wedding is the bridegroom with his bride.
B. The focus of a wedding is the union of bridegroom and bride – much attention.
C. The spiritual metaphor presents Jesus as the bridegroom and church as bride.
D. The church and people of God are the bride, but a bridegroom has attendants.
E. The bride, as the church, and the guests, as celebrants, are there for the groom.
F. The metaphor of husband-wife and marriage relative to God and His people is common (Ezek 16; Matt 22:1-14; II Cor 11:3-4; Eph 5:25-27; Rev 21:2).

But the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him.

A. John the Baptist is the friend of the bridegroom, closely connected to Jesus.
B. John was in a position of honor with Jesus Christ as His announcing friend.
C. This friend gets to stay with the bridegroom and hear Him and wait on Him.

Rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice.

A. Rather than resenting the bridegrooms presence, the friend rejoices for Him.
B. John's whole life and ministry were wrapped up in announcing Jesus Christ.
C. After introducing the Lamb of God, John rejoiced to see Jesus Christ take over.

This my joy therefore is fulfilled.

A. John's greatest joy was to announce the Son of God and see Him take His role.
B. How is your life fulfilled? Some of you think family, friends, house, success.
C. Our joy should be of Christ, to serve Him and His people, and to speak of Him.

30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

He must increase.

A. John Baptist was the great prophet of Messiah, Jesus Christ, and knew his job.
   1. He was the voice crying in the wilderness to announce Messiah (Is 40:3).
   2. He was the messenger sent to prepare the way for Jesus Christ (Mal 3:1).

B. Like Paul later, the goal of every Christian and church should be to exalt Jesus.
   1. God arranged Christ's life and role so He is preeminent in all (Col 1:18).
   2. The book of Hebrews fits well here – Jesus Christ is superior to all in O.T.
   3. Speak often of God (Mal 3:16), but neglect of Son neglects God (Jn 5:23).
   4. Paul dumbed his message down to exalt Jesus crucified (I Co 2:2; Ga 6:14).
   5. No minister should build anything on Christ as foundation (I Cor 3:10-17).
   6. There is no controversy about the greatness of gospel mysteries (I Ti 3:16).
   7. Paul counted everything in life as dung compared to Christ (Phil 3:8-10).
   8. Are you like Mary or Martha? Only one chose the best thing (Lu 10:38-42).
   9. Wrath is pronounced against those not loving Him (I Cor 16:22; Eph 6:24).

C. For sermons in Hebrews.

D. For more about Higher Ground.

E. He Is Altogether Lovely.

F. Unsearchable Riches.

But I must decrease.

A. John Baptist was the great prophet of Messiah, Jesus Christ, and knew his job.

B. Peter took Cornelius up and rejected worship, contrary to popes (Ac 10:25-26).

C. Like Paul later, the goal of every Christian and church is honest self-demotion.
   1. Paul was excellent at self-denigration (Eph 3:8; I Cor 15:9; I Timothy 1:15).
   2. No flesh should glory in the presence of God now or later (I Cor 1:29-31).

31 He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.

He that cometh from above is above all.

A. Grasp the value of these verses as historical details of our religion's founders!
   1. John Baptist continued detailed exaltation of Jesus as far superior to him.
   2. The inspired account included two baptizers and jealous disciples (3:22-26).
   3. The Baptist explained to them that Christ is preeminent over him (3:27-36).

B. Cometh from above is clearly defined later in the verse as cometh from heaven.

1. John had a divine mission from God (Jn 1:6), but did not come from God.
2. Jesus was the Son of God by incarnation and was also God Himself as well.
3. How did Jesus come from heaven, for He was conceived and born on earth?
4. Jesus was more than just a man – He was also God the Word – made flesh.
5. This same question is answered in other places by our Lord's two natures.
6. Jesus Himself already explained it by His two natures to Nicodemus (3:13).
7. The way in which Jesus came from heaven was the way He was still there!
8. Jesus being in the form of God humbled himself to death (Phil 2:5-11).

C. Jesus Christ is above all without compare by a divine nature and exalted state.
1. No other man has ever come from heaven, God's presence, for a role here.
2. The primary intent of this context is the superiority of Jesus to John Baptist.
3. No other man equaled John the Baptist, even Paul, but he less than Christ.
4. No other man should be considered – Moses, David, Solomon, Elijah, etc.
5. No earthly man should be considered – Buddha, Gandhi, Muhammad, etc.
6. Jesus is the Son of God, which makes Him superior to the angels (Heb 1-2).
7. The book of Hebrews shows Jesus above all O.T. persons or institutions.
8. He will show Himself to be the Blessed and Only Potentate (I Tim 6:13-16).
9. He is the Lord of hosts with all angels and principalities under His rule.
10. He rules the nations with a rod of iron from the throne of God right now.
11. All will give account (Ec 12:14; Ro 14:10-12; II Co 5:10-11; Re 20:11-15).
12. You have never been in the presence of anyone even close, or imagined it.
13. There is no reason to worry about the political games we must hear about.
14. Every ruler should kiss Him before hiding under rocks (Ps 2; Rev 6:15-16).
15. Any response less than Paul's is folly – Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?

D. For a strong Biblical basis to not fear the political games and war men, see here:
1. Nebuchadnezzar.
2. King of Kings.
3. Remedies for Political Fear.
4. Rulers and the Rich.
5. Marvel Not.
6. Blessed and only Potentate.
7. Living Under Obama.

He that is of the earth is earthly.

A. John had human parents and no divine nature, though his was a miracle birth.

B. Though of the earth, John had heavenly authority and role (Jn 1:6; Matt 21:25).

C. Yet, he himself maintained a significant difference between himself and Christ.

And speaketh of the earth.

A. John's knowledge of things was earthly and limited, consistent with his origin.

B. He identified a coming Messiah, that Messiah's works, the necessity and nature of baptism, true repentance and a changed life, etc.

He that cometh from heaven is above all.

A. The speech difference is for the next verse; John repeated Christ's superiority.

B. Jesus returned to God at His ascension, where this epistle placed Him (1:18).

C. There is no man to be compared to Jesus Christ; He is Lord over all forever.

D. This is your Lord and Savior; this is your King; this is your Friend and Brother.

32 And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.

And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth.

A. Jesus, as Word of God, had seen and heard things earthlings know nothing of.

1. Jesus as the only begotten Son of God had declared God in truth (Jn 1:18).
2. Jesus had the fullest authority, basis, and knowledge to declare truth (3:11).
3. God conveyed great truth to Jesus and great power for miracles (5:20-21).
4. God sent Jesus Christ as His Son with knowledge He had heard (8:26-27).
5. Jesus taught His apostles all things that His Father had told Him (15:15).

B. Lawyers and court cases crave those with firsthand information about a matter.

1. If you cannot believe an eyewitness or ear witness, what can you believe?
2. Jesus had certain and infallible knowledge of divine truth by eye and ear.

And no man receiveth his testimony.

A. Since Jesus is Jehovah God and a human nature, all men should hear all things!

1. There has never been another religious teacher anything like Jesus Christ.
2. He only testified those things He had personally seen and heard in heaven.
3. John and Jesus had already confirmed what the Baptist said (1:11; 3:11-12).

B. John the Baptist's take on our Lord's popularity is decidedly negative and few.

1. Contrary to what his disciples claimed – all men – John said none believed.
2. This is an exciting point of doctrine, for crowds or majorities prove heresy.
3. The true followers of Jesus Christ have always been a very small remnant.

C. Wise men know that scripture is always interpreted by context and knowledge.
    1. The very next verse says some believed, so no man is understood relatively.
    2. Since his disciples had exaggerated for faith, John exaggerated against faith.
    3. We know by scripture that comparatively few believe (Isaiah 1:9; 6:9-13; Matt 7:13-14; 22:14; Luke 12:32; 18:8; Rom 9:27-29; 11:4-6; I Peter 3:20).
    4. Primary definitions and grammar are worthless in this and many places.

D. Let Arminians, who build their soteriology on such relative words, take heed.
    1. They look for simple words they can apply in absolute terms for the naive.
    2. Disciples said all men came to Christ (3:26); he said no man came to Him!
    3. Our apostle writer said no Jews received Him (1:11), but some did (1:12)!
    4. For more absolute or relative.

33 He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.

He that hath received his testimony.

A. Jesus the Son of God testified truth about God, Himself, man, and eternal life.

B. Some believed our Lord's testimony or preaching, though comparatively few.
    1. This in spite of John's hyperbolic words for emphasis in the previous verse.
    2. This kind of contrast for emphasis was used by John earlier (John 1:11-12).

C. Only those ordained to eternal life – sheep – believe (Jn 10:26-27; Acts 13:48).

D. The important question is whether you have received the testimony of Jesus.

Hath set to his seal that God is true.

A. When we believe the witness of God about Jesus, we declare that God is true.
    1. If we do not believe about Jesus, then we make God a liar (I John 5:6-10).
    2. Will you declare for or against God's integrity in sending Jesus (Ro 3:3-4)?

B. In order to establish the validity of our faith, we will easily have a changed life.
    1. If you do not have a changed life, your actions declare God a liar (Tit 1:16).
    2. Faith without action is vain (Is 29:13; 48:1; 58:1-3; Eze 33:31; Ro 2:17-24).

34 For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God.

A. The ministry of Jesus Christ was by divine appointment and for divine content.
    1. His preaching/teaching was of God by virtue of God in Him and with Him.
    2. He taught things He heard of His Father via a divine nature and the Spirit.

B. Even for Jesus the Son of God, His teaching content was by the Spirit of God.

1. Jesus the Son of God – the Godman – had to grow in wisdom (Luke 2:52).
2. Jesus Christ did not have all knowledge in His human nature (Mark 13:32).
3. Why did He ask in Gethsemane for an absolute impossibility (Matt 26:39)?

For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

A. Without Holy Spirit revelation, we cannot know things of God (I Cor 2:6-16).
   1. atural man can never know spiritual things unless revealed by the Spirit.
   2. Natural man will not know spiritual things unless given a spiritual nature.
   3. Therefore, there are two absolute necessities of revelation and regeneration.
   4. Further, unless and until men compare words rightly, they are blind (2:13).

B. Jesus had the Holy Spirit without measure, unlike all other prophets of God.
   1. Other men had the Spirit for limited gifts or for limited time or both limits.
   2. We understand Psalm 45:7 and Hebrews 1:9 in the very same way as here.
   3. Jesus gives the measure of His gifts (Eph 4:7-11), but no measure to Christ.

35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

The Father loveth the Son.

A. The Almighty God greatly loves His incarnate Son, Jesus Christ of Nazareth.
   1. This is a much higher position and privilege than any prophet or even John.
   2. God gave individual and small gifts to prophets and men, but all to Christ!
   3. To reject the Son is a personal offence against the Father (John 5:22-23).
   4. God has promoted Jesus over the universe and assigned Jesus all authority.
   5. God had declared this fabulous truth (Mat 3:17; 17:5; Lu 20:13; II Pe 1:17).

B. A father that loves a Son transfers the entire estate to him to rule and enjoy it.

C. And we are in the Son, so we are loved as well, in the Son (Romans 8:38-39).

And hath given all things into his hand.

A. John Baptist knew the position, rank, and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

B. God gave Jesus great authority (John 5:22,27; 17:2; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Rev 1:18; 3:7; Matt 11:27; 25:31-46; 28:18; II Tim 4:1; I Pet 4:5; Rev 1:7; 20:11).
   1. We understand this of judgment more than sparrows by the following verse.
   2. We find a similar expression about our Lord prior to His death (John 13:3).
   3. Jesus is the Judge of the universe, and God has given all gifts to Him also.
   4. He may dispense with forgiveness or judgment according to His own will.
   5. If this is the case, every man ought to humble himself to the Son of God.

C. All is an absolute term with relative intent; God is excepted (I Cor 15:27-28).

D. Yet, everything else in the universe is Christ's to judge and rule as He sees fit.
    1. He easily ordered evil angels around as He chose by the voice of authority.
    2. He can give eternal life to the sheep and all those the Father gave to Him.
    3. He gave the gift of the Holy Spirit to the church on the Day of Pentecost.
    4. Much more could be written here, but let judgment and eternal life reign.

36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.

A. Jesus has all authority for heaven or hell; what you do with Him is crucial.
    1. What you do with Jesus Christ is the great divider and identifier of men.
    2. John had taught and warned clearly that Jesus was far greater than he was.
    3. God testified and witnessed of Jesus Christ – all better believe (I Jn 5:6-10).
    4. God gave Jesus authority to execute judgment (John 5:22,27; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Rev 1:18; 3:7; Matt 25:31-46; II Tim 4:1; I Pet 4:5; Rev 1:7; 20:11).

B. This describes possession of eternal life: not a condition, offer, or probability.
    1. He that believeth (present tense) hath everlasting life (is in possession of it).
    2. Believers show the work of God in them and have evidence of eternal life.
    3. Compare John 5:24 and 6:47 in light of I Jn 5:13 and other evidences there.

C. Do you believe Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior He sent for His people?
    1. The devils believe these things, so you need much more by way of works.
    2. Those who truly believe these facts gladly repent to fully obey His rules.

And he that believeth not the Son shall not see life.

A. Rejecting the Son of God, in spite of evidence for Him, is proof of damnation.
    1. What you do with Jesus Christ is the eternal divider and identifier of men.
    2. You will not even see life – you will not have any part of eternal life at all.
    3. Jesus will come in vengeance against rejecters of the gospel (II The 1:7-10).

B. It is a commandment to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (I John 3:23; Jn 6:29).

C. There is belief as a thing of faith … and of obedience (Tit 1:16; Jas 2:14-26).

D. Children of disobedience are the children of wrath (Eph 2:2-3; 5:6; Col 3:6).

But the wrath of God abideth on him.

A. Why do most men ignore the fact the chapter ends with abiding wrath on men?

B. The wrath of God is a subject that most Christians hardly ever hear or consider.
    1. They have corrupted God's character by perverting and stressing John 3:16.

2. They know next to nothing of God's true character toward sin and sinners.
3. They do not want an angry God, so they altered His nature to cotton candy.
4. They disdain Jonathan Edwards, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God."
5. Men want to deny, ignore, or minimize the wrath of God, but it is very real

C. God has fury toward children of wrath and vessels of wrath (Ep 2:3; Ro 9:22).
1. All sinners by disobedience deserve wrath (Eph 5:6; Col 3:6; Rom 2:5,8).
2. The Flood and other similar judgments were only tokens of coming wrath.
3. God's wrath is revealed in the gospel (Rom 1:15-18; 2:5-6; 5:9; John 3:36).

D. The wrath of God is His anger and indignation against evil persons and things.
1. Most think God is like them, because He does not crush quickly (Ps 50:21).
2. God's wrath occurs due to holiness and righteousness (Ps 45:7; 11:7; 7:11).
3. God takes vengeance on His enemies (De 32:35-43; Nah 1:1-6; Rev 11:18).
4. God is willing to show His wrath and fury, even for eternity (Romans 9:22).
5. Examples of His wrath include Noah, Sodom, Egypt, Korah, Israel, and etc.
6. A day of wrath comes (I Thes 1:10; Ro 2:5; Rev 6:16-17; 11:18; 19:11-16).
7. Consider wrath by One omnipotent (Ps 2:12; 76:7; 90:11), omniscient (Jer 17:10), holy (I Pet 1:15-17), and righteous (Nah 1:3) in order to rightly fear.
8. Paul persuaded men due to the terror of the Lord (II Cor 5:11; Luke 12:4-5).
9. His fiery wrath against compromisers continued in the N.T. (Heb 12:28-29).

E. You should appreciate your deliverance from the wrath of God that is coming.
1. By nature we are children of wrath (I Thes 1:10; 5:9; II Thes 1:7-9; Ep 2:3).
2. God's anger at His own differs from that to the wicked (Ps 7:11; 69:22-28).
3. His anger at children is short (Ps 30:5; 85:1-10; 89:30-34; 103:9; Mic 7:18).
4. His anger at them has comfort and mercy (Is 12:1; Mic 7:18-21; Job 35:15).

F. The wrath of God was already there – his disbelief does not cause it or bring it.
1. See John 3:18, where men are condemned already before rejecting Christ.
2. Men are under God's wrath by Adam's sin and their sins before disbelief.

G. Coming judgment of sinners is far more than so-called separation from God.
1. Instead it is wrath that abides on, over, and toward the sinner for eternity.
2. Consider the fury and ferocity of warnings (Matthew 25:41; Rev 14:10-11).

H. Reconciliation is not offered or lost, but only for elect (II Cor 5:18-21; Ro 5:9).
1. He poured out His wrath against sinners on His Son instead of on us. Glory!
2. You can and should believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to prove eternal life.
3. You can and should give all diligence to prove your election (II Pet 1:5-11).

I. Kiss the Son – the Lord Jesus Christ – the King of kings forever (Ps 2:6-12).