

John Series: That You May Believe #11: The Gospel Unveiled!

Text: John 3:9-21

Jesus' nighttime interview with Nicodemus continues. He moves from speaking about the new birth to God's glorious plan of redemption through the death of Christ, and man's need for faith in Him. Jesus unveils the gospel!

I. A Debate With Omniscience (vs 9-13).

1. Bewildered. (v9) Nicodemus answers Jesus' teaching on the New Birth with an awe-struck, "How can these things be?" He had begun talking to Jesus about what he "knew," but is now speechless.

2. Christ's Response. (v10) Jesus implies that he should have known about these things all along. The promise of new birth was in the Old Testament all along, though veiled.

3. Christ vs. The Religious Authorities. (vs11-12)

A. Know and See. Earlier Nicodemus had told Jesus about what HE knew. Now Jesus tells him that He is speaking about what HE knows. Christ had pointed out Nicodemus' blindness ("unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God") and now tells him that He is speaking about what HE sees.

B. The Authorities Unbelief. Christ is clearly making a distinction between Nicodemus and the religious authorities he represents, and Christ – the One who is the Truth. Christ tells Nicodemus that "you do not receive our testimony." Watch for this separation between Christ and the authorities to continue to grow and escalate throughout John's gospel.

C. Earthly & Heavenly Things. Christ has been speaking of earthly things (the new birth is "from" above, but happens to men in the earthly experience). Now Jesus is about to transition into heavenly things: God's eternal plan of redemption; the mystery of the Gospel revealed!!!

Verse 13 is saying that no man has gone into heaven to hear the divine mysteries revealed. Redemption lies outside of our grasp, reach, sphere and ability. **Christ Himself was THERE when God decreed the eternal plan of redemption.** Christ is speaking to Nicodemus (and all of us) about what He KNOWS and what He SAW. He is about to reveal the gospel in plain speech, using the Old Testament types.

II. Jesus Reveals the Gospel! (vs 14-21).

1. The Gospel Concealed in Old Testament Type (vs 14-15). Jesus takes Nicodemus, the teacher of Israel, to Numbers 21:4-9; to Moses' last miracle. The solution was NOT to climb the pole, etc, but to LOOK. "As...so" terminology show us that this is a type of Christ's death on the cross. "MUST" be lifted up: This was the only way! "Lifted up" is a term that can mean crucified or glorified. Christ's cross WAS the means of His glorification.

2. The Gospel Clearly Proclaimed (v16). The most loved and well-known verse in the world.

A. Origin of the Plan: GOD. Salvation is not man's idea but God's. HIS eternal plan. (1Pt1:19-21a, Is46:9b-10)

B. Heart Behind the Plan: LOVE. God chose to set His love upon us. (1Jn4:9, 10, 19; Rom5:8-10, Ps 63:3, Is 54:10, Eph1:4b-6, 2:4-5)

C. Scope of the Plan: WORLD-WIDE. Not just Jews, but people from every ethnic group will be included! God's general love is for all His creatures, and His special saving love is for His people, the church. (Acts 11:18, Rev 5:9-10, Gal 3:8)

D. Essence of the Plan: CHRIST. Christ is the PLAN. God loved and GAVE. There is a lot in that word, "gave." It speaks of the cross! (Jn 15:13, 1Jn 3:16, 4:10, Rom 8:32, Gen 22:2, Mt21:33-39)

E. Condition of the Plan: FAITH. We must abandon all other sources of trust and put our faith exclusively in Christ. Note that Christ taught the new birth *before* faith. As we are born again, we embrace Christ in saving faith. (Gal 2:16, Eph 2:8-9)

F. Refusal of the Plan: PERISH. Banished from the presence of the God of love; dwelling forever under the just wrath of God. (Rom 6:23, 2Thess1:7b-10a)

G. Outcome of the Plan: ETERNAL LIFE. Whoever believes has eternal life, which begins now! This life manifests itself in fellowship with God in Christ (Hendricksen). John 5:24

3. The Reason for Christ's First Coming (17-18) He didn't come to condemn but to save! (Amos5:18-20) Because of our sin, Christ could have come to wipe us out. But because of God's grace He came to save! However, those who do not believe already are condemned. It's just a matter of time till the judgment. Those who abide in Christ by faith will have no condemnation against them or guilt before God...ever!

4. The Judgment Shown: Light vs. Dark (19-21)

A. People Reject the Light. People run from Christ like cockroaches scattering from the light. Why? Because the light of His truth reveals sin. People love sin more than Jesus. There is no one to blame but ourselves if we reject Christ.

B. Some Come to the Light. God has a people. His people leave the darkness and come to the light. There IS fruit in His people. God makes sure of this, and so the deeds are carried out "in God," giving all glory to God. 1 Jn 1:6

Application: Turn from the darkness and the sin you once loved. Believe the Christ who bore our sins at the cross. Look to Him in faith and be saved!

Scripture References & Quotes

1Ptr1:19-21a – "but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. **20** He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you **21** who through him are believers in God"

Is46:9b-10 – "for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, **10** declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,"

1Jn4:9-10,19 – "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. **10** In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins... We love because he first loved us."

Rom 5:8-10 – "but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. **9** Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. **10** For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life."

Ps63:3 – "Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you."

Is54:10 – "For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the Lord, who has compassion on you."

Eph1:4b-6 – "In love **5** he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, **6** to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved"

Eph2:4-5 – "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, **5** even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ by grace you have been saved"

Acts11:18 – "When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life."

Rev 5:9-10 – "And they sang a new song, saying, Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, **10** and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."

Gal 3:8 – "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'In you shall all the nations be blessed.'"

Jn 15:13 – "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."

1Jn 3:16 – "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers."

Rom 8:32 – "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?"

Gen 22:2 – "After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, Abraham! And he said, Here am I. **2** He said, Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

Gal 2:16 – “yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through **faith** in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by **faith** in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

Eph 2:8-9 – “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, **9** not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

Rom 6:23 – “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

2 Thess 1:7b-10a – “when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels **8** in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. **9** They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, **10** when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed,”

Jn5:24 – “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.”

1Jn 1:6 – “ If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.”