

Jesus Came to Bring Eternal Life

John 3:9-21

In John 3:1-8, Nicodemus visits Jesus to inquire about his teaching. Jesus jumps quickly to the heart of the matter when he says three times, “You must be born again.” Though he was the leading teacher of Israel, Nicodemus has a hard time understanding what Jesus means. In 3:9-21, Jesus explains that he came to earth to bring eternal life. *Eternal life comes through faith in the cross.*

Jesus has the authority to speak the truth (9-13)

Nicodemus betrayed his ignorance of the Old Testament by his question (9). He should have known that God by his sovereign grace can give someone a new heart.

Jesus responded with a question that expressed dismay that Nicodemus did not understand (10). His study of the Scriptures should have made him aware that no one comes to God without spiritual cleansing.

Jesus affirms a solemn truth for the third time (11). Jesus was speaking as an eyewitness but Nicodemus was rejecting his witness. Nicodemus had gone beyond failing to understand to making the more serious error of failing to believe Jesus’ testimony about the new birth.

The earthly things (12) about the new birth were elementary. Since Nicodemus had not believed it, he could not begin to believe heavenly things such as life beyond the grave, life in the kingdom, and the new heavens and new earth.

Jesus explained that he could speak with authority about heavenly things since he came from heaven (13). While many prophets had heavenly visions, Jesus had been there in person.

Eternal life comes through belief in Jesus (14-18)

Jesus would be lifted up in death (14) in the same way that Moses lifted the serpent on a pole in the wilderness as a cure for disobedience.

Salvation is available for those who believe (15). By comparing himself to the serpent on the pole, Jesus was teaching that whoever trusted in him and his death would receive eternal life. The look of faith would lead to eternal life for those doomed to die.

Verse 16 is the best-known verse in the Bible and expresses the gospel message more clearly than any other. Each word is significant and provides a summary of the gospel.

God	The greatest Lover
so loved	The greatest degree
the world	The greatest company
that he gave	The greatest act
his one and only Son	The greatest gift
that whoever	The greatest opportunity
believes	The greatest simplicity
in him	The greatest attraction
shall not perish	The greatest promise
but	The greatest difference
have	The greatest certainty
eternal life	The greatest possession

(R. Kent Hughes, *John: That you may believe*, p.90)

God's purpose in sending his son was not to judge or condemn the world (17). While Jesus will eventually judge everyone, he came to provide salvation.

The person who believes in Jesus escapes condemnation (18). Those who do not believe already stand condemned.

Some choose darkness rather than light (19-21)

Though light casts shadows, its purpose is to illuminate. It reveals sin (19). Some reject the light because they prefer their sin and darkness. Their deeds are evil.

Not only do evildoers love darkness (19), they hate the light (20) because it exposes the vanity and emptiness of their lives. It convicts them of their sin.

People who hold to the truth come to the light (21). Rather than cover up their deeds, they allow the light to expose them. They humbly acknowledge that the good works that they do are really God's production.

Application

Come to the light

Believe the Message

Enjoy eternal life