

John 09 – Saved or Lost: Law Excluded Middle

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John 3:16-21

Prologue

Nicodemus' Lesson of New
Covenant salvation based on the
requirement of Christ's sacrifice
as the Passover (Paschal) Lamb

- Three Amens (Absolutes)
 - *Born from above* to discern God's Kingdom
 - Baptisms: repentance & Spirit to enter Kingdom
 - Rejection of Christ's absolute knowledge
- Old Testament examples:
 - Son of Man descending then ascending to God
 - Christ must die for sin

Belief in Christ

- This is implicit in Old Testament scriptures
 - Crucifixion events described in detail (vs. 21)
 - Christ trusts in God even in the valley of death (vs. 28)
 - Who is the King of Glory - He is the Lord of Hosts (vs. 28)
- Teachers of Israel grasped at gnats to swallow camels in the ridiculousness of their *ignorant* teachings (vs. 23-28)

Moses Illustrated Christ's Death

- As Moses lifted up the bronze dragon on a stauros
 - Sinless Christ would become sin paying penalty for sin
 - He would die on a stauros of wood (tree) & be cursed
 - All who looked to Him would be saved (Have new life)
- If Nicodemus understood Scripture he would have realized Christ's truths; instead, he meditated on chaff
(Jo 5:36-47)

Most Famous Bible Verse (Jo 1:16)

- This has become one of the most famous Bible verses; yet, it is one of the least understood – how Nicodemus-like we have become
 - So (οὐτως) – Poorly translated into English, this means God expressed His love in a completely **unlooked** for and **little** understood fashion by having His one-of-a-kind Son (God) die for sinful man rather than simply extract the justice due for our being sin from each of us

Aorist Tense – Completed Action

- God loved – In eternity past God made a decision and never unmade that decision: *He loved man* {Omniscient}
(Ep 1:16)
- God gave – In eternity past God sent His Son to die in place of sinful man {Omnipotent} {Unimagined}
(Jo 5:31; Ro 5:6-11)
- Man simply believes to appropriate life; but, sinful man cannot believe {Incomprehensible} (Jo 5:39-43; 6:44, 63-66; 1Co 2:10)

Cosmos {κόσμος} – World

- κόσμος references not an object but an interrelated system with bounds defined by the biblical context
 - In Hebrew the phrase “heaven and earth” defines the system; i.e., what occurs on earth must first be determined in Heaven (Ge 1:1-10)
 - In Greek κόσμος refers specifically to this physical and spiritually sinful world (universe) system including man (Jo 1:10, 7:7; Ro 8:19-23)

Elements of κόσμος System

- κόσμος is ruled by Lucifer since Adam’s sin (Jo 12:31, 14:30)
- κόσμος rejects and hates the Light (Jo 7:7, 9:5)
- κόσμος covets what it cannot have and in slavery to (ITi 6:7; Jo 2:15-17)
 - Lust of the eye
 - Lust of the flesh
 - Pride of life

{ἔχῃ} Subjunctive Case is the Issue

- *If they have life*; they heard & believed {Subjunctive}
 - No one can hear (understand) the Light as all are born spiritually dead in original sin (Jo 8:23; 14:15-17; 3Co 2:14; Ro 13:8)
 - Only those whom God has quickened (made alive) can hear His salvation call (Ro 8:15; Co 4:6; Ep 2:1-10; Col 2:13; 1Pe 3:18)
 - Out of context – Verse appears to support *free will heresy* {Pelagianism, Semi-Pelagianism, Arminianism Heresies}
 - In context – Verse reveals God’s sovereignty

Truth of John 3:16

- Before the creation of the κόσμος God loved those whom He called so greatly that He sent His one & only Son into the κόσμος that all who will believe in Him, written in the Book of Life, and will receive the New Covenant, indwelling Spirit, to cry out, "Abba, Daddy"
- Pelagianism in all its forms is works so man can boast that he helped in his own salvation; Christ not needed

Christ Came to Redeem κόσμος

- Son not sent into the κόσμος to condemn the κόσμος
 - Jews expected Messiah to come and defeat the nations so they could enslave everyone (Still their dream today)
 - Nicodemus' [Jews] could not comprehend Suffering Messiah; thus, he came to co-opt Conquering Messiah
 - Christ came bringing life, inaugurating the New Covenant clearly proclaimed in Jeremiah (Je 31:31-34)

Anyone Can Destroy

- The essence of sin is *death* and revels in violence
(Jn 2:4-12; 7:1; 3:1-3)
 - Satan - Murderer from the beginning (Jn 8:44)
 - Man - History of man is death of all who are different (Jn 4:6-12)
- Christ came bringing *Life* (New Covenant) into κόσμος
(Jn 12:47; 3:16-20)
 - Physical aspect of the κόσμος longs for redemption (Entropy)
(Jn 8:19-23)
 - Spiritual aspect the of κόσμος rejects Light/Life (Darkness)
(Jn 8:23; 12:46)

New Life Unexpected

- Sinful man, including Nicodemus, did not understand that the New Covenant requires a *new nature* (2Co. 5:17)
- Man expects to be the same but only act differently; this is impossible since sin cannot be sinless (Lk 6:43-45)
- Thus, Christ's message is very different: all who do not believe are already condemned; i.e., it is not a matter of doing but of being (one with this κόσμος)

Criteria of Judgment – Light

- By nature sinful man hates the Light (Truth) because He {Messiah} reveals their sin by their works
 - Since Christ in the flesh lives according to the Law without violating the Law, man stands condemned
 - Works reveal one's spiritual nature, which is invisible
 - Man agrees with his sin nature; thus, the rejection of the Light condemns man - Unquickened man hates light

Light Reveals the Obvious

- The κόσμος system hates the Light because it exposes man's sin
 - God judges man by his own works (Ro 2:11-15)
- Law is the standard by which righteousness is measured (Ex 20:1-17; Mt 5:17-20; Ro 3:31; 7:21-25)
 - Lost - Law reveals person's sinfulness
 - Saved - Law is standard that measures our maturity

Hope for Nicodemus

- Those who are *called* of God come to the Light so their works can be revealed
 - Not because of what they do but because of what the Spirit does *through* them (χάρισμα) (ICo 12:1-11)
- Nicodemus, came in darkness (physical & spiritual) and he rejected Christ's teaching; but, he does turn to the Light by the time Christ dies (J: 7:45-52; 19:38-42)

Epilogue

Nicodemus in spiritual darkness comes in the darkness to co-opt Christ to his understanding only to discover that he has no understanding of God's Truth

- Last lesson discussed the spiritual aspects of the New Covenant
- This lesson discussed the practical manifestations (revealed by Light) AEB
 - One's acceptance or rejection of the Truth
 - One's deeds reveal one's inner nature: lost (Dark) or saved (Light) (Mt 7:15-20)

Mirrors the Opening Hymn (J: 1:1-5, 9-11)

- Messiah creator of the κόσμος that Lucifer co-opted
 - Lucifer sinned but Light brought order out of chaos
 - Man sinned and Light brings Life out of Death
- Man rejects the Light
 - Nicodemus, teacher of Bible, could not find His Truth
 - Did not accept Christ's witness, remained in Darkness

Sinful Man Seeks to Hide Light

- Lest we be too harsh on Hebrews rejection of Truth
 - Church history replete with false teachers corrupting God's truth for man's philosophies to justify his sin
 - Pelagianism, Semi-Pelagianism, Arminianism and free will are all flavors of the same basic tenets:
 - Man is not tainted, irrevocably at least, and able to discover truth and choose to accept or reject Christ
 - However, this directly contradicts Scripture

American Flavor of Error

- *Second Great Awakening* and Revivalist Movement popularized this error {Charles Finney} - 19th century
 - Finney rejected biblical truth making his own theology
 - Combined New England Common Sense Realism, Jacksonian instinctive democracy, Emerson's mystical Transcendentalism and Wesley Brothers methodology (outside of church scrutiny) to refashion religion (Music manipulation, invitations, and peer pressure)
 - Moody, Sunday, Graham & others promoted *free will*

Moralism is not New Life

- America's *godly* heritage was simply outward moralistic behavior without inner salvation {like Pharisees}
 - Used government to force people to live morally: Prohibition, War on Drugs, Sunday Blue Laws, etc.
 - These failed miserably empowering the flesh - Violence
(C=1 2:20-23)
 - Most converts remained in flesh supporting state power
 - Some like Nicodemus & myself, saved - God's Grace
(JC= 159-12)