

Class 7 - Chapter 3 – Part 2

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The Greatest
Verse in the
Bible
John 3:16

The Greatest Verse in the Bible
The Only Way to Escape Judgement & Go to Heaven

John 3:16

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

John 3:14 - 15

“Just as Moses Lifted up the Serpent...the Son of Man must be lifted up, that whoever BELIEVES in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

- Jesus goes out of His way to explain to Nicodemus that the Son of Man must become the curse of sin in the same way as this Old Testament passage did.
- **The Serpent Moses lifted up on the Pole was a Foreshadowing (type & shadow) of the Cross!**
- **Numbers 21:4-9** – God punished the disobedient Israelites by sending snakes to bite them. He instructed them to put a brass snake on a pole, and by **looking** up at the serpent they could be delivered by death.
- 2 Kings 18:4 – this same snake began to be worshiped as an idol 700 years later!

The Bronze Serpent

- ⁴ Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of **the people became very discouraged** on the way. ⁵ And **the people spoke against God and against Moses**: “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For *there is no food and no water*, and **our soul loathes this worthless bread.**”
- ⁶ **So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.**

The Snakes were sent by the Lord and the wrath of God is on the people for their sins of **thanklessness**, complaining and rebellion.

The Bronze Serpent

- ⁷ Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us.” So **Moses prayed for the people.**
- ⁸ **Then the LORD said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.”**
- ⁹ So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

The bitten people had the poison venom (**sin analogy**) in them already. They would die without divine intervention.

The means God chose to rescue the people from His own curse is a picture of the curse itself!!

John 3:14

Why Does Jesus Compare Himself to a Bronze Serpent?

- There is nothing in the entire Old Testament that clearly explains why God chose this method of the snake on the pole until John 3 when Jesus compares this (analogy) to looking in faith to the crucified Christ.
 - Serpent was a symbol of sin
 - Brass was a metal that could sustain fire (symbol of judgement)
 - Therefore sin would be judged **Jesus/God became sin for us!**
 - Crucifixion had not been invented yet at time of Moses – divine

Jesus/God became Sin Curse for us!

2 Corinthians 5:21

- ²¹ **For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

Galatians 3:13

- ¹³ **Christ** has redeemed us from the curse of the law, **having become a curse for us** (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”),

Jesus/God became Sin Curse for us!

- For Jesus to compare Himself to a snake, portrayed as evil and a curse is **SHOCKING**.
- **In becoming like the snake, Jesus was the embodiment of our sin and curse, and in becoming sin and curse for us, he took ours away.**
- **To be cursed is to be separated from God** and is the key to understanding Jesus' cry from the Cross "My God, why has thou forsaken me"
- **On the cross, Jesus was cursed and separated from God and the fury of God's wrath was poured out on Him as He became the sin bearer, the final Lamb of God, the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world.**
- The horrific experience of having the sins of the world put upon the Lord Jesus as He hung in excruciating pain from that cross is beyond human understanding.
- **Can you see how immense the love of God is to do this for you?**

Summary

- The snake on the pole was a foreshadowing of the CROSS!!
- All God asks is for us to believe & look at His Son, and you have Life. Salvation by Faith.
- **Isaiah 45:22** ““Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I *am* God, and *there is no other.*”
 - (the single verse that resulted in the instant conversion of Charles Spurgeon)

Other Insights to the Serpent on the Brass Pole

- **Greek mythology** – Aesculapius 1200 BC (god of medicine & healing, 250 years after Moses) - a snake on a pole is a symbol of healing.
- **WHO – World Health Organization** today has this serpent on a pole in their logo. WHO is actually displaying in their logo the serpent on the brass pole from the Bible!



The Greatest Story Ever Told

John 3:16

THE MOST IMPORTANT VERSE IN THE BIBLE

God: Salvation starts with God. He seeks man.

Love: Rom. 5:8 "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

World: A sinful world under the control of Satan. This means everyone in the world.

Gave: Love is expressed by giving.

His only begotten Son:

God gave His best! His Son (unique: one of a kind). To come down from Heaven and bear the sins of the world on the Cross. 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom 8:3

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

Him: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, not a doctrine.

Perish: Separation from God. God's judgement to unbelievers. Hell. This is not universal salvation. Unbelievers will perish.

Whoever believes: Certainty & Assurance. Everyone, good and bad. It doesn't matter how bad you've been. Anyone can trust Him this moment and invite Him into your heart and pass from death to life (born again)

Eternal Life: Not something in the future. Used 16X in John. Begins at the moment of faith.

John 3:16

THE MOST IMPORTANT VERSE IN THE BIBLE

- For God
 - so
 - loved
 - the world
 - That He gave
 - His only
 - Son
 - That whosoever
 - believes
 - in Him
 - should not perish
 - but have
 - everlasting
 - life
- the greatest **being**
 - the greatest **degree**
 - the greatest **affection**
 - the greatest **object of love**
 - the greatest **act**
 - the greatest **treasure**
 - the greatest **gift**
 - the greatest **company**
 - the greatest **trust**
 - the greatest **object of faith**
 - the greatest **deliverance**
 - the greatest **assurance**
 - the greatest **promise**
 - the greatest **blessing**

CRITICAL

John 3:16

VERY IMPORTANT

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BELIEVE?

We need to trust:

- 1. Who Jesus is** – We must believe Jesus Christ is GOD (or there is no salvation).
- 2. What He has done** – DIED for our SINS & ROSE FROM THE DEAD
- 3. That He is our Saviour** - that He can forgive us our sins and give us eternal life
- 4. That He is our Lord** – we need to **trust** and **obey** His Word, serve and glorify Him

John 3:16

THE GOSPEL MESSAGE OF SALVATION

- **Believe that Jesus is Lord, died on the Cross for your sins and was raised from dead.**
- **The FREE offer of the Gospel is broad enough to include the very worst, most wretched sinner (murders, etc.) who believes, but**
- **Is narrow enough to exclude the most moral, religious and most socially generous person who does not believe.**

John 3:18-21

The Results of Unbelief

- CONDEMNATION (v.18)
 - WRATH OF GOD (v.36)
 - PERISH or HELL (v.16)
-

- ¹⁸ “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but **he who does not believe is condemned already,**
- ³⁶ He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and **he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”**

John 3:18-21

The Results of Unbelief - CONDEMNATION

- The final sentencing for those who reject Christ is in the future. But they are condemned already, just like eternal life is both now and in the future, so is condemnation.
- **Light & Darkness analogy for judgement – when people willingly reject the Light (Truth) when it's exposed to them, it's because they love the Darkness & their sin, because they don't want their evil deeds exposed.** They don't want to repent, and do not hate their sin, but love their sin.
- **Believers hate their sin and love and hunger for righteousness.**

John

Evangelistic Message

1. Premise of modern day evangelism is often “do you lack purpose, meaning, unfulfilled, lonely, stressed, financial problems, etc.” Jesus can help you.
2. The evangelistic message is you are going to eternal hell because you are sinner. You need forgiveness and eternal life to avoid hell. This can only come through **repentance** and **faith** in Jesus Christ who was resurrected.
3. The lost sinner needs to be **convicted of their sin** before there can be true heartfelt repentance. They must understand the magnitude of God’s love for them in sending Jesus to the Cross.

John 3

Summary of the Passage

1. You need to be Born Again (to avoid God's wrath which is the punishment of sin, resulting in eternal Hell.)
2. Being Born Again is work of divine sovereignty of God
3. But anyone who Believes can be born again (human responsibility)
4. Why – so God gets all the glory and we cannot boast and because He loved the world so much.
5. Purpose of Jesus' coming was not judgement, but to provide the salvation of all who believe.
6. V.18 – We are condemned and judged “ALREADY” – when you were born you were already guilty, and no future verdict will be made on your life, so nothing you can do can earn a right- standing with God.
7. **You will be judged to Hell not for anything you did, but what you didn't do, BELIEVE in Jesus Christ. The only unforgiveable sin is unbelief.**
8. People refuse to believe because they love their sin, and Christ exposes their sin. (v.19-20) Therefore people need the Light of Jesus' truth to confront their sin and convict them to **Repent** and **Believe**.

Are you Saved and going to Heaven when you die?

- **Have you decided to believe in Jesus?**
- **Now is the day of Salvation!**
- **The message of the Bible is to Believe in Jesus Christ.**
- **Will you put your faith in Jesus Christ and believe?**

SALVATION

What it means in more detail.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BELIEVE?

- **Believe = Trust = Faith**

- To have confidence in the truth or the reliability of something, although without absolute proof that one is right in doing so. **To put your TRUST or to put your FAITH in.** Belief in the Bible means more than just intellectual agreement to something; it is fully Trusting in the source of the information.
- The object of your faith is not “faith itself” (or some mystical impersonal force or self-will).
- **The object of your faith must be Jesus Christ. It’s not a question of the amount of your faith, but the trustworthiness of the person you have faith in (Jesus & the Word).**
- It’s like a **marriage relationship**, when you get married you trust that your spouse will keep the vows, be honest, faithful, take care of you, etc.
- To trust in Jesus means to believe everything He said and accept His Word as true since the Bible is the very character, Spirit and promises of God. (John 8:31-32). **Can you truly be a Christian (born again) and not believe even just certain things in the Bible?**

Mark 1: 15

“repent and believe” A Call to Salvation

- **Repentance** – for the unsaved person means a heartfelt, sorrowful recognition that you are a lost, helpless sinner who needs God’s forgiveness. (a change in mind resulting in a change in lifestyle)
- **Believe = Trust = Faith (total confidence in and dependence on Jesus)**
 - that Jesus Christ is God and your saviour, and with faith, accept Him into your **heart** as your Lord with a desire to follow Him.
 - It’s more than intellectual, even **the demons “believed”** and trembled, **it must be from the heart and there must be a change in your life.**
- **Salvation** - When we do our part by Repenting & Believing, God does His part by providing us salvation, which is the **forgiveness of sins and eternal life.**
 - **No effort required – Just Trust (with a repentant heart)**
 - **But it does require Commitment** - like a marriage to a spouse where on the wedding day you trust your spouse to love and care for your needs for the rest of your life.
 - Repentance & Faith go together, because it’s impossible to put your faith in Christ as your Lord & Saviour, without first changing your mind about who He is and what he has done.

Mark 1: 15

REPENTANCE

- **Rom 3:23; 6:23; Prov 28:13; Luke 13:3, 24:46-48; 2 Cor. 7:10; Mark 2:17**
- **Repentance** literally means **TO CHANGE ONE'S MIND** about your **ATTITUDE** towards God, self, sin and Christ.
- Repentance is the sinner's recognition & acknowledgement that they are lost, helpless and in need of grace, in light of God's holiness. Grace and Truth must never be separated.
- It must be produced by the Holy Spirit and often effected by preaching of the Word, like John the Baptist was doing.
- Therefore Jesus tells every sinner in Luke 13:3 "**Except you repent** (change your ATTITUDE), **you will perish.**"
- See www.crossroadoftruth.org "Sin & Repentance" notes under Learning Resources for more information on Christian repentance (daily), conviction of sin, and confession.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pn-MxtZLxl8> – Video on What Sin is

The Salvation of God

DEATH

Sin/Child of Satan/
Dead Spiritually/Adam
Nature/Blind/Condemned/
God's Wrath/Judged to Hell

- Disobedience to God's law
- Penalty of sin is death, therefore we need to be judged righteous to avoid the wrath of God

LIFE

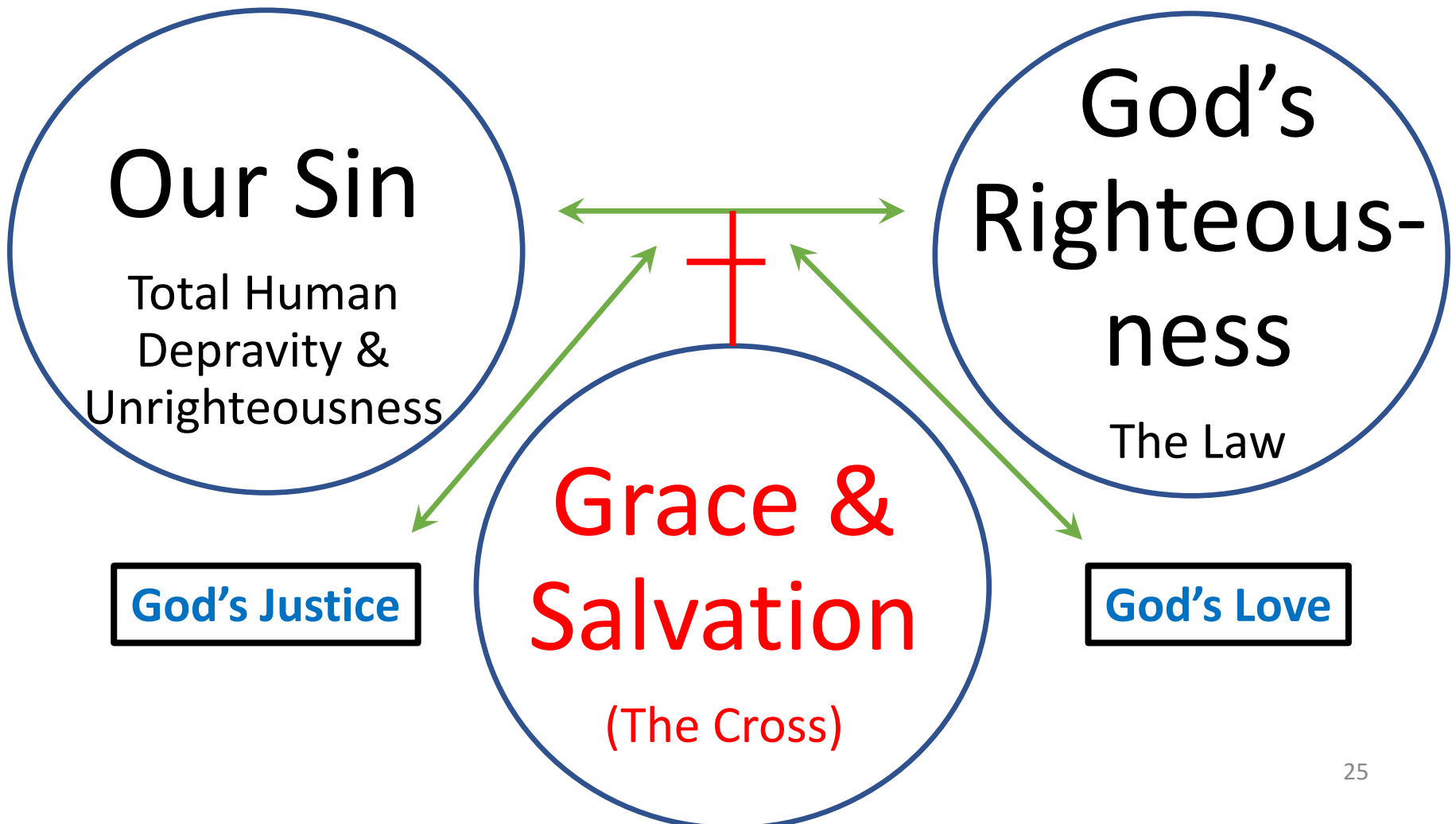
Salvation
by Grace through Faith in the
Shed Blood of Jesus
Christ/Justified or Declared
Righteous by God/Heaven

- Born Again/Adoption as Child of God/Forgiven of all Past & Future Sin/No Condemnation, Eternal Life/Holy Spirit Indwells

Grace & Salvation

The Cross

Grace of God is Revealed through the Cross



Salvation of God

- To be saved from **sin** and it's punishment, which is death & eternity in **hell**, and to receive **forgiveness** and **eternal life** with Jesus in **Heaven**.
- Salvation is by Grace through Faith in Jesus Christ, is a free gift and is without works (morality, religion and good works do not save)
- Includes all the redemptive acts of:
 - Justification
 - Redemption
 - Grace
 - Propitiation
 - Atonement
 - Substitutionary
 - Imputation
 - Forgiveness
 - Sanctification
 - Glorification

3 Tenses

- Past – Christians are saved from the guilt and penalty of sin
- Present – Christians are saved from the power & dominion of sin
- Future – Christians are saved from the presence of sin at the Lord's Return

Salvation Message Meaning

- **“Trust in Jesus and you will be saved”** Acts 16:31
- We are sinners deserving eternal death (Rom 3:23; 6:23), nothing we do on our own can satisfy God (“like filthy rags” Is. 64:6). Therefore everything Christ did for us was undeserved – this is **Grace**.
- Jesus Christ, who was without sin, died “as an offering for sin” acceptable to God, and paid the penalty of sin by **redeeming** those who believe. He was raised on 3rd day and conquered death.
- Our sins are imputed to Him, and His righteousness is imputed to us (Rom 3:24) so we may be judged Righteous to God (justified). In other words our sins are forgiven (Past, Present & Future) by His shed blood on the Cross (Heb. 9:22) which is the basis for the New Covenant. Christ “atoned” or substituted His life for ours and satisfied God as the last sacrifice required, “It is Finished”.
- We in turn are born again spiritually, freed from the power of Sin and we receive **eternal life** in Heaven. This is a free gift of God.
- All you need to do is admit you are sinner (with a repentant heart) and **“put your Trust (Faith) in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved”** -
What a salvation!!

Righteousness of God = Law

The Most Important Question of Humanity is – How Do I Be “Right” with God

- Righteous – is a Legal standing that we are judged “Right” with God – God’s perfect character is the standard by which everyone is measured (which is expressed in the Mosaic Law). It’s right living in accordance with God’s standards and laws (in **Word, Deed and Thought**).
- On our own, it’s impossible to meet the righteousness demanded by God on judgement day since it’s impossible for us to obey all the commandments in the Bible without sinning – the standard of God’s perfection is too high for us to attain (we can’t measure up to it – [Rom. 3:23](#)).
- The penalty of sin is spiritual death and eternity in hell, separated from God (Ez. 18:20; [Rom. 6:23](#))
- So, how can we ensure that when we die, we are judged “right” with God in order to avoid the punishment? This is the big question. The bible says there will be a judgement (Rev. 20: 11-15) and Jesus Christ is the judge (John 5:16-30; Rev. 7:17). Only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life (Rev. 21:27) will avoid hell. (the lake of fire).
- How can a sinner be justified (“declared righteous”) before a holy and righteous God and avoid his wrath?
- The good news of the Gospel is that God, through His grace (an undeserved gift), reconciles us to Himself and judges us legally righteous based on nothing more than Faith in His Son, who He sacrificed on the cross out of love for all mankind.
- **The Righteousness of God is only found in Christ and is Imputed to those who Trust in the crucified Jesus Christ.**

Righteousness Analogy

The arbitrary requirement made by the Calgary Police Force is that all new officers must be at least 7 Feet Tall to be accepted as Police officers.

7 Feet Tall = Righteous Requirement of Law = Glory of God

Don't measure yourself by judging others (works)



Jesus Christ Fulfills the Righteous Requirement
(Rom. 3:21-22; Matt. 3:15; Matt. 5:17)

“For there is no difference (drug addict, morally nice person, self-righteous person) for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23; 6:23)

No one will ever measure up to the acceptable standard to become a police officer on the Calgary Police Force (Rom 3:10). Nothing we do on our own can make us tall enough. **The Righteousness of God (Salvation) is found only through faith in Christ.**

John 3:17

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

- **John 12:47** – “if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.
- **Luke 19:10**–“the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
- **Mark 2:17** - “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”
- **John 5:24** – “He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”
- **Romans 8:1; 33** – “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus...Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? *It is* God who justifies.”
- **Jesus’ first coming was not to judge, but God will judge all who reject His Son and don’t believe (v.18)**