

STORE THIS IN YOUR BRAIN:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."

John 3:16-17

John Lesson 3 Believe John 3:16-4:42

GOD'S LOVE IN ACTION – John 3:16 - 21

1. a. God is love - holy, just, and perfect. How did God show His love to us? vs.16

- b. Romans 5:8-9 says, "But God shows His great love for us in this way: Christ died for us while we were still sinners... we have been made right with God by the blood of Christ's death." 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 says "Christ died for our sins...He was buried...He was raised on the third day." What did Jesus do for us? _____
- c. How can you receive this amazing gift from God? vs. 16 _____
- d. Define **believe**. _____
- e. The decision to believe or to not believe in Jesus is a crucial one – you do or you don't. What are the long-range results of each decision? _____
- f. Why would we perish (be destroyed/die)? Romans 3:23 & 6:23

- g. If we believe, what is **eternal life**? _____
- h. Verse 16 does not read – God loves the rich, or the famous, or the best.... How would you describe God's love?

2. a. Why did God send Jesus into the world? vs. 17 _____
- b. What happens to those who choose not to believe? vs. 18 _____
- c. What keeps people from belief in Jesus and **salvation/eternal life**? vs. 19-20

- d. What do Galatians 5:16 & 25 tell you? _____
- e. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, believers' can "live by the truth/do what is right." The presence of the Holy Spirit in you gives you the power to live your life for God - for His glory not your own. What does this mean to you? _____

JOHN'S TESTIMONY ABOUT JESUS - John 3:22 - 36

3. a. List the who, what and where of verse 22.

- b. Who else was baptizing people? vs. 23 _____
- c. What did John's disciples tell John the Baptist? vs. 26 _____
- d. How does John reply? vs.27-28 _____
- e. John says that he is the best man to Jesus – the groom - and is "filled with joy at His success." Write verse 30.

- f. What do you need to do to "become less" so Christ is able to "become greater" in your life?

- g. What facts about Jesus do you learn from John? vs. 31, 32, 34, 35

- h. How do we know we possess eternal life? vs. 36 _____

-----> **JESUS MEETS THE SAMARITAN WOMAN - John 4:1-42** <-----

- 4. a. Why did Jesus leave Judea, and where was He going? vs. 4:1-4

- b. What did Jesus ask the Samaritan woman at the well? vs. 5-7

- c. Where were Jesus' disciples? vs. 8 _____
- d. Why was she surprised? vs. 9 _____
- e. Define **Samaritan**. _____
- f. What did Jesus say? vs. 10 _____
- g. Why is water so important to us? _____
- h. How is "living water" different from the water in the well? vs. 13-14

- i. It takes the Samaritan woman a while to figure out who Jesus is. Write what she knows or thinks about Him.
vs. 9 _____ vs. 19 _____ vs. 29 _____
- j. Jesus knew everything about this woman. Jesus knows everything about you.
How does that make you feel – knowing He loves you and died for you?

- k. How do the townspeople respond to the woman? vs. 39 _____
- l. What does this tell you about the woman?

- m. Do you share your "testimony" (your witness / your experiences with God) with others? Explain.

- n. As a believer you represent Jesus at all times. What impression of Jesus do people have when they see or talk with you? _____
- o. How do the townspeople respond to Jesus? vs. 40-42

- p. When the disciples returned, Jesus challenged them to complete God's work on earth. Doing God's work is so satisfying! List ways that you can help God in your world.

-----> **SO WHAT? – John 3:16 – 4:42** <-----

- 5. a. What truths about Jesus did you learn in these verses?

- b. What things were hard for you to understand in this lesson?

ACTION: Each morning this week, tell God you are putting control of your life in His hands – then trust, have confidence, and have total faith in Him to work in your life.



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EXTREME PROMISE: Believe in Jesus and have eternal life!
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Lesson 3

Believe

John 3:16 - 4:42

Many Bible scholars believe the apostle John is reflecting on Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus (from John 3:1-15) in the second half of Chapter 3; they don't believe these words were actually spoken by Jesus. When the New Testament was written, punctuation was not used as it is today, so quoted speech was hard to identify. Also, the writing style changes from conversational to more reflective in verses 16-36, similar to John 1:9-14, 16-18. And although Jesus twice identifies Himself as "the Son of man" (3:13-14), John refers to him as "his one and only Son" (3:16), "his Son" (3:17), and "God's one and only Son" (3:18). Only rarely did Jesus describe Himself in these terms.

The Jewish people were expecting a Savior (Messiah) who would be a national king — one for them exclusively. In verses 16-21, John provides fresh insight into the unlimited outreach of God's love: "God so loved the world." The Greek word used here for love is *agape*, which involves the whole being and is motivated by concern for others. God's *agape* is immeasurable, penetrating mind, heart, and spirit. It is the love that motivated Him to sacrifice His only Son. Sadly, many in our world refuse to accept the Creator and Redeemer. Ever since Adam and Eve's rebellion in the Garden of Eden, God has demonstrated His love — first through the prophets, then through His Son. John says, "God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son" (3:16). But knowing God loves "the world," is not the same as understanding that He personally loves you, the individual.

Eternal life is available through faith in Jesus. Although eternal life encompasses life (both its quality and duration), on earth and beyond, the Greek word *aiouios* used here for eternal emphasizes the present quality of life. When Jesus spoke to Nicodemus about spiritual rebirth (3:1-15), He was not suggesting only a future occurrence. The joy of being given new life by the breath of God is meant to be experienced in the present, as well as into eternity.

Biblical Jewish faith was founded on the ideas of acknowledging and applying God's guidance, trusting His infinite goodness, and relying on Him daily for help. In addition, biblically grounded Jews understood the object of their faith, had full confidence in God's unchanging promises, and were aware of God's nearness. Thus, the true biblical Jew had an open channel of communication with God and sought only God's will for his life. In our society, however, independence and self-sufficiency are considered worthwhile goals, evidence of genuine success. But the way of the world and the way of God often oppose one another. God's way demands that we entrust ourselves totally to God's keeping.

Having declared God's unconditional love in verses 16-17, John now speaks of God's judgment. He emphasizes that God's desire is not to condemn, because God Himself has provided the solution: "Whoever believes in [God's Son] is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already" (3:18). John clearly states the consequence of not accepting God's Son, who bears the stamp of God's nature and reflects His glory. Each individual passes judgment on himself by accepting or rejecting Jesus Christ as Lord.

In the next part of Chapter 3, we learn that John the Baptist, who has not yet been imprisoned, is enjoying the freedom to preach and baptize at the same time Jesus and His disciples are ministering nearby in Judea. As a result, the Jews are drawn simultaneously by the magnetic preaching of both John the Baptist and Jesus. An argument arises between some of John's disciples and a certain Jew over ceremonial washing, a ritual that alludes to the "baptizing" in verse 26. The issue, therefore, is that both John and Jesus are baptizing (actually, Jesus' disciples are baptizing [John 4:2]). In addition to the issue of ritual, some of John's disciples are disturbed because Jesus' increasing popularity is depleting John's audience. When Jesus learns of this, He leaves Judea and goes deeper into Galilee.

John the Baptist's response to the situation reflects his humility and loyalty to Christ. He begins by acknowledging the sovereignty of God. He has no personal ambition or desire to claim credit beyond his calling as the prophet whose task is to prepare the way for the Lord. He recognizes the joy of being a friend of the Bridegroom (Jesus) who is ready to meet His bride — His people. To prepare for his wedding, a biblical Jew would spend time alone in prayer and fasting before God. Then he would be ready to meet the bride and would promise to respect, cherish, and provide for her. What a beautiful illustration of the delight awaiting believers, who like a bride, accept this pledge of commitment from Christ.

John the Baptist accepts his changing ministry, saying that "[Jesus] must become greater; I must become less" (3:30). Said another way, Jesus must increase in popularity, whereas John must decrease in fame. He must increase in power and authority; John's influence must diminish. Jesus must increase the number of His followers; John must release his disciples to become followers of Jesus.

John confirms Jesus' origin in verses 31-36, calling Him "the one who comes from above" (3:31). He notes the intimate relationship between God the Father and Jesus the Son, who "speaks the words of God" (3:34). John concludes by stating that each individual, in one way or another, responds to Jesus: "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life" (3:36).

After His conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus and His disciples remain in the Judean region, preaching and baptizing. In reality, only His disciples are baptizing, but a growing number of people are fascinated by Jesus' teaching. The disciples of John the Baptist are getting more and more uncomfortable and resentful of the competition with their master. Aware of their negative feelings, Jesus chooses to leave Judea and return to Galilee.

The statement in verse 4, "Now [Jesus] had to go through Samaria," baffles many scholars because most Jews, instead of taking a shortcut through Samaria to get from Galilee to Judea, would go around. In verse 9, John explains: "Jews did not associate with Samaritans." Perhaps Jesus wants to avoid going through the area of John the Baptist's ministry, along the popular Galilean-Judean route where most of the traffic moved. But His main reason for going through Samaria is to do His Father's will, which includes meeting the Samaritan woman.

Samaria was in central Palestine between Galilean territory to the north and the Judean region to the south. To Samaritans, the Pentateuch (the five books of Moses) was divine, but they did not worship as the Jews did. Assyria conquered Samaria in 721 B.C., removed 28,000 Samaritans from their homeland, and brought in pagan colonists to live with them, resulting in a mixed-blood race. This was one reason the Judean Jews disliked Samaritans. But Christ referred to their integrity two times — when a good Samaritan cared for a robbery victim (Luke 10:25-37) and when a grateful Samaritan thanked Him for healing his leprosy (Luke 17:11-19).

At that time, most wells in the region were about 100-150 feet deep and had a curbstone around them that protected them and served as a place to sit and rest. Near noon, Jesus sits down by a well. Soon a Samaritan woman comes to draw water. The Lord begins His conversation with her by referring to a human need she understands — thirst — but His attitude mystifies her.

As she gradually shows interest in what Jesus is saying, He begins to diagnose her problem. When she replies that she doesn't have a husband, Jesus responds prophetically: "You are right ... you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband" (John 4:18). His statement probably shocks her, and she relates what she knows about God's prophets, who judge humanity's moral condition. Jesus eventually leads her to think of the "coming" Messiah, who would reveal all things. At this point, Jesus quietly reveals that He is the Messiah — probably the only time Jesus identifies Himself in that way.

How exciting to see the woman's faith grow as she sees Jesus first as a weary traveling Jew, then as a prophet, and finally as the Messiah. She has many needs; Jesus has the power to meet them. But now she turns the discussion to the proper site of worship. The moment a secret sin is put under a microscope, people often try to dodge the issue and talk of anything but sin and salvation. The Samaritan woman realizes that Jesus knows all there is to know about her, but does not condemn her or demand repentance on the spot. He simply reveals Himself to her.

Eager to tell people of her experience with Jesus, the woman leaves her water jar and goes back to town. She shares with her neighbors that Jesus knew all about her, and still unsure, asks them if He could be the Christ, the Messiah. Immediately the people go with her to see Jesus. Many Samaritans believe in Him because of the woman's testimony, and they invite Him to stay in Samaria for two more days. As a result of His teaching, many more come to believe in the Lord. Note what the Samaritans say to the woman: "Now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world" (John 4:42). Jesus was so intent on finishing His work with the Samaritans that His disciples have to encourage Him to eat (4:31). But Jesus responds that His "food" (4:34) is doing God's will, His true nourishment.

Although Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life" (6:35, 48), He apparently never said, "I am the living water." Jesus did describe Himself, however, as the giver of living water (4:10), and as the water of life (Revelation 21:6; 22:17). All these descriptions fit with the quality and dynamics of the God-given life, defined by the Lord as "eternal life" (John 4:14). We can conclude that the Lord, in using the word water, was talking about the future outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which we now know can transform an empty, dull existence into a life of eternal peace, joy, and abundance (Ephesians 5:18-20).

Jesus and the woman also speak of "worship" (John 4:20-24). Worship can be defined as a moment when Christ, through Scripture, confronts us so that we are moved by the Holy Spirit to respond — in adoration of God for His unmerited love; in humility to God for our defiance of His will; in gratitude to God for His loving forgiveness and renewing grace in Christ; and in obedience to God through the gift of His power to face every chore and challenge of our daily lives. In other words, worship is our response to God loving us. As believers, we can enjoy communion with God and with one another, through the Holy Spirit, as members of the body of Christ.