

September 27, 2015

Scripture: John 3:16-21

“Loving Darkness, Hating Light”

- The Old Testament makes up about 75% of the Bible.
 - The New Testament writers and books are constantly reaching back to the Old Testament as the backdrop for their message.

The Gospel Of John is also reaching back to the book of Genesis:

- “In the beginning...” (John 1:1)
- “...you must be born again” (John 3: 7)
- The number “7” (7 signs, 7 “I am” statements like the 7 days of creation)
- Talking about “light” and “darkness” (Day 1 of creation)

“In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it (John 1:4-5).

“The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world” (John 1:9).

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (John 8:12).

Believe in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of light.” When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them” (John 12:36).

Walking Through Verses 16-21 (descending into darkness?)

Verse 16: the whole gospel in 1 verse!

Verse 17: Jesus is sent to save not condemn

Verse 18: another way of saying verse 16. We condemn ourselves because we do not believe in the One the Father has sent.

Verse 19:

i. **Contrast:** God loved the world (verse 16) but the world (people) loved darkness (verse 19)

ii. **Legal:** “verdict”

iii. **Comprehensive:** not just a few select people, but all of us love the darkness

iv. **Ludicrous:** we are offered heaven but we love hell

v. **Love!:** “...people loved darkness instead of light...” they **loved** darkness

Verses 19-20: “loving darkness” is about our immoral actions (“evil deeds”)

Verse 21: we come into the light by “living by the truth”

“Believing in Jesus means coming to the light, the light of God’s new creation. Not believing means remaining in the darkness. The darkness (and those who embrace it) must be condemned, not because it offends against some arbitrary laws which God made up for the fun of it, and certainly not because it has to do with the material, created world rather than with a supposed ‘spiritual’ world. It must be condemned because evil is destroying and defacing the present world, and preventing people coming forward into God’s new world (‘eternal life’; that is, the life of the age to come).

But the point of the whole story is that you don't have to be condemned. You don't have to let the snake kill you. God's action in the crucifixion of Jesus has planted a sign in the middle of history. And the sign says: believe, and live. (NT Wright, John for Everyone Part 1: Chapters 1-10 (p. 34). SPCK. Kindle Edition.