

The Gospel of John 3:17-36

I The Lord Was Not Sent to Condemn or Judge the World (vv.17-21)

- A. The world was already *condemned in Adam*, through the poison of sin. The Lord didn't have to come to condemn what was already judged. In verse 18, the Lord revealed more to Nicodemus about his condition. He not only had the poisonous nature of the serpent, but was also under the judgment of God. According to this verse [v.18], Nicodemus, a good gentlemen, had been judged already on the same day that Adam was judged. In other words, you were condemned before you were born six thousand years ago. (**Mk.16:16, Rom.5:12, 15, 17a, 1Cor.15:21a, Gen.2:17**) Regardless of whether you are bad or good, you are already under the wrath of God (**3:36**). Although Nicodemus was a high-class gentleman, he was still condemned. He was a good man, a religious man, and a moral man, yet he was already condemned. Therefore, he needed the Lord's redemption—the Lord had to die for him. His true condition is twofold: his nature has the poison of Satan within it and his position is under the condemnation of God. Thus, the condition of the best person is the same as that of the worst. This same thought is conveyed by the account in Genesis, where all men, good and evil, perished in the Flood. (**Gen.4:16-17, 26b, 5:1, 24, 32, 6:3, 5-7, 11-13, 17, 7:22-23**) As long as you were not in the ark, you were judged. There was no need to condemn anyone, you were already condemned and destined to perish, unless you were in the saving ark. Christ is our ark, today. All we need is to believe into Him and we are put into Him, as the ark, by God. (**1Cor.1:30a**)
- B. We can all be saved from this condemnation through Christ. In the natural birth we were condemned in Adam. In regeneration we are saved in Christ. Verses 15, 16, 18, and 36 tell us clearly and definitely that the way for us to be saved and regenerated is simply to believe in the Lord. To believe is the only way for us to receive salvation and regeneration. It is absolutely a matter of faith. It is by faith in the Lord, by believing in the Lord, that we receive the forgiveness, the release from God's condemnation negatively. It is also by faith, by believing in the Lord, that we receive eternal life, the divine life of God, positively for our regeneration. There is no need of our work, only of faith in His finished, completed, and all-inclusive redemptive work. (**Eph.2:8-9**)
- C. Just as the poisoned Israelites lived by looking unto the brass serpent on the pole, we may experience the same thing today if we repent, lift up our heart, and gaze upon the very Jesus crucified on the cross. When we do this, our sin is removed, our serpentine nature is dealt with, Satan is destroyed in us, and we have life eternal. This is what it means to be regenerated. When we believe into the Son, we are enabled to live according to God's life and nature and such a living is to do the truth. According to the context, truth here denotes uprightness (as opposed to evil, vv.19-20), which is the reality manifested in a man who lives in God according to what God is, and which corresponds with the divine light, which is God, as the source of the truth, which is manifested in Christ. (**John1:4, 17, Gal.5:24, 22-23, Eph.2:10**)

II The Regenerated People Becoming The Bride of Christ as His Increase (vv.22-30)

- A. Christ as the bridegroom needs a bride. He came for this purpose; for His increase. He does so by entering into us and making us a part of Himself. We all are parts of Christ. As parts of Christ composed together, we are the bride of Christ, His increase. Both salvation and regeneration are for this purpose, for the bride as the increase of Christ, and this increase is the bride which becomes the counterpart of Christ. The bride is the church, the composition of all the regenerated are composed together as the corporate bride to match Christ. (**Rev.19:7, 21:2, 9, Eph.5:23-27, 29-32, SS 6:13, 2Cor.3:18, Rom.8:29**)
- B. The bride as the increase of Christ is like Eve who was the increase of Adam. When Adam was first created, he was single—a so-called bachelor. In Adam's single state, there was no increase. After God took a rib out of Adam and built a woman with it, this woman was married to Adam (**Gen. 2:21-24**). Once she was joined to Adam, she became the increase of Adam. Adam then had an increase and was no longer single. Christ also was single, and so He made a bride to be the increase of Himself. But who are the increase, the bride, of Christ? Through regeneration we possess the divine life of God which is Christ Himself, thus becoming members of the corporate bride of Christ.
- C. The ultimate result of regeneration is that Christ has a bride as His increase. Christ is increased through regeneration because by regeneration He is reproduced in us. We, the regenerated people are His reproduction. The increase in this verse is the bride in v. 29, and the bride there is a living composition of all the regenerated people. This means that in this chapter on regeneration not only is the divine life brought into the believers and annuls the satanic nature in their flesh, but it also makes them the corporate bride for Christ's increase.

III The Immeasurable Son of God for Man's Believing Unto Eternal Life. (vv.31-36)

- A. *From, of, and out of* are the same word in Greek. Since persons, matters, and things on the earth are from the earth, they are of the earth. He *who comes from heaven* refers to one who is out of heaven; therefore, he is of heaven. Verses 31-36 unveil to us the immeasurableness, the unlimitedness, of Christ. He is such an immeasurable and unlimited One, who comes from above, who is above all, to whom the Father has given all, and who dispenses the Spirit without measure. Such a One needs a universal increase to be His bride to match Him, as revealed in vv. 22-30. He who believed into this immeasurable One has eternal life; he who disobeys this One is under the wrath of God.
- B. The intention of this chapter in the Gospel of John is to show us that this unlimited Christ must have a universal increase, and He is in the process of gaining this increase today. Wherever we go, Christ is present by the Spirit that He gives without measure. Verse 34 says definitely, "He gives to the Spirit not by measure." This is the Spirit He gives to His Body, the Church. The Spirit given by Christ to His Body is immeasurable. (**Phil.1:19**) This *immeasurable* Spirit produces a *universal* increase for the *unlimited* Christ. Please note the three adjectives used in the previous sentence: immeasurable, universal, and unlimited. Immeasurable describes the Spirit, universal describes the increase, and unlimited describes Christ. The unlimited Christ gives the immeasurable Spirit in order to produce a universal increase.