

# Part II: The Gospel in a Nutshell

John 3:14-21

## INTRODUCTION:

This morning, we are moving into our next section of Scripture which contains probably the most famous verse of Scripture, John 3:16. People who aren't believers know this one by heart. This passage contains a lot within it and a lot from outside of it.

We are still in the middle of the conversation of Jesus and Nicodemus. Setting the state a bit, we have just come out of Jesus saying, "If you don't understand earthly things, how are you to understand when I speak of heavenly things?" Then Jesus gives Nicodemus this straightforward aspect of the Good News of the Lord.

### John 3:14-21 NTWT

<sup>14</sup> 'So, just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, in the same way the son of man must be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. <sup>16</sup> This, you see, is how much God loved the world: enough to give his only, special son, so that everyone who believes in him should not be lost but should have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> After all, God didn't send the son into the world to condemn the world, but so that the world could be saved by him.

<sup>18</sup> 'Anyone who believes in him is not condemned. But anyone who doesn't believe is condemned already, because they didn't believe in the name of God's only, special son. <sup>19</sup> And this is the condemnation: that light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light, because what they were doing was evil.

<sup>20</sup> For everyone who does evil hates the light; people like that don't come to the light, in case their deeds get shown up and reproved. <sup>21</sup> But people who do the truth come to the light, so that it can become clear that what they have done has been done in God.'

### John 3:16 in Greek

Οὕτως γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται ἀλλὰ ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον. <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Wright, T. (2004). [John for Everyone, Part 1: Chapters 1-10](#) (p. 31). Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

<sup>2</sup> Holmes, M. W. (2011–2013). [The Greek New Testament: SBL Edition](#) (Jn 3:16). Lexham Press; Society of Biblical Literature.

## **I. The Story of Humanity in Relation to Creation in Psalm 8**

- A. So, what we have discussed thus far is the backdrop of the serpent, and the motivation of God's love for the World to want to redeem it back to what it once was.
- B. The back half of John 3:16 though is about humanity as the focal point.
- C. It is as if God's love for the World, which includes everything in it, has something to do with humanity and the need for redemption.
- D. This is where the narrative takes a twist because we must first understand what it means to be human.
- E. The question around identity is directly in my view related to our departure from our vocation of what it means to be human.
- F. As I have stated before, the purpose of humanity is to reign God's truth out into His creation and reflect His glory back to Him in worship.
- G. At the Fall of Mankind, we abandoned that created position and purpose for our own selfish ambition.
- H. We often want to blame Adam and Eve, but we have all followed in their footsteps.
- I. Psalm 8 in the Old Testament reveals much about what it means to be human in the context of a hymn of praise to God.

## Psalm 8

Yahweh, our Lord,  
how magnificent is Your name throughout the earth!

You have covered the heavens with Your majesty.

Because of Your adversaries,  
You have established a stronghold  
from the mouths of children and nursing infants  
to silence the enemy and the avenger.

When I observe Your heavens,  
the work of Your fingers,  
the moon and the stars,  
which You set in place,  
what is man that You remember him,  
the son of man that You look after him?  
You made him little less than God  
and crowned him with glory and honor.  
You made him lord over the works of Your hands;  
You put everything under his feet:  
all the sheep and oxen,  
as well as the animals in the wild,  
the birds of the sky,  
and the fish of the sea  
that pass through the currents of the seas.

Yahweh, our Lord,  
how magnificent is Your name throughout the earth!

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<sup>3</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: Holman Christian standard version.\*](#) (Ps 8:1–Ps 9). (2009). Holman Bible Publishers.

J. This is a praise hymn pertaining to God's relationship with humanity and humanity's relationship to Him and creation.

K. The centerpiece of the Psalm is verse 4, "What is man that you are mindful of him? The son of man that you care for him?"

L. Briefly, going through the verses:

- The author is David.
- The Psalm is bookended with the same statement of Praise to God.
- The second verse metaphorically reveals God ushering strength through the vulnerable and the weak to overcome the enemy and avenger. This verse was also used by Jesus on Palm Sunday.
- The centerpiece of Psalm 8 is verse 4 in David's questioning as to why God pays attention to humanity in light of his creation.
- The back half of the Psalm is how God created mankind a little under God's authority, and how he has placed humanity in charge of what he created.

M. The reality is that for God to redeem all that was His "Good World," He has to redeem the ones that were put in charge. Once they are redeemed then that which was put under their care can be restored to what it once was at the time of creation.

## **II. God gave His Son to Finish What Adam Failed to Do**

A. Adam was put in charge of creation. He was charged with placing it under his authority.

### **Genesis 1:28-30**

God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and *every creature that crawls on the earth.*" God also said, "Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the entire earth and every tree whose fruit contains seed. This food will be for you, for all the wildlife of the earth, for every bird of the sky,

and for every creature that crawls on the earth—everything having the breath of life in it. I have given every green plant for food.<sup>4</sup>

B. Notice, in the text above “every creature that crawls on the earth.” Would this include snakes?

### **Genesis 3:1**

Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made.<sup>5</sup>

C. We see from this verse that “evil” personified itself as the very thing that Adam was responsible for subduing and placing within his authority.

D. When Adam and Eve fell to temptation, then they became subject to Evil rather than Evil becoming subject to humanity.

## **III. God Gave His Son (16b)**

A. God gave His Son out of Love for two major reasons:

1. To be the substitutional atonement for the sins of humanity’s rebellion.
2. To finish the job Adam failed to do.

B. This would include two major views of Atonement Theory:

1. Penal Substitution
2. Christ the Victor

### **1 John 2:1-2**

My little children, I am writing you these things so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ the Righteous One. He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for those of the whole world.

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<sup>4</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: Holman Christian standard version\*](#). (Ge 1:28–30). (2009). Holman Bible Publishers.

<sup>5</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: Holman Christian standard version\*](#). (Ge 3:1). (2009). Holman Bible Publishers.

## Hebrews 2:6-11

**What is man that You remember him,  
or the son of man that You care for him?  
You made him lower than the angels  
for a short time;  
You crowned him with glory and honor  
and subjected everything under his feet.**

For in **subjecting everything** to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. As it is, we do not yet see **everything subjected** to him. But we do see Jesus—**made lower than the angels for a short time** so that by God’s grace He might taste death for everyone—crowned with glory and honor because of His suffering in death.

For in bringing many sons to glory, it was entirely appropriate that God—all things exist for Him and through Him—should make the source of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For the One who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father.

- C. The primary role of Adam was to place everything under his authority, but when he failed that job still needed to be done. Therefore, Christ came to finish what Adam had failed to do and also be the substitute atoning for the sins of humanity who had rebelled against God by forsaking their identity.

### IV. Open Invitation (16c)

- A. In Biblical interpretation, you always interpret that which is hard in light of the plain.
- B. Some believe that Christ died only for those God knew would be saved, so that all that Christ died for would in fact be saved, because the plans of God cannot be thwarted. Therefore, implying Christ did not die for everyone, only for some.
- C. The issue I have with that is that this view is not the plain reading of John 3:16 which states “Whosoever will, everyone...”
- D. It is my view that God predestined the whole of humanity to be saved, in other words, made a way for them to be reconciled, but left it up to their freewill choice to decide.

### **Ephesians 1:3-8**

Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens. For He chose us in Him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in His sight. *In love, He predestined us to be adopted through Jesus Christ for Himself, according to His favor and will,* to the praise of His glorious grace that He favored us with in the Beloved.

We have redemption in Him through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding<sup>6</sup>

E. The question is, ‘Who does God love?’ Answer: The entire world (Jn 3:16), not just humanity, but all of humanity and then some.

F. Some believe if God is turned down in His offer of salvation, then that somehow impugns, does away with, His sovereignty. I would say that is silly because God is SO sovereign in His power and control that His sovereignty can even allow for human free will to reject His invitation and still accomplish all of His plans. That is even a greater understanding of His sovereignty not less than.

G. God wants you and I to have life in Him. His invitation is to all who would receive the invitation.

### **Ephesians 2:3-8**

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler who exercises authority over the lower heavens, the spirit now working in the disobedient. We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children under wrath as the others were also. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love that He had for us, made us alive with the Messiah even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace! Together with Christ Jesus He also raised us up and seated us in the heavens, so that in the coming ages He might display the immeasurable riches of His grace through His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God’s gift— not from

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<sup>6</sup> [The Holy Bible: Holman Christian standard version.](#) (Eph 1:3–8). (2009). Holman Bible Publishers.

works, so that no one can boast. For we are His creation, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: Holman Christian standard version.\*](#) (Eph 2:1–10). (2009). Holman Bible Publishers.