
a *Grace Notes* course

Life of Christ 100

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Lesson 108

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Nicodemus and Christ

Nicodemus is a Greek name that means 'Victor of the People'. Indeed he would be.

He is found only in John's Gospel, in John 3:1-10; 7:37-52; and 19:38-42.

John 3:1 names him as a man of the Pharisees and a ruler of the Jews. The latter places him as a member of the Sanhedrin. A glimpse at this ruling body will reveal much about the man.

The word "Sanhedrin" comes from the Greek SUNEDRION, 'a sitting place together'. It describes many people sitting together in the same place.

In the second and third centuries, the Persians, then the Greeks began to grant the Jews some privileges of self rule. The ruling counsel of the Sanhedrin finds its roots there, but the actual organization did not come into being until the time of the Maccabees, about 190 B.C.

They patterned themselves after the 70 elders of Moses' appointment in Numbers 11:16, and claimed to exist continually since that time (about 1400 B.C.).

The Sanhedrin consisted of 70 members, presided over by the High Priest of the Jews. After the High Priest, the leadership fell to the Chief Priests, and then to the rank and file of the elders.

The powers and religious alignment of the Sanhedrin rose and fell throughout the time from its inception to Christ's era. Sometimes it was dominated by Hellenists, sometimes by nationalists. Sometimes it had a great amount of influence over the lives of the Jews, sometimes hardly any. Sometimes it ruled much land, others only a small sliver.

At this time, 27 A.D. the Sanhedrin was dominated by a conciliatory branch of Jews known as the Sadducees, although there was a strong branch of Pharisees as well. They had a lot of power over both spiritual and secular matter, although only in Judea. However, all of Israel felt the influence of their power, and no place was truly free from their tyranny.

The Sanhedrin was a court much akin to the supreme court of the United States. When a lower

court could not come to a decision, then the higher court would have to intervene. During Christ's time, the Sanhedrin was trusted with most of the civil as well as religious cases. They had a tremendous influence on internal affairs, and apparently no small influence even in cases of capital crimes.

The Sanhedrin had its own police force, and no doubt had a constant temptation to abuse the powers of arrest. Otherwise, they would follow simple rules of jurisprudence.

Nicodemus was a rank and file member of the Sanhedrin minority party. He was just an elder.

He was one of the legalistic Pharisees. He would have an influence on policy, even though in the minority. The greater Sanhedrin could not rule effectively without the input and cooperation of men like Nicodemus.

The Sadducees were the aristocratic and Romantic branch of the Jewish Leadership. They were very antisupernatural in their world view, even denying the afterlife. They remained very materialistic, and were sycophantic toward the Roman rulership in order to retain their wealth.

The Pharisees were scholars, although extremely legalistic in their outlook, fanatics for making laws that did not exist. The Pharisees fashioned themselves as the champions of the people and yet were very oppressive in their rule.

Both considered themselves the best. Both were wrong. Nicodemus, however, was an honest man with positive volition.

READ John 3:19

Nicodemus was apparently a famous man, a member of the ruling council of the Pharisees, the Sanhedrin. In other words, he was a super Pharisee.

Nicodemus came to Jesus by night. The original language shows a little surprise at this appearance. Perhaps because the Pharisees were already more than a little leery of Christ. The night time appearance reveals his desire to keep the visit a secret. Nicodemus did not want the other Pharisees to know about this. It also shows his positive volition to Jesus Christ.

Nicodemus' first words reveal his positive volition further. He has put two and two together in his own mind about Christ, and makes a statement to this effect. 'Rabbi, we know that you have come as a teacher from God; for no one is able to do these signs which you do, unless God is with him.' This statement does not go all the way; but it is true.

Jesus' reply is a compliment. It assumes the best of Nicodemus that he is a believer. What he is saying is this: that Nicodemus' statement reveals that he has seen the kingdom of God. Born from above is a reference to salvation. The notion of born again is not in the adverb ANOTHEN. ANOTHEN is never used in classical Greek to denote the idea of 'again'. In fact, the use of this adverb in that way is drawn from this passage. Christ did not intend to use it that way, and neither did Nicodemus mistake it in that way.

Nicodemus mistook ANOTHEN for a word which sounds almost like it ANTHROPON. Nicodemus says ANTHROPOS in his next sentence.

Nicodemus' question in reply to his misunderstanding of Jesus' statement is relevant "How can a man (anthropos) being old be born?" Someone who is already a man cannot be born. You are born and then you become a man. He makes his point really clear by his example: 'He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?' Jesus was speaking on a spiritual level and Nicodemus on an earthly one.

Jesus reply in verse 5 is a clarification for Nicodemus. "Unless anyone is born of water and the Spirit, he is not able to enter into the kingdom of God."

Notice that this is a parallel of His previous statement except that he substitutes EX HUDATOS KAI PNEUMATOS for ANOTHEN, and 'enter into the kingdom of God' instead of 'see the kingdom of God'.

Our Lord is responding to the mistake of Nicodemus, and also changing his assessment. Instead of assuming that Nicodemus is a believer, Christ now assumes that he has yet to enter the kingdom.

'Born of water and the Spirit' is especially pertinent because it reveals two births.

Born of water is not a reference to baptism. Instead it is a reference to human birth. Before every birth, the woman's water breaks (actually it is the fluid from the amniotic sac). Born of water is reference to this. It appears that every person is born of water, and this is a good way to make it clear that you are talking about human birth.

Born of the spirit is of course a reference to salvation, where God the Holy Spirit makes the new believer a new creature in Christ through His baptizing ministry.

Our Lord's implication is this: that you must be both a man and believe in order to enter the kingdom of God. In a roundabout way he also tells Nicodemus that he is right about the first birth, but wrong about the second.

In verse 6, Jesus gives even further clarification on the matter. "That which is born from the flesh is flesh, and that which is born from the Spirit is Spirit."

This simply divides birth into two categories: fleshly birth and spiritual birth.

It takes the point of view of origin in the matter of birth. The kind of birth which you have is a matter of the origin of that birth.

In verse 7 Christ deals with Nicodemus' mistake. "Do not take surprise that I said to you, 'It is necessary for you to be born from above.' In the next verse, our Lord draws an analogy to explain this statement. These two verses, 7 and 8, are Christ's final explanation of His first statement. Essentially He says, 'do not misunderstand.' Nicodemus was not amazed, he misunderstood.

The analogy that Christ uses is this: "The wind blows where it wills and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes or where it is going; so is everyone who is born from the Spirit."

Christ is emphasizing that this is an invisible birth.

The birth from above is one which we know exists. We can see the results of it in believers (the sound).

Unlike the birth from flesh, we cannot perceive with our senses the origin or destination of the birth from above.

In other words, Christ is just showing a further distinction between the two kinds of birth, so that

Nicodemus will clearly know in his own mind that there is a spiritual birth.

In Nicodemus' final words he reiterates his positive volition. He says, "How can these things come to pass?"

Nicodemus uses the demonstrative adverb TAUTA to form the subject of his reply. It is a word that must be defined by a previous reference. It is translated, 'these things', and it goes back to these things:

The birth from above that gives insight into the kingdom of God.

The birth from above that enables one to enter the kingdom of God.

The birth from above that comes from the ministry of God the Holy Spirit.

The ministry of the Spirit that is invisible yet very real, and with a will of its own.

By using the verb GINOMAI instead of the verb ESTIN, he shows his desire for the second birth. Nicodemus wants to know how to get the second birth for himself. GINOMAI is the verb of becoming, not of being. GINOMAI always indicates a change, an entrance into a new status.

Furthermore, Nicodemus uses DUNATAI, the verb of ability. By using DUNATAI, Nicodemus reveals his desire to know mechanics; to know what is to be done to gain entrance into God's kingdom.

Nicodemus asks this question in such a way as to reveal a personal desire for this information he wants to become a believer.

Later passages reveal that at some point Nicodemus did accept Christ. His words in chapter 7 and his deeds in chapter 19 reveal it.

Verse 10, "Jesus answered and said to him, "You are the teacher of Israel and do not know these things?"

This verse is more of an exclamation than anything. Nicodemus as a member of the Sanhedrin should be an expert on salvation. He is a leader of his nation, and one who holds grave judicial responsibilities.

This also serves as a reminder of the kind of leadership that Israel had at the time. It was weak

spiritually, and so the rank and file in the country would be exceedingly weak. This is why Christ would not trust the new believers. They had very little inherent restraint on the sin nature.

Verse 11, "Truly, truly I say to you that we speak that which we have known, and we testify what we have seen, and you do not receive our testimony."

The formula amen stands as a pre-certification for what is to follow. Christ uses it to convince His hearers of the verity of His statement before they even listen to His words.

The two second verbs, oidamen and heorakamen are both in the perfect tense. In this case, they show something that is a life changing event the intervention of God. Christ uses the first person plural because He speaks for his followers and disciples as well. So, His disciples speak because God has intervened, and they know it. They testify because God has intervened and they have seen it. The knowing has to do with the doctrines, especially kingdom doctrines that Christ teaches. The seeing has to do with the miracles and healings that are done by Christ.

All of this earnest testimony and speech, and yet the Sanhedrin does not receive it. Christ employs the second person singular [you all], so He speaks to more than just Nicodemus.

Christ chides Nicodemus and his Pharisee and Sanhedrin mates so that Nicodemus might understand that this is not his first opportunity to receive the gospel. Perhaps Nicodemus was a part of the Sanhedrin task force sent to John the Baptist to find out whether Christ was fit to be their Messiah.

But Christ is getting at something more...

Verse 12, "If I spoke to you [all] earthly things and you [all] do not believe, how will you believe if I were to speak heavenly things?"

Christ uses a really fascinating conditional sentence. He begins in reality, by citing in the protasis what has already occurred. Then He postulates from the protasis what should logically occur as a result.

'If I spoke to you earthly things... ' This has really happened. The aorist indicative of lego reveals this

as an actual past event. Christ has spoken to Nicodemus and others about earthly things.

Their response was unbelief, one and all. Nicodemus, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Sanhedrin, they have all rejected Christ on the earthly level.

Now Christ postulates with the aorist subjunctive. This applies a likely outcome to a circumstance. The circumstance is Christ telling the Jewish leadership about heavenly things. The likely outcome is unbelief. The kind of reasoning here is simple: if the Jewish leadership is unable to believe an easy thing, then how will they ever believe the more difficult? It is like saying, 'Because you could not lift 100 lbs., it is fair to assume that you cannot lift 200 lbs.'

Christ uses the second person plural to impersonalize this principle. He does not want Nicodemus to believe that He applies it to him.

This discourse on the negative volition of the Jewish leadership precedes the giving of the gospel, and for a reason. Jesus helps to identify for Nicodemus a sense of destiny about his unique position in the Sanhedrin as a believer. Remember, this reproof of Christ's is directed at a body of men, not Nicodemus directly.

You, too, can have this kind of unique destiny by being a believer in a time when belief is not so popular. For Nicodemus, there was some of the greatest peer pressure against belief in God of all time, and yet He wanted to believe. This reproof and brief discourse is all about helping Nicodemus to identify himself, and separate himself from his peers.

Verse 13, "And no one has ascended into heaven, except the one who first descended from heaven, the Son of Man."

The **Son of Man** is a prophetic term, a reference to Christ's relationship with Adam.

It occurs 107 times in the Old Testament, but only fourteen times outside of Ezekiel. In those cases outside of Ezekiel, it is almost universally an idiom for 'human being'. But in one instance in Daniel, it most certainly refers to Adam himself. The one time that it is used in the singular in Daniel is 7:13, and this is the reference for the popular term in New Testament times.

Daniel 7:13-14, "I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven one like a Son of Adam was coming. And He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed."

The 'Ancient of Days is an Aramaic title that refers to God the Father as judge of Jesus Christ. Daniel 7:7-22 is the only instance of this title for God the Father. It concentrates on his eternal nature, and His authority over the other two members of the Godhead.

God would judge the sins of mankind in the Son of Adam on the cross.

God gave two evaluations of His Son during the incarnation 'This is my Son, whom I love, in whom I am well pleased.' Once at His baptism, and once at the transfiguration.

The picture presented in Daniel's vision is the transfer of authority from God the Father to Jesus Christ the Son. This transfer of authority occurred in heaven most likely immediately before the incarnation. This is something of a Christmas story from Daniel. It is a revelation of the moments before the incarnation of Christ, the sad/glad going away ceremony for the Son. From that moment forward God the Son would never be the same. He would become the God man, and though His deity did not change, His status did. This is the moment when Christ voluntarily restricted the independent use of His divine attributes, and the independent expression of His divine character. This moment was somewhat akin to taking a military oath.

The earthly transfer of authority took place at Christ's baptism.

The term 'the Son of Man' describes here Christ's relationship to the first man, Adam.

READ Romans 5:12-21.

Naturally, this verse would be a popular one with an oppressed nation such as Israel.

In Ezekiel the prophet himself is addressed as the son of Adam, an identification of him as one belonging to the human race.

By the time that Christ came on the scene, the Son of Man was a popular term, and needed no explanation whatsoever. Never once in the New Testament does the use of the term require an explanation to the readers or listeners. It is simply used. Christ employed the direct Greek translation of the term, which used the noun *anthropos* as a translation for the Hebrew *Adam*.

Now the verse serves to communicate that Christ is indeed the Son of Man. This is one for Nicodemus to remember a few years from this time, when Christ does ascend.

This is not the first time that Christ uses His own future as evidence for His deity. Remember the cleansing, when he used His own resurrection as future evidence. Well, here we go again.

So, Christ will ascend, and it will mean this: that He descended from heaven at some time before. At this moment when Christ speaks to Nicodemus, He has already descended. Nicodemus alluded to it, but believed that Christ was just a man sent from God. Christ identifies Himself as the Son of Adam, who is the Son of God, and offers His future ascension as evidence for His present status.

Verse 14, "And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up."

Verse 15 will deal with the purpose for this statement, but let's see what this says first.

A comparison is drawn between a past event for Israel, and the necessity of a future event in the life of Christ.

Again this is the use of a future event for evidence of present status.

This event that Christ refers to is in Numbers 21: 9. The setting is that of yet another rebellion by the children of Israel against Moses and against God. Specifically, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this miserable food."

The discipline for this complaining attitude was a plague of fiery serpents, which bit the Jews, many

of whom died. The fiery term is most likely due to a specific effect of the venom on the nervous system.

Well, with this kind of discipline, many of the Jews repented, and went before Moses to seek forgiveness, asking him to intercede on their behalf.

Moses went before God for his people, and so God forgave them. As a sign, God required Moses to make a fiery serpent of bronze and lift it up before the people so that if they looked at it they would live.

When people received a bite by a serpent they would look at the bronze serpent and be cured of the effects of the venom.

Moses' serpent was made of bronze to represent the judgment of God concerning this sin.

By looking at the serpent, an expression of belief was made. The kind of seeing here is the Hebrew word *RA'AH*, the equivalent of the Greek *THEOREO*, 'to behold'. The idea is looking with a desire to know. The pure motive is taken into account in the looking, and not everyone who glanced the way of the serpent would be healed of their sin and the discipline that accompanied it.

Now Christ would be lifted up on the cross.

Verse 15, "that whoever believes in Him might have eternal life."

This verse sets the standard for salvation unto eternal life.

Note the third class conditional sentence: salvation is a direct result of the expression of human will.

The work is done; the son of man has been lifted up; we need only trust in that work. Not in what we do, or thing, or any kind of merit inherent in ourselves. Just Him, and more specifically the work done on the cross.

This is a purpose clause; the Son of man was lifted up on the cross so that we might believe, and no other reason. *hina*.

Notice that the adjective *pas* describes the universal condition for salvation, 'everyone who believes.' There is no exception, no amount or severity placed on sin, so that some of the worst who believe are excluded. Every one who

believes, without exception, without reference to what has gone in the past.

Next, is the Divine motive. Why has God chosen to forgive mankind, even the most sinful of men?

Verse 16, "For God so loved the world, so that He gave his only born Son, in order that everyone who believes in Him might not perish but might have eternal life."

The verse has three parts: the motivation of God, the resultant action, and the purpose of the action. Here begins a commentary by the writer of this gospel, and not the words of Christ Himself.

The 'might' here is dependent absolutely on human volition. The might is not, 'believe, and you might not perish', but you will not perish if you do believe. It is not, 'Believe and you might have eternal life', but believe and you definitely will have it. The might is that the verse looks at the possibility from the viewpoint of human free will, not what God might do after the free will is expressed. This is a Greek third class condition, and it shows that if the condition is fulfilled, then always, always, the results will come to pass. Here, the condition is belief in Christ, and here, everyone who believes does not perish, but comes to have eternal life.

The conjunction *houtos* indicates a stronger degree of God's love. He so loved...

The verb *e.gape.sen* is from *agapao*. Virtue love is in view here. The verb is in the aorist tense, and so reveals one moment of time in eternity past. That moment when God conceived His perfect idea on how to provide for the redemption of mankind.

So first, the love of God.

Love is a word that describes purity of motive.

Motivation is a thought or system of thought that leads one to act. In order to move, you must first think.

Given the conditions of fallen mankind and the perfection of God, what was the thought or system of thought that moved God to act in the provision of salvation?

The Bible reveals that it was the purest motive of all, love. The very verse we study confirms this.

The motive was not anything that we might consider from human viewpoint: it was not attraction to the human race, for they were in total depravity; not personality or physical attractiveness or success or clothing or anything else. God looks at the heart, and before Christ, the heart is wicked, with nothing that might attract the love of God.

The motive was a desire for the human race to have the same thing that the three members of the Godhead had, a virtue love relationship.

From eternity past, God has perfect personal love among the members of the Godhead.

The Father has perfect love for the Son and the Spirit.

The Son has perfect love for the Father and the Spirit.

The Spirit has perfect love for the Father and Son.

This love is based on the virtue of both the subject and the object of love. It is perfect love expressed toward perfection, and infinite by nature.

This perfect love is an appreciation and admiration for the other persons of the Godhead. This directed toward who they are and what they do.

This perfect love is infinitely fantastic, and the greatest treasure of all time and out of time.

When God observed mankind in total depravity, He moved to save them in order to provide for them the greatest treasure of all time and out of time, a love relationship with Him.

But the love of God had to overcome the sinfulness of man without compromising His own holiness. He could not give the greatest treasure to the those who were unfit because of the ravages of sin.

Therefore, Christ, the God-man. The unique person of the universe.

God gave His only born Son.

The aorist tense of *didomi* again takes us back to a moment of time in eternity past, when God made the decision to give His Son.

Giving is a real lightweight idea for what God did. It was sacrifice, plain and simple. From His foreknowledge, God knew exactly what the sending of His Son entailed.

The sacrifice included at the least a change in status. By limiting His capabilities and character, Christ limited His old relationship with the Father and the Spirit, Phil 2:58.

The sacrifice included the utter separation of the cross. The physical pain, was something, but the spiritual was far more. Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?

The adjective *monogenes* reveals a couple of things about Christ.

Christ is the only born Son of God. Not the first born, with others to follow, but the only born.

Christ is the God-man in hypostatic union, and is therefore unique in all the universe. He was truly one of a kind. And yet God was willing to sacrifice Him.

This was an incredibly painful sacrifice! And from it we gain an idea of the virtue of God: of how very much He values His own love, and what He would do to bring it to His own creatures who stand without it.

The sacrifice of Christ was a universal one He died for all the sins of all mankind, it was unlimited atonement. 1 John 2:1.

God's intent is to save the human race from perishing. This perishing is eternity in the Lake of Fire.

People choose to go to hell. It is an option in life, and those who reject God and the Gospel choose the Lake of Fire. Unlimited atonement makes eternal punishment just.

The Lake of Fire is the final destination for both fallen angels and unbelieving mankind. It was prepared in angelic prehistory at the judgment of the fallen angels, Matt. 25:41, "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

The first occupants of the Lake of Fire will be the beast and the false prophet of the Tribulation, Rev 19:20, "And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone."

Next will be Satan himself, Rev 20:20, "And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."

After the judgment of Satan, all unbelievers are judged and cast into the Lake of Fire. This is the judgment of the Great White Throne, Rev 20:14,15, "And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

Specific mention is made of sinners who are especially heinous, Rev 21:8, "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part [fate] is in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." This mention is made so that we believers might gain a greater appreciation of divine justice related to unbelievers.

There is no way out.

John 3:18,36 "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

Heb 9:27, "And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment."

The lake of fire is modeled after an old place of sacrifice just South of Jerusalem. It was called Gehenna. Gehenna is synonymous with the valley of the sons of Hinnom, or BenHinnom.

The valley of Gehenna was a place of child sacrifice, where babies were thrown into a fire, 2 Kings 16:3; 21:6.

Jeremiah 7:32; and 19:6 set this place as a place of discipline for Judah.

Christ often uses Gehenna to describe eternal punishment, Matt 10:28; 13:40,42,50; 25:41,46; Mark 9:43, 45, 47,49.

The alternative to the Lake of Fire is Eternal Life. What is the difference? The sacrifice of human pride. This is why so many choose the Lake of Fire. It seems such an incredible thing that people would do this, but they do!

Note that we begin in judgment, and can choose to get out from under it by believing in Jesus Christ, but we cannot escape that judgment if we reject Him.

This is a literal lake of fire... Christ and all the other writers of Scripture portray it as such. This is not a metaphor, not simply an illustration, not something used to scare us, but does not really exist [if you don't clean your room, the boogie man is going to get you!], not anything other than what it is, a place of eternal punishment.

Hell is not just eternal separation from God; it is much, much more. It is eternal, burning pain, for the fires of hell do not consume the resurrection bodies of the damned. This form of punishment is appropriate for those arrogant enough to reject the Grace Offer of God. It is the arrogance of those who equate themselves with God; of those who deny their need for God.

From the perspective of the eternal state we will observe the justice of God, and understand fully His action in carrying out the sentencings to Hell. If it seems harsh now, then learn more about God, and you will know.

The alternative to perishing is eternal life (really brief review).

Verse 17, "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but to save the world through Him."

This is a crucial verse on divine motivation and character.

It reveals God in the best possible light; that His motive in sending His Son was the highest and purest form of love.

Have you ever encountered an unbeliever who was offended at the idea of hell? That a loving God could never send anyone to eternal damnation? Well, this verse is certainly for them.

There are two things that a loving God would never do:

The first would be to leave anyone in condemnation without the possibility of redemption;

The second would be to force anyone to accept that offer of redemption.

So God sent His Son to die for the sins of mankind, and you should certainly consider the grave nature of this sacrifice as a vital symbol of God's earnest desire to save mankind. He gave His unique and only Son on our behalf.

For "God is not willing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9)

Therefore, God does not gleefully rub together His hands in anticipation of the final judgment; every lost soul grieves Him.

Yet, Christ will judge believers and unbelievers alike. (see doctrine of judgments).

Verse 18, "the one who believes in Him is not judged; but the one who does not believe has already been judged, because he has not believed in the name of the only born Son of God."

This verse is best seen in the light of the doctrine of imputations (reference).

At its simplest foundation, this verse says that people are brought into this life in a state of condemnation, and brought out of that state by belief in Christ.

Believers are still evaluated at the judgment seat of Christ; but the salvation issue is certainly no longer a question.

Verse 19, "and this is the judgment: that the light shone in the world and men loved the darkness more than the light; for their works were evil."

John now goes back to the big picture. In a wistful manner he summarizes the life of Christ.

The light shone in the world; this is a one-sentence review of John 1:15.

Men loved the darkness more than the light; this sounds a little like John 1:5, but there is a distinction. In the earlier verse there is a concentration on the efforts of the darkness to destroy the light; in the later verse, an explanation of why the men of darkness rejected the light.

The explanation is that their works were evil.

Perhaps a quote from one of John's epistles will explain it best: 1 John 2:15-17.

Do not love the cosmic system nor the things in the cosmic system. If anyone loves the cosmic system, the love of the Father is not in him.

The first part of this verse is command and warning to abstain from having high esteem for the cosmic system.

If you have high esteem for the cosmic system, that is, if you like being involved in it, then you are not in spiritual adulthood.

You cannot enjoy being in the cosmic system and be a spiritual adult at the same time.

The cosmic system is the enemy and opposite of God the Father's plan for your life.

If you are in the cosmic system, then you are an enemy of God, even though you may be a believer.

Because everything that is in the cosmic system, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the arrogance of life, is not a part of the Father but is a part of the cosmic system.

John divides the cosmic system into three categories: lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the arrogance of life. See the genius in this.

There is a kind of lust that comes from within the body sexual lust.

The lust of the eyes is materialism what things in life that you desire.

And then there is a generic arrogance of life.

And yet the world and its lust is deceiving itself, but the one who does the will of God remains forever.

Again, the cosmic system and its components cause self-deception and self-destruction in the cycle of lust and unhappiness.

Those believers who get involved in the cosmic system lose their rewards for eternity even though they still have eternal life.

By contrast, those believers who stick it out in the plan of God have not only eternal life, but a fantastic system of rewards as well.

Tragically, those who refuse to believe in Christ do not have eternal life, but instead are cast into the lake of fire.

A conclusion: people remain in darkness because somehow they love what is there and what they do there. Some people loathe the darkness and so come into the light.

Verse 20, "For each one who practices worthlessness hates the light and does not come to the light, so that his works might not be exposed."

Worthlessness is PHAULOS, the word which means even in the Greek out of bounds.'

Some things are obviously out of bounds, like many evil sins and acts. Murder would be a good example for this.

Other things are not so obvious, such as the right thing done for the wrong reason. God looks on the heart, and probes our motives for doing good things.

We can do good things because we love Him and are responding to His love; or, we can do good things because we are trying to impress God with our own brand of righteousness. The latter is certainly PHAULOS.

Let me emphasize the practice. This shows a consistent pattern of behavior that is uncaring about sin.

Someone who cares about resisting temptation will not only fight and scratch and bleed in the war against sin, but they will also acquire all the defenses that they possibly can through their study of Bible truth.

And not only this, but someone who cares about sin will confess that sin as soon as they possibly can.

And this person who practices worthlessness does not come into the light; that is, he does not regularly expose his soul to the truth. This is because that exposure will cause him to leave behind what he loves so much.

Verse 21, "And the one who practices the truth comes to the light, in order that his works by be shown that have been made in God."

But the one who practices the truth must get the truth on a regular basis, even every day to do so.

Coming to the light is that very thing exposure to the truth.

Coming to the light gives you the opportunity to practice the truth, and once you practice the truth you have every reason to return to that exposure of light, because it places you in a very excellent standing you are fulfilling the plan of God!

Imputations

Romans 3:19-20, "Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may be accountable to God; because by the works of the Law no flesh shall be justified in His sight; for by the Law is the knowledge of sin."

1 Timothy 1:9-10, "Realizing this fact that the Law was not made for a righteous man, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who murder their fathers and mothers, for murderers in general, for fornicators and homosexuals, for kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine."

The Mosaic Law defines sin for both unbelievers and believers.

Galatians 3:24, "Therefore what is the purpose of the Law? It has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under the tutor. For you are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

The purpose of the Law to the unbeliever is:

- To reveal sin, but not to remove it.
- To reveal sin, but not to prevent it.
- To prove all human beings as sinners, but it was not a standard by which one might prove himself holy.

The Law was added because of transgressions.

Galatians 3:19, "Therefore why the Law? It was added to grace because of the transgressions, until from whom came the seed in what form it had been promised, having been ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator."

The Law was added to the Old Testament portfolio of grace because of the transgressions, or personal sins of those in that time.

The Law bridged the gap between Moses and Christ. Christ is the seed, who came in the form of a man.

He was ordained through angels by their great pronouncement on the night He was born.

Though the Law was ordained to life, it is a sentence to death, Romans 7:10, "and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me;"

Therefore, the Law is a minister of condemnation, and not of spirituality.

2 Cor 3:68, "...who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was, how shall the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory?"

A Study of Romans 5:12-21:

Rom. 5:12 "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, so also death went to all men, on the basis of which all sinned"

Sin entered the world through Adam. Note, however, that this is for the human race. Sin originally entered the world through Satan.

Spiritual death entered the world through sin. Spiritual death is separation from God due to His holiness and your sinful state; it is total helplessness to remedy the situation.

Spiritual death went to all men by the imputation of Adam's original sin to the genetically formed old sin nature.

The result of this is that all men are considered to have sinned. EPI HO should be translated 'on the basis of which' not 'because'

This is not a raw deal! It is the best deal that mankind ever received!

Rom. 5:13 " now before the Law, sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed while there is no Law."

The first half of this verse relates something so obvious it is almost embarrassing: that sin was in the world before the time of the Mosaic Law.

The preposition ACHRI with the genitive case can show time until, or also time before; here it is the latter.

The contrasting statement is in the second half of the verse. That sin is not imputed while there is no Law. Ultimately, God is fair.

All the personal sins of the world were imputed to Christ while He was on the cross.

1 John 2:1-2, "My dear children, I write this to you so that you might not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world."

2 Corinthians 5:14-15, "For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again."

1 Timothy 2:6, "who gave himself as a ransom for all men the testimony given in its proper time."

Titus 2:11, "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men."

Even before the cross this was considered as true, because of the veracity of God. He is always faithful to His word.

Condemnation comes not because of personal sin, but because of Adam's original sin (see later reference). The imputation of Adam's original sin causes a condemnation that can only be abrogated by belief in Christ.

The last half of this verse does not refer to personal sin, which is all imputed to Christ while He is on the cross.

The last half of this verse does not refer to the sin nature, which is transmitted genetically and thus not a part of the imputation plan.

Psalm 51:5, "Surely I was born in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

Therefore this imputation can only be Adam's original sin. And isn't that the subject of this passage anyway?

This applies to all who have not reached the age of God-consciousness.

The Law brought God consciousness and a whole lot more; it brought a knowledge of sin; of imputations; of the perfect character of God; of the future work of Christ.

In other words, the Law made an issue out of the gospel for all who encountered it.

Children before a certain age do not have God consciousness; the mentally retarded may never gain it.

Before the Law came it was much more difficult to come to God consciousness. There was no written code or ritual which taught sin and the work of Christ.

This does not, however, mean that there was no condemnation or imputation of Adam's original sin. Far from it. For both spiritual death and salvation by faith are dispensational constants since Adam.

The two statements of verse thirteen do not say that there was no gospel before the Law came!

There was spiritual death in the time between Adam and Moses. It is just that the Law made it so much easier to come to God-consciousness that it increased spiritual death.

There is a verse which should make this passage a little clearer.

2 Peter 2:21, "It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred commandment that was passed on to them."

Rom. 5:14, "Nonetheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of

Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come."

Spiritual death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam.

This does not mean, however, that spiritual death then ceased to reign after the introduction of the Mosaic Law. In fact, spiritual death still reigns today, even after the accomplishments of the cross and the resurrection.

Adam was a type of Christ. He was born into a state of perfection no sin nature, and no condemnation.

He was a crucial part of the imputation plan of God. The sin of Adam was imputed to all mankind, as the sin of all mankind was imputed to Christ.

It is on the basis of our persistent rejection of the gospel that we are in the end condemned to the Lake of Fire.

John 3:18, "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

You are judged already because of the imputation of Adam's original sin.

If you never came to God consciousness, Adam's sin was never imputed to you, and so you were never condemned.

John 3:36, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

The wrath of God abides on you because you previously received the imputation of Adam's original sin, which caused your condemnation.

If you never came to God consciousness you never received the sin of Adam and resultant condemnation.

It did not matter how those in the time between Adam and Moses sinned, but whether they believed in Jesus Christ.

Spiritual death continued to reign because there are other ways to come to God consciousness than through the Mosaic Law. Although the Mosaic

Law was quite effective in this regard, there are other ways.

Romans 1:20, "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse."

The Religious Argument. The religious argument contends that God exists because mankind universally believe in His existence. Creatures do not crave what does not exist, and men seek after God. Even religious instincts indicate the reality of a Supreme Being. The concept of man seeking God is found in Jeremiah 29:13, and Acts 17:27.

The Moral or Anthropological Argument. This argument says that to a greater or lesser degree man's soul possesses both volition and conscience with an urge to choose right over wrong. This phenomena has no explanation apart from the existence and influence of a Supreme Being with perfect and eternal holiness or integrity. A material, ungoverned universe can know nothing of moral values apart from the absolute righteousness of a Supreme Being. Acknowledging the existence of virtue and truth eventuates in becoming aware of the source of virtue and truth. Jesus said, "I am the truth...no man comes unto the Father but by Me."

The Ontological Argument. Ontological reasoning says that since the human mind possesses the idea of a perfect and absolute being, such a being must exist. Apart from the religious and moral tendencies, the existence of God is a necessary idea to the human intellect, and beyond the relative which mankind measures there is the absolute which gives value and character to the relative.

The Teleological Argument. This argument is the fact that the universe, by its telescopic and microscopic wonders, always form arrangement, purpose, and adaptation, which connotes a designer. Structure in the universe demands a designer. The more we discover about the perfect structure of the universe in science, the more we recognize the need for a designer. Romans 1:20. The order of the universe can no more be accidental than the shuffling of twenty-six letters

of the alphabet into a beautiful poem. The chemical contents of the human body are never accidentally combined to form man.

The Cosmological Argument. This reasoning states that the intuitive law of cause and effect demands the existence of God as the initial cause. Order in the universe demands both a creator and a preserver. The universe presents an overwhelming demand for belief in the existence of God.

John 1:3, speaking of Jesus Christ as eternal God, says, "All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being."

Colossians 1:16-17 teaches that Jesus Christ is not only the creator of the universe, but that He also holds it together for the perpetuation of human history until the end of the Millennium, "For by Him were all things created both in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or empires or rulers or authorities. All things have been created through Him and for Him. He has existed prior to all things and by Him all things hold together."

Hebrews 1:10, "In the beginning, O Lord [Jesus Christ], You laid the foundations of the earth and the heavens are the workmanship of Your hands."

Hebrews 1:3, "He upholds all things by the word of His power."

Rom. 5:15, "But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many."

This contains the simple and just formula of imputation.

Many, but not all died in Adam. Some who never reached God consciousness did not.

Christ died for the sins of all.

As a result, those who never reach God consciousness are automatically saved, while those who believe in Christ are saved by the work of Christ. This is the many.

While Christ died for all in unlimited atonement, not all are saved. Only many.

Rom. 5:16, "And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift from the many transgressions resulting in justification."

A contrast between Adam's original sin and the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

The judgment is the imputation of Adam's original sin; it is synonymous with the imputation in verse thirteen. An imputation is a divine judgment.

The result of the imputation of Adam's sin is condemnation.

The free gift came from the imputation of all the sins of mankind being imputed to the body of Christ on the cross. The imputation of the free gift to the one who believes results in justification.

The true nature of the free gift is the righteousness of Christ that same righteousness that He produced by dying for the sins of man.

John 3:18, "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

John 3:36, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

Rom. 5:17, "For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ."

Death reigned through the imputation of the original sin of Adam.

We should reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. There two good explanations of the reign of life in this verse:

Our reign over the sin nature, which is spiritual adulthood to spiritual maturity.

Our reign with Christ in the millennium.

If we do the first, we will have the second.

Christ is the prince-ruler of the church, and will be the king of kings and Lord of lords starting at the second advent.

We can share in Christ's victory in operation footstool through our advance in the protocol plan for the church age.

Rom. 5:18, "Therefore a conclusion: as through one transgression all men tend to condemnation, so also through one act of righteousness all men tend to justification of life."

This is an exact parallelism. In order for God to be perfectly just in His imputations, there must be perfect balance present. The exact parallelism is denoted by the use of HOS in the first clause and HOUTOS KAI in the second. They are translated, 'as... so also'.

The second one first: not all men are saved, and that is not what this verse says. Salvation is hardly automatic.

Instead, the double use of the preposition EIS in this clause functions to show a tendency toward something, which is justification through the righteousness of Christ. This double EIS without the verb is unique to Greek literature.

So our translation: 'through one act of righteousness all men tend to justification of life.'

Not all men fulfill this purpose of God, because God gave all men free will.

The first one second: If not all men are saved by the atoning sacrifice of Christ, then certainly not all men are condemned through Adam's original sin.

Remember, this is an exact parallel. Therefore, if you believe that unlimited atonement leads not all to salvation, you must also believe that Adam's original sin cannot be imputed to all.

Adam's original sin may only fairly be imputed to those who have God consciousness; anything less would violate the integrity of God. God never arbitrarily condemns anyone!

This is the true volitional view!

Rom. 5:19, "For just as through the one man's disobedience the many were appointed

sinner, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be appointed righteous."

Notice the word HOI POLLOI. It is the Greek word 'many'.

Again there is an exact parallel between the two clauses of this verse. This time that parallel is formed by HOSPER... HOUTOS. The translation is 'just as... even so'.

Again we will take the second clause first: through the obedience of the One many will be appointed righteous.

'Many' is perfectly accurate! Not all are saved through the work of Christ. Many are saved, and in fact many are not!

The obedience of Christ resulted in unlimited atonement. However, God still honors volitional decisions!

Although through the work of Christ all men tend toward justification, not all receive it.

And the first clause last: through one man's disobedience the many were appointed sinners.

Many, but not all are appointed sinners.

Although all men tend to condemnation, not all receive it.

Adam's original sin is only imputed at God consciousness!

Rom. 5:20,21, "And the Law came in that the transgression might increase; but where the sin increased, grace abounded all the more, that, as sin reigned in death even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The purpose of the Law was so that God consciousness might increase. The Law is superb at that function.

Romans 3:19-20, "Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may be accountable [HUPODIKOS] to God; because by the works of the Law no flesh shall be justified in His sight; for by the Law is the knowledge [EPIGNOSIS] of sin."

Galatians 3:24-26, "Therefore what is the purpose of the Law? It has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under the tutor. For you are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

This is because wherever Adam's original sin is imputed, there is an amplification of grace.

God is glorified each time someone believes in Christ.

The imputation of Adam's original sin makes that a possibility.

The reign of grace is again the process of spiritual growth to maturity. Salvation makes the reign of grace possible!

When someone goes to heaven by default, there is some glorification of God because it is a display of the work of Christ through unlimited atonement.

When someone chooses Christ from the status of condemnation, there is greater grace. This is the subject of Paul's conclusion.

Romans 6:5-6, "For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin..."

The old sin nature was crucified with Christ on the cross.

As a result, it cannot be a basis for condemnation.

The Old Sin Nature is transmitted genetically through the seed of Adam. It provides temptation to the soul, James 1:14-15.

This context concerns the post salvation effect of Christ's payment for the old sin nature.

Romans 4:15, "For the Law produces wrath; but where there is no Law, neither is there transgression (original sin).

Naturally, this can lead to no small amount of confusion.

Pay attention to the word PARABASIS. Paul employs it to denote original sin!

Romans 5:14

1 Timothy 2:14 (the woman's original sin).

The Law (as the gospel) brings wrath from God because of the imputation of Adam's original sin and subsequent condemnation.

But if there is no Law yet on the heart, there is no Adam's original sin.

This does not mean that if you sin in ignorance of the Law, there is no sin! That notion would offend any Jew who knew of the Law of burnt offerings in Leviticus chapter four. The first half of that chapter is about the sacrifices which must be made for sins done in ignorance.

This is a distinct reinforcement of Romans 5:13b, "but sin is not imputed while there is no Law."

Romans 7:9-11, "but I was then continuously alive apart from the Law, but after the commandment came, sin sprang to life, and I died, and the commandment resulting in life was found in me, this resulting in death. For the sin, after taking the opportunity through the commandment deceived me and through it killed me.

The previous two verses form the immediate context: "Therefore what will we say? The Law is sin? Definitely not! But I would not have known sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting unless the Law was saying "You will not covet." But sin, after taking an opportunity through the commandment produced in me every kind of lust. For apart from the Law sin is dead"

The Law is not sin, but it brings knowledge of sin. With the knowledge of sin comes the ability to sin knowingly.

Therefore without the Law sin is powerless. Because knowledge of sin brings power to sin.

Therefore the Law gives voice to the sin nature. The sin nature develops a vocabulary and broader frame of reference through the Law's defining of sin.

Paul says he was continuously alive apart from the Law that is, that before he knew of the Law he was spiritually alive. The imperfect tense of ZAO portrays past continuous action.

At some time in the past Paul was continuously alive.

This was the time before he knew the Law, as indicated by the second clause.

Human life is not an issue in this passage. The subject is neither human life nor death.

If the subject is figurative life, there is only one figurative life that it could be; spiritual life.

Now again, Paul is saying that he was spiritually alive before the Law came into his life.

After the commandment came, sin sprang to life. Just which commandment is defined by the end of verse ten; it is the commandment which results in life which could only be the gospel.

So the commandment which results in life causes sin to spring to life, which in turn brings about spiritual death.

Therefore each human life is a miniature copy of the history of sin. Each one is born into innocence.

The category of sin in view here is however the sin nature. The sin nature lies dormant in the flesh until such time as it develops a vocabulary and frame of reference.

The vocabulary and frame of reference of the sin nature can only come through the Law of God, whether through natural means or through the Pentateuch.

- Natural means number one: the conscience.
- Natural means number two: parents.
- Natural means number three: other institutions of authority.

The amplification of the Pentateuch in the New Testament may also be a source of the Law for this purpose.

The knowledge which comes by these means may be knowledge of God, direct prohibitions against sin, or the Gospel itself.

The sin nature does not act ignorantly or blindly; it acts through cognizance.

Therefore knowledge of the Law of God activates the sin nature.

The activation of the sin nature brings the imputation of Adam's Original Sin, and thus condemnation: spiritual death.

The final clause of verse ten explain this with clarity: HE ENTOLE HE EIS ZOEN, HAUTE EIS THANATON.

A very literal translation would say, "the commandment which is unto life, this is unto death.

There are many uses of the preposition EIS in the Koine' Greek of the New Testament; the obvious use here is as something which points to the result of an action or incident.

Therefore, there is a commandment which results in life.

And, this same commandment results in death.

The demonstrative pronoun HAUTE points back to the antecedent ENTOLE. It is worthwhile to note that the same commandment which results in life also results in death.

There is only one commandment that can result in life. It is the commandment to believe in Jesus Christ.

So listen again to Paul's order:

He was continuously alive apart from the Law.

The commandment came and sin [the sin nature] sprang to life.

Then came spiritual death.

This possibility sees Paul's continuous spiritual life as post salvation.

The death in the verse would then be temporary spiritual death, or loss of fellowship.

The hearing of the commandment would be anytime that you add a new 'nono' to the categories of your soul.

The failure of this interpretation is threefold: the sin nature is alive and well long before salvation, so it does not spring to life each time something new is learned; the death is very obviously the imputation of Adam's Sin; and the continuous life is not an accurate representation of the spiritual dynamics of the Christian life.

The continuous life is life in the womb interpretation.

This possibility sees the continuous life as the biological life in the womb, with the imputation of Adam's sin at birth.

However, this immediately falls apart when you realize that there is no God consciousness for many months after birth, and that the crux of this passage has to do with the knowledge of God, sin, and the gospel.

This view completely fails to account for the gap between human birth and God, and so must be discounted.

The only option remaining is the one we have discussed.

The Essence of Adam's Sin:

Adam's Original Sin is imputed at God consciousness, but before any personal sin is committed.

On the basis of Adam's Sin, each one receives condemnation which is tantamount to spiritual death. This is the point at which separation from God is initiated.

Only because Adam's Sin is imputed before any personal sin is committed is there the allowance of a just imputation of personal sin to Jesus Christ.

Whether the child believes in the gospel at this time is not an issue; the sin is always imputed before any personal sin is committed, and before there is a chance to express belief in Jesus Christ.

In other words, there is no chance of continue perfection. The sin of Adam is imputed before anything else can occur.

The results of the imputation.

Therefore, each human being is a model in miniature of the life of Adam, and even before Adam, of Satan.

There is creature innocence, knowledge, and then sin.

But unlike Adam and Satan, there is condemnation before the commitment of personal sins.

This early condemnation is what allows God to impute our personal sins to Christ, and thus it also makes volition the issue.

This also allows for the perfection of Jesus Christ, because He had no sin nature and no sin before His God consciousness.

With no sin nature, God could not impute Adam's Sin to His Son.

Therefore, Christ had to remain perfect throughout His life, or suffer eternal separation from the Father. The stakes were indeed high.

The imputation of Adam's sin at God-consciousness means that there is no condemnation or spiritual death before that time. In fact, there is spiritual life until that time.

Since there is no condemnation or spiritual death before that time, it is clear that God is able to save those individuals without the compromise of His justice.

There is no need for the imputation of the personal sins to Christ of those who do not reach God consciousness, because there is no sine without God consciousness. Therefore, there are no sins that need to be imputed!

At God consciousness, if the knowledge of God and sin are rejected, then certain things occur immediately. Remember, condemnation from Adam's sin occurs before there is a chance to consider the gospel.

Romans 1:21, "Therefore, though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became vacuous in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened."

Remember the two preceding verses are specifically about God consciousness.

This sounds remarkably like an entrance into the very first stage of the cosmic system, and so it is.

Ephesians 4:17-19, "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the unbelievers also walk, in the vacuum of their mind, being continually darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance, the being in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness."

Distinctions of early life.

In the womb, there is biological life but no soul life. Though there is a sin nature, it is dormant.

The soul and spirit are imputed at birth; there is human life and spiritual life but no consciousness of God (see Psalm 8:2). There is a sin nature, but it is still dormant.

Between birth and God consciousness there are three basic needs of every infant:

There are physical needs, including food, clothing, shelter, and even comfort.

There is the need to explore and accumulate knowledge.

There is a need for love and affection.

If the basic needs of an infant are consistently met, then it will be a happy child.

The means for God consciousness vary, and Paul even indicates that the state may be achieved by learning one of the ten commandments.

Those responsible for an infant are responsible to meet his or her needs consistently and personally.

The expression of displeasure by an infant who has not reached God consciousness is simply related to its needs, and not a rejection of the authority of his or her parents or guardians.

This expression of displeasure is definitely not sin. It is absolutely necessary that the infant at this time communicate to his caretakers about his needs.

The expression of displeasure is the way an infant does this, and this cannot be classified as sin.

At the moment of God consciousness, the sin of Adam is imputed, spiritual death ensues (loss of the human spirit) the sin nature activates, and the child enters the cosmic system.

Three Psalms:

Psalm 51:5, see David's Bastardship.

Psalm 58:3, "The wicked go astray from the womb; they err from their birth, continually speaking lies."

This Psalm has been quoted as support for the imputation of Adam's sin at birth.

But observe: this Psalm is an imprecation against the wicked of the world. The sixth verse says, "O God, shatter their teeth in their mouth; break out the fangs of the young lions, O Lord."

It is a Psalm exclusive about the wicked of the world and their behavior; in no way is it intended to describe the entire human race.

Therefore, when the third verse makes its axioms, those axioms apply exclusively to the wicked, and definitely not to the entire human race.

And therefore, the verse does not have the imputation of Adam's Sin as its subject.

This point becomes clear from a study of the original Hebrew:

The first verb is the qal perfect ZORU, which is translated 'go astray'.

The perfect tense communicates an axiom that is always true about the wicked of this world.

The verb itself usually denotes the literal separation of a blood relationship, and is the same verb employed in Psalm 69:8 to describe David's blood separation from his own brothers. Here however it illustrates the spiritual separation between the wicked and God.

The wicked produce the action of this verb; that is, they go astray under their own power, and not because of their sin nature or because of the imputation of Adam's Sin.

They go astray from the womb; the phrase is MERAHEM, and it is a synonym for birth.

Now of course this is a hyperbole. David is trying to communicate a point by exaggeration.

The hyperbole is a common figure of speech in the Bible, and has persisted throughout history and almost all languages and cultures. It draws attention to the degree of something by overstating the case.

"They go astray from birth" is another way of saying that they are sinning at the earliest age possible.

The second verb is TA`U, and it also is a qal perfect verb.

Again the perfect tense is axiomatic; it describes something that is always true about the wicked.

The verb itself depicts someone who wanders about aimlessly; it is the perfect picture of the drunk, and Isaiah employs it that way in Isaiah 28:7.

It also depicts someone who wanders away from the Law of God.

The subject of this verb is the wicked, and it produces the action of the verb. It is an accurate portrayal of volition producing personal sin, and nothing else.

The combination of preposition and noun MIBETEN also describes that the action takes place immediately after birth, but note that this also is a hyperbole.

Example of hyperbole: "Christ paid for the trillions of sins that I have produced in my lifetime."

I have committed a lot of sins in my lifetime.

I have not committed a trillion sins.

In order to illustrate the great number of my sins, I used an outrageously large figure.

Biblical examples of hyperbole:

Deuteronomy 1:28, "The cities are great, and walled up to heaven," to express their great height.

Judges 20:16, "Every one could sling stones at a hair and not miss" to describe the wonderful proficiency which the Benjamites had attained in slinging stones."

1 Kings 1:40, "So that the earth rent with the sound of them." A hyperbolic description of their jumping and leaping for joy.

John 3:26, "All men come to him" Thus his disciples said to John, to show their sense of the many people who followed the Lord.

Now think this through:

This is about the wicked only, and applies to the wicked only.

The wicked their lives of personal sin at the earliest possible time; the double hyperbole does not communicate that the wicked are sinning at the moment they are born; nor do the two parallel verbs explain the sin nature or the imputation of Adam's Sin, but only the production of personal sin.

If David had wanted to convey the idea of the old sin nature, then the wicked could not have been the subject of the two parallel statements. He could have employed the term 'lust' or 'temptation' to do

so, but certainly no human being produces his own temptation through his own volition.

If David had wanted to convey the idea of the imputation of Adam's Sin, he would have had God as his subject, or made the wicked the recipients of the action of the verb.

The final conclusion? That this verse is a hyperbole about the activation of the sin nature in the wicked at the youngest age possible.

Psalm 8:2, "You have built a fortress from the mouth of children and infants because of your foes, to stop your enemies and adversaries."

God builds a fortress from the mouth of babes and infants.

The word for 'children' is `OLELIM. It denotes a child of any age, but one who is definitely a child.

The word for 'infants' is YONQIM, which is literally a 'sucking one'. This is the infant who is still at the breast.

The fortress is defined well from Matthew, where we find that it is a fortress of praise.

Matthew 21:12-16, "And Jesus entered the temple and cast out all those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who were selling doves. And He said to them, 'It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer; but you are making it a robbers den.' And the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that He had done, and the children who were crying out in the temple and saying, 'Hosanna to the Son of David,' they became indignant, and said to Him, 'Do You hear what these are saying?' And Jesus said to them, 'Yes; have you never read, Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babes You have prepared praise for Yourself?'"

The reference to infants is of course a hyperbole again; infants are incapable of speech. The hyperbole means again that the praise comes at the youngest possible age.

Children also build a fortress of praise to God. The children in the temple on that day were perceptive

enough to realize that Christ was truly the king of the Jews after the pattern of David.

Children do this because they are young, inexperienced, and uneducated, yet they are fully capable of giving praise to God. Now that confounds the enemies of God!

It confounds the enemies of God, because it illustrates the concept of spiritual I.Q.

Spiritual I.Q. has its foundation in the wisdom of God and the power of the Spirit. It has no foundation in education or experience outside of the necessary vocabulary.

Children can praise God as well as anyone; they are enabled by God the Holy Spirit to do so.

This does not rule out the necessary doctrinal content of praise. Children must have doctrine to bring praise to God.

1 Corinthians 1:26-29, "For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and God has chosen the lowborn things of the world and the despised, the things that are not, that He might render powerless the things that are, that no man should boast before God."

There are three categories of human division in this passage:

The category of human wisdom to have or to have not.

The category of human power to have or have not.

The category of worldly environment to have or have not.

God chooses many from the lesser category in order demonstrate His power.

He chooses the fools (here the frame of reference is human wisdom, so uneducated would work well here) to shame the wise.

He chooses the weak to shame the powerful. This is weak according to human standards. It may be poor with reference to money; it may that you are the low man on the totem pole in your company; it may be that you are not empowered politically. It

may be that you are weak physically or in the current subjective standards of beauty.

He chooses the lowborn and the despised, the "are nots" of this world to render powerless the "ares", that no man should boast before God.

You cannot bring your human intelligence, human power, or human birth standing to the Great White Throne; you cannot bring these things to the judgment seat of Christ.

This is why the praise of children glorifies God.

Implications of this point of doctrine concerning child rearing:

That there is no sin until God consciousness; therefore, there can be no sin-related discipline until then.

There is still plenty of room for a learning routine within the limits of the infant's attention span.

Whatever negative emotions and expressions come from an infant are related to his basic needs.

That the infant communicates these things instinctively, and that it is the parents responsibility to understand and meet these needs are they are communicated.

That without an active sin nature, there is no guile in the communication of needs. They can always be accepted as they are.

That the sin nature activates when the child reaches God-consciousness, and that this causes no small amount of consternation in a child; so an authoritative yet loving approach to discipline is the best way to go, especially early on.

The parents must form an alliance with the child against the sin nature.

That the child must be made to understand the forces within him, so that he can begin to help himself.

The sooner the child can understand what impels him to be bad, the sooner he can begin to stand against temptation on his own.

Gentleness and communication are the watchwords of correction in the early days.

Two proverbs:

"Spare the rod and spoil the child"

"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." 3. That evangelization is an absolute necessity at the moment of God consciousness.

As soon as you know that your child has reached God consciousness (and it should be obvious), you have a heavy and personal responsibility to evangelize your child.

You are never to scare your child or abuse your authority in any way to accomplish this end. You are to present the issue clearly to him or her, and to ask him if he would like to tell God that he believes in Christ.

Of course it is best to place the gospel within your child's frame of reference!

The evangelization of your child will ease your burden of child raising one hundred fold.

The Accession of John the Baptist

Introduction:

Note the distinction: to this point John has pointed the way to Christ, and noted Christ's superiority; here he completely accedes to Jesus, more than hinting to his disciples to give way and follow Christ.

For a few weeks after Christ's return from the wilderness, John has continued to point the way to Christ. Since Christ returned, here is what happened:

- The priests and Levites came to John to inquire about Christ (John 1:1928).
- John identified Christ as the Son of God (John 1:2934).
- Christ called His first disciples (John 1:3551).
- Christ performed His first miracle, at Cana, in Galilee (John 2:111).
- Christ stayed a few days at Capernaum with His family and His disciples (John 2:12).
- Christ cleansed the temple at the Passover (John 2:1322).
- The people in Jerusalem responded positively to Christ's miracles at the Passover (John 2:2325).
- Nicodemus came to Christ at night and inquired about His person (John 3:121).

This places the time at around late Spring to early Summer of 27 AD. Christ is thirty years old.

Now Christ's ministry has begun in earnest, and it is time for John to completely step aside. Christ's appearance in the region provides a golden opportunity to do so.

By this time John has been on the scene for about a year and his ministry has gained great fame and popularity. In fact his message continued to have a following even decades after, and spread to far distant places even after his death.

Imagine the humility of this man. To find such popularity, and then give it all to Christ.

Discussion of John 3:22-36

John 3:22: "After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the Judean land and there He spent time and baptized with them."

So Christ moves from Jerusalem to the Judean countryside, apparently somewhere near the river Jordan. The phrase *meta tauta* summarizes everything that had happened in Jerusalem at that first Passover.

John uses the Roman term Judea, so this includes not only the old Judah, but also a good deal of the old Northern kingdom, now called Samaria. The location of this verse can be anywhere from halfway between Galilee and the Dead Sea south along the Jordan River to the Dead Sea itself. They may have been only a few miles from John and his disciples at the time. At any rate, not more than forty miles, and probably much less than that.

In the Greek, when there are two verbs and only one object in a sentence, the object takes both verbs. That is the case with *DIATRIBO* and *BAPTIZO*. They each describe different actions taken by Christ, but they both take the same object, the disciples.

This object, the personal pronoun *auton* 'them', is modified by the preposition *META*.

META defines the relationship of subject and object, and modifies the action of the verb accordingly.

Christ did these actions in the company of the disciples; He 'does' these things with them. They do these things together, but since the verb is in the third person singular, it portrays Christ as the initiator of the action.

Christ 'spent time' with the disciples.

Since Christ produces the action of the verb, He is the initiator, while the disciples are the co-participants.

DIATRIBO means to 'wear away' or 'rub away'. It describes the wearing of a path by foot traffic, or the wearing away of clothes from use. Since the preposition DIA compounds this verb, the picture is of complete use or wear. Not just worn, but worn through.

After a while, the Greeks applied the concept of this verb to time. 'While away the hours', 'spend time'. It also applied to money 'spend', and others things that get spent, like physical energy.

It even came to exemplify academic effort. Our English word 'diatribe' is the direct descendant of this concept. The noun form of this verb could mean both 'pastime' and 'study'. The adjective always meant 'pedantic' as in teaching in such a way that wears on the student.

John 2:12 describes Christ and others staying at Capernaum. John employs the usual verb for such activity, meno.

John 3:22 is quite far enough away where the use of a synonym would not be required. In this verse John wanted to describe exactly how Christ spent the time with His disciples.

The time spent was a wearing time, a time of study.

Christ took this time to inculcate His disciples in the essentials of His kingdom. He baptized with His disciples.

Now we have a puzzle. Christ initiated this action; the Pharisees perceived that He was baptizing; but John makes it clear that it was not Christ Himself that was doing the actual baptism. And there is little doubt that this is baptism by water.

We know that Christ initiated this action because BAPTIZO is third person singular, and Christ is the subject. His disciples did this with Him, META AUTON.

We know the Pharisees' impression from John 4:1, "Jesus knew that the Pharisees heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John."

We know that part of this impression was mistaken from John 4:2, "Although Jesus Himself was not baptizing but His disciples were."

The conclusion is that the baptizing was Christ's idea, but the disciples carried it out.

This idea bore fruit in two areas:

The introduction to Christ's kingdom ministry continues. People are baptized, and from it are identified with the millennial kingdom. (doctrine of the Millennium, intercalation of the church age)

The disciples get a more intense form of training. Teaching always requires a more thorough understanding of the subject matter.

You must anticipate what your pupils want to know, and distinguish what they need to know. You must filter your subject matter accordingly, and thus you think about it.

You must sort out what is true and false concerning the subject matter.

You must put the subject matter into a teachable form, and be able to explain it in a manner that will satisfy the curiosity of your pupils.

You must fit the subject matter into the overall system, to give your pupils the broader picture.

So by instructing the disciples on how to introduce others to the kingdom, Christ better inculcates them into its precepts.

None the less, after this accession by John, water baptism never again enters the scene in Christ's ministry.

John 3:23, "Now also John was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there, and they were appearing and being baptized."

So in the time since Christ returned from the wilderness John has continued his ministry, pointing the way to Christ.

Aenon near Salim was a little north of halfway between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea.

The phrase 'John was also baptizing' tells us that the baptism of Christ's disciples was water baptism.

An interesting verb is PARAGINOMAI 'they were appearing'. It paints this picture: one moment they

are nowhere to be seen, and the next they appear right at John's side. It tells us that John's ministry was going like hotcakes.

John 3:24: "For John had not yet been thrown into prison."

This event is not too far off, but we do not have the exact time. A little over a year later John the Baptist is in jail, Luke 7:1117. It does occur before Christ goes back to Galilee, according to Mark 1:14. This return is apparently just a few days off.

John's readers knew that the Baptist would go to prison and die there, and this verse explains that those events are still in the future.

Just as John preceded our Lord in ministry, so also in imprisonment and death.

Herod Antipas feared that John's ministry would bring about an armed revolt in Judea and Galilee. This, and John's rebuke of Herod for marrying his brother's wife were the human viewpoint reasons. But perhaps there is something more than meets the eye here... It is obvious that it was God's plan for John's ministry to end.

John 3:25: "Then there arose an inquiry from the disciples of John with a Jew about purification."

So the disciples of John and a Jew got into an inquiry about purification. The word for inquiry portrays two or more people investigating a matter, all seeking the truth. It is literally, 'a seeking', or 'a quest'. It is interesting that these natural adversaries have joined together on a topic that would pit them as adversaries purifications. The preposition META reveals that these two have allied on this matter.

Purification would be an interesting subject, but it does not seem to line up well with their question, which is given in the next verse. What they actually ask about is Christ. Let's try to connect the two.

Purification fits well into the topic of baptism, for baptism could easily be perceived as a ritual of purification.

John's baptism was a baptism of repentance in preparation for the Messiah and His kingdom. Just like the other rituals of the Jewish system, it was a real act that taught Bible doctrine.

However, it was the Jewish trend to distort the teaching rituals into legalism. It was their contention that just doing the rituals themselves pleased God, regardless of what was in their hearts.

At some point the conversation must have shifted to a comparison of Christ and John.

It must have been interesting indeed for John and his disciples when Christ began to baptize.

Remember, John brought in this new ritual of baptism after the Jews had been doing the same things for 1400 years.

Remember also that John was the first true prophet of Israel in a few hundred years. He had a spectacular following because of his gift.

But John made it clear from the start that he was just showing the way to Christ, and that his baptism was intended for that same purpose.

Now Christ, the superior has set His disciples to baptizing, and not too far from where John's ministry was located.

They are in a quandary: what change does this bring to John's ministry?

John 3:26: "And they came to John and said to Him, 'Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, about whom you yourself have testified, behold, He is baptizing and all are coming to Him.'"

Hey, these guys are out of fellowship about losing their ministry to Christ and His disciples.

Their concentration and focus is entirely on John, in the first part. "He who was with you..." "About whom you have testified..."

But then they notice that this ministry is tapering off and they do not like it. "He is baptizing [sneering tone], and all are coming to Him."

This is the wrong focus! Wrong attitude!

But something else. Christ has now begun His own ministry. Why is John still at work? Why has John not ceased now that Christ has begun? Perhaps this is John's one flaw. He did not know when to hang it up.

John 3:27: "John answered and said, 'No man can receive a single thing unless it has been given to him from heaven.'"

This is a hard line grace answer. The real man in question is Jesus Christ.

It reveals the unasked question of the disciple-Jew alliance: Why Christ and not John?

John tells them: All are going to Christ because it comes from heaven.

John uses two very strong grammatical constructions in order to make clear the absolute nature of grace.

The first is OUDE HEN, which I have translated 'a single thing'. OUDE is nothing, and HEN is the numeral one. Together with the phrase 'no man', they make a double negative, which is fine in the Greek, but confusing in the English. In the Greek one negative strengthens the other. In the English, one negative cancels the other. This construction is very strong and makes an absolute statement. John is hammering on this alliance.

The second is the perfect periphrastic participle of DIDOMI. This one shows that heaven is the ultimate source of all things. You receive not a single thing, unless it comes from heaven. It is one of the strongest ways to state a principle of doctrine.

Additionally John makes clear the subjects to whom this rule applies: mankind. He uses ANTHROPOS. Christ is a member of the human race, and so this principle certainly applies to Him. Therefore, what Christ has in the people who are flocking to Him comes straight from heaven.

Remember, in verse 23, people were appearing out of nowhere to be baptized by John. Now they are all going to Jesus, according to verse 26. Insert millennium comment: Christ is here to found the millennial kingdom; John is in the way. Beware yourself in getting in the way of the kingdom of Christ. You should be a window on the kingdom of heaven, an open doorway.

John 3:28: "You yourselves witnessed me saying, "I myself am not the Christ, but that I have been sent ahead of Him."

Again, John draws attention to Christ, and his relationship to Christ. Here he reprises his role as the waypaver, even for some of his disciples.

The emphasis here is interesting:

In claiming that he is not the Christ, John emphasizes himself with the intensive use of the personal PRONOUN EGO.

In claiming that he has been sent, John uses the perfect periphrastic construction. This again concentrates on John's person.

John uses the preposition EMPROSTHEN to describe his relationship with Christ. He sees himself as going ahead of Christ to prepare the way.

The conclusion is that John says the right things, but that he has appearance of being self-centered. If John was doing the right thing at this time, this would be a marvelous statement; but since he is not, we may call it somewhat self-centered.

John has applied his mission in this way: he sees himself as the one who must prepare the way for every individual in Israel. That before anyone goes to Christ, they must go through him.

He sees a continuing role for himself in Christ's kingdom. He is the screener, the waypaver, the man who prepares the hearts of all for Christ, even as Christ is on the scene.

But Christ, by setting His disciples to baptize, has communicated a very hard message to John that with the beginning of the Kingdom ministry, he is no longer needed.

Christ is there to be seen face to face; His ministry is in the open. Why should Israel go through a human being to see Him?

John 3:29: "The who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, the one who stands and hears him rejoices with joy through the sound of bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine has been made full."

The bride at this point is Israel; the groom is Christ; the friend is John.

The friend is what we would call the best man. In the Jewish wedding, the friend would stand next to the bridegroom and hear his vows. At this he would rejoice, as any best man would.

John says:

That he does not have the prize at this wedding of all weddings: Christ does.

But that he still rejoices for Christ, and that the joy of hearing Christ's voice has been made full at this time.

Again, though, there is hint of bitterness. John perhaps has indulged in self-pity here. Oh, he is not the bridegroom, and he does not get the bride, but at least he vicariously experiences the bridegroom's joy. "Even though I do not get Christ's joy, I am happy for him. My limited joy has been made complete."

Why the negative assessment of John's statement? Because of his actions. If John had ceased his ministry at the beginning of Christ's ministry, then these statements could have been taken in the most positive light possible. Now because of John's action, they have the appearance of tarnish and rust. There is a dark side to them.

John 3:30, "It is necessary for that one to increase, but for me to diminish."

Note the two verbs that reflect the necessity.

The first is AUXANO, to grow. This verb described the growth of living things, of plants and trees, of children. It shows a gradual growth over a period of time.

The second is ELATTOO, to shrink. This too is a verb of gradual change. It describes the action of shrinking over time, of growth in reverse.

What John has done here is nothing less than put a spin on the events of the past few days. But let's look again at the facts!

In verse 23, people are coming out of nowhere to be baptized by John.

In verse 26, they are all going to Christ.

This is not a gradual growth and diminishment! This is an all at once radical change.

But why does John put his spin on these events? It can only be because he wants to hold on to the following and the ministry that he thinks he has.

John sees his accession as gradual; what has already happened was immediate and absolute.

John uses a rather impersonal mode of reference to Jesus Christ. It is the far demonstrative pronoun, ekeinon.

In fact, in this entire discourse, John uses the word Christ only once, and never the word Jesus.

In verse 27, John says, "a man cannot receive a single thing". The application is Jesus.

In verse 28, John says, "I myself am not the Christ." But the real focus of the sentence is John, through his use of the intensive pronoun.

In verse 29, John employs a short parable, where Christ is the bridegroom, but Christ is never mentioned by name.

In verse 30, John uses the far demonstrative.

Jesus was John's own cousin. They were family, and yet John the Baptist uses only titles and roundabout ways to describe our Lord.

John uses emphatic, intensive, and self-centered modes of expression to describe himself.

Apparently, all the popularity and approbation had gone to John's head. He would lose that same head about a year later.

What follows now is an injection of John the Apostle's. He inserts his own discourse, and in a way it concentrates on what the Baptist has just said. In opposition to John's self-centered words, the Apostle concentrates very much on the person and character of Christ.

John 3:31: "The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all."

Now for John the Apostle's editorial comment. He tells us in this verse that what the Baptist has just said is cosmic propaganda, and entirely wrong.

First is Christ. Christ comes from above, and is above all. He is above the selfishness and pettiness of the Baptist. He is above all human flaws.

Second is the Baptist. He is from the earth and he speaks the worldly point of view. Make no mistake. John paints the Baptist here as he is: worldly and trapped in the cosmic system. Spouting forth to his last few followers the propaganda that he hopes will keep them.

Third is Christ again, and you can see immediately John the Apostle's desire to keep his gospel centered on Christ, and above all in its own right. John needed to get out the truth on the last days of the Baptist's ministry, but did so in such a way

that was objective and did not linger on the sad details of the demise of this great prophet of Israel.

Knowing what we now know now will make it easier to understand why in a few more days John will be thrown into prison, and his enigmatic message to Christ once there.

From here, the Apostle sticks to Christ.

John 3:32: "What He sees and hears this He testifies, and His testimony no one receives."

Now this is Christ. The nearest antecedent to the third person masculine pronoun is the last sentence of verse 31, which is about Christ.

Nice. A description of the human faculties of sight and hearing, attributed to the one from above. Now we have the hypostatic union.

This verse tells us that from Christ we get just the facts. That Christ tells us like it truly is. It also describes the general response to this ministry of truth.

No one receives the truth. It is the old aphorism, the truth hurts. The truth often demands that we surrender our pride, and that is the most painful thing. Only true humility will respond to the truth in the right way. But truth is the kind of ministry that Christ has undertaken.

Christ testifies what He sees and hears. This also refers to His method of faith perception. He only has available for application what He has gained through faith perception. That very same thing is what we have. This is a great testimony to kenosis.

John 3:33, "The one who receives His testimony sealed that God is Truth."

Positive believers receive another kind of sealing. This one they produce by themselves. It is the sealing of the notion that God is truth.

God is the very personification of the truth, and when someone believes in Christ, they confirm that notion in their hearts.

The sealing is a confirmation that what has been said by Christ is true.

Verse 34 will explain this idea a bit more.

John 3:34, "For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for He did not give the Spirit from measure."

This jumps back to Christ in order to explain this new believer produced sealing in the previous verse.

Christ speaks the words of God.

God gave the Spirit without measure to Christ, so that Christ could speak God's Words.

The term John uses for words is *remata*. This can mean the actual words that come out of a person's mouth, or it can mean the principles of a person's life. Here I think it covers both. Christ spoke the very words of God (albeit in translation), and communicated the important principles that come from Him.

This Christ did from the ministry of God the Holy Spirit, in perception and application of the truth.

(faith perception of the truth)

John 3:35, "The Father loves the Son and has given Him all things into His hand."

This a direct reference to Daniel 7:1314.

John 3:36, "The one who believes unto the Son has eternal life; the one who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

Again this has to do with imputations, and is a restatement of verse 17.

For the sake of clarity understand that obeying the Son means believing in Him, and does not make reference to post salvation obedience.

This verse does not undermine eternal security.