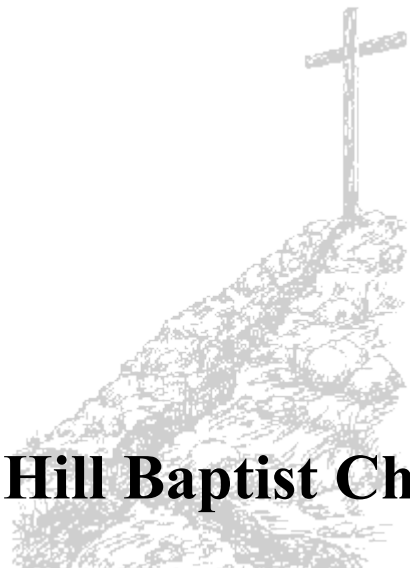


God So Loved

Why Must We Preach Christ

John 3:16-21



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FOCAL John 3:16-21 ^{KJV} "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (17) For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. (18) He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (19) And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. (20) For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. (21) But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

Most every person who professes to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior - and even some who don't believe in Him - can quote John 3:16. Say it with me now:

FOCAL John 3:16 ^{KJV} "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. "

This verse has been recognized as one of the *shortest and most complete definitions of the Gospel of salvation* ever posted in Scripture. We will study this verse tonight, along with its Scriptural context. But I also want us to note this - if this verse and those which follow it are true - then it is *imperative* that we tell others the Gospel of salvation.

The Three Letter Word Often Overlooked

Our text begins with:

PPT : FOCAL John 3:16 ^{KJV} "**For** God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. "

This small *primary particle gar*² is translated in the King James as "**For**". But a better translation would be **for this reason**.

Now anyone knows that **for this reason** will point you to the *previous statements made*, otherwise you find yourself asking the question "For WHAT reason?". So John 3:16 cannot stand alone. We must look at our preceding text:

PPT PRE-FOCAL John 3:14-15 ^{KJV} "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: (15) That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Last Sunday morning we studied this text, noting that Jesus was referring to the time that Israel was in great

1 PPT throughout the document signifies to teacher USE POWER POINT SLIDE

2 G1063 (Strong's) γάρ *gar gar* = A primary particle; properly assigning a *reason* (used in argument, explanation or intensification; often with other particles): - and, as, because (that), but, even, for indeed, no doubt, seeing, then, therefore, verily, what, why, yet. (Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries)

apostasy, a time recorded in Scripture in **Numbers 21**. The people blasphemed God when they said:

Numbers 21:5^{HCSB} The **people spoke against God and Moses**: "Why have you led us up from Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread or water, and we detest this wretched food ³!"

The Bible tells us that God responded to Israel's evil ways by sending *serpents* or *poisonous snakes* in among them (**Numbers 21:6**) to bite them and - if the bite was not treated - to kill them. The snakes remind us all of the Scripture that states:

Romans 6:23^{NIV} "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The snakes that came in the camp of Israel were *the wages of sin*.

The poison that came on the Israelite and death were a just wage earned by a worker faithful - not to God - but to their own satisfaction and pleasure. When the Israelite repented God gave Moses a remedy. A *brass serpent* was to be mounted on a pole. Every Israelite who looked on that serpent *because to look was to obey* would be saved from death. The **wages of sin** would be transmitted away from the guilty and onto that which was mounted

HCSB Holman Christian Standard Bible

³ refers to the manna that God in Grace gave them

NIV New International Version - NOT the gender sensitive paratranslation!

on the pole. All the Israelite had to do was *look in faith* and death would be averted.

It is against this background that Jesus said:

PPT FOCAL John 3:16 ^{KJV} "**For this reason** God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. "

God gave a solution to Moses and Israel - a brass likeness of a poisonous serpent - and by looking on that serpent in faith the Israelite was saved.

It was God's *righteous anger* that caused Him to send serpents into the camp, for God *must* judge sin. Sin is anything that stands in opposition to God, and God in His authority *cannot* stand to be in proximity to sin.

The prophet said of God:

Habakkuk 1:13a ^{NIV} "**Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong.**"

God's *justice demands* that He punish sin - but God's *love demands* that He offer a just method of mercy. Hence the **for this reason** of **John 3:16**. Just as God's love caused Him to bring Israel out of Egypt, God's justice caused Him to punish evil in the camp. God *cannot* lie, and He is always faithful. However when Israel rejected God's provision of Grace they were given the only alternative to His Grace - death - until they came

back to Him in repentance desiring *mercy and grace*.

FOCAL John 3:16 ^{KJV} "For this reason **God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,**

God's love demands that He offer a way of salvation even to sinners such as we are - yet God's love is *never* allowed to stand in opposition to His justice. Those who believe that *God loves, and based on that love will automatically transmit every person who ever lived to Heaven* is either ignorant, a fool, or an ignorant fool! God gave *His Son* just as God gave Israel the brass *serpent lifted up* - the viper was an Old Testament shadow of the New Testament Calvary. But I want you to note that the **for this reason** of **John 3:16** reminds us that,

Just as Israel *had to look with faith* on the viper to be delivered, those for whom Christ died *must look with faith on the One Who died for them*. If there is no looking, no trusting, there is no salvation.

When the poisonous snakes came in the camp I am sure that there were many who were bitten who tried *many means to save themselves*. They may have cut themselves where the snakes bit them and tried to suck out the poison. By the way, that's the *most foolish* thing you can do if you're ever bitten by a snake, for the poison will quickly enter your bloodstream through your gums! Anyway, these people may have put a poultice on the bite, or taken some sort of medicine. It was all to no

avail! The wages of sin are death and these people died, surely and certainly, until they did what God said to do.

The Bible tells us that

PPT FOCAL John 3:16 ^{KJV} "For this reason God so loved the world, that **he gave** ..."

God so loved the world that He gave. The word gave is one that⁴ emphasizes that God gave *once and for all*. There are no other means of salvation for people. Just as Israel had to look at the brass viper that Moses constructed and put on a pole, if you will be saved from God's hand of wrath you must look at the Son of God high and lifted up on Calvary. The *Aorist tense* tells us that this giving is unique - a truth echoed throughout the rest of Scripture in verses like:

Acts 4:12^{NASB} "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is **no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.**"

and

1 John 3:23 ^{NASB} **This is His commandment,**

4 Aorist Active Indicative {Strong's G1325} **δίδωμι** didōmi *did'-o-mee* A prolonged form of a primary verb (which is used as an alternate in most of the tenses); to *give* (used in a very wide application, properly or by implication, literally or figuratively; greatly modified by the connection): - adventure, bestow, bring forth, commit, deliver (up), give, grant, hinder, make, minister, number, offer, have power, put, receive, set, shew, smite (+ with the hand), strike (+ with the palm of the hand), suffer, take, utter, yield.

NASB New American Standard Bible

that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.

God's solution to our sinful rebellious nature is to *look on Jesus, believing in Him for salvation*. Faith alone in Christ alone is that which brings **everlasting or eternal life** - nothing else.

The wages of sin which are death are averted by turning your eyes to Christ. But is this it?

Belief Must Reflect Change Of Life or New Birth

Do we just look at Christ, believe on Him *for a moment*, then go on about our business as if nothing ever happened? Do we come to salvation by believing on Him, then live our lives without ever a thought as to our Lord and Savior? Absolutely not! Our text also tells us:

PPT FOCAL John 3:16 ^{KJV} "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, **that whosoever believeth in him** should not perish, but have everlasting life.

The word **believeth** or **believes**⁵ is a verb in the Greek that specifies a *repeated or habitual action*. The **Amplified Version** translates the word as "**whoever**

5 Present Active Participle {Strong's G4100} **πιστεύουσιν** *pist-yoo'-o* From G4102; to *have faith* (in, upon, or with respect to, a person or thing), that is, *credit*; by implication to *entrust* (especially one's spiritual well being to Christ): - believe (-r), commit (to trust), put in trust with, *keeps on believing on*

believes in (trusts in, clings to, relies on)" Him. In short,

those who have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior *undergo a mental change* from one system of thought to God's system of thought. They have *been changed* by their New Birth experience.

Just as a newborn baby passes from one environment into another, from the mother's womb to the world at large, the Christian passes from *darkness to light*:

2 Corinthians 5:17 ^{HCSB} "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; old things have passed away, and look, new things have come."

PPT The caterpillar cannot become the butterfly unless it dies to itself. The professor cannot become the Christian unless he dies to himself.

Jesus *did not just come* to save us from Hell - though He certainly does that. Jesus did not just come to *take us to God* - though He certainly does that. Jesus came not only to **seek and to save that which is lost**⁶, but to actually bring that which is lost to a place where it is found. He came to both *bring us to God, and to bring God to us*. This is what we are taught repeatedly in Scripture. Luke tells us that Jesus Christ, just like the sun, came to bring light to we who believe:

Luke 1:78-79 ^{HCSB} Because of our God's merciful compassion, the **Dawn from on high will visit us (79) to shine on those who live in darkness** and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

When Jesus Christ raised up Paul and saved him on Damascus Road the Lord gave him the specific mission of preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles so as to ...

Acts 26:18 ^{HCSB} "... **open their eyes that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God**, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a share among those who are sanctified by faith in Me."

Those who are saved by faith in Christ *undergo a New Birth - they are changed*. Those who are saved by *looking on Him* are changed so that they *no longer follow after darkness*. Jesus said:

John 8:12 ^{KJV} "... I am the light of the world: **he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light** of life."

The *Present Active Participle* of **John 3:16** emphasizes that the one who believes in Jesus *undergoes a change* - they believe in Him and *keep on believing*.

And again we see our Lord saying,

John 12:46^{KJV} "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth⁴ on me should not abide in darkness."

Again we see Jesus using the same *Present Active Participle* that He used in **John 3:16**. Jesus never taught that salvation was a matter of believing on Him then *walking away* - salvation, God's salvation, creates a *new creature* who turns from darkness to light.

We do not walk after Jesus *in order to remain saved*, we walk after Jesus *because we are saved*.

Based on the reality of this *new state of being* the Apostle commands us:

Romans 13:12-14^{NIV} "The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. (13) Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. (14) Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature."

If you are saved you are a new creature - if you are a new creature you are saved. The two go hand in hand. Those

who are Christ's **hear His voice and follow Him⁷**.

John 10:26-27^{HCSB} "But you don't believe because you are not My sheep. (27) My sheep hear My voice, I know them, and they follow Me."

**Jesus' Mission Is One of Salvation,
Not Condemnation**

PPT FOCAL John 3:17^{KJV} "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. "

Verse 17 begins with the same three letter *particle* - *gar* - which we translate **for this reason**. The purpose that Christ came was *not* to condemn the world, but to save the world. The salvation that Jesus offered was *both* to bring man to God and to bring God to man. However, this salvation is based on that phrase *whosoever will*.

Those who are of this world **might be saved** - the word **might** emphasizing that they also *might not* be saved. If a person will not accept Christ as Lord and Savior then salvation is not foisted on them.

No man is forced to salvation. **Whoever will** accept Christ as Savior will be saved, as per God's Scripture.

⁷ John 10:16 New English Text I have other sheep that do not come from this sheepfold. I must bring them too, and they will listen to my voice, so that there will be one flock and one shepherd.

Matthew 10:32^{nkj} "Therefore **whoever confesses Me** before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven."

Matthew 16:25^{nkj} "For **whoever** desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."

Mark 8:34^{nkj} "When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, **"Whoever desires to come after Me,** let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."

Luke 9:24^{nkj} "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but **whoever loses his life for My sake** will save it."

Acts 2:21^{KJV} "And it shall come to pass, that **whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.**"

Acts 10:43^{KJV} "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name **whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.**"

Acts 13:26^{KJV} "Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and **whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.**"

^{nkj} New King James Version

I could go on and on, but this should be enough to show you that the Scripture teaches that salvation comes to those who believe on and call on Jesus Christ for salvation. It was God's will that *all* come to Christ and be saved, though there will be many who reject this free gift and fall into eternal punishment.

PPT FOCAL John 3:18 "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but **he that believeth not is condemned already,** because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

I love the *Peanuts* cartoon by *Charles Shultz*. In this little cartoon Charlie Brown asks his friend Lucy

"Sometimes I wonder if God is pleased with me. Do you ever wonder if God is pleased with you?"
Lucy quickly answers, "He just *has* to be".

This is the way that people think today - they believe that God *just has* to be pleased with them. You see this reflected in popular television religions. Joel Osteen⁸ - as Larry King reported - "... evangelism's hottest rising star, pastor for the biggest congregation in the United States", when asked by Larry King about salvation, responded in the following way. This is copied *directly* from the transcript off the Larry King interview:

⁸ quotes that follow are from CNN transcripts at:
<http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0506/20/lk1.01.html>

KING: Because we've had ministers on who said, your record don't count. **You either believe in Christ or you don't. If you believe in Christ, you are, you are going to heaven. And if you don't no matter what you've done in your life, you ain't.**

OSTEEN: Yeah, **I don't know. There's probably a balance between.** I believe you have to know Christ. But I think that if you know Christ, if you're a believer in God, you're going to have some good works. I think it's a cop-out to say I'm a Christian but I don't ever do anything ...

KING: **What if you're Jewish or Muslim,** you don't accept Christ at all?

OSTEEN: You know, **I'm very careful about saying who would and wouldn't go to heaven.** I don't know ...

KING: **If you believe you have to believe in Christ? They're wrong, aren't they?**

OSTEEN: Well, **I don't know if I believe they're wrong.** I believe here's what the Bible teaches and from the Christian faith this is what I believe. But I just think that only God with judge a person's heart. I spent a lot of time in India with my father. I don't know all about their religion. But I know they love God. And I don't know. I've seen their sincerity. So I don't know. I know for me, and what the Bible teaches, I want to have a relationship with Jesus.

A relationship with Jesus means affirming that which He has affirmed -

John 14:6⁹ Jesus replied,¹³ **"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.**

You can have *no relationship with God* apart from Jesus Christ our Lord. Osteen is not the only television superstar to promote many ways to God. The superstar Oprah Winfrey has said:

"One of the biggest mistakes humans make is to believe that there is only one way. Actually, there are many diverse paths leading to what you call God ... there couldn't possibly be only one way ... does God care about your heart or whether you called His Son Jesus? ¹⁰"

Regardless as to what the television superstars say, the Bible teaches us that God *will not* accept anyone into His Heaven who does not have a relationship by faith in Jesus Christ.

Believers need to be diligent in telling others about Christ because those who do *not* believe on Him for salvation are - right now - in a state of **condemnation**. Vines says of **John 3:18**

PPT FOCAL **John 3:18** **"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten**

⁹ NET = New English Translation

¹⁰ recorded from the Oprah Winfrey show, as recorded at watchman.org.. Watch the video at their site.

Son of God."

Is condemned already (ἤδη κέκριται) Rev., more correctly, *hath been judged already*. Unbelief, in separating from Christ, implies judgment. He has been judged in virtue of his unbelief.

Robertson's Word Pictures states:

Hath been judged already (ēdē kekritai). Perfect passive indicative of krinō. Judgment has already been passed on the one who refuses to believe in Christ as the Saviour sent by the Father, the man who is not willing to come to Christ for life ([Joh 5:40](#)).

That which condemns people to hell is *failure* to believe in the name of the *only begotten Son of God*.

The true teaching of Christ on the final judgment of God is much different than the Catholic fantasies of purgatory or the confused teachings of most worldly religions.

Most man-made religions teach us that God will wait until man dies, then man will stand in front of a Judge Who will weigh our good against our bad. If we have more good to our credit than our bad, then we will find ourselves in Heaven, or Valhalla, or some other place of eternal paradise. Yet the Scripture - specifically in this place Jesus Christ our Lord - teaches that those who have not accepted Christ as Savior are *already judged*, though they have not yet stood before the Creator's Great White Throne. Why is that? Because God has already decreed that there is *only one way to reach Him, and that is through faith in Christ*. If you have not accepted Jesus Christ as Savior then you have a reservation already made for you in hellfire. This applies to *everyone*

regardless of race, religion, or sexual orientation! That which condemns a person to hell - that place of *eternal punishment* - is **because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God**. What causes salvation or loss in eternity is *what think ye of Christ*.

Who Is Responsible If You Go To Hell?

PPT FOCAL John 3:19-20 ^{KJV} "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and **men loved darkness rather than light**, because their deeds were evil. (20) For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd."

It is not an accident that people die and go to hell, but a willful *rebellion* against the Light of the world. The Bible says that **men loved darkness rather than light**.

The word **loved**¹¹ is one of deep emotion. Not that men flirted with, or were enamored with, but *loved darkness*. The word **darkness**¹² is a Greek word found only here and in:

1 John 1:6 ^{HCSB} If we say, "We have fellowship with Him," and walk in **darkness**⁸, we are lying and are not practicing the truth."

¹¹ {Strong's G25} ἀγαπάω agapaō ag-ap-ah'-o Perhaps from ἄγαν agan (*much*; or compare [H5689]); to love (in a social or moral sense): - (be-) love (-ed). Compare G5368.

¹² skotos, *the darkness*. See Vine's

The word would be better translated as a state of being - **men loved THE darkness rather than light**. People not only followed sin rather than Christ, but the sinner who rejects Christ is *actively pursuing any course of action that separates him from Christ*.

Jesus made it clear that those who reject Him as Savior are people who are doing what they want to do. They are self absorbed, and actually *hate Christ*. Why? Because to recognize Him as Savior and Lord you *must* recognize yourself and your own works as *deficient*.

The first commandment of God is:

Exodus 20:3 KJV "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

Men have, from the very beginning, made a god out of themselves. We want what we want when we want it.

Jesus says that those who do not want to come to the light do so because they love darkness - their own deeds, their own ways - more than they love God Who is Light. They violate the first commandment by making a god of themselves, and once they have made a god of themselves they are violating the *remainder* of the commandments. They **loved darkness rather than light**.

FOCAL John 3:20 KJV "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds¹³ should be reprov¹⁴ed."

The deeds that men commit are worthy only of **reproof**. This word, **reproved**, literally means **to be convicted**.

Men do not want to be told that their works are evil - they want to have peace with God, but they also want to remain in their sins because they are *enjoying* their sins.

Yet man cannot have peace with God and live in a way that He rejects as normal. Our Creator defines normalcy - not us.

You can see Jesus' words as true just by opening your newspaper. Look in the headlines. One recent article on **msnbc.com** titled "Most gays, psychologists reject conversion" stated¹⁵:

"Supporters of the biological explanation for homosexuality have the weight of science on their side. All of the major medical and psychological professional organizations — from the American Medical Association and the American Psychological Association

13 {Strong's G2041}, ἔργον *ergon er'-gon* From ἔργω *ergō* (a primary but obsolete word; to *work*); *toil* (as an effort or occupation); by implication an *act*: - deed, doing, labour, work.

14 {Strong's G1651}, ἐλέγχω *elegchō el-eng'-kho* Of uncertain affinity; to *confute, admonish*: - convict, convince, tell a fault, rebuke, reprove., Aorist Passive Subjunctive - to be reprov^{ed} or be placed under conviction in time

15 by Alex Johnson, MSNBC.com, July 13, 2005. Posted at <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/8543982/>

on down — state that sexuality is predominantly determined by chemical, hormonal and genetic conditions in the womb. They are clear in declaring that homosexuality is not a disease or a pathology that can be changed; most go a step further and strongly question whether it is even ethical for a medical professional to help clients try to change their sexuality.

Public opinion appears to be turning their way. In a series of polls by the Gallup organization over the last three decades, the percentage of Americans who agree that homosexuality is not a choice has slowly doubled, to nearly 40 percent. "

The Lord clearly declares the gay or lesbian lifestyle to be incompatible with normalcy, but man - using so called medical science - says otherwise. We see Jesus' words are truth, for **"every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved"**.

From England, the place where God blessed us with the King James Version of the Bible, we read the report¹⁶:

"A majority of people in 21st century Britain neither hopes nor fears for a life after death. Only about a third believes in Heaven, and even fewer in Hell and the Devil.

Marriage is no longer seen as a sacrament and even church weddings no longer find favor.

Moreover, the existing trend towards secularization seems almost certain to continue. The incidence of religious belief has declined sharply in recent decades and young people today are significantly less religious than their elders.

More than a third of today's young people describe themselves

16 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2004/12/27/nfaith27.xml> - by Anthony King, 27/12/2004

as either agnostics or atheists. Among middle-aged people and the elderly, the figure is far smaller."

In an article entitled *"God gene discovered by scientist behind gay DNA theory"* we read that the so called scientist who discovered the "gay gene" in humans also discovered a "god gene". The article states¹⁷:

"After comparing more than 2,000 DNA samples, an American molecular geneticist has concluded that a person's capacity to believe in God is linked to brain chemicals.

His findings were criticized last night by leading clerics, who challenge the existence of a "god gene" and say that the research undermines a fundamental tenet of faith - that spiritual enlightenment is achieved through divine transformation rather than the brain's electrical impulses.

Dr Dean Hamer, the director of the Gene Structure and Regulation Unit at the National Cancer Institute in America, asked volunteers 226 questions in order to determine how spiritually connected they felt to the universe. The higher their score, the greater a person's ability to believe in a greater spiritual force and, Dr Hamer found, the more likely they were to share the gene, VMAT2.

Studies on twins showed that those with this gene, a vesicular monoamine transporter that regulates the flow of mood-altering chemicals in the brain, were more likely to develop a spiritual belief."

Is this research true? No, but the words of Christ are true.

PPT FOCAL John 3:20 ^{KJV} **"For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest**

17 <http://news.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2004/11/14/ngod14.xml&sSheet=/news/2004/11/14/ixnewstop.html>

his deeds¹⁸ should be reproved¹⁹."

Men hate the Light of God, for by that Light they are seen to be sinners in need of salvation.

Playing Marbles With Diamonds

One day a man from Lisbon, a mining engineer, came into the small Brazilian city of Ouro Preto. This man happened to notice some children playing nearby, and wandered over to ask where to get a bite to eat. The kids were playing a spirited game of marbles and as he walked up, one flew out of the circle and rolled to a stop at his feet. Picking it up, he thought he saw something in the smooth stone. He rubbed it against his clothing for a moment or two, and what he saw changed his life. The children, poor and ragged like the town they lived in, were playing marbles with diamonds²⁰.

Think about that! These children, suffering under hunger and deprivation, were playing a child's game with unimagined wealth. The key to their salvation was being ignored while they were toying with a bit of mindless entertainment. These children are no different than the many people who hear the words of Christ and indifferently turn away from His riches to "play

18 {Strong's G2041}, ἔργον *ergon er'-gon* From ἔργω *ergō* (a primary but obsolete word; to *work*); *toil* (as an effort or occupation); by implication an *act*: - deed, doing, labour, work.

19 {Strong's G1651}, ἐλέγχο *elegchō el-eng'-kho* Of uncertain affinity; to *confute*, *admonish*: - convict, convince, tell a fault, rebuke, reprove., Aorist Passive Subjunctive - to be reproved or be placed under conviction in time

20 as posted at <http://www.newhopevalp.org/2004/07/playing-marbles-with-diamonds-luke.html>, Thursday July 22, 2004

marbles". We play marbles when we *look for reasons* to ignore God's command to be saved. We play marbles when we listen to foolish scientists and doctors who seek to disprove God on the basis of some method of research. We play marbles when we ignore Christ's invitation to eternal life:

John 3:16^{KJV} "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

in favor of our own priorities.

We're playing marbles with diamonds when we refuse His commandment and yet believe He will still save us because of His goodness.

God gave us the key to eternal life in Jesus Christ. We all live under the shadow of death - if you don't believe me, go to your local funeral home. Any of us could leave this life at any time. What then? Do you not know that

Hebrews 9:27^{KJV} And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

When you stand before God, will you be able to say with a straight face that you loved Jesus and believed on Him for eternal life? Will you be able to say that Christ and what He did on Calvary is your *only hope* of getting into God's Heaven? Will you be able to say - not only that you professed Christ - but that Christ *possessed* you - and on this basis you will enter into Heaven and not hell?

Every Christian who ever lived gave up something that he could not keep so that he could gain something he would never lose. Every Christian who ever lived gave up his life to Christ - for this life is but a vapor which quickly passes away - so he could gain eternal life *through Christ.*

The Gospel of Christ teaches us that God came to man to bring man to God so God could come and live in man. Is this the Gospel you understand? Or are you, like the ragged children of Ouro Preto, playing marbles with diamonds while starving to death? Examine your hearts, my Beloved. The answer you give will have eternal consequences!

