

The One Who Came

Notes

Have you ever been glad to see someone? I mean really glad. You were waiting, hoping, searching, worrying, and this person shows up and all your worries, fears, problems, the biggest issues of your life seem to fade away, if even for a moment.

The one we are looking for is Jesus. Jesus is God's only son and it is only Jesus who can redeem us from our sin; it is only Jesus who can give a relationship with our Holy Creator; it is only Jesus who can restore our broken image; it is only Jesus who can give meaning to our lives.

It is only Jesus who gives us a voice (a voice to talk to God and a voice to share God with the world).

In John Chapter 3 Jesus is talking with a man named Nicodemus. Nicodemus was a learned man of the Old Testament. He knew all about God, all about how to live right; he did all the right things, said all the right things, and even went to church every week.

But Nicodemus was still missing something. While all these things were good things, they still did not fix his sin problem; these things still did not give him purpose in life; they did not help him truly have a genuine relationship with the Father.

Jesus begins to tell Nicodemus what it means to be saved, to be born again through the Holy Spirit by placing your faith in Him, and we get to probably one of the most popular verses in all of the Bible.

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. 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. (Jn. 3:16-18)

We Have a Need for One

The world tells us that we are just an unintentional development of millions of years of random evolution; that our lives have no inherent meaning; that our deaths will be the end of our existence.

This type of thinking, this worldview has caused millions of deaths over the last 100 years alone; suicide rates are skyrocketing; depression and substance abuse are through the roof; counselor

and social workers caseloads are so heavy many are leaving the field because their own emotional health is in such bad shape.

This line of reasoning is contrary to what the Bible tells us is true. God's word tells us that all of creation, everything in the natural and supernatural world came into being through God's intentional act of creation.

God's special creation, more valuable than any other created thing, for humanity has been created with the very image of God.

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. (Gen. 1:26-27)

Man bears God's image and as such is God's representative on the earth.

Man was made to walk in perfect union with God. And for a while, the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, lived in perfect union with the Lord and with creation.

They enjoyed a time of no arguments, no wars, no sickness, no death, no struggle; no mothers-in-law and no crazy cousins. But that did not last for long.

⁶ When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. (Gen. 3:6-7)

Upon this bite of the fruit, Adam and Eve, through a deliberate act of disobedience to God, they became sinners and through them sin not only entered them, but all those who would come after them and sin even entered the very earth, infecting the ground, the atmosphere, the weather, and all of creation.

You may wonder, "Am I a sinner?" "Is my neighbor a sinner?" "Is my son or daughter a sinner?" "Is my sweet grandbaby who could not do any wrong a sinner?"

For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23)

Sin has infected all of God's creation.

Sin has to be dealt with; it has to be punished.

For the wages of sin is death... (Rom. 6:23)

The price of sin is death. Sin separates us from a holy God. When God looks upon sin, he has to judge it. And the penalty for sin is death.

The great enemy of life is death. Death is the by-product of sin.

Ever since sin entered the world death has been present.

Death is enemy of life. Sin is the enemy of life, as it steals from us what God desires for us, eternal life with him.

Sin, hinders eternal life, because sin separates us from God as God cannot be in relationship with sin.

Speaking to the church at Ephesus, Paul reminds the Ephesian believers...

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, (Eph. 2:1)

Paul is telling those who are saved to not take their salvation for granted. He wants us to remember that we too, were guilty; that we should never feel high and mighty; we should never look down on those without Jesus; we shouldn't treat differently those who didn't grow up in church.

He is reminding us that we should see those without Christ as dead in sin and unable to escape.

Paul says we were dead in sin; just like all those without Christ are dead in sin.

In order for sin to be forgiven, in order for the salvation of one to take place another has to be sacrificed, there must be a substitute.

The Unsatisfactory Substitute

In the OT God set up a sacrificial system and part of that system was the Day of Atonement. On the Day of Atonement the high priest would go through a detailed ritual where he would wash, sacrifice a bull for himself, sprinkle blood on the altar and other places.

Then the priest would take a goat and sacrifice it...

¹⁵ "Then he shall slaughter the goat of the sin offering which is for the people, and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat. (Lev. 16:15)

The priest would sprinkle the blood of the slaughtered goat and then he would take another goat, a scapegoat, and place his hands on it and send it out into the wilderness.

These two acts, sacrificing the goat and sending out the scapegoat, forgave the people of their sins and symbolized their sins being taken away.

Commenting on the sacrificial system the author of Hebrews says...

²² And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. (Heb. 9:22)

Sin demands a sacrifice. And in order for the people to be forgiven a sacrifice had to take place.

This sacrificial system continued year after year, century after century for two reasons:

- The people kept on sinning
- The sacrifice was unsatisfactory.

Humanity will never stop sinning, so the only other response is to provide a perfect sacrifice.

The Perfect Sacrifice

The reason a perfect sacrifice is needed is that we will keep on sinning and we do not want to pay for our own sin and the sacrificial system was never designed to be an eternal system.

The prophet Isaiah shows us our deep need for cleansing...

For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; and all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. (Isa. 64:6)

We are all unclean in our sin and any attempt to fix ourselves amounts to dirty filthy rags and because of this, our sin carries us away.

BUT there is good news!

Because God created us in his image; because he wants to have a relationship with us; because he loves us; because he knows we can't go without sinning; because he knows there is not a satisfactory sacrifice to take our place, he did something.

Listen again to what Jesus said to Nicodemus.

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

Jesus is the perfect sacrifice who came right on time, doing exactly what was required.

² He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:2)

He is the atoning sacrifice. He atones, makes us right with God.

We could not make it right with God no matter what we did, but Jesus came, and he makes it right, through his own real, painful, historical, death.

Jesus did not die for himself. Look at what John says. He doesn't say Jesus died for his own sins, he died for our sins.

It is also important to understand he did not just die for those who are saved. His death makes salvation available to all. And his death is applied to all who respond to his gift.

John says it like this, look again, "not only our sins, but for the sins of the whole world."

The perfect One who came did not just come to be our sacrifice, to offer us forgiveness, he came to the whole world.

Notice how Paul describes our salvation in Ephesians...

⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.
(Eph. 2:4-5)

Because of his love for us, God who has an abundance of mercy (mercy is not getting something you deserve. We deserved death, but God did not give it to us).

Because of his love for us, God in his mercy for us who were dead in our transgressions, (offenses to him; we sinned against a holy and righteous God) made us alive with Christ.

Jesus not only came to die to forgive us of our sins, making us right with God; he also rose from the dead.

His rising from the dead, secures our eternal life. Christ Jesus, in one fall swoop provides us forgiveness and eternal life.

The One who came is our perfect sacrifice, doing for us what we cannot even do for ourselves.

And he does it not only for us, but for all those who will ever believe in him.