

SERMON-BASED STUDY: SNAKE WATCHING

John 3:9-21, ESV – ⁹ Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” ¹⁰ Jesus answered him, “Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? ¹¹ Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. ¹² If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. ²⁰ For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. ²¹ But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”

Notes:

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QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week’s teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

ENGAGE WITH THE MESSAGE

1 This week we saw that Jesus states 'belief in Him' is the only way to life. Why do people have a hard time believing in what Jesus says?

2 How does God enable people to believe in Jesus? Why is it necessary for God to do so?

3 Based on John 3:16, explain the main points of the Gospel of Jesus?

DIGGING DEEPER

A **Romans 5:18-19, ESV** – ¹⁸ Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. ¹⁹ For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

Psalm 34:19-22, ESV – ¹⁹ Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all. ²⁰ He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken. ²¹ Affliction will slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be condemned. ²² The LORD redeems the life of his servants; none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.

4 Looking at Romans 5:18-19, why are all people condemned aside from Jesus? Is this condemnation based on any choice we have made? Explain.

5 What promise do we find in Psalm 34:19-22? How does a person move from being someone who hates the righteous to being one of the righteous?

6 How would you explain this important truth to a nonbeliever?

B **Ephesians 2:8-9, ESV** – ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Galatians 2:15-16, ESV – ¹⁵ We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; ¹⁶ yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

Romans 10:9-13, ESV – ⁹ because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. ¹³ For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

7 Looking at the passages above, we see that faith is central to salvation. What is faith? What is the relationship between faith and belief?

8 Why do people try to use works to justify themselves to God? Why are human works ultimately not sufficient for justifying ourselves?

9 In Romans 10:9, Paul states that one must “confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord.” Why is this necessary? Why is believing in heart not enough?

TAKING IT HOME

The gospel message is clear: all are condemned due to sin and faith in Jesus Christ is the only way to be saved. Have you placed your faith in Jesus, alone, to save you from condemnation? If so, have you confessed it publicly? Are you living your life as a follower of Christ? Are you sharing the gospel with others who need to receive this gift, as well? Share with your group or accountability partner what God has been showing you. Pray for one another as you seek to grow in faith in Jesus Christ and to be used by Him to share that with others.

PRAISES AND PRAYER REQUEST

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FOR FURTHER STUDY

Numbers 21:4-9

Proverbs 30:4

Ezekiel 36:25-27

Mark 16:16

1 Corinthians 15:50

2 Corinthians 5:17, 21

Galatians 6:15

Ephesians 4:9

1 Peter 1:3-25

1 John 4:9-10, 14