

An Address John 3

by John Nelson Darby

The sermon emphasizes the necessity of being born again through faith in Christ, who was lifted up for our salvation and offers peace with God.

Scripture: Isaiah 1:18, John 1:14, John 3:3, John 3:16, Romans 5:8, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Ephesians 2:8-9, Colossians 1:20, Hebrews 9:26, 1 John 1:7

Topics: "Grace and Salvation", "New Birth"

Description

John Nelson Darby addresses the profound truths found in John 3, emphasizing the necessity of being born again to truly know Christ and experience His grace. He highlights that while many acknowledge Jesus as a teacher, they often lack a genuine relationship with Him, remaining indifferent to His love and sacrifice. Darby stresses that the Son of Man must be lifted up, illustrating the depth of God's grace and the necessity of Christ's crucifixion for our salvation. He encourages listeners to recognize their need for a new nature and to embrace the peace that comes from understanding Christ's atoning work. Ultimately, he calls for a heartfelt response to the light of Christ, which reveals our true state and offers redemption.

Transcript

This chapter tells us of One who has come down from heaven, who speaks that He knows, and testifies that He has seen; who knows God fully, and who knows what is in man; and He tells us what God requires, and what God gives. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. He, the Son of God, came the Light into this world, but men loved, and still love, darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. He was born into this world in grace for you. He has not left us in anywise in the dark about it, but has brought perfect light to our hearts and consciences, which testifies what is of heaven, what is from heaven, and what is needed for any connection with heaven, and in order to be there. So that when I come to heaven, there is nothing in its moral nature that is not brought to my heart and conscience now. You will not get a more blessed thing in heaven than Christ on earth!

Nicodemus had a mere human conviction of Christ; he knew that He was a teacher come from God. When they saw His miracles, many believed on Him. How many Christians are like that now! giving a mere human assent to who He is. It is not insincerity or dishonesty, but they do not know Him. There is no want created in the heart. The Son of God is here: is that enough for you? You do not care to know what He is here for, or whether you have any part with Him! You do not trouble yourselves farther, or care to listen to one word He says; not an anxiety as to what He has said concerning you, or interest as to one thought or

feeling He might have. Could you be quiet if you thought you were lost? You could not. You are lost! and there is no greater proof of the utter ruin of man than that Christ does not attract his heart, speaking and testifying of divine things. Any bit of news will occupy you - a bit of family interest - a newspaper - a thing passing in the street; and here is news from heaven, news from God, and you do not care! - nor for all the love in His coming down from heaven to tell it to you!

IS IT NOT TRUE THAT YOU MUST HAVE A NEW NATURE?

You are indifferent to all that God can do, and you tell me that it is not crime; but is it no testimony of the state of your soul? That Christ has no beauty that you should desire Him, and yet you are "hoping" to go to heaven! And what is there in heaven for you? Do you expect to be happy if there this Christ, who is the very centre of heaven's delight, has no attraction for your heart? Impossible! It is quite clear that, if I am to be happy in heaven, it is with God. What pleasure have you in God? Is there one thing in your heart now that would make you happy in heaven, one single affection in your heart that finds its pleasure and company in those who fill heaven? Oh, may it come home to your soul - the conviction I am all wrong, the tree bad, and as I am I can never be better. Here the Lord, speaking what He knows, says, Ye must be born again. This was what God required.

128 And now we come to the other side -

"THE SON OF MAN MUST BE LIFTED UP."

God gave His Son. This is the grace - this the glad tidings - that you "might not perish, but have everlasting life." He "must," according to the glory of God, but He "must," because you are a sinner perishing! Because you are a sinner, you will reject Him and prove yourself so bad, that nothing but the crucifixion of the blessed Lord could meet your case. Oh! you must be born again.

But there is another, a deeper, a divine "must"; the Son must be lifted up - terrible necessity of righteousness! God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. The Son of God spoke that He knew. Oh, how He knew it! With God there is no allowance of evil, not an unholy thought. We have all had plenty of unholy thoughts. Christ comes down from heaven, and says, "The Son of man must be lifted up!" What blessed grace in His mouth! And mark the complete subjection of His soul, the depth of the love in it, the peacefulness and quietness of Christ thus looking at the necessity of His drinking that cup of wrath, that you might not. And, farther on, when it was going to be accomplished, He set His face stedfastly to go up to Jerusalem, and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood as He approached that hour. Yet here, in the beginning of His career, He states it as the thing He had come down from heaven to do. He came to do His Father's will, and that will was our salvation.

DO YOU DOUBT THAT YOU ARE PERISHING?

Or do you mark how fully grace rises up above all your ruin? Do you discover that the sin that is pressing on your conscience, and plaguing your heart, is the very thing that Christ died for? - that He took it off you on Himself? Now you have got to the gospel, to the glad tidings - the grace - that the blessed Lord Jesus put Himself in my whole place before God - "made sin" - He who "knew no sin." Suppose I see Him on the cross, standing thus in my place, answering for me because I could not answer for myself, I see that He has not left a thing that could bar my entrance up to God. He appeared once, in the end of the world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He has finished the work.

129 Did He put me away into outer darkness? No; that would be day-of-judgment work; but He put my sin away, and set me there before God without sin. That was His Father's will, which He came down from heaven to do. And, oh, what unspeakable comfort! there is not a sin in my heart that God does not know, because there is not a sin in my heart that Christ has not died for. He drank the cup, and God set His seal in righteousness when He said, "Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool"; and now grace reigns through righteousness - grace has risen above all our sin. What true rest to be able to say, "It was all done there between God and Christ - righteousness made good before the universe." The moment your soul gets hold of what those three hours of darkness on the cross were, you see that all was settled there between God and Christ, outside yourself; for if you had got there, you must have got into wrath.

Hence, when you believe in Christ, you come to God to find the whole question settled by Himself - Christ for you - sweet and conscious truth! You can say, "God so loved me that He sent His Son: though my sins were as scarlet, I am white as snow - I can 'go in peace.'" One who came down from heaven to tell me: "You are the vilest of the vile, but I have taken up your cause - I have redeemed you to Myself - go in peace." He who made peace by the blood of His cross, who says, "My peace I give unto you" - wonderful love! - He is able to tell, at such a cost of Himself - having drunk the cup that you had earned and filled - that He has made peace.

CAN YOUR HEARTS GO IN PEACE ON HIS WORD?

Do not let any one make you doubt the efficacy of what He has done. And the Lord give you to hear Him declare in the quietness and grace of that moment, that the "Son of man must be lifted up"; and may He tell you why, in applying it to yourself. And may you learn how blessed it is to be in light - the light of God - where light shews you white as snow - clean according to God Himself; and you will know what it is to walk in the light of His countenance. Amen.

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