



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY](#)

John 3:16-21

3 Contrasts Between Believers & Unbelievers

Context/Background

- Author: John the Beloved, Apostle, Part of Jesus' inner circle
- Audience: Written (AD 80-95 approx.) to believers and churches in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey)
- John wrote from city of Ephesus
- Major Theme: Jesus is the fully divine Son of God in whom all people should believe in and put faith in
- Setting: Jesus and Disciples are in Jerusalem to celebrate Passover (God's deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage)
- Jesus is visited by Nicodemus (religious leader)

Believers Possess Eternal Life While Unbelievers Do Not

- (v. 16) One of most well-known verses, but (17-21) not as much
- One Key: “believe” trust, faith, reliance on
- Not good deeds, church membership, baptism; key is faith
- We are extravagantly loved by God!
- Those who put faith in Jesus, repent of sin, and by faith receive His free gift of eternal life; have salvation, heaven
- Those who do not, do not have eternal life

- Rom. 5:8, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
- Eph. 2:8-9, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”



Believers Are Not Condemned, While Unbelievers Are Condemned Already

- (vv. 17-19) Bible teaches all people are born separated from God and are “dead” spiritually
- Result is personally experiencing penalty of sin (Rom. 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death...)
- “condemnation” – to decide or determine, to make a legal decision, a verdict from judge in court of law
- Jesus didn’t initially come to earth with message of “guilty” because world is already condemned and guilty

- Rom. 8:1, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”
- John 3:36, “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”



Believers Exhibit Spiritual Fruitfulness While Unbelievers Live Out Darkness

- (vv. 20-21) Jesus shares spiritual insight; results of having relationship with Him or not
- Light (Jesus and His truth; revelation)
- Darkness (rejection of Jesus, self, unbelief, world system)
- Those who do not know Jesus personally, reject the light because it brings conviction and awareness of sin
- Those who know Jesus and are saved are part of the “light”; they want to share that light

- Matt. 5:16, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”
- I John 1:6, “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.”

