

The Nature of Belief and Unbelief

John 3:19-21

- 19** And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.
- 20** For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.
- 21** But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”

The New King James Version. (1982). (Jn 3:19–21). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Introduction:

On April 20, 1999, in the small, suburban town of Littleton, Colorado, two high-school seniors, Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris, enacted an all-out assault on Columbine High School during the middle of the school day. The boys' plan was to kill hundreds of their peers. With guns, knives, and a multitude of bombs, the two boys walked the hallways and killed. When the day was done, [twelve students, one teacher, and the two murderers were dead](#); plus 21 more were injured.

In addition to the shootings, the complex and highly planned attack involved a fire bomb to divert firefighters, propane tanks converted to bombs placed in the cafeteria, 99 explosive devices, and carbombs.

On the previous Friday before the shootings they worked making pizzas, the following Monday they went bowling, and the next day became mass murderers.

many blamed guns, or the video games, music, missing or disconnected parents and the list goes on and on. It was discussed and debated and argued on every major and minor news outlet.

Although I am convinced that much of the media driven culture of video fantasy and much of the music finds its ordination in the pit of Hell and has a devastating effect on the mind and heart of young people.

And I also believe that broken families and the lack of participation and instruction in the lives of children by their parents is a leading cause of the deplorable condition of state of children today

And no doubt that these elements have led us into an time unlike any other time in the history of the world where any form of the worst type of evil that could be imagined can be accessed in the privacy of your own home by the mere click of a mouse or the use of a smart phone.

With that said
I believe that what we have seen perpetrated on our society

in this incident and many others like it does not lie in the good bad or neutral things I that our world makes available but rather how the evil human heart assesses, accesses and accommodates these things

In other words,

Men are not evil because evil things exist, but rather evil things exist because men are inherently evil.

This is a heart issue. We are born with a very evil heart. and our heart is constantly from time of birth looking for ways to express its evil.

The Sad reality is that our society has given a platform the evil nature of man to be fully displayed with no restrictions whatsoever

This what the nature of man from the beginning.

Gen. 6

- 5 Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that every intent* of the thoughts of his heart *was only evil continually.*
- 6 And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.
- 7 So the Lord said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them."

Romans 1

- 21** because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.
- 22** Professing to be wise, they became fools,
- 23** and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.
- 24** Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts

The New King James Version. (1982). (Ro 1:21–24). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

So when it comes to the Gospel and men and women believing the Gospel
 We need to understand the nature of saving faith
 and that the problem people have with believing in Christ is not an intellectual problem,
 But rather a moral one
 Its not that theres not enough evidence, or that for some reason its not logical.
 Its a moral problem.

we will see this in our passage

Review:

Lesson:

- I. The light**
- II. The Love**
- III. The Loathing**
- IV. The Liberty**

I. The Light

v19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world,

Jn 1:4–5

4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

Jn 1:9–11

- 9 That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.
- 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.
- 11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.

Jn 8:12

12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”

condemnation

krisis: a decision, judgment

Original Word: κρίσις, εως, ἡ

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Transliteration: krisis

Short Definition: judging, divine judgment

Definition: judging, judgment, decision, sentence; generally: divine judgment; accusation.

Cognate: 2920 *krisis* (a feminine noun derived from 2919 /*krinō*, "to separate, distinguish, judge") – judgment, emphasizing its qualitative aspect that can apply either to a positive verdict (for *righteousness*) – or more commonly, a "negative" verdict which *condemns* the nature of sin that brings it on. See 2919 (*krinō*).

AT Robertson

And this is the judgment (αυτη δε εστιν η κρισις — *hautē de estin hē krisis*). A thoroughly Johannine phrase for sequence of thought (John 15:12; John 17:3; 1 John 1:5; 1 John 5:11, 1 John 5:14; 3 John 1:6). It is more precisely the process of judging (κρισις — *kri* -κριμα — *sis*) rather than the result (το πως εληλυθεν — *kri* -ερχομαι — *ma*) of the judgment. “It is no arbitrary sentence, but the working out of a moral law” (Bernard).

Leon Morris (*The Gospel According to John* [Eerdmans], p. 233, italics his) explains [John 3:19](#),

The word translated “judgment” here denotes the *process* of judging, not the *sentence* of condemnation.... It is not God’s sentence with which [John] is concerned here. He is telling us rather how the process works. Men choose the darkness and their condemnation lies in that very fact.... They refuse to be shaken out of their comfortable sinfulness.

ἐλήλυθεν-

has come Perfect Act. Indic.

erchomai: to come, go

Original Word: ἔρχομαι

That light is come - Light often denotes instruction, teaching, doctrine, as that by which we see clearly the path of duty. all the instruction that God gives us by conscience, reason, or revelation may thus be called light; but this word is used especially to denote the Messiah or the Christ, who is often spoken of as “the light.”

II. The Love

v19b and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

John 8:44 You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and *does not* stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him.

loved

ἠγάπησαν

V-AIA-3P

agapaó: to love**Original Word:** ἀγαπάω**Part of Speech:** Verb**Transliteration:** agapaó**Short Definition:** I love**Definition:** I love, wish well to, take pleasure in, long for; denotes the love of reason, esteem.**Cognate:** 25 *agapáō* – properly, to *prefer*, to *love*; for the believer, *preferring to "live through Christ"* (1 Jn 4:9,10), i.e. embracing God's will (choosing His choices) and obeying them through His power. 25 (*agapáō*) preeminently refers to what *God prefers* as He "is love" (1 Jn 4:8,16). See 26 (*agapē*).

Men loved darkness - Darkness is the emblem of ignorance, iniquity, error, superstition - whatever is opposite to truth and piety. Men are said to love darkness more than they do light when they are better pleased with error than truth, with sin than holiness, with Belial than Christ.

“Men loved darkness.” The past tense (Greek aorist) could be translated, **“Men set their love on darkness”** (Morris, p. 233).

Loved indicates that this was not a cool, rational decision:

“Having weighed all the factors involved, I think the best decision is to love darkness rather than light.” No, it was in large part an emotional choice that stems from desires that dwell in our hearts due to the fall. **We love darkness rather than light.**

Jonathan Edwards

The apostasy of man summarily consists in departing from the true God, to idols; forsaking his Creator, and setting up other things in his room. When God at first created man, he was united to his Creator; the God

that made him was his God. The true God was the object of his highest respect, and had the possession of his heart. Love to God was the principle in his heart, that ruled over all other principles; and everything in the soul was wholly in subjection to it. But when man fell, he departed from the true God, and the union that was between his heart and his Creator was broken: he wholly lost his principle of love to God. And henceforth man clave to other gods. He gave that respect to the creature, which is due to the Creator. When God ceased to be the object of his supreme love and respect, other things of course became the objects of it.

Romans 1:21

For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

- 1 **Gen. 6:5**, "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."
- 2 **Gen. 8:21**, "And the Lord smelled the soothing aroma; and the Lord said to Himself, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth."
- 3 **Ecc. 7:29**, "Behold, I have found only this, that God made men upright, but they have sought out many devices."

Psalm 14:1-3. The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They

**are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy:
there is none that doeth good, no, not one.**

Total depravity.

To speak of *total* depravity, then, is a bit redundant. This language is used, however, to emphasize that man is so wicked that he lacks any good and even the ability to do good or to want what is good. This emphasis is necessary because of the many ways in which the doctrine of total depravity is denied.

Usually three things are meant by the word *total*:

- a. *Total* depravity means, first of all, that the totality of the human race is depraved. There is no one, not even a newborn infant, who is not so corrupted and wicked. Nor are there any primitive people who still live in some kind of "innocence." All are depraved.
- b. *Total* depravity means also that *every part of man's existence* is filled with wickedness. In other words, not only his actions are wicked, but his speech, his thoughts, his motives, his wishes, his mind, his soul, his spirit, everything he is and does, inwardly and outwardly. He cannot do, desire, or even understand what is good.
- c. *Total* depravity also means that every part of man's existence is *completely* wicked. That is to say, his mind is not partly wicked and partly good, but totally wicked. And the same is true of every part of his existence, especially of his will. His will is in bondage so that he cannot even want what is good, nor is there any desire for good to be found in his life and thoughts.

This does not mean that every man shows the evil of his sinful nature as much as possible and at all times.

rather

mallon: more

Original Word: μᾶλλον

Part of Speech: Adverb

Transliteration: mallon

3123 *mállon* – the *comparative* ("-er") form of *malla* ("very") meaning "*rather, more than,*" i.e. *more than* what it is compared to. **3123** /*mállon* ("more than, better rather") is a *comparative* adverb so it refers to what is *better* as compared to what is merely "good." This involves *prioritizing* or *ranking* to elevate the better over the good, i.e. the higher priority (the *more important*) over the less-important.

1. added to verbs and adjectives, it denotes increase, a greater quantity, a larger measure, a higher degree, **more, more fully**

evil

ponéros: toilsome, bad

Original Word: πονηρός, ἄ, ὄν

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: ponéros

Short Definition: evil, bad, wicked

Definition: evil, bad, wicked, malicious, slothful.

4190 *ponērós* (an adjective which is also used substantively, derived from **4192** /*pónos*, "pain, laborious trouble") – properly, *pain-ridden*, emphasizing the inevitable agonies (misery) that always go with *evil*.

Because their deeds are evil - Men who commit crime commonly choose to do it in the night, so as to escape detection. So men who are wicked prefer false doctrine and error to the truth. Thus the Pharisees cloaked their crimes under the errors of their system; and, amid their false doctrines and superstitions, they attempted to convince others that they had great zeal for God.

Aldous Huxley, the famous atheist of the last century, once admitted that his rejection of Christianity stemmed from his desire to sin. He wrote (*Ends and Means* [Garland Publishers], pp. 270, 273, cited in James Boice, *Genesis* [Zondervan], 1:236):

I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning; consequently assumed that it had not; and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption. The philosopher who finds no meaning for this world is not concerned exclusively with the problem of pure metaphysics; he is also concerned to prove that there is no valid reason why he personally should not do as he wants to.... For myself ... the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation, sexual and political.

III. The Loathing

v20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

everyone- first in greek sentence, giving priority

practicing

Present Participle Active

prassó: to do, practice

Original Word: πράσσω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: prassó

Phonetic Spelling: (pras'-so)

Short Definition: I do, fare, require

Definition: I do, perform, accomplish; be in any condition, i.e. I fare; I exact, require.

HELPS Word-studies

4238 *prássō* – properly, the active *process* in performing (accomplishing) a deed, and implying what is done as a *regular practice* – i.e. a routine or habit (cf. R. Trench).

evil

phaulos: worthless, bad

Original Word: φαῦλος, η, ον

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: phaulos

Definition: worthless, wicked, base.

Apparently a primary word; "foul" or "flawy", i.e. (figuratively) wicked -- evil. More the act of doing evil

5337. φαῦλος phaulos; a prim. word; *worthless, bad*:— bad(3), evil(3).

Thomas, R. L. (1998). *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek dictionaries : updated edition*. Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc.

hates

V-PIA-3S

miseó: to hate

Original Word: μισέω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: miseó

Phonetic Spelling: (mis-eh'-o)

Definition: I hate, detest, love less, esteem less.

3404 *miséō* – properly, to detest (on a *comparative* basis); hence, *denounce*; to *love someone or something less* than someone (something) else, i.e. to renounce one choice in favor of another.

Hateth the light (μισει το πως — *misei to phōs*). Hence talks against it, ridicules Christ, Christianity, churches, preachers, etc. Does it in talk, magazines, books, in a supercilious tone of sheer ignorance.

does not come

έρχεται

comes Pres Middle, Passive, Infinitive

Cometh not to the light (ουκ ερχεται προς το πως — *ouk erchetai pros to phōs*). The light hurts his eyes, reveals his own wickedness, makes him thoroughly uncomfortable. Hence he does not read the Bible, he does not come to church, he does not pray. He goes on in deeper darkness.

lest, that, purpose clause

ἵνα

that

deeds

ergon: work

Original Word: ἔργον, ου, τό

Part of Speech: Noun, Neuter

Transliteration: ergon

Phonetic Spelling: (er'-gon)

Definition: work, task, employment; a deed, action; that which is wrought or made, a work.

exposed

Tense: Aorist

Mood: Subjunctive

Voice: Passive

elegchó: to expose, convict, reprove

Original Word: ἐλέγχω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: elegchó

Phonetic Spelling: (el-eng'-kho)

Definition: (a) I reprove, rebuke, discipline, (b) I expose, show to be guilty.

1651 *elégxō* – properly, to *convince* with solid, compelling *evidence*, especially to expose (prove wrong, connect).

Jn 7:7

The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil.

Pr 1:29–31

- 29** Because they hated knowledge
And did not choose the fear of the Lord,
30 They would have none of my counsel
And despised my every rebuke.
31 Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way,
And be filled to the full with their own fancies.

Eph 5:11–14

- 11** And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them*.
12 For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.
13 But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.
14 Therefore He says:
“Awake, you who sleep,
Arise from the dead,
And Christ will give you light.

J. C. Ryle (*Expository Thoughts on the Gospels* [Baker], 3:164) points out that eventually sinners will get what they desired while on earth: they loved darkness; they will be cast into outer darkness. They hated the light; they will be shut out from the light eternally. God will be perfectly just in condemning those who rejected Christ. They saw the

Light, but hated it and turned away from it because they loved their sin.

IV. The Liberated

v21 But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”

he who does

Tense: Present

Mood: Participle

Voice: Active

poieó: to make, do

Original Word: ΠΟΙΕΩ

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: poieó

Phonetic Spelling: (poy-eh'-o)

Short Definition: I do, make

Definition: (a) I make, manufacture, construct, (b) I do, act, cause.

James 1:23

23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror;

- 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.
- 25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

Acts 17:10

- 10 Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.
- 11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily *to find out* whether these things were so.

1 Jn 1:5–7

- 5 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.
- 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.
- 7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Matt 7:21

- 21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.
- 22 Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’

23 And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

Luke 6:46

46 “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?

47 Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like:

48 He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock.

49 But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great.”

Romans 2:5

But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

6 who “*will render to each one according to his deeds*”:

7 eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality;

8 but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath,

9 tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek;

10 but glory, honor, and peace

Titus 1:16

They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

The New King James Version. (1982). (Tt 1:16–2:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

may be clearly seen

phaneroó: to make visible, make clear

Original Word: φανερώω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: phaneroó

Phonetic Spelling: (fan-er-o'-o)

Definition: I make clear (visible, manifest), make known.

5319 *phanerōō* (from **5457** /*phōs*, "light") – properly, illumine, make *manifest (visible)*; (figuratively) make plain, in *open* view; to become apparent ("graspable").

Charles Spurgeon

If you do not like self-examination, be sure that you are wrong. If you do not like reading heart-searching books, or listening to a faithful gospel ministry, be sure that you are wrong. If you do not like that part of the Word of God which judges you, and makes you tremble, be sure that you are wrong. The man in business, who cannot bear to look at his books, most probably has good reason to be afraid of his books. He shuts them up because they would shut him up if he were to pay attention to them. O sirs, there is no more damning sign of human's condition than his endeavor to avoid the light. Search and see, look and examine. Make sure work for eternity, whatever you trifle with, trifle not with your souls. Take other things on hearsay, if you please; but not your

condition towards God. Let that be searched into with all earnestness and sincerity; and be not satisfied till the truth has satisfied you.

have been done in God

Tense: Perfect

Mood: Participle

Voice: Passive

ergazomai: I work, trade, do

Original Word: ἐργάζομαι

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: ergazomai

Phonetic Spelling: (er-gad'-zom-ahee)

Definition: I work, trade, perform, do, practice, commit, acquire by labor.

Cognate: 2038 *ergázomai* (from 2041 /*érgon*, "work") – to work (accomplish). See 2041 (*ergon*).

They have been wrought in God (εν τρωι εστιν ειργασμενα — *en theōi estin eirgasmēna*). Periphrastic perfect passive indicative of εργαζομαι — *ergazomai* He does not claim that they are perfect, only that they have been wrought in the sphere of and in the power of God. Hence he wants the light turned on.

John 15:4

- 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

- 5 “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

Isa 26:12

- 12 Lord, You will establish peace for us,
For You have also done all our works in us.

I Cor 15:9-10

- 9 For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.
- 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God *which was with me*.

Phil 2:12-13

- 12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;
- 13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His good pleasure*.

James Montgomery Boice

There is a fatal defect in the life of Christ’s church in the twentieth century: a lack of true discipleship. Discipleship means forsaking everything to follow Christ. But for many of today’s supposed

Christians—perhaps the majority—it is the case that while there is much talk about Christ and even much furious activity, there is actually very little following of Christ Himself. And that means in some circles there is very little genuine Christianity. Many who fervently call Him ‘Lord, Lord’ are not Christians (Matthew 7:21)...There are several reasons that the situation I have described is common in today’s church. The first is a defective theology that has crept over us like a deadening fog. This theology separates faith from discipleship and grace from obedience. It teaches that Jesus can be received as one’s Savior without being received as one’s Lord...Discipleship is not a supposed second step in Christianity, as if one first became a believer in Jesus and then, if he chooses, a disciple. From the beginning, discipleship is involved in what it means to be a Christian...Is ‘faith’ minus commitment a true biblical faith?...If faith without works is dead—how much truer is it that faith without commitment is dead...True faith involves these elements: knowledge...heart response...and commitment, without which ‘faith’ is no different from the assent of the demons who ‘believe...and shudder’ (James 2:19) (James Montgomery Boice, *Christ’s Call to Discipleship* (Chicago: Moody, 1986), pp. 13, 14, 16, 21).