

Christ came not to *condemn* - (Pt 2) of *Condemn*

This is our second study of the word *condemn* in the Holy Scriptures. In our previous study we found the Oxford dictionary meaning of the word *condemn* included; "Censure, give judgment against; bring about conviction of, as his look - him; doom (to death, to be beheaded; also fig. to toil etc); -ed (for -ed persons); pronounced fortified (smuggled good etc), unfit for use, incurable. Hence condemnable." The Oxford Thesaurus writes, "censure, castigate, attack, berate, upbraid, reprimand, rebuke, reprove, reprehend..." And under condemnation points to, "censure, criticism, castigation, stricture, denunciation, damnation..." When we consulted the Scriptures we found four (4) different meanings of the word *condemn*, that include; give judgment against, reprove or judge, testify against and eternally damned. As well as covering the meaning we looked at three (3) points:-

1. Sin *condemns* every one
2. God *condemns* sin for every one
3. Every one who believes God is not *condemned*

In this teaching we will cover four additional points:-

1. The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world not to *condemn*
2. The lost are *condemned* by the preaching and righteous actions of the just.
3. The lost are *condemned* because they love darkness more than light
4. Those who believe In Jesus are not *condemned*

Let us add a little more detail to our four points:-

1. The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world not to *condemn*

Jn 3:17 *For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*

We are all familiar with the previous verse (16) - *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.* Then our verse continues - *For sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.* So God's purpose in sending His Only Begotten Son was Not to *condemn* the world, or similarly He did not want any to perish (2Pet.3: 9), but to the contrary He wants everyone to be come to repentance, He desires everyone to be saved.

Did His Son exhibit the same desires when He was on earth?

The example in Jn 8:10,11 indicates that the Lord Jesus did not want to *condemn* anyone either. This is reiterated in Jn.12: 47, where Jesus says he came not to judge the world (from this we suggest that the meaning for *condemn* is 'give judgment against'). In the example in Jn.8: 10,11 He showed this desire not to *condemn*, when a woman was caught in the very act of adultery (see Jn.8: 3,4), who according to the law was to be *condemned* to death (see Lev.20: 10 & Deut.22: 22). Instead of *condemning* the woman Jesus suggested to his audience that those who had not sinned should cast the first stone. And everyone in the audience left because they all knew they were sinners and the verse concluded - *Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.*

So the Scribes and Pharisees that brought the woman to Jesus were prepared to watch her be *condemned* and even stone her themselves perhaps, but when they were challenged about their own sinlessness, that was too much for them. Such wisdom that Jesus showed to the woman and to the Pharisees that each was convicted in their conscience of their sin (see verse 9). Such wisdom was wiser than the law, such charity was unheard of during the age of Law. But note, that He did not dismiss the woman's sin, He did not say to her 'your sin is okay', but rather, that she was to *go and sin no more*. He made a specific point of telling the woman that just as her accusers did not *condemn* her, did not judge her, neither would He, but *go sin no more*.

Think about that for the next 20 years! Jesus said, *go sin no more*. And so, the actions of the Lord Jesus were the same as His teachings. In this instance; the Scripture say that He came into the world, not to *condemn* the world and His actions showed He was true to those words.

How would we apply this example of Jesus today?

Firstly, by not judging others, by not *condemning* them when we see them doing something to be wicked. Our flesh loves to *condemn* others, or judge them, that is often our impulsive response.

Second, we can apply the example of Jesus by asking God for wisdom to share illustrations like Samuel did with David (see 2Sam.12: 1-9), in such a way that is not *condemning*.

I have had sodomites come up to me on the street and ask what I think of homosexuals (sodomites). I refuse to be drawn into the discussion but rather let them know what the Bible says and refer them to Lev.20: 13, Rom.1: 27 & 1Tim.1: 10. If they get a negative reaction from me and I told them that I thought sodomy was wrong then I would have personally *condemned* them and they would have felt justified in rejecting any gospel message that was being shared. But instead, when you take the focus of your opinion, which don't matter anyway, and turn the focus on

what God says about their behaviour, they are only left with feeling *convicted by their own conscience* (see Jn.8: 9) and in this case they walked away.

When I look at the example in Jn.8: 3-9, perhaps there was an opportunity to bring in the depravity or sinfulness of all humanity and suggest that God does not want to *condemn* them to hell for their sinfulness, but rather He wants them to repent, to *go and sin no more*. And if we are thinking about how we can apply this example to our lives today, perhaps we could ask God for wisdom to speak to the lost such that we do not condemn them but that they come to the point of acknowledging their sin, feel convicted, repent and believe the gospel of Christ crucified.

The next part of the verse in Jn.3: 17, although has nothing to do with our point is nevertheless worthy of mention. The second part of the verse reads; *but that the world through him might be saved*. This again shows the desire of God to save everyone, that none would perish, but there is a catch. And ALL man made religions hate these words, because right here, their prophets and their gods are excluded. God does not want to *condemn* anyone, but rather He wants all to be saved THROUGH the name of Jesus, not Mohummad or any other prophet that came after him, but by God's only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him none are *condemned*, and hence, He came into the world not to *condemn* the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. Amen!

2. The lost are *condemned* by the preaching and righteous actions of the just.

Heb 11:7 *By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.*

Whenever a believer yields unto righteousness unto holiness (see Rom.6: 16) his righteous actions *condemn* the lost, just as Noah did when he obeyed God and prepared an ark. In a similar way when a preacher preaches righteousness or today preaches the gospel of Christ crucified. Whether the preacher knows it or not, the preaching *condemns* the lost. How?

Well, the words, *all have sinned and come short of the glory of God* (Rom.3: 23), *there is none that doeth good, no not one* (Rom. 3: 12), have a tendency to remind a person of their failings, their sin, before a Holy, Righteous and Just God. And when the lost who walk past the preaching, perhaps after being out to a movie, or clubbing or to a rock concert and therefore has been entertained, has little consciousness of his sin at the point. But then they hear those words - *all have sinned*. POW! He is *condemned* by the preaching of righteousness.

What is a common reason for a lost sinner not wanting to receive a gospel tract? They believe they are okay, they are good. A classic little phrase "I'm okay". They might be smoking, have tattoos, or long hair, and the last thing they want is some strange preacher telling them how much they disapprove of their look, their walk, or their blasphemous language. So when a preacher stands up and preaches righteousness or the law, or the gospel of Christ crucified, they come face to face with the very thing they are trying to cover up, keep in the closet; an inner personal knowledge of their sin, a knowledge of their wrong, a knowledge of their wickedness and any conviction in their heart that goes with it. Hence why preachers (as mentioned in earlier studies) often preach the 10 commandments first off, as part of their gospel message, because it is by the law that we have knowledge of sin (hence all who hear are convicted as sinners), and all are *condemned* by their sin. Hence it is by the preaching of the law and righteousness that the lost are *condemned*.

If there is a blasphemous man who knows you are a believer and sees you living righteously they will often, without us even knowing it, be convicted, feel guilty, or *condemned* for their blaspheming the name of your Saviour. You will know this to be the case, because they will apologise for taking the name of Jesus in vain, or swearing in your presence, or drinking excessively while you are around. Perhaps we could respond with; don't apologise to me, say you are sorry to God. It is truly amazing to watch the Holy Spirit of God, *condemn* a man for his sin, by the righteous actions of another. The first time I witnessed it, I was amazed. But such is the power of the Holy Spirit of God to reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment (see Jn14: 8). Let us remember that the lost are *condemned* by the preaching and righteous actions of the just.

3. The lost are *condemned* by the Lord, because they love darkness more than light

Jn 3:19 *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

But what is the *condemnation*? The *condemnation*, according to our verse, is *that light is come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil*.

What was Israel's *condemnation* prior to Christ? Their heads, their Princes hated good and loved evil (see Mic.3: 2). It was no different in the time of Jesus, or today. In the Old Testament, the Lord sent prophets like Isaiah, Micah,

Jeremiah and Ezekial to warn His people, to encourage them to turn from their sin. In doing so those prophets (as per our previous point) *condemned* those who committed idolatry and then in the New Testament, God sent His Son (the Light) and when he came into the world, although He came not to *condemn* (see previous point), yet because the Pharisees and wider Israel loved darkness rather than the light, they were *condemned*.

When the Lord Jesus was speaking to the woman caught in adultery (see point 1), He did not want to *condemn* her, and in doing so He did not judge her (see Jn.8: 3-8). And in that example the sinfulness of the Pharisees would have convicted them or *condemned* them.

Could you imagine a person desiring to live in the North Pole more than living in New Zealand or Australia? The North Pole is dark for almost 6 months of the year (see http://www.arctic.noaa.gov/gallery_np_seasons.html), whereas we have light then darkness every day. But our verse implies that a person desire darkness more than light in the spiritual. Those who are spiritually lost, those who, according to Jn.3: 18, believe not and are *condemned* already, they love darkness more than light. They love evil more than good (still sounds like those that Micah was speaking about who love evil and hate the good - Mic.3: 2). Why do they love evil more than good? Because they know, deep down that their deeds are evil. And if they hate the evil, perhaps it would lead them to hating themselves and with no way to change their evil deeds, they would be faced with a life time of hating themselves. Perhaps their thinking is:- you may as well love yourself (which is what the world encourages everyone to do) and in doing so you love evil more than the good. In the context of our verse, the heathen love spiritual darkness rather than spiritual light, however, their life's experience shows they love the physical light that New Zealand offers more than the physical darkness of the North Pole. Such is the power of the devil, this spiritual being who hates us and seeks our destruction.

Have you ever had anyone tell you that they acknowledge the eternal blessings you are offering them in Christ, but they love their sin, they love their riches more than eternal life in heaven? There are not many people I know who will come out and be so frank, so honest, most just give you an excuse not to hear the gospel, like "they are okay". But I remember one chap, who lived a good life, by worldly standards, had a wife and two children, nice home and job. But loved his beer, woman and rugby entertainment more than the riches of Christ. He didn't really like the idea of spending an eternity in hell, but said, if I have to give up all the things I love about this world, then I chose to reject Christ and what he did on the cross. Wow! He loved the pleasures of this world more than he loved God (see 2Tim.3: 4). Such a person who is completely the opposite to Moses, who chose *rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season* (see Heb.11: 25). Let us pray for those who are lost, that are *condemned* because they love darkness more than light.

4. Those who believe in Jesus are not *condemned*

Jn 3:18 *He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

This is truly good news, that those who choose life, those who hear the gospel of the grace of God and choose to believe it, choose to believe that their sin is on Christ (just as Hannah did on Friday and night before her Lawrence and many others before and after them), are not condemned, they are not eternally damned to the lake of fire. Wow! But our verse does not finish there, it continues to say, *but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* There it is again; confirmation that it is only through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, that a man can be saved. It is only by believing what he did on Calvary, can a man not be *condemned*. But he that believeth on Him is promised not to be *condemned*. Our job, is to get that message out to as many people as we can, because our God is *not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance* (see 2Pet.3: 9).

I know there is no greater joy to some than to put out gospel tracts in people's letter boxes. Let us pray for those involved in this work for it is good work to put such an important warning in people's hands:-

Heaven

or

Hell (Which One will You Choose?)

And inside the little tract is a gospel message on how to be saved. There is a message that clearly lays out what a person has to believe so that they are not *condemned* to hell for an eternity.

I know there are Calvinists (those who follow the teachings of John Calvin - a theologian of the 16th century), who taught that God has His elect and if you are one of them, you cannot resist His grace (Irresistible Grace its called). But such doctrine nullifies the need for preachers to preach the gospel of Christ crucified and denies the individual's decision to believe or not believe and so removes the individuals choice. But we won't turn this into a defense or attack on Calvinism, we will stick to what the Bible says. Those who choose to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are not *condemned* and those who choose to believe not, are *condemned* already.

Do you remember what happened in your heart the moment you believed the gospel of Christ crucified?
Do you remember how you felt the second after believing in the name of the only begotten Son of God?
Let us each desire to share our testimony of God's grace in our lives, that others may know the truth of the gospel, and believe in the Lord Jesus and so not be *condemned* to the fires of hell for eternity.

Having said what we have said, let us say it again. In this our second study on the word *condemn* in the Holy Scriptures, we have covered four (4) points:-

1. The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world not to *condemn*.
2. The lost are *condemned* by the preaching and righteous actions of the just.
3. The lost are *condemned* because they love darkness more than light.
4. Those who believe In Jesus are not *condemned*. Amen, Amen and Amen!