



# God So Loved the World

John 3:9-21

Notes: The *MacArthur Study Bible* by John MacArthur was used as a reference in developing this Bible Study. Also used were answers from [www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org) provided by Don Stewart, author and apologist of AusAmerica Ministries. The Scripture references in this Bible study are taken from the New King James Version.

## 3:9 – Did Nicodemus understand what Jesus was telling him about being born-again?

No, this was a completely unknown concept for him.

## 3:10 – Why did Jesus call Nicodemus the teacher of Israel?

The use of the definite article "the" indicates that Nicodemus was a renowned master-teacher in the nation of Israel, an established religious authority *par excellence*.

## If Nicodemus was a renowned master-teacher in the nation of Israel, what does this tell us about their spiritual condition?

Jesus' reply emphasized the spiritual bankruptcy of the nation at that time, since even one of the greatest of Jewish teachers did not recognize this teaching on spiritual cleansing and transformation based clearly in the OT.

## Does going through the motions of religion help a person to be more spiritually perceptive?

No, exactly the opposite which is what Jesus was saying here.

## 3:11 – Who was the “we” Jesus referred to when He said, “we know and testify of what we have seen”?

This refers back to the “we” of v. 2, where Nicodemus was speaking as a representative of his nation Israel (“we know”). Jesus replied in v. 11 with “you” indicting that Nicodemus’ unbelief was typical of the nation as a collective whole.

## 3:11 – Why did Jesus speak in terms of “Our witness,” why did He pluralize this?

This is the witness of the Triune God-head. Jesus spoke the witness, the Father authenticated what He said with miracles, and the Holy Spirit worked on the souls of people to convict them of the truth.

## 3:12 – What earthly things had Jesus told Nicodemus?

Jesus had used analogies of earthly things such as born of the water and the wind blowing where it wishes to help him understand spiritual matters.

## What was the reason for Nicodemus’ ignorance about what Jesus spoke?

Jesus focused on the idea that unbelief is the cause of ignorance. At heart, Nicodemus’ failure to understand Jesus’ words centered not so much in his intellect but in his failure to believe Jesus’ witness.

## 3:13 – What was Jesus referring to when He said, “no one has ascended to heaven”?

This corrects other religious claims to special revelation from God. No one had ascended to heaven in such a way as to return and talk about heavenly things. Only Jesus had His permanent abode in heaven prior to His incarnation and, therefore, only He had the true knowledge about heavenly wisdom (cf. Prov. 30:4).

## Paul claimed to have gone to heaven in 2 Corinthians 12:2 so did this change?

Paul wasn’t sure whether he actually went to heaven or received a vision about heaven...

2 Corinthians 12:2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago-- whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows-- such a one was caught up to the third heaven.

Certainly Jesus was referring to up until that time because Scripture does indicate that someone besides Jesus who has been cooling his heels in heaven will come back to be a witness...

## Do you know who that is?

It is Elijah who did not die...

II Kings 2:11 - Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

God has promised that He would send Elijah back to be a witness prior to the return of Jesus to establish His millennial kingdom...

Malachi 4:5 - Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

I believe that Elijah will be one of the two witnesses of Revelation...

Rev 11:3 - And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.

I believe the other witness will be Enoch because he the only other one referred to in Scripture who did not die and,

*“it is appointed for men to die once”* (Hebrews 9:27). In the midst of the genealogies of Genesis where it made a reference to everyone’s death, Enoch was the notable exception...

Genesis 5:24 - And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

### **Isn’t the rapture of the church an exception to Hebrews 9:27?**

The rapture of the church may be the one great exception to everyone having to die or part of our translation to a glorified body may go through a phase when we are technically dead. God is sovereign and if He wants to make an exception to everyone having to die, it is His prerogative.

### **3:14 – What did Jesus mean by saying, “so must the Son of Man be lifted up”?**

This is a veiled prediction of Jesus’ death on the cross.

### **What did Jesus refer to regarding Moses?**

Jesus referred to the story of Numbers 21:5–9 where the Israelite people who looked at the serpent lifted up by Moses were healed. This foreshadowed the spiritual healing offered by the Savior. The point here is the being "lifted up." Just as Moses lifted up the snake on the pole so that all who looked upon it might live physically, those who look to Christ, who was "lifted up" on the cross for the sins of the world, will live spiritually and eternally.

### **3:15 – What is eternal life?**

Eternal life refers not only to eternal quantity but divine quality of life. It means literally "life of the age to come" and refers therefore to resurrection and heavenly existence in perfect glory and holiness.

### **When do believers experience eternal life?**

This life for believers in the Lord Jesus is experienced before heaven is reached. Jesus said:

John 10:10 - I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

Experiencing eternal life begins the instant we are born-again because we have become partakers of the divine quality of life. And we know that, even though we are not in heaven yet, our place there is a sure thing...

Philippians 1:6 - being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ

### **What does it mean to perish?**

This is referring to spiritual death which has the consequence of spending eternity in hell. The Bible refers to this as the second death:

Rev 20:14-15 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not

found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

### **How would you explain hell to people?**

Suffering in hell will be in intense anguish. People in hell will be isolated from everything else. They will realize they have been permanently cut off from God and everything good.

### **The Bible gives a number of descriptions of hell, or the place of final judgment:**

Hell is place of unquenchable fire, John the Baptist said:

He [Jesus] will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire (Matthew 3:12).

Jesus also emphasized the nature of this punishment.

And if your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire (Matthew 18:8).

Hell is a place of crying and gnashing of teeth. Jesus said.

The Son of Man will send His angels, and they will collect out of His kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 13:41-42).

Hell is a place of no rest.

And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name (Revelation 14:11).

Hell is a place of condemnation.

I tell you, on the day of judgment you will have to give an account for every careless word you utter; for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned (Matthew 12:36,37).

The place of final judgment is a place of destruction.

Destruction means loss or ruin, it does not mean annihilation or non-existence as we’ll look at in a minute... Paul wrote:

For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God’s doing (Philippians 1:28).

Jesus emphasized the destructive nature of hell:

Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it (Matthew 7:13).

Unbelievers will be separated from God’s presence. Paul said Jesus would return...

in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, separated from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might (2 Thessalonians 1:8,9).

Future punishment is also described as a place of outer darkness. Jesus said...

And cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 25:30).

Finally, the suffering in this place will be eternal. Jesus said. And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life (Matthew 25:46).

### **Will the unbelieving dead become non-existent?**

Annihilationism is a popular belief, even among Christians. Annihilationists believe that the wicked dead are annihilated, or destroyed - they lose all consciousness forever. Annihilationists deny that there is an eternal place of torment known as hell. When the Bible speaks of hell it means the annihilation of the individual - not everlasting punishment. The wicked are reduced to nothing or non-existence. There is no such thing as the eternal existence and punishment for the wicked.

### **What kind of arguments for annihilation do people make?**

There are a number of reasons why people embrace the idea of the annihilation of the wicked. Some reasons are emotional, some philosophical, and some are biblical.

#### **1. How can people use the loving nature of God to argue that people will not suffer eternal punishment?**

The idea of eternal suffering is abhorrent to many minds. The God of the Bible is a God of love. The Bible says.

Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love (1 John 4:8).

A God of love would not allow anyone to suffer conscious torment forever. Though not everyone deserves to be saved, no one deserves eternal punishment.

#### **How does the fact that God is righteous challenge the annihilation theory?**

While it is true that God is love, He is also righteous. Sin must be judged. The Bible says.

Say to them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?' (Ezekiel 33:11).

There is no pleasure for God for the judgment of the wicked but wickedness must be judged.

#### **2. How can people use the many Bible references to the wicked being destroyed to argue that people will not suffer eternal punishment?**

Those who favor annihilation of the wicked, say that the Bible's references to the destruction of the wicked mean that they will cease to exist in eternity. For example:

Indeed, those who are far from You will be destroyed; You put an end to those who are false to You (Psalm 73:27).

In the Book of Esther, we read.

And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish (Esther 4:16).

Jesus said.

Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it (Matthew 7:13).

Jesus also said:

Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell (Matthew 10:28).

These passages say that the wicked perish, or are destroyed, which, it is argued, means to be annihilated.

### **How does the contextual meaning of destruction in the Bible argue against annihilation?**

The passages referring to destruction do not mean that the wicked cease to exist. To perish speaks of physical death, not annihilation. The destruction of the unbeliever means to be sent away from the life of the Lord.

These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power (2 Thessalonians 1:9).

The only implication of these passages, that speak of the wicked as perishing and destroyed, is that the unbelievers are deprived of the presence and fellowship with God.

### **How does the Bible's use of figurative language argue against annihilation?**

The terms and phrases cited by those holding to annihilationism are figurative, the language of observation. They explain how things appear to the observer, for example:

His spirit departs, he returns to earth; in that very day his plans perish (Psalm 146:4).

This is how death looks from the point of view of an observer...

Whatever your hand finds to do, do with your might; for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

Those who have died have ceased their existence as far as this earth is concerned. This does not mean the end to all existence.

#### **3. How can people use Bible translation errors to argue that people will not suffer eternal punishment?**

It is argued that the Greek word *aion*, translated as "eternal" in Scripture, has the idea of "age long" and not everlasting. In certain contexts it can be shown that Scripture uses *aion* to refer to something that is not everlasting. The suffering is eternal in its effects, not eternal in time. Therefore the affect would be that the person will never experience God's blessings for eternity, not that the person would suffer eternally.

### **How does the context help us to understand that eternal is a better translation than age-long?**

Though the Greek word *aion*, translated eternal can mean age-long, there is nothing in the context of the passages that speak of the destruction of the wicked that suggests age-long. To the contrary, the natural way of understand the term would be everlasting. This is the usual sense of the term. The Bible says the believer will have everlasting life.

This is the bread which came down from heaven - not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever (John 6:58).

Also...

So that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 5:21).

This same word, eternal, that describes the state of the righteous also describes the state of the wicked. This speaks of the time of their punishment, not the quality of punishment.

The Bible speaks of the duration of punishment of the wicked...

Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt (Daniel 12:2).

Jesus was very explicit on this issue - punishment will be everlasting...

And if your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the eternal fire (Matthew 18:8).

Jesus compared the punishment to an undying worm. where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched (Mark 9:48)

He made it clear that the punishment was forever.

And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life (Matthew 25:46).

The Apostle Paul wrote about the eternal suffering of the wicked...

These will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, separated from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might (2 Thessalonians 1:9).

The Apostle John also wrote about everlasting punishment.

And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name (Revelation 14:11).

Eternal punishment is forever and ever...

And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever (Revelation 20:10).

The same word that describes the happy state of the righteous also describes the terrible state of the wicked - eternal. If the joys of heaven are eternal, so is the

condemnation of hell. If life is eternal, then so is the punishment.

### **4. How does saying that it is just not fair that people will suffer eternal punishment aid the annihilation argument?**

The punishment does not fit the crime. Sin only occurs in time, not eternity. Sins committed in time should not be punished for eternity. Eternal suffering is beyond what justice demands. It is not proportionate to the offense.

### **How should we respond to the idea that eternal punishment is not fair?**

Those who support annihilationism do not understand the extent of evil. Sins are committed against God. Who are we to tell God what is fair? He is the One who determines what justice demands.

### **5. How does saying that people suffering eternal punishment would allow evil to continue into the eternal state help the argument that people will not suffer eternal punishment?**

The continuing presence of evil in the universe would mar God's perfection. How could there be a new heavens and new earth with a place of eternal suffering still existing? Everlasting punishment is difficult to reconcile with what the Bible says about the future universe. Paul wrote.

To be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment - to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ (Ephesians 1:10).

Also...

and through Him [Christ] God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of His cross (Colossians 1:20).

### **How should we respond to the idea that everlasting punishment would mar the perfection of eternity?**

Those who are punished eternally serve as a reminder of the depth of mercy of God to those who are not punished. All of us deserve punishment. The fact that anyone is saved is a tribute to God's amazing grace and mercy.

- The Bible says that Christ came to be the Savior of humanity. To be our Savior, we have to be saved from some type of punishment. Extinction is not a form of punishment. We must be saved from something!

### **6. How does saying that eternal punishment was only intended for the devil help the argument that people will not suffer eternal punishment?**

Some have argued that the never ending torment is only for the Devil, the beast, and the false prophet. Humans are not specifically said to be tormented eternally as are these evil beings...

Matthew 25:41 - Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels

### **How should we respond to the idea that everlasting punishment was only intended for the devil?**

While Scripture says that hell was prepared for the devil and his angels, it also makes it clear that wicked people also end up there (see Revelation 20:11-14). All people end up with their Father, either with God if you are a child of God or with the devil if you have rejected God. As Jesus commented about the wicked...

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. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

### **7. How about the argument that the Bible speaks of a second death for the wicked, isn't this annihilation?**

For example...

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death (Revelation 2:11).

Those who advocate annihilation argue that the wicked are raised to have a second chance, or in some cases, a first chance to believe.

### **How should we respond to this argument?**

The idea that you can have a second chance to believe after you die is clearly unbiblical...

Hebrews 9:27 - it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment

The second death that the Bible speaks about is a spiritual death, an eternal separation from God. Indeed, the purpose for why we are here in this life is to prepare for eternity.

The Bible describes life as a test to show who will enter into an eternal personal relationship with their Creator and who will not.

## **Other Arguments Against Annihilationism**

### **How should we respond to proponents of annihilationism?**

We need to show them what Scripture says... the Bible is clear that death is not a cessation of being for either the believer or unbeliever. Jesus said:

And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous to eternal life (Matthew 25:46).

A person can exist without being punished but that person cannot be punished without existing. Something must exist to be punished.

### **1. How does the idea that people are made in the image of God and that we are body, soul and spirit combine to argue against the annihilation theory?**

As God is eternal, people will always have a body, soul, and spirit. The Book of Genesis gives us the account of the fall of the humanity and the pronouncement of death upon their descendants. All subsequent allusions to death in Scripture shows that it is only the dissolution of the body, not the spirit. The state of the spirit of the unbelieving dead is one of absence from God's holy presence, as well as suffering, but it is never extinction, scripture teaches that we have been made for eternity...

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of humans; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

Note that when judgment was pronounced upon Adam for sinning against the Lord, it was his body that was judged to go back to its original elements...

By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return (Genesis 3:19).

The spirit, however, was not judged to return to dust because it was breathed into Adam by the breath of God. The body became dust but the spirit went elsewhere. Never do we find the Bible teaching that the spirit can be annihilated or become extinct...

the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

### **2. How does the idea that time is just another dimension created by God to be a context for us in the world He created for us argue against the wicked ceasing to exist?**

If God has punished people in time, then why is it inconsistent that He punish people in eternity? There is nothing unreasonable that God would punish people. Justice demands punishment. No punishment means no justice.

### **3. How does the fact that the Bible foretells the resurrection of the wicked argue against annihilation?**

The Bible clearly foretells the resurrection of the wicked:

John 5:28-29 - Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth-- those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

Paul also reinforced this:

I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust (Acts 24:15).

### **4. How do the biblical descriptions of the afterlife argue against annihilation?**

The descriptions in Scripture for the place of departed spirits have, in them, no indication of annihilation or the cessation

of consciousness for the wicked. To the contrary, they describe continuous existence.

And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the people who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh (Isaiah 66:24).

##### **5. How do the biblical references to the wicked having no rest in eternity argue against annihilation?**

For example...

Revelation 14:11 - And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.

This can only mean that punishment is eternal.

##### **6. How do the biblical references to degrees of punishment argue against annihilation?**

If annihilationism is true, then the Bible would not teach different degrees of punishment. Jesus said...

And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who did not know, yet committed things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much shall be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more (Luke 12:47,48).

Can there be degrees of annihilation?

##### **7. How does Jesus telling Judas it would be better if he had not been born argue against annihilation?**

Jesus said the following about the traitor Judas.

The Son of Man goes as it is written of Him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born (Matthew 26:24).

If Judas were merely annihilated, it would be the same as not being born. The only reason Jesus would say it would be worse if he had not been born would be that his existence is eternal.

##### **How does a comparison between Revelation 19:20 and 20:10 argue against annihilation?**

A comparison of Revelation 19:20 with 20:10 shows that death is not annihilation...

And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who had performed in its presence the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur (Revelation 19:20).

A thousand years after this happens, we read the following.

And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false

prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever (Revelation 20:10).

After a thousand years in the lake of fire, the beast and the false prophet are still there - they have not been annihilated.

##### **So what should we conclude about the eternal fate of the wicked?**

We conclude that there is no biblical support whatever for the idea that the wicked will cease to exist after they die.

The Bible clearly teaches a conscious life after this one for believers as well as unbelievers.

##### **With that little diversion, let's get back to our study in John 3...**

##### **3:16 – Why did the Father send the Son into the world?**

The Father sent his only Son into the world to pay the penalty for the sins of those who trust in Him because He loves His creation.

##### **Does this say that since God loved the world that all people in the world would have everlasting life?**

No, only those who believe in the Son will have everlasting life.

##### **What does it mean to believe in the Son?**

It means to recognize who He is, why He came into the world, and understanding what He did in the world. It means acknowledging your sinful condition before Him and receiving Him into your life as Savior. It means repenting of your sin and following Him as your Lord.

##### **If God so loved the world how could He allow people to go to hell?**

Hell seems so inconsistent with the character of God. Why not send everyone to heaven? How would you respond to this question frequently asked by both skeptics and seekers?

##### **How does the fact that people were made in the image of God help us see why there will be those that will end up in hell?**

God desires a deep personal relationship with each of us. That is why he made us in His image so that we would have a will to accept or reject a relationship with Him on our own volition. If we had no choice to have a relationship with Him, the quality of that relationship just wouldn't be the same. Since we have a free will to accept a personal relationship with God, some will exercise their "right" to reject it. Their spending eternity in hell is the result of their own choice.

##### **Another aspect of our being made in the image of God is that all people will live into eternal future. How does this demand that there be a place for people who reject a relationship with God?**

Since we have been made for eternity, and certain people have rejected having a relationship with God, there is nowhere else for them to go. Hell, by definition, is the total absence of God. Their going to hell is only what they have asked for by rejecting God. These people would be content in heaven and they would make it less like heaven should be for God's children (it would be more like what the world is like now).

**So does this mean that hell will be a tolerable place for the wicked?**

No, the Bible makes it clear that apart from God there can be no peace. The wicked will accept their confinement in hell as being just but they will not like it. Apart from God, no one can be content where ever they are.

**3:17-18 – What do these verses have to say about why there will be people spending eternity in hell?**

It is not God who sends people to hell, those who will spend eternity there go there as a result of their own choice. They condemned themselves by the decision they made to reject a relationship with their Creator.

**3:18 – Why does it say that those who do not believe, do not believe in the name of the Son of God?**

This emphasizes the importance of recognizing who Jesus is and trusting in His character as God. You can not be saved unless you recognize Jesus as God Himself, the second person of the Trinity, sent by the Father to be our Savior who was the promised Messiah...

John 8:23-24 - And He said to them, "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."

This is why Jesus asked His disciples who they understood who He was. Jesus praised Peter for providing the right answer that was revealed to him by the Father...

Matthew 16:15-16 - He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

**3:19 – What condemns those who are condemned to hell?**

That despite God's revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ, people rejected that revelations choosing instead to remain in their sin.

**Why do most people choose to remain in their sin?**

Sin is fun for a season and most people prefer to buy now and pay later. Seeing the future consequences for today's actions is an abstract concept that people deliberately repress. People have allowed themselves to grow accustomed to the idea that living in sin is normal and natural. In fact, they have become so comfortable with sin

that they deny that there is such a thing as sin. The conventional wisdom is that people are basically good, that being bad is something they learn. All you have to do to see the error in this perspective is to look at the selfish behavior of children... no parent teaches their children to be bad, this is something they come by naturally because all people have a sinful nature.

**3:20 – What do people who have embraced their sinful condition think of the revelation of God?**

People living in sin hate the revelation of God because it reminds them of their true nature. And this makes them uncomfortable because it demands that they take corrective action. So people who live in sin tend to avoid the revelation of God.

**3:21 – What do people who are honest with themselves do?**

Those who are honest about their condition before God seek His revelation so that they may make the changes necessary to be acceptable to God.

**Does this mean that our own actions are what save us?**

No, it is God who saves us. Being saved is what motivates us to take the actions to be more acceptable to God.

**What action should a person take who has never been saved?**

Such a person should be honest about their condition before God and pray that He would change them and thus make them acceptable to Him. And trust that God will save them...

Acts 2:21 - whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.