

K.E.Y. Bible Study (2012-2013/Year V)

K.E.Y. Bible Study is a systematic study of Scripture that equips participants to become acquainted with the major truths of the Bible over a five-year period. Each lesson is self-contained, so, you can join the study at any time during the five years.

Purpose: To teach the most significant events, passages, and doctrines of the Bible in a manner and using methods that encourage and empower the student to:
Keep the Faith We Have Received
Be Equipped to Serve the Body of Christ
Become Yoked in Ministry with Other Believers

Session 15 December 5, 2012 "The 'Why' of Christmas and Easter"

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (John 3:16-17)"

Why are John 3:16-17 K.E.Y. verses in the Bible?

This may be the most quoted passage in the New Testament. According to the BibleGateway.com, these are the most read Bible verses on their popular Internet site. They are KEY verses not because they are popular, but because they convey succinctly the reason for the entire incarnational event (birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus). While this passage is often used for evangelistic purposes, it is rich in doctrine revealing much about the nature of God.

Who?

- God, as revealed in Jesus, the Christ
- Nicodemus who was a member of the Sanhedrin, the religious high court in Jerusalem. The Roman courts handled most political and legal issues while this court dealt primary with Jewish religious concerns. This court consisted of 70 highly respected church and community leaders.

When?

The dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus probably occurred during the first year of Jesus' ministry.

Where?

This conversation occurred in or near Jerusalem.

Context:

Nicodemus came to Jesus with a statement that was actually a question: For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him. This was a way of asking Jesus, "Are you from God?" During the conversation, Jesus explained the spiritual new birth. Nicodemus had difficulty separating the physical from the spiritual. Jesus used an illustration from an unusual event in Numbers 21:4-9. The central truth from the story in Numbers is that we are to trust and obey God's instruction

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even when we do not completely understand. In Numbers, those who trusted and obeyed were saved, while those who did not trust or obey died. Nicodemus would have been well acquainted with the Old Testament story.

Word Study

- **“For God so loved”** – uses a Greek verb tense showing that the action is completed. The verb “loved” is similar in theological meaning to the Old Testament word “hesed” (covenant love). God’s love is the motivating factor behind the incarnation. Most pagan religions of the time would never have allowed their god to love people because they were basically barter religions: do something good for the gods and they will do something for you.
- **“the world”** – is the Greek word “cosmos.” Many of the Gnostic teachers perceived the physical world as evil and only the spiritual as good. Jesus made it clear that God loves His whole creation. He does not love sin as humanity chose to bring it into the world. Through Jesus, humanity and the whole world will be redeemed.
- **“he gave”** – another verb describing completed action.
- **“his one and only Son”** – This means “one of a kind.” It does not mean that no one else is a child of God only that there is no one else like Jesus.
- **“whoever believes in him”** – the subject indicates that there is no restriction on the kind of person who can believe. The verb “believe” describes a continuous action. This verse helps us understand the tension and paradox between God’s sovereignty and humanity’s free will. They are not mutually exclusive but mysteriously related. God initiates, by means of the covenant, and humanity then responds or rejects the initiative.
- **“shall not perish but have eternal life”** – contrasts a life that is always in the process of decaying with a life that is always in the process of being vibrant. We do not start to perish after we die; as long as we live separated from God, we are perishing.
- **“For God did not send his Son to condemn the world”** – emphasizes why Jesus came. It was not because of the Father’s negative judgment but because of the Father’s love. This does not mean Jesus does not judge. The purpose of His first coming was salvation. His second coming will be to consummate salvation and bring judgment to the world.
- **“but to save the world”** – this is the logical conclusion of having eternal life. We are being saved so we will always be saved.

What spiritual competencies are emphasized in this K.E.Y. verse?

These verses teach us that God loves through action and that Jesus is the unique Son of God.

What am I to know as a result of having read and studied these K.E.Y. verses?

God took the initiative in our salvation.

What am I to be or become as a result of having studied these K.E.Y. verses?

Be saved from judgment and perishing.

What am I to do in order to apply these K.E.Y. verses in my private and public life?

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Trust God's initiative by believing Jesus is the Son of God/Trust Him enough to live under His authority.