10-16 March 2024 How we stay in the light

# **John 3:14-21**

# **New International Version**

**14**Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3%3A+14-21&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26135a)] **15**that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.”[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3%3A+14-21&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26136b)]

**16**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. **17**For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. **18**Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.**19**This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. **20**Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. **21**But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

**Bible notes**

The perspective of the world portrayed in John’s Gospel is one of contrasts: life and death, light and darkness. There is no ‘in between’, no shadows, no half-light. People choose: life or death, light or darkness. John picks up the imagery of the bronze serpent in this week’s Old Testament reading. Just as anyone who chose to look up at the bronze serpent would live, so anyone who believes in Jesus will live. The act of looking at the serpent was an act of faith, of looking for healing; so too is looking to Jesus for healing which brings life. John’s explanation of this is God’s unconditional love.

The newly formed people of God in the Old Testament reading needed tangible ways to understand God and to express themselves to God. So, they were given ways of doing this – the sacrificial system, offerings, the bronze serpent. The need persists; but now, says John, God loves the world so much that God comes to the world in in person – a truly tangible way of demonstrating how to live in the light.

### ****Reflection****

Spend a few moments thinking about what stands out for you from the Bible reading. This idea may help.

‘What is that noise?’ Ben thought to himself as he heard the third crash coming from Sophie’s bedroom followed by, once again, the sound of little feet running around. As he opened the bedroom door he saw Sophie, running full pelt up and down the length of the room, arms waving. The room was in darkness, the thick curtains closed, shutting out the sunlight. As he watched, Sophie cannoned into the bag of toys, sending one flying into the side of the wardrobe, which, as it wobbled, dropped the game balanced on its top, causing yet another crash. Ben caught Sophie as she flew past once again, and asked what was going on. ‘I’m trying to get rid of the dark!’ she explained. ‘There’s no need to chase the dark,’ said Ben, as he drew the curtains. ‘Look, we can let in the light!’

**Questions for reflection**

*You may wish to use these questions and the picture to help you think about or discuss issues arising from this week’s Bible passage.*

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**Questions**

* What is this pet doing?
* Why is it desirable to stay in the light?
* What actions and behaviours might be markers of someone walking in the light of God?

Prayer

Adapt to your local context.

#### **A prayer of praise**

Almighty God, we praise and thank you for being always with us by our side and within us.
Almighty God, in the darkness of night you are with us.
Almighty God, in the light of dawn as sun breaks on the horizon, you are with us.
Almighty God, in the noonday sun, its heat and brightness, you are with us.
Almighty God, in the fading light of dusk when shadows fall, you are with us.
Almighty God, in the darkness of night, in the stillness it brings, you are with us.
Almighty God, we praise and thank you.
**Amen.**

## **A prayer to end the Bible study**

Loving God, we humans are afraid of the darkness.
But, for you, darkness and light are alike, and no problem.
You can see in the dark, and we can put our hand in yours and trust you,
knowing that the light will dawn again – in your time.
**Amen.**