

Please Turn to John 3:16-21

Welcome to Church today! Do you like dumb riddles? I do. While you are turning to John 3:16, let's see if you are awake!

- Why did the Easter egg hide? He was a little chicken!
- What do you call a rabbit with fleas? Bugs Bunny!
- What do you get if you pour boiling water down a rabbit hole? A hot cross bunny!
- How do bunnies stay healthy? Eggercise!

### **John 3:16-21 NIV**

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 he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. 19 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men 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 his deeds will be exposed. 21 But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."

Welcome to the 32 Second of March! Well, that is a possible explanation for April fools day. The English Poet Chaucer possibly wrote that as joke, because most people realize there is no March 32. (Well except for the people on the back row). So, some people think that may be how April fools day got started.

Another explanation for April fools day goes back to the time of the Romans. It was called Hilaria! (Get it?) It was during this time of the year, ancient people played pranks in worship to the goddess Cybele. Maybe that's how it got started.

Yet, a possible third explanation is from the middle ages when the church changed the. The old calendar began its New Year on April 1. Pope Gregory XIII changed the New Year to January 1. Those who celebrated New Years on

April 1 were considered fools because they didn't know which calendar to follow!

Well, for whatever reason, here we are today, Easter and April's fools day together! When I first realized that these two holidays were going to fall on the same day I thought the Media was going to have fun making fun of our Christian beliefs. I anticipated mocking of our hope in the Resurrection and how we are fools for going to church.

I have to admit, what we proclaim does sound incredible. We actually believe 2000 years ago, a Jew from Palestine named Jesus, from an insignificant town in Palestine, died by Roman Crucifixion, who had committed no crime. Then, He raised from the dead, never to die again and ascended into heaven. The news media, major universities, and Hollywood all consider this foolishness!

To be sure, the Bible concedes, if Jesus didn't raise from the dead, that we are fools.

**1 Cor 15:14 NIV**

14 And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

*I have a question for you this April Fools Day. What made you roll out of bed this morning? Are you already a believer who has come to worship the risen King or are you here because you are hoping that there is something to believe in? Whether you are here by faith or by hope, I am not playing a prank on you today. We sincerely teach that Jesus conquered death and that we someday are going to do precisely the very same thing. This is based upon the historical reality, and not wishful thinking, that Jesus Christ was and is the Messiah!*

Is it foolishness to believe in such things? Many of the most educated in our society think so. Do you know of Richard Dawkins? The evolutionary biologist and author of the book "The God Delusion". He believes we are fools! Dawkins said that religion is "... capable of driving people to such dangerous folly that faith seems to me . . . a kind of mental illness."

Ladies and Gentleman, are here today because of mental illness?

Dawkins is considered a rock star in atheist circles. He is called one of the New Atheist. The New Atheist go out of their way to war against Christianity. They repeatedly lump Christianity in with cults, Islamist, and any ideology that believes in a higher power. They see religious people as victims of group think; naive and uneducated individuals that have been duped to believe a lie!

Quoting Dawkins Again,

“Christianity, just as much as Islam, teaches children that unquestioned faith is a virtue. You don't have to make the case for what you believe. If somebody announces that it is part of his faith, the rest of society . . . is obliged . . . to "respect" it without question; respect it until the day it manifests itself in a horrible massacre like the destruction of the World Trade Center, or the London or Madrid bombings.”

This is not fair in my opinion. Christianity, is not a religion. Religion is a worldly thing. In religion men hope to appease god by rituals and works so that their god won't destroy them. We are not like that. God does not seek to punish us, rather on the contrary, God sent his Son so He wouldn't have to!

**John 3:16–17 NIV**

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.

It says that Jesus did not come to condemn, but to give eternal life.

Thankfully, Dawkins has now began to see the difference in Christianity and worldly religions. He now concedes the point that Christianity is not violent and it stands in stark contrast with Islam:

Dawkins made the news just this week when he said,

“There are no Christians, as far as I know, blowing up buildings. I am not aware of any Christian suicide bombers. I am not aware of any major Christian denomination that believes the penalty for apostasy is death,”

I agree with Dawkins for a change. Christians are known for building schools, hospitals and orphanages. Frankly, the universities the New Atheist received their degrees from were originally Bible colleges. The church invented higher education so man could understand the world and therefore understand the handiwork of God. So that He might have the praise. Times have changed. Today these same institutions teach an anti-god worldview that wars against their very founding.

**Psa 11:3 ESV**

“If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?”

One thing I have noticed, is that since atheist took over the universities there has been a noticeable change. The more innovation brought into public education, the more government control, the more reliance upon secular experts, has brought us only lower test scores and rampant violence. I don't think it's working.

The Bible says,

**Psa 111:10 NIV,**

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;”

That used to work, why did we change it?

Another of the New Atheist, Christopher Hitchens, who wrote, “God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything” recently died of cancer. He said of Christianity before he died:

“I think the teachings of Christianity are immoral. The central one is the most immoral of all, and that is the one of vicarious redemption . . . I can pay your debt if I love you. I can serve your term in prison if I love you very much . . .”

“It even manages to pollute . . . love, by making love compulsory, by saying you **MUST** love. You must love your neighbour as yourself, something you can't actually do.”

As Christopher Hitchens was dying, the Christian community that was spurned by his insults, made to be villains in his writings, and blamed for all that was wrong in the world, reached out to him in his last days. Prayer chains were started, preachers and theologians tried to meet with him, Christians on social media reached out, all exhorting him to accept the gospel. Christians, including myself cried when he died. Christians did the impossible according to Hitchens. . . they loved him.

Jesus believed in the impossible, maybe that makes him a fool,

**Matt 5:44 NIV**

I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

To me though, Christopher Hitchens was not my enemy. I saw a brilliant man who warred against an enemy that he didn't understand. Many of his criticisms of Christianity, by him and the New Atheist, are correct. The church has become businesslike; many Christians have never stopped to think why they believe what they do; in Christ's name people have committed heinous acts. But those who do such things ARE NOT FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST. They are false religion!

Christopher never met his name sake. He never met the Christ, the gentle shepherd that didn't come to condemn but to save a world that has condemned itself.

**John 3:18 NIV**

18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already . . .

Next, I would like to take you back a couple hundred years, back to the times known as The Enlightenment. It was during those "enlightened times" that men began to proclaim there was no god.

One of those Atheist, Friedrich Nietzsche, even though he didn't believe in God, turned out to be quite a prophet. His forecast of what would happen after his death is not due to him having the ability to see the future, but rather his intellectual honesty.

After announcing “God is dead”, he predicted two things would happen because of that belief:

“First, the 20th century would become the bloodiest, most catastrophically destructive century in history, and second, a universal madness would break out and turn the West upside-down. Truth would become lie and lie truth; evil would become good, the unnatural would become natural, and the unholy would become holy.”

Friedrich Nietzsche has been right on both counts, but it drove him insane for the last 11 years of his life.

In the 20th century, over a 100 million people died under communism which is inherently anti-god. This is more than all other centuries combined. Dictators led millions to their doom, promising security for power.

Sadly, we also see the second prediction coming true right before our eyes. We mainly see it in the break down of the rule of law. Criminals are protected and those who stand for truth literally incarcerated. Preachers are going to jail in Canada, the UK, and in the US Christians lives are destroyed for not baking cakes for acts they believe are morally wrong.

In this age, words have lost meaning. Everything is being reinterpreted based upon group identity. Only groups considered victimized are allowed to speak to their troubles. An outsider is not allowed to speak to the group, because it is reasoned an outsider could not possibly understand. So as a white male, I’m not suppose to speak on topics outside of my demographic. This is madness. Truth is not defined by color, race, or gender, simply whether it is true or not.

I could use many examples, but let me just focus on one. What medical journals once called Gender Dysphoria, was traditionally known as a mental illness. Today, has been redefined as a choice.

What I am about to tell you may sound like an April Fools Day joke, but it is not.

Many parents today can no longer tell the difference between a boy or a girl. When they look at their baby, naked from head to toe, they can’t figure it out.

Because parents today are so befuddled the government has stepped in to help. In California, gender is now left blank on birth certificates to give the child time to choose for himself. Children are considered a victim group, because they have no power, and it is not right for the parents or doctors to tell a child what gender he is. Only the child can make that call.

In the name of tolerance and political correctness, parents are pumping their children full of drugs, to delay puberty so their child can choose their preferred gender when they are ready. If the child decides he was born “wrong” alternative hormones are then given to get him ready for a sex change operation. If you say this is evil from the pits of hell, you are called a fool for believing in hell.

A college student during a political forum asked renown conservative speaker Ben Shapiro about this very same issue. She asked Ben why he promoted hate speech by denying that people can choose their gender. Ben asked her age.

“I’m 22,” she said, “so I’m probably naive, right?”

“No,” he said, wanting to ask her another question, “Why aren’t you 60? Why can’t you identify as 60? What is the problem with you identifying as 60?”

“It’s not the same as gender,” she retorted. Looking confused, and momentarily speechless, “You can’t just change . . .”

“You’re right!” Ben Shapiro said.

Just as you can’t change your age, you also can’t change your gender. Realize, she learned this at her university. This is what they teach now. Madness.

Last year I went to my doctor. There was paperwork to fill out by decree of the experts who run Illinois. New to the paperwork was a question that asked me my gender. There were three boxes: Male, Female, and fill in the blank. Out of protest I crossed out the question, I found it insulting.

I turned in the paperwork and headed back to see the doctor. The nurse checked my pulse, my blood pressure and weighed me. When I got on the scale it moved as far to the right as it could possibly go. As the nurse proceeded to write my weight down on her clipboard I stopped her, “Wait! Even though it says 375, I don’t identify as 375. I identify as only 175 pounds! Do you have something against fat people?”

I was joking, but I was trying to make a point. How can you give quality healthcare if you don't understand the biological differences between men and women?

**Prov 1:7 NIV**

7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

For my last example, the French atheist Voltaire.

He was well educated and a prolific writer. He wrote many things about the Christian faith. One of his most notable quotes,

“Christianity is the most ridiculous, the most absurd . . . religion that has ever infected the world.”

Again, here we have another atheist calling us fools. Even though he wrote that, he obviously knew there was something special about Christianity that was good. He knew that belief in God somehow held society together.

Voltaire also said,

"If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him."

As far back as Aristotle, greek philosophers talked about the “Noble Lie”. It is the idea that man can't live morally without a belief in god. A belief in a god must exist, just to keep man accountable. Voltaire was saying much the same thing. Many atheist have acknowledged, even though they don't believe Jesus is the Son of God, they don't want to live in a society without Judeo-Christian values.

I think deep down inside everyone knows there is a God, but they go to great lengths to disprove him, just to convince themselves. Why would they do this?

The Bible says,

**John 3:20 NIV**

20 Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

Isn't that really the truth. Man denies God, because he doesn't want to deny himself. Honestly, who you want to have sex with has more to do with what you believe, than all of the education in the world. Intellectuals hide their sin behind the pretense of academic pursuit. It's a safe place in Western Culture because people have been conditioned not to challenge the academic community.

There was much written of Voltaire when he died. He was not just dealing with the failure of the body, but he was also dealing with a failure in his convictions. He was having a crisis of conscious. He would go back and forth, crying out to God and then later cursing him. At one point, he even called the clergy to his bedside to just change his mind and blame them for his condition. At one point, a recantation was written and he signed it, but he would again change his mind, gnash his teeth and in anger curse God. In his final days he was heard saying, 'O, Christ! O, Lord Jesus! I must die-abandoned of God and of men!'

His nurse that attended him, said 'For all the wealth of Europe I would never see another infidel die.' In horrific anger he died with only his atheist friends to comfort him but they were not able to give him any hope.

The Bible had Voltaire and Nietzsche in mind this was written,

**Eccl 10:13 NIV**

13 At the beginning his words are folly; at the end they are wicked madness—

Nietzsche and Voltaire died mad, because they would not acknowledge what they knew deep down inside to be true.

Do you know what would really be foolish? Going one more day pretending you don't believe in God, because you do. Or not following God, because you're in love with your sin. Only a fool would deny the truth.