

Series: John

Title: For God So Loved

Text: John 3: 16

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John 3: 16: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

This is one of the most quoted verses. We see John 3:16 signs at sporting events, on athletes faces and in the crowd. We hear religious folk quote this verse often. Even non-religious folk know this verse.

Yet, it may be the least understood verse. It commonly taught that this verse means God loves everyone in the world without exception. They say that God loves sinners so much that he gave his only begotten Son and Christ redeemed every sinner without exception to give every sinner a chance to be saved. So they put salvation entirely in the sinner's hands saying that God has done all he can now it is up to you.

Some declare Christ's blood really did not save anyone. But, they say, it is up to the sinner to make Christ's blood effectual by his faith in Christ. They present faith as an exercise of man's will which they say is free to choose or reject Christ. So they leave sinners with the vain notion that whenever they get ready they can "give their heart to Jesus" and everything will be alright.

The problem is most people do not know what is before John 3:16 nor after. Who is speaking? The Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Who is he speaking to? Nicodemus, a natural born Jew who believed being born in Israel made him God's elect, he believed salvation was by the works of the law, by man's doing. So let's consider John 3:16 in its context

FOR GOD SO LOVED

"For God so loved" means for God "thus" loved or for God "after this manner" loved or God "on this wise" loved (the same word is used in vv 8, 14). Notice, the word "loved" is in the past tense. Whoever God loved, it is God who first loved them.

1 John 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us...

God loved whom he would freely, sovereignly of himself from eternity. Nothing outside of God moved God to love those he loved. Those God loved he loved without a cause in us. He did not set his love upon us because of any loveliness in us. Nor did he love us because we loved him. John said, '*We love him because he first loved us.*'

Whoever the "world" is that God loved, he loved them before he sent his Son—"For God so loved the world, that he sent his only begotten Son..." God did not send his Son in order to love us. God sent his Son because he loved us before, from eternity, everlastingly

1 John 4: 9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10: Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

The Father loved a people and chose us in his Son before the world began. In his purpose, God gave his Son for his people before the world began. Long before there was a sinner, God provided a Savior for those he loved. Before we fell in Adam, God loved us in the last Adam. Before we went astray, God made Christ the Shepherd of his sheep. Before we broke God's law, God made Christ our ransom. Before we became polluted, God provided his Son to be our cleansing Fountain. Long before we incurred the debt of sin, Christ stood as our Surety to pay our debt. Before we were cursed by the law, Christ was our Redeemer. Before we died, Christ was our Resurrection and our Life!

In scripture "the world" never means all men without exception. Our Lord was speaking to a Jew who thought he was God's elect because he was born in Israel. Christ used the word "world" and "whosoever" to declare that God has an elect people from among Jew and Gentile, a people throughout the world.

John 17: 1: These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: 2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him... 6: I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word...9: I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

GOD GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON

In what manner did God love those he gave to Christ? *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.*

God manifested his love for his people by giving his unspeakable gift—*his only begotten Son*. Do you see the love of God for his people? After this manner God loved his elect, Jew and Gentile, that he gave his only begotten Son. God gave the Son of his love. God gave his choice Son. God gave his only begotten Son

THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH

God loved his people by making it so we are saved through faith in Christ, apart from our works. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

He gave his only begotten Son who gave his life in the room and stead of his people, bearing our sin and our curse, to save us from our sins through faith in him.

John 3: 13: And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. 14: And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so [after this manner] must the Son of man be lifted up: 15: That whosoever believeth in him should not [shall not] perish, but have eternal life. 16: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17: For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might [shall] be saved.

God gave his Son to work the works his people could not work: to fulfill the law we could not fulfill, to put away our sins we could not put away, to make us the righteousness of God that

we could not make ourselves. Christ finished the work. There is no maybe or might. Those God loved shall be saved because Christ has justified us by his blood.

1 John 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son...the propitiation [the appeasement, satisfaction to God] for our sins.

Oh the love of God for his people! The offended Judge took his own holy Son, whom he dearly loved, and gave him up to suffer the pains of hell on the cross to accomplish the redemption of our souls, in order to save traitors and rebels who would never love him in return, except he creates love in us. Notice what Christ accomplished while we were yet sinners. Notice how it assures us we shall be saved by him now that we are reconciled to God and believe on his Son by his grace.

Romans 5: 6: For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7: For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8: But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9: Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10: For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Christ reconciled us by his blood. He justified his people by his blood so that each one shall be saved by his life. This another reason Christ said *we must be born again*. Since Christ reconciled his people, each one must be born of the Spirit and given faith in Christ. Without his regenerating work none would believe on Christ because by nature we loved darkness.

John 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. 20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

After this manner God loved his people, he sends the gospel to us and regenerates us by his Spirit and gifts us with faith to rest in his Son.

Titus 3: 3: For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another. 4: But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5: Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6: Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7: That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

After this manner God loved his people. He made our salvation to be by simple faith in Christ rather than by works which we could never accomplish so that salvation might be sure to all his elect Gentiles, as well as he elect Jews.

Romans 4: 16: Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might be* by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,...

After this manner God loved his people, he made salvation the free gift of God's grace

Romans 6: 23: the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 5:17: For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

After this manner God loved his people, he brings us to give God all the glory!

John 3: 21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

Isaiah 26:12: LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.

1 Cor 1: 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence. 30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Sinner believe on Christ. If you can then it is proof you are one he loved. That is so because he gives faith to those he loves. He says, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore in loving kindness have I drawn thee" (Jer 31: 3).

“Come ye sinners poor and needy
Weak and wounded by the fall
Jesus ready stands to save you
Full of pity, love, and power.

Let not conscience make you linger
Nor a fitness fondly dream
All the fitness He requires
Is to feel your need of Him.”

Brethren, for you and me who God has given faith in Christ, let us glory in God our Father and his Son our Savior by our witness and our walk declaring to lost sinners that which we do know, testifying that we have seen by his grace.

And for each other, John said, “*Beloved, if God [after this manner] loved us, we ought also to love one another. [after this manner.] (1 Jn 4: 11)*. Christ bore our sins—therefore we love each other by bearing one another's burden as he did ours. Christ restored us through the preaching of Christ and him crucified—therefore we love each other by restoring each other by holding up Christ our Substitute to one another as he did for us in the gospel. Christ sent the Holy Spirit to regenerate and turn us to Christ in faith—therefore we love by denying ourselves by waiting on the Spirit to bless the word to one another's heart as he used his ministers to do for us.

Amen!