

# John 3:14-16

## The Amazing Love of God

- 14** And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,
- 15** that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.
- 16** For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.
- 17** For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.
- 18** “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.
- 19** And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.
- 20** For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.
- 21** But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”

*The New King James Version. (1982). (Jn 3:14–21). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.*

### Introduction:

**“Does God love *all* humanity, even the Judas Iscariots and Adolf Hitlers of the world?”** At the time, I couldn’t answer that question with any degree of certainty. And although I was sitting under sound biblical teaching, I had begun entertaining the idea that God’s elect have a monopoly on His love. I couldn’t reconcile the idea of God loving His enemies with the following texts:

- **Psalm 5:5**, “You hate all workers of iniquity.”
- **Psalm 7:11**, “God is angry with the wicked every day.”
- **Psalm 26:5**, “I have hated the assembly of evil doers.”

Beyond *those* troubling texts, I was grappling with God’s explicit statements about hating Esau found in Romans 9 and Malachi 1. “Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.”

You have to admit, that’s a hard verse to refute. God’s hatred was unrelated to Esau’s conduct or character. It was rooted in His eternal, sovereign purposes.

The more I pondered those verses, the more resistant I became to acknowledging God’s love to all humanity. I failed to see the tragic effects such thinking had on my evangelistic fervency. I had adopted a self-righteous mindset, thinking God was absolutely repulsed by unbelievers—probably just as repulsed as I was. I became blind to all the Scriptures speaking to God’s steadfast love and compassion for the lost. Somewhere along the way, my love and compassion for sinners waned.

**I was convinced in my own mind. God loves the elect and hates the non-elect. End of discussion.**

But then, I read the following words by John MacArthur: Scripture clearly says that God is love. “The Lord is good to all, and His mercies are over all His works” (Psalm 145:9). Christ even commands us to love our enemies, and the reason He gives is this: “In order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous” (Matthew 5:45). The clear implication is that in some sense God loves His

enemies. He loves both “the evil and the good,” both “the righteous and the unrighteous” in precisely the same sense we are commanded to love our enemies.

In fact, the second greatest commandment, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” ([Mark 12:31](#); cf. [Leviticus 19:18](#)), is a commandment for us to love *everyone*. We can be certain the scope of this commandment is universal, because Luke 10 records that a lawyer, “wishing to justify himself . . . said to Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’” ([Luke 10:29](#))—and Jesus answered with the Parable of the Good Samaritan. The point? Even Samaritans, a semi-pagan race who had utterly corrupted Jewish worship and whom the Jews generally detested as enemies of God, were neighbors whom they were commanded to love. In other words, the command to love one’s “neighbor” applies to *everyone*. This love commanded here is clearly a universal, indiscriminate love.

Consider this: Jesus perfectly fulfilled the law in every respect ([Matthew 5:17–18](#)), including this command for universal love. His love for others was surely as far-reaching as His own application of the commandment in Luke 10. Therefore, we can be certain that He loved everyone. He *must* have loved *everyone* in order to fulfill the Law. After all, the apostle Paul wrote, “The whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” ([Galatians 5:14](#)). He reiterates this theme in [Romans 13:8](#): “He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.” Therefore, Jesus must have loved His “neighbor.” And since He Himself defined “neighbor” in universal terms, we know that His love while on earth was universal.

Do we imagine that Jesus as perfect man loves those whom Jesus as God does not love? Would God command us to love in a way that He does not? Would God demand that our love be more far-reaching than His own? And did Christ, having loved all humanity during His earthly sojourn, then revert after His ascension to pure hatred for the non-elect? Such would be unthinkable; “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes

and forever” (**Hebrews 13:8**) (John MacArthur, *The God Who Loves*, 102-03).

John’s simple explanation of those Scriptures compelled me to rethink my position on God’s love. Jesus was God. Jesus loved His neighbors—even His non-elect neighbors. Jesus was a friend to sinners. *Jesus loved His enemies*—all of them. How could I have missed *that*? What caused me to overlook such clear, vital truths about the character of God? The answer is pride, that hideous sin lurking in all of us, waiting for the opportunity to express itself.

If you wrestle with some of the verses I listed, or struggle to reconcile God’s love with his wrath, I’d recommend you pick up a copy of John’s book *The God Who Loves*.

Tommy Clayton

Content Developer and Broadcast Editor

## **Review:**

Is it not wonderful news to believe that  
salvation lies outside ourselves?

**Martin Luther**

- 11** Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness.

- 12** If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?
- 13** No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, *that is*, the Son of Man who is in heaven.

*The New King James Version. (1982). (Jn 3:11–13). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.*

## **LESSON**

- I. The Predetermination of the Sacrifice**
- II. The Provocation for the Sacrifice**
- III. The Purpose of the Sacrifice**

## **I. The Predetermination of the Sacrifice**

**14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,**

**as**

**Original Word:** καθώς

**Part of Speech:** Adverb

**Transliteration:** kathos

**Phonetic Spelling:** (kath-ocē')

**Short Definition:** just as, as

**Definition:** according to the manner in which, in the degree that, just as, as.

### **HELPS Word-studies**

**2531** *kathōs* (an adverb derived from **2596** /*katá*, "according to" and **5613** / *hōs*, "as compared to, to the extent of") – properly, "in proportion, to the degree that" (J. Thayer); *just as* (in direct proportion), corresponding to fully (exactly).

### **even so**

**houtó and houtós: in this way, thus**

**Original Word:** οὕτως

**Part of Speech:** Adverb

**Transliteration:** houtó and houtós

**Phonetic Spelling:** (hoo'-to)

**Short Definition:** thus, so, in this manner

**Definition:** thus, so, in this manner.

### **HELPS Word-studies**

**3779** *hoútō* (an adverb, derived from the demonstrative pronoun, **3778** / *hoútos*, "this") – *like this . . . ; in this manner, in this way* (fashion), *in accordance with this description* (i.e. corresponding to what follows); *in keeping with; along this line, in the manner spoken*

**And as Moses** - Jesus proceeds in this and the following verses to state the reason why he came into the world and, in order to this, he illustrates His design, and the efficacy of his coming, by a reference to the case of the brass serpent, recorded in **Numbers 21:8-9**. The people were bitten by flying fiery serpents.

There was no cure for the bite. Moses was directed to make an image of the serpent, and place it in sight of the people, that they might look on it and be healed. There is no evidence that this was intended to be a type of the Messiah, but it is used by Jesus as strikingly illustrating his work. Men are sinners. There is no cure by human means for the maladies of the soul; and as the people who were bitten might look on the image of the serpent and be healed, so may sinners look to the Saviour and be cured of the moral maladies of our nature.

**Lifted up** - Erected on a pole. Placed on high, So that it might be seen by the people.

**The serpent** - The image of a serpent made of brass.

**In the wilderness** - Near the land of Edom. In the desert and desolate country to the south of Mount Hor, [Numbers 21:4](#).

**Even so** - In a similar manner and with a similar design. He here refers, doubtless, to his own death. Compare [John 12:32](#); [John 8:28](#).

**John 12:32 - "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself."**

**John 8:28 - So Jesus said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me."**

“The heart of the Christian Gospel with its incarnation and atonement is in the cross and the resurrection. Jesus was born to die.”

— **Billy Graham,**

The points of resemblance between his being lifted up and that of the brass serpent seem to be these:

**1. In each case those who are to be benefited can be aided in no other way.** The bite of the serpent was deadly, and could be healed only by looking on the brass serpent; and sin

is deadly in its nature, and can be removed only by looking on the cross.

**2. The mode of their being lifted up.** The brass serpent was in the sight of the people. So Jesus was exalted from the earth raised on a tree or cross.

**3. The design was similar.** The one was to save the life, the other the soul; the one to save from temporal, the other from eternal death.

**4. The manner of the cure was similar.** The people of Israel were to look on the serpent and be healed, and so sinners are to look on the Lord Jesus that they may be saved.

**Must** - It is proper; necessary; indispensable, if men are saved. Compare [Luke 24:26](#); [Luke 22:42](#).

**The Son of man** - The Messiah.

## **must**

**dei: it is necessary**

**Original Word:** δεῖ

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** dei

**Phonetic Spelling:** (die)

**Short Definition:** it is necessary, inevitable

**Definition:** it is necessary, inevitable; less frequently: it is a duty, what is proper.

## **HELPS Word-studies**

**1163** *deí* – properly, what *must* happen, i.e. what is *absolutely necessary* ("it behooves that . . .

## **lifted up**

**hupsoó: to lift or raise up, to exalt, uplift**

**Original Word:** ὑψόω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** hupsoó

**Phonetic Spelling:** (hoop-so'-o)

**Short Definition:** I lift up, exalt



**Definition:** (a) I raise on high, lift up, (b) I exalt, set on high.

### **HELPS Word-studies**

**5312** *hypsóō* (from **5311** /*hýpsos*, "height") – properly, raise high (elevate), *exalt*.

**Luke 24:26 - "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?"**

**Luke 22:42 - saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."**

## **What necessitates the Cross**

### **1. The Glory of God**

#### **Romans 3:23**

- 23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,  
**24** being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,  
**25** whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,  
**26** to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus

*The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ro 3:23–26). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

## 2. The sinfulness of Man

“Before we can begin to see the cross as something done for us, we have to see it as something done by us.”

— John R.W. Stott

### Romans 3:10

As it is written:

- “There is none righteous, no, not one;  
11 There is none who understands;  
There is none who seeks after God.  
12 They have all turned aside;  
They have together become unprofitable;  
There is none who does good, no, not one.”  
13 “Their throat is an open tomb;  
With their tongues they have practiced deceit”;  
“The poison of asps is under their lips”;  
14 “Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.”  
15 “Their feet are swift to shed blood;  
16 Destruction and misery are in their ways;  
17 And the way of peace they have not known.”  
18 “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”*

**19** Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

**20** Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight.....

For there is no difference;

**23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

The New King James Version. (1982). (Ro 3:10–20). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

“The ground is level at the foot of the cross.”

— **Billy Graham,**

## **II. The Provocation for the Sacrifice**

**16** For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son,

**For God**

For

1063 *gár* (a conjunction) – *for*. While "*for*" is usually the best translation of 1063 (*gár*), its sense is shaped by the *preceding* statement –

**γάρ gar**; a contr. of **γε ἄρα ge ara** (*verily then*); *for, indeed* (a conjunc. used to express cause, **explanation, inference or continuation**)

Thomas, R. L. (1998). *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek dictionaries : updated edition*. Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc.

## **so loved**

### SO

3779 *hoútō* (an adverb, derived from the demonstrative pronoun, 3778 /*hoútos*, "this") – *like this . . . ; in this manner, in this way* (fashion), *in accordance with this description* (i.e. corresponding to what follows); *in keeping with; along this line, in the manner spoken*.

**οὕτω houtō** and **οὕτως houtōs**; adv. from 3778; *in this way, thus*:

Thomas, R. L. (1998). *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek dictionaries : updated edition*. Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc.

## **loved**

### **Aorist verb**

**agapaó: to love**

**Original Word:** ἀγαπάω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** agapaó

**Phonetic Spelling:** (ag-ap-ah'-o)

**Short Definition:** I love

**Definition:** I love, wish well to, take pleasure in, long for; denotes the love of reason, esteem.

### **Romans 5:8**

But God proves His love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

### **Ephesians 2:4**

But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,

## **the world**

2889 *kósmos* (literally, "something *ordered*") – properly, an "ordered system" (like the universe, creation); the *world*.

**The world** - All mankind. It does not mean any particular part of the world, but man as man - the race that had rebelled and that deserved to die. See [John 6:33](#); [John 17:21](#). His love for the world, or for all mankind, in giving his Son, was shown by these circumstances:

1. All the world was in ruin, and exposed to the wrath of God.
2. All people were in a hopeless condition.
3. God gave his Son. Man had no claim on him; it was a gift - an undeserved gift.
4. He gave him up to extreme sufferings, even the bitter pains of death on the cross.

**Nicodemus would have be shocked by this. The jews were very prejudice against the Gentiles. They where the scum, defiling, not deserving of the love of God. But rather only His displeasure and wrath. They were outside the Covenant.**

## **From Talmud**

### **The Superiority of Jews**

If a gentile hits a Jew, the gentile must be killed (BT Sanhedrin 58b).

A gentile who strikes a Jew deserves death. Striking a Jew is in God's eyes an assault on the Divine Presence. (BT Sanhedrin 58b).

All the blessings which gentiles enjoy come to them only because of God's regard for Israel. (BT Yebamoth 63a).

A Jew need not pay a gentile the wages owed him for work (BT Sanhedrin 57a).

If an ox of an Israelite gores an ox of a Canaanite (non-Jew) there is no liability; but if an ox of a Canaanite gores an ox of an Israelite...the payment is be in full. (BT Baba Kamma 37b).  
The deeds of Israel are righteous, but the gentiles are capable only of sin. (BT Baba Bathra 10b).

A gentile who observes a day of rest deserves death. (BT Sandendrin 58b).

God is displeased when Jews show hospitality to gentiles. (BT Sanhendrin 104a).

It is forbidden to teach gentiles the Law. (BT Hagigah 13a).

A gentile who studies the Law deserves death. (BT Sanhedrin 59a).

It is permissible to cheat a gentile in court. (BT Baba Kamma 113a).

For executing a gentile, only one person's testimony is necessary. (To kill a Jew, two witnesses are necessary). (BT Sanhendrin 57b0>

Jews may steal from Non-Jews

If a Jew finds an object lost by a gentile it does not have to be returned. (BT Baba Mezia 24a. Affirmed also in Baba Kamma 113b).

Property of gentiles is like the desert; whoever among the Jews gets there first, owns it. (BT Baba Bathra 54b).

If a gentile loses something, a Jew may keep it, even if he knows the owner. (BT Baba Kamma 113b).

God's love for this sinful world is shocking.

"For God so loved *the Jews*" would not have been shocking to a Jew. The Jews knew that they were God's chosen people and that He had set His special love on them ([Deut. 7:6-8; 10:14-15](#);

Mal. 1:2-3). So there was nothing new or shocking to the Jews about the fact that God loved the Jews.

“For God so loved *sinful* Jews” might have been a bit more of a stretch, but if a religious Jew thought about it, he might concede the point. Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness so that the sinning Jews who had been bitten by the fiery serpents could look to it and live. So, even though the self-righteous Pharisees thought that they were above common sinners (John 9:34), they might have agreed that God loved even sinful Jews.

But, “God so loved *the world*” was just plain shocking! By *world*, John’s Jewish readers would have immediately thought, *Gentiles*. Also, John often uses the word to refer to sinful people who were hostile toward Christ and eventually crucified Him (1:10; 7:7; 14:17; 15:18-19; 16:8, 20, 33; 17:6, 9, 14, 25; 1 John 5:19).

**John 1:10** He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

### **John 15:18**

“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you.

**19** If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

### **John 16:8**

**8** And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

### **John 17:14**

**14** I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

John wants us to understand that God's love goes beyond the Jews to Gentiles from "every tribe and tongue and people and nation" (Rev. 5:9). And, His love extends even to those who are His committed enemies (Matt. 5:43-45; Rom. 5:6-8, 10).

But this raises a difficult theological issue: If God loves even His enemies, why didn't He choose to save everyone? This conundrum has caused people to go in two erroneous directions, as I understand it. Some have said that since God hates the wicked (Ps. 5:5; 11:5), *world* in John 3:16 must be limited to the elect. If God loves the wicked, then it seems reasonable that He would have chosen to save them. So these Calvinistic brethren try to explain *world* as the elect from all over the world. But they deny God's love for all sinners.

On the other hand, some take John 3:16 to mean that God loves every single human being in exactly the same way. These Arminian brethren deny that God could have a special love for some whom He chose for salvation. They say that salvation depends on the will of man, not on the will of God. Thus they err by denying or dodging the many texts that speak of God's sovereign election.

So how do we resolve this tension? D. A. Carson wrote a helpful little book, *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God* [Crossway]. He explains (pp. 16-21) that the Bible speaks of the love of God in at least five distinguishable ways. (1) There is the peculiar love of the Father for the Son, and of the Son for the Father (John 3:35; 5:20; 14:31). (2) There is God's providential love over all that He



has made ([Gen. 1](#); [Matt. 6](#)). (3) There is God's salvific stance toward His fallen world ([John 3:16](#); [Ezek. 33:11](#)). (4) There is God's particular, effective, selecting love toward His elect ([Deut. 7:7-8](#); [10:14-15](#); [Mal. 1:2-3](#); [Eph. 1:4-5](#); [5:25](#)). (5) There is God's conditional love toward His own people, based on their obedience ([John 14:21](#); [15:10](#); [Jude 21](#); [Exod. 20:6](#); [Ps. 103:9-11](#), 13, 17-18).

Carson argues (pp. 74-77) that if you take any one of these aspects of God's love and try to force all the other biblical references into that one mold, you will sacrifice sound exegesis of those texts. He concludes (p. 77, italics his):

I argue, then, that both Arminians and Calvinists should rightly affirm that Christ died for all, in the sense that Christ's death was sufficient for all and that Scripture portrays God as inviting, commanding, and desiring the salvation of all, *out of love* (in the third sense...). Further, all Christians ought also to confess that, in a slightly different sense, Christ Jesus, in the intent of God, died effectively for the elect alone, *in line with the way the Bible speaks of God's special selecting love for the elect* (in the fourth sense...).

John MacArthur argues in the same fashion in *The Love of God* ([Word], pp. 12-20). He points out (p. 15) that as humans, love and hate toward the same person are not mutually exclusive: "We often speak of people who have love-hate relationships. There is no reason to deny that in an infinitely purer and more noble sense, God's hatred toward the wicked is accompanied by a sincere, compassionate love for them as well." In an endnote (p. 228) he clarifies, "What I am saying is this: God in a real and sincere sense hates the wicked because of their sin; yet in a real and sincere sense He also has compassion, pity, patience, and true affection for them because of His own loving nature."

In practical terms, this means that we can tell unbelievers that God loves them so much that He sent His only Son to die for their sins, *if they will repent and believe in Christ*. At the same time we

should warn them that if they do not believe in Christ, they are under God's righteous judgment and wrath ([John 3:18, 36](#)), which will be finalized for all eternity if they die in unbelief. And, since we know that none are able to repent and believe in Christ unless God grants it ([John 6:44, 65](#); [Acts 11:18](#)), we should be praying as we proclaim the gospel that He would be merciful in opening their blind eyes and imparting new life to them so that they can repent and believe.

In other words, we can and must offer the gospel freely to all sinners. It's shocking, but true, that God loves even the worst of sinners so much that He sent His unique Son to make provision for their salvation. But at the same time that we tell sinners this good news, we must also tell them the bad news:

Reformed theology has historically been the branch of evangelicalism most strongly committed to the sovereignty of God. At the same time, the mainstream of Reformed theologians have always affirmed the love of God for all sinners. John Calvin himself wrote regarding [John 3:16](#), "[Two] points are distinctly stated to us: namely, that faith in Christ brings life to all, and that Christ brought life, because the Father loves the human race, and wishes that they should not perish."

Calvin continues to explain the biblical balance that both the gospel invitation and "the world" that God loves are by no means limited to the elect alone. He also recognized that God's electing, saving love is uniquely bestowed on His chosen ones.

Those same truths, reflecting a biblical balance, have been vigorously defended by a host of Reformed stalwarts, including Thomas Boston, John Brown, Andrew Fuller, W. G. T. Shedd, R. L. Dabney, B. B. Warfield, John Murray, R. B. Kuiper, and many others. In no sense does belief in divine sovereignty rule out the love of God for all humanity.

We are seeing today, in some circles, an almost unprecedented interest in the doctrines of the Reformation and the Puritan eras. I'm very encouraged by that in most respects. A return to those

historic truths is, I'm convinced, absolutely necessary if the church is to survive. Yet there is a danger when overzealous souls misuse a doctrine like divine sovereignty to deny God's sincere offer of mercy to all sinners.

John MacArthur

**He gave His only begotten Son,**

**gave Aorist verb.**

love is attached to the historical act of the Cross

[Romans 8:32](#)

He who did not spare His own Son but gave up Him for us all, how will He not also, along with Him, freely give us all things?

### **III. The Purpose of the Sacrifice**

**15 that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.**

**v 16 ....that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life**

[John 3:18](#)

**Whoever believes** in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

John 3:36

**Whoever believes** in the Son has eternal life. Whoever rejects the Son will not see life. Instead, the wrath of God remains on him."

John 6:40

For it is My Father's will that **everyone who looks** to the Son **and believes** in Him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

John 11:25

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. **He who believes** in Me will live, even though he dies.

**That whosoever** - This shows the fulness and freeness of the gospel. All may come and be saved.

whoever does not mean that just anyone can be saved.

so often the emphasis is on whosoever.

But the whosoever

d **Believeth in him** - Whosoever puts confidence in him as able and willing to save. All who feel that they are sinners, that they have no righteousness of their own, and are willing to look to him as their only Saviour.

**Should not perish** - They are in danger, by nature, of perishing - that is, of sinking down to the pains of hell; of

being “punished with everlasting destruction” from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power, [2 Thessalonians 1:9](#). All who believe on Jesus shall be saved from this condemnation and be raised up to eternal life.

## **Perish aorist verb**

J. C. Ryle comments on [John 3:18](#) (*Expository Thoughts on the Gospels* [Baker], 3:163): “Nothing is so provoking and offensive to God as to refuse the glorious salvation He has provided at so mighty a cost, by the death of His only begotten Son. Nothing is so suicidal on the part of man as to turn away from the only remedy which can heal his soul.”

Steven Cole writes

“Many years ago, I conducted a funeral for a man from my church in California. On the brochure that the funeral home prints for such occasions was [John 3:16](#), cited as follows: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that whoever believes in Him shall have eternal life.” But they left out some crucial words: “shall *not perish* but have eternal life”! I don’t know whether the family or the funeral home was responsible for the omission, but I didn’t let it go. I pointed out during the service that while God has provided forgiveness of sins and eternal life for all who believe in Jesus, the verse also warns that all who do not believe in Jesus will perish.”

**Matthew Henry**

And here is the great gospel benefit, that whoever believes in Christ, shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and so saving it. It could not be saved, but through him; there is no salvation in any other. From all this is shown the happiness of true believers; he that believeth in Christ is not condemned. Though he has been a great sinner, yet he is not dealt with according to what his sins deserve. How great is the sin of unbelievers! God sent One to save us, that was dearest to himself; and shall he not be dearest to us? How great is the misery of unbelievers! they are condemned already; which speaks a certain condemnation; a present condemnation. The wrath of God now fastens upon them; and their own hearts condemn them. There is also a condemnation grounded on their former guilt; they are open to the law for all their sins; because they are not by faith interested in the gospel pardon. Unbelief is a sin against the remedy.