John Three Sixteen

John 3:16
7-28-2024

Introduction:

- **The clearest, most concise statement about the greatness of God's Love for sinners is found in John 3:16**

What did God love do for us?

I. ***God's Love:***
Made the Greatest <u>SACRIFICE</u>! ***("He gave")***

II. ***God's Love:***
Was Manifest to the Greatest <u>DEGREE</u>! ***("His Son")***

III. ***God's Love:***
Was Extended to the Greatest <u>NUMBER</u>! ***("the World")***

IV. ***God's Love:***
Fulfilled the Greatest <u>NEED!</u> ***("not perish")***

V. **God's Love:**
Provided the Greatest <u>GIFT!</u> ***("eternal life")***

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Introduction:

John 3:16 is the most quoted and well known single verse of Scripture in the Bible. This verse is so beloved and so frequently referred to because it encapsulates the key element of the Gospel and the key doctrines of the Christian faith.

This verse when expounded unfolds the doctrine of ...

the love of God (“For God so loved”);
The substitutionary sacrifice of His Son (“He gave his ... son”)
The uniqueness of Jesus Christ (“only begotten”)
God’s broad invitation to salvation (“whosoever believeth”)
The doctrine of the final judgment (“should not perish”)
The doctrine of eternal security for the believer (“ everlasting life”)

John 3:16 – “The Greatest Verse in the Bible” (by Elmer Towns)

“For God”	--	The greatest Being
“So”	--	The greatest degree
“Loved”	--	The greatest affection
“The world”	--	The greatest object of love
“That He gave”	--	The greatest act
“His only”	--	The greatest treasure
“Begotten”	--	The greatest relationship
“Son”	--	The greatest gift
“That whosoever”	--	The greatest company
“Believeth”	--	The greatest trust
“In Him”	--	The greatest object of faith
“Should not perish”	--	The greatest deliverance
“But have”	--	The greatest assurance
“Everlasting”	--	The greatest promise
“Life”	--	The greatest blessing

The "John Three Sixteen" Boy

One cold, wintery night a poor boy stood in the streets – homeless, houseless, friendless. He had become an associate of thieves, who were leading him on the broad road to destruction. That very night they had planned to commit a burglary and had appointed him to meet him in a certain street.

As he stood there waiting, shivering and cold, a hand was suddenly laid on his shoulder. It was dark, he could only see a tall form standing by him, and he trembled with fear: but a kindly voice said, "Boy, what are you doing here at this time of night? Such as you have no business in the streets at so late an hour, go home, go to bed."

"I have no home and no bed to go to."

"That's very sad, poor fellow! Would you like to go to a home and to a bed if I provided one?"

"That would I, sharp!" replied the boy.

"Well, in such a street and number you will find a bed."

Before he could add more the lad had started off. "Stop!" said the voice, "how are you going to get in? You need a pass; here is one for you – can you read?"

"No sir."

"well, remember that the pass is 'John 3:16', don't forget, or they won't let you in. 'John 3:16'. There that's something that will do you good."

Joyfully the lad rushed off repeating his lesson, and soon found himself in the street, and at the number indicated, before a pair of large iron gates. Timidly he rang the bell. The night porter opened, and in a gruff voice asked, "Who's there?"

"Me sir! Please sir, I'm John Three Sixteen," he said in very trembling tones.

"All right, in with you, that's the pass;" and in the boy went. He was soon in a nice, warm bed, and between sheets such as he had never seen before. As he curled himself up to go to sleep, he thought, "This is a lucky name, I'll stick to it!"

The next morning he was given a bowl of hot bread and milk before being sent out into the street, for this home was only for a night. He wandered on and on fearful of meeting his old companions, thinking over his new name when heedlessly crossing a crowded thoroughfare, he was run over. The unconscious boy was carried to the nearest hospital.

After his injuries had been attended to he was carried up into the accident ward. In a short time his sufferings brought on fever and delirium. Then was heard in ringing tones and oft repeated "John 3:16! It was to do me good, and so it has!"

These persistent cries aroused the other patients. Testaments were pulled out to see to what he pointed. What could he mean? And here one, and there another read the precious words. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." "It was to do me good and so it has!" the sufferer cried. When those poor sick folk read the tender words, and heard the unconscious comment – "It was to do me good, and so it has!" John 3:16 – the Spirit stirred within them, and used this one text from the lips of this poor ignorant boy in the hospital ward, and souls were saved.

Consciousness returned, and the poor little fellow gazed around him. How vast it looked and how quiet it was! Where was he? Presently the voice from the next bed said: "John Three Sixteen, how are you today?"

"Why, how do you know my new name?"

"Know it! You've never ceased with your 'John Thr-ee Sixteen,' and I for one say, 'Blessed John Thr-ee Sixteen!' " This sounded strange to the little lad's ears. To be called blessed! He for whom no one cared. "And don't you know where it comes from – it's from the Bible."

"The Bible! What's that?" The poor little waif had never heard of the Bible, that blessed Book, God's word to man. "Read it to me," he said, and as the words fell on his ear, he muttered, "That's beautiful, it's all about love, and not a home for a night, but a home for always!" He soon learned the text, saying "I've not only got a new name, but something to it." This was indeed a joy.

Days passed on, and there were changes in the ward, but our little friend never felt lonely; he fed on his text and its precious words.

On a cot by him lay an old man who was very ill. Early one morning a nun came to his bedside and said, "Patrick, how is it with you today?"

"Badly, badly," groaned the old man.

"Has the priest been to see you?" asked the nun.

"Oh! Yes, but that makes it worse; for he has anointed me with the holy oil, and I am marked for death. I'm not fit to die; oh, what shall I do?"

"Patrick, it's very sad to see you so," she gently answered, and then wishing him goodbye, went out. But how could this ease a dying man facing eternity, with his sins unforgiven. Poor Patrick groaned aloud. "God, ha' mercy," he cried, "I'm such a sinner, I'm not fit to die. What shall I do? Oh, what will become o' me?"

Our little fellow heard his miserable words. Poor old man, he wants a pass! "Patrick," he called, "I know something that will do you good – quite sure – it has done me good."

"Tell me, tell me quickly," cried Patrick; "if I only could find something to do me good."

"Here it is! Now listen: John 3:16. Are you listening?"

"Yes. Yes. Go on."

"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." Through these words, Patrick found peace in his dying hour, and entered into everlasting life.

Our little friend recovered. For long, John Three Sixteen was his one text. God blessed his simple faith; friends placed him at school, and now he is an earnest, hearty worker for the Master.

-Abridged

(Quoted from the Gospel Tract titled "John Three Sixteen" by Grace & Truth, 210 Chestnut St., Danville, IL 61832)

The grammatical subject of John 3:16 is God. There is no subject of higher substance than God. He is the initiator of salvation

The object of John 3:16 is the World. There is no needier place in the universe than this world with it's millions of lost, hopeless, spiritually barren souls. All of whom stand in need of God's salvation.

John 3:16 is a continuation and reemphasis of verses 14 & 15.
The lifting up of "the son of Man" (v.14) is anchored and rooted in the love of God.

The word "love" is the Koine Greek word "agapao." This is a special love. A love that has it's source only is God. (I John 4:7 – Love is of God)

The love of God is:

1. An Unconditional love *("For God")*
   The kind of love God has for people is not dependent upon the worthiness of them . This love, is a love that gives even when the recipient of that love is an unworthy, evil wretch (Rom. 5:8). God showed His love toward a world that was hostile toward Him. A world worthy of condemnation.
2. A Specifically demonstrated love *("So Loved")*
   God chose a very special & specific way to show His love to the world.
3. Giving Love *("He Gave")*
   It's a love that gives (hence it is often translated "charity" - I Cor. 13)
4. A Sacrificial Love *("His only begotten Son")*
5. A Merciful & Forgiving Love *("Should not perish")*
6. A Gracious Love *("But Have everlasting life")*

John 3:16, when carefully read answers the following questions:

John 3:16 answers the question: How did God love?
The Manifestation of His love
John 3:16 answers the question: Whom did God love?
The Objects of His love
The world
The "whosoevers"
John 3:16 answers the question: Why did God love?
The Motive of His love
He does not want us to perish
He wants us to have eternal life

- **The clearest, most concise statement about the greatness of God's Love for sinners is found in John 3:16**

What did God love do for us?

I. ***God's Love:***
Made the Greatest SACRIFICE! ***("He gave")***

God is a giver. As James puts it, "every good gift and perfect gift is from above" (James 1:17)

God only gives good and always gives good.

His greatest gift was that of His Son.

God's love gave; Giving is the essence of love. Hence the word is translated "charity" elsewhere (cp. I Cor.13)

II. ***God's Love:***
Was Manifest to the Greatest DEGREE! ***("His Son")***

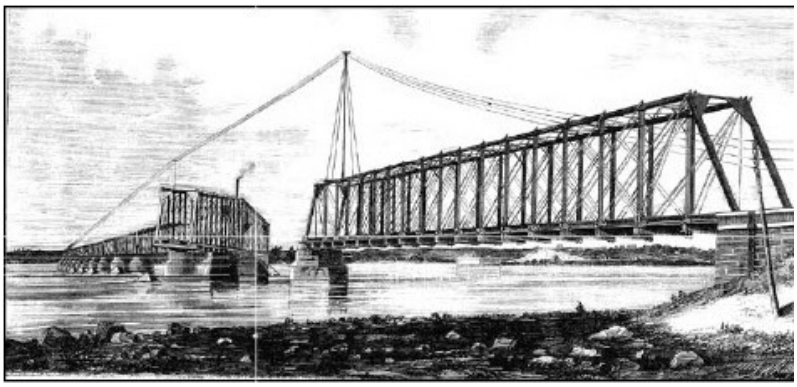
"Only begotten" – (monogenes) – mono=one; genes=kind; Literally the word means "one of a kind" or "unique" For example, every believer is called a "son of God" (I John 3:2), yet there is only one "only begotten" son; The angels are called the "sons of God" (Job 38:7); yet there is only one "only begotten" son – Jesus Christ.

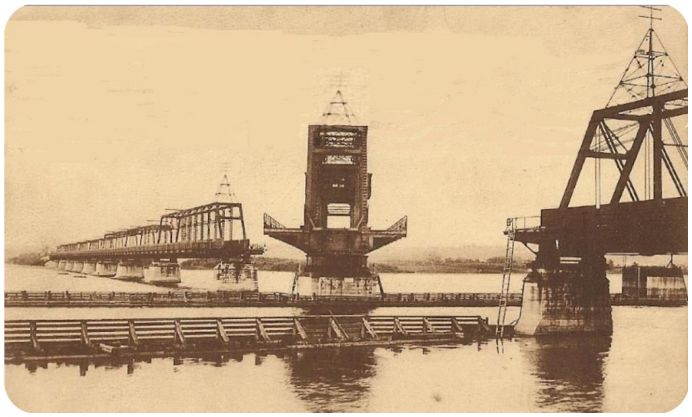
The word refers to uniqueness not origin.

Example: Abraham had many sons, but only one was called his "only begotten" (unique) son, and that was Isaac.

Hebrews 11:17
By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

The words "only begotten son" emphasize the greatness of the gift the Father gave. God the Father gave the world the best He had to offer – His unique, one of a kind son.





Swing bridge coming across the Mississippi River from Missouri into the Quincy bay

The Train & The Bridge

John Griffith's childhood ambition was to travel. He fantasized about it frequently, but that ambition crashed with the Great Depression of 1929. As the howling winds turned Oklahoma, his native state, into a dust bowl, this young man with his wife and small child packed his belongings in an old car and headed out to try to find a life somewhere else.

They made their way to Missouri and, as Dennis E. Hensley tells the story, John finally found a job as the controller of a great railroad bridge spanning the Mississippi River. Each day at certain hours, this massive bridge was raised so that the great freight and passenger trains could rush across. John found some delight in this because he often wondered what far places these people were visiting; and so he had some joy in their experience.

In the summer of 1937 John Griffith took his eight-year-old son, Greg, with him to work for the first time. Little Greg was understandably thrilled at the great railroad bridge and the stirring and exciting trains that roared across it. He marveled at the control house, filled with all sorts of levers over which his daddy had absolute, sovereign control. His father took him to an observation deck and told him that our here he could watch the boat and trains go by.

At noon, John Griffith but the bridge up to allow for some ships that were coming. Since there would not be a train to some while, he made his way along the catwalk to the observation deck. There he opened his brown bag and he and Greg had lunch. As they ate, John shared with his son some of the stories of various ships that had gone by and of the time the great flood had overflowed the banks of the Mississippi.

Just as John was telling his son that story, he was startled by the shrieking of a train whistle in the distance. He quickly looked at his watch. It was 1:07. He had forgotten the express for Memphis. With four hundred people on board, it would be roaring across the bridge in only a few moments. He leaped from the observation deck to the catwalk.

John raced back to the control tower. He placed his hand upon the massive controls and started to close the bridge. He glanced down under the bridge to see if there were any ships beneath it. A sight caught his eye that brought his heart leaping into his throat. Greg had slipped from the observation deck, and fallen into the gears that operated the bridge.

Greg's left leg was caught in the cogs of the two main gears. John knew if he pushed the lever, his son would be ground between four tons of whining, grinding steel. His mind whirled in panic and desperation. There was no way to free his son before the train would be upon the bridge. Again, the train whistle shrieked. He could hear the clicking for the locomotive wheels and rapid "puffing" of the approaching train. There were four hundred passengers on that train-four hundred souls!

John was a father, and this was his boy. He knew what he had to do. He heaved the lever of the massive gears. The Memphis Express thundered across the bridge. John lifted his face, smeared with tears, and looked into the passing windows of the train. Businessmen were reading their afternoon papers, conductors were looking at their large, vest-pocket watches and finely dressed ladies sipped coffee in the dining car, while children pushed long spoons into dishes of ice cream. With wrenching agony, John Griffith cried out to the steel train, "I sacrificed my son for you! Don't you care?" Nobody hear. The train rushed by.

From Coral Ridge Messenger
Fort Lauderdale, FL

III. ***God's Love:***
Was Extended to the Greatest <u>NUMBER</u>! ***("the World")***

In a broad sense, God loves everyone; In a specific sense, God loves those who belong to Him. He has a general love, even for the heathen (Mark 10:21); and He has a special love reserved for those who belong to Him.

(Example: I am to love everyone, even my enemies (Mt. 5:44); But I have a special love for my children; So it is with God)

Regardless of your race, skin color, age, social pedigree, appearance, or character, God loves you.

The word "world" (cosmos) is never used (as some would say this verse teaches) to refer to the "world of the elect" But in this context of vv.16-19 it refers to everyone, even those who will remain under condemnation in this world.

Not only does the word "world" refer to so many people, but the word "cosmos" refers to so many "bad" people. The word cosmos is most often used with the negative connotation of sin (I John 2:15-17; cp. John 1:10)

"Whosoever" – this includes anyone & everyone who believes.
You can insert your name in the place of whosoever.
No one who truly believes will be disappointed.

Romans 10:11-13 states:
For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. [12] For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. [13] For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Another great "whosoever" verse is Revelation 22:17: And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

IV. *God's Love:* **Fulfilled the Greatest NEED!** ***("not perish")***

To "perish" is to be destroyed; To be judged and sentences to eternal damnation.

The condition for salvation from perishing is "belief" or "faith"
Salvation is not automatically applied to people apart from faith.

Note the repeated emphasis on the necessary requirement of belief in this chapter (see verses 15; 18; 36)

"believeth in him" – i.e. in the Son; In Jesus Christ;
It is not enough to "believe in God" You must trust God's Son for salvation

Acts 16:31
And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.
Acts 4:12
Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Compare John 3:18 & 36

Jesus took your punishment when He was lifted up on Calvary!

Little Jim's Substitute

First day of school!
The boys and girls registered and the teacher let them make their own rules and the punishment for disobeying them. They decided there was to be no stealing, fighting, etc. The punishment for doing these things would be ten stripes across the bare back.
One day a boy could not find his lunch. The boys and girls looked everywhere and finally each one was questioned. Little Jim was found guilty.
Perhaps he was hungry; but whatever was his reason for doing it, he was guilty. So the teacher commanded him to take off his shirt, all saw how weak and underfed he was. Then he walked to the front crying, "I can't bear it! I can't bear it!"
Jimmy's pitiful cry touched many hearts. Just then, Big Tom, a big, strong boy, stood up and said, "I'll take Little Jim's place."
The teacher turned to the boys and girls and asked, "Will it be right if Big Tom takes Little Jim's punishment?"
Yes, they agreed this would be just and fair. So Big Tom took off his shirt and received the stripes across his bare back which were Little Jim's due for stealing the dinner-pail. Then the teacher said, "Little Jim, you come now and take your punishment."
"Oh, no," shouted the children, "you can't punish Big Tom and Little Jim, too. Big Tom took Little Jim's place and Jimmy is free."
The teacher now turned to the children and said, "Yes, you are right, Little Jim is free and this is just what I want to tell you about the Lord Jesus and ourselves. We are all guilty sinners and deserve to be punished forever but the Lord Jesus went to the cross and bore our punishment instead. Like Big Tom,

He took our place, and if we believe in Him and accept Him as our Substitute, we go free. God who in love gave His Son and punished Him in our stead will not punish us too, if we believe in Him."

V. God's Love: Provided the Greatest <u>GIFT!</u> *("eternal life")*

If its "eternal," it will last forever!

"eternal" – Illustration: If a bird was to pick up in it's beak one grain of sand and transport it from the east coast of America to the west coast. By the time every grain of sand was transported, eternity would just be beginning.

If its "eternal," you can't lose it!
God gives "everlasting" life not temporary life.

"There are only two possible responses to Jesus: belief or unbelief. And there are only two possible destinies to which those responses lead: eternal life ... or eternal death" (Swindoll, p. 43)

Conclusion: Notice the verbs of John 3:16:

On God's part: "loved ... gave"
On Man's part: "believeth...should not perish...but have"

Do you believe on the Son of God? Will you take Him by faith?

THE ART COLLECTOR'S SON

Author Unknown

Years ago, there was a very wealthy man who, with his devoted young son, shared a passion for art collecting. Together they traveled around the world, adding only the finest art treasures to their collection.

Priceless works by Picasso, Van Gogh, Monet and many others adorned the walls of the family estate.

The widowed, elder man looked on with satisfaction, as his only child became an experienced art collector. The son's trained eye and sharp business mind caused his father to beam with pride as they dealt with art collectors around the world.

As winter approached, war engulfed the nation, and the young man left to serve his country. After only a few short weeks, his father received a telegram. His beloved son was missing in action. The art collector anxiously awaited more news, fearing he would never see his son again. Within days, his fears were confirmed. The young man had died while rushing a fellow soldier to a medic.

Distraught and lonely, the old man faced the upcoming Christmas holidays with anguish and sadness. The joy of the season, a season that he and his son had so looked forward to, would visit his house no longer.

On Christmas morning, a knock on the door awakened the depressed old man. As he walked to the door, the masterpieces of art on the walls only reminded him that his son was not coming home. As he opened the door, a soldier greeted him with a large package in his hand. He introduced himself to the man by saying, "I was a friend of your son. I was the one he was rescuing when he died. May I come in for a few moments? I have something to show you."

As the two began to talk, the soldier told of how the man's son had told every one of his, not to mention his father's, love of fine art.

"I'm an artist," said the soldier, "and I want to give you this."

As the old man opened the package, the paper gave way to reveal a portrait of the man's son. Though the world would never consider it the work of a genius, the painting featured the young man's face in striking detail. Overcome with emotion, the man thanked the solider, promising to hang the picture above the fireplace.

A few hours later, after the soldier had departed, the old man set about his task. True to his word, the painting went above the fireplace,

pushing aside thousands of dollars of paintings. And then the man sat in his chair and spent Christmas gazing at the gift he had been given.

During the days and weeks that followed, the man realized that even though his son was no longer with him, the boy's life would live on because of those he had touched. He would soon learn that his son had rescued dozens of wounded soldiers before a bullet stilled his caring heart.

As the stories of his son's gallantry continued to reach him, fatherly pride and satisfaction began to ease the grief. The painting of his son soon became his most prized possession, far eclipsing any interest in

the pieces for which museums around the world clamored. He told his neighbors it was the greatest gift he had ever received.

The following spring, the old man became ill and passed away. The art world was in anticipation! Unmindful of the story of the man's only son, but in his honor, those paintings would be sold at an auction.

According to the will of the old man, all of the art works would be auctioned on Christmas Day, the day he had received his greatest gift.

The day soon arrived and art collectors from around the world gathered to bid on some of the world's most spectacular paintings.

Dreams would be fulfilled this day; greatness would be achieved as many would claim, "I have the greatest collection."

The auction began with a painting that was not on any museum's list. It was the painting of the man's son. The auctioneer asked for an opening bid. The room was silent.

"Who will open the bidding with $100?" he asked. Minutes passed. No one spoke.

From the back of the room came, "Who cares about that painting? It's just a picture of his son."

"Let's forget it and go on to the good stuff." More voices echoed in agreement.

"No, we have to sell this one first," replied the auctioneer. "Now, who will take the son?"

Finally, a friend of the old man spoke, "Will you take ten dollars for the painting? That's all I have. I knew the boy, so I'd like to have it."

"I have ten dollars. Will anyone go higher?" called the auctioneer.

After more silence, the auctioneer said, "Going once, going twice. Gone." The gavel fell.

Cheers filled the room and someone exclaimed, "Now we can get on with it and we can bid on these treasures!"

The auctioneer looked at the audience and announced the auction was over. Stunned disbelief quieted the room.

Someone spoke up and asked, "What do you mean it's over? We didn't come here for a picture of some old guy's son. And what about all of these other paintings? There are millions of dollars of art here! I
demand that you explain what's going on here!"

The auctioneer replied, "It's very simple. According to the will of the father, whoever takes the son gets it all."

Just as those art collectors discovered on that Christmas Day, the message is still the same - the love of a Father, a Father whose greatest joy came from His Son, who went away and gave His life rescuing others.

And because of that Father's love, whoever takes the Son, gets it all!