

The Book of John - 20



Introduction: We have looked at and dealt with the **first 15 verses** of John 3. We have seen the **World's Greatest Tragedy** and the **World's Greatest Truth**. Continuing this chapter, we come to **verse 16**, the **World's Greatest Text**.

Let's read together out loud **verse 16**.

John 3:16 *"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."*

Martin Luther called the **16th verse** of **chapter 3** the 'miniature Gospel' because it captures the whole story of the Bible.

Notice that **verses 15 and 16** contain the precious promise of eternal life by believing in Him.

John 3:15 *"15 That whosoever believeth **in him** should not perish, but **have** eternal life."*

John 3:16 *"16 ..., that whosoever believeth **in him** should not perish, but **have** everlasting life."*

The word "have" and eternal life in verses **15 and 16** allude to two different things.

1. That the promise that eternal life is the **present possession of believers**.

John 3:36 *"36 He that believeth on the Son **hath everlasting life**: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."*

2. That the possession of eternal life is secure and **kept by the power of God**.

We could say it this way, "they have eternal life and keep on having eternal life," as that verb signifies a continual action.

As we go through the Bible, we are given truth, which is progressively unfolded.

In **Genesis chapter 1**, we have God's **creative work** summed up. *"And God said..."* (**Genesis 1:3; 1:6; 1:9; 1:11; 1:14; 1:20; 1:24; 1:26; 1:28; 1:29**)

In **Exodus chapter 20**, we have **God's legislative work** summed up. (Commonly referred to as the ten commandments.)

But here in **John chapter 3**, **God's redemptive work** is summed up.

There are five sets of words we could couple together as we look at this verse further:

“God” and “Son” - This shows us the **giver** and the **gift**. God the Father gave God the Son.

“loved” and “gave” - This speaks to God’s full expression of love to us.

“world” and “whosoever” – These words express both the extent and the individuality of the Gospel.

God extends eternal life to **the world to those who believe in Him**. (The word used is *kosmos* and signifies not the circle of the globe by rather all the people in it). The grand design of God is that salvation is available to all. As John Phillips stated, “it as though that person were the only one in the world.”

“believeth” and “have” - Signifies our faith towards God and the subsequent guaranteed reception of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. On one occasion, it has been said that someone came up to D.L. Moody and said, “I can’t believe.” To which Mr. Moody replied, **“Whom** can’t you believe?”

“perish” and “life” - These are the two opposites poles and destinations of those who believe and those who do not.

There are those who die in their sins and perish...

John 8:23-24 *“23 And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. 24 I said therefore unto you, that **ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.**”*

There are those who believe in Him and possess eternal life with the Lord Jesus Christ. **Matthew 18:11** has the same word translated as ‘lost.’ *“11 For the Son of man is come to save that which was **lost.**”* These two words, ‘perish’ and ‘life,’ are opposites and are put in stark contrast to one another.

The Lord’s conversation with Nicodemus was to open His eyes to the truth that He must be born again. And that could only occur if He believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. As we have seen up to this point, the witnesses, beginning with John the Baptist, repeatedly testify to you and me what this verse states.

And that is this:

- God loves us. *“For God so loved the world...”*
- God’s love is why He gave. *“...that He gave...”*
- God gave His only begotten Son. *“...that He gave His only begotten Son...”*
- God’s design is for all men to believe and receive eternal life.

“...that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

This wonderful verse begins with the eternal One— God Himself and ends with eternal life. In the center of the verse is His Son.

John Phillips observed, “God has no plan, no program for this world or any other, no purpose in the universe or in time or eternity, that does not center in His Son. Any measure in which our thinking centers in Christ is the measure in which our thinking is in harmony with the mind of god. Any thinking that is not Christ-centered is in that measure out of harmony with the mind of God. Our plans and purposes can succeed in the long run only in proportion to whether or not they are centered in God’s Son.”

The last section we will deal with before we see some statements by the Lord concerning John the Baptist is **The World’s Greatest Test**.

Notice how the record is set straight in **verse 17**.

John 3:17, “**17 For God, sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.**”

When we consider this thought, we see that the portrayal of God as a condemning tyrant is to malign the character of God. When we look at the Scriptures in totality, the outstanding presentation of God is that He loves us...even as we see in **John 3:16**. Satan’s tactic, even as seen in Genesis 3, is to malign the character of God! John sets the record straight concerning the first advent of the Lord and God’s redemptive plan. He did not come to condemn us. The Bible teaches that we are already in a state of condemnation without Christ. Therefore, He came not to finally condemn us but to save us.

“The earth is a rebel planet, one that has gone astray.” - John Phillips.

The Lord Jesus Christ reveals God’s love toward us! This is seen in the very words used in this marvelous verse.

In **verse 16**, God the Father **gave** His only begotten Son.

In **verse 17**, God the Father **sent** His Son.

The word translated as sent is the same word from which we get the word apostle, which means “sent ones.” As the apostles were sent ones with a message, so our Lord was sent with a message. What is that message?

The Bible says in that wonderful verse, **Romans 5:8**, “**8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**”

Verses 18-19 then demonstrate who is condemned.

John 3:18-19 *“18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is **condemned already**, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 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.”*

This is the **world’s greatest test**. Why? Because of the choice between coming to the Light or remaining in darkness.

Notice what the text says,

- a. Because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son.
- b. Because Light is come into the world.
- c. Because men love darkness.
- d. Because their deeds are evil.

King Herod is a classic illustration of a man who loved darkness.

He murdered His wife’s brother.

He murdered His favorite wife’s parents.

He murdered His favorite wife (Mariamme I - one of ten wives).

He murdered both of His sons. (Alexander and Aristobulus)

He murdered the Hasmoneans.

He left instructions upon his death:

1. To execute the recently imprisoned Jewish elders so that the people would be mourning during his death.
2. To execute his other son Antipater.

And yet, at that time, Light invaded the land; he murdered the babes in Bethlehem. The explanation for this love of darkness is shown in **verse 20**. Notice what the Bible says in **John 3:20**.

“For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov’d.”

One expositor said, “No wonder that Ahab hated Elijah and Micaiah, that Jehoiachin destroyed the prophets’ roll, that Herodias hated John and the Pharisees Christ.”

What can dispel the darkness in the life of a man? The answer is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Light. This was the choice before Nicodemus, come to Christ that ye may be born again. Believe in Him... step into the Light.