

# A Great And Misunderstood Statement

## I. Introduction.

- A. There are several profound and great verses in the Bible regarding God's love for man.
- B. One is "for God is love" (1 John. 4:8).
- C. Another verse is 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"*.
- D. John 3:16 is memorized, quoted, and referred to perhaps more than any verse in the entire Bible.
- E. Unfortunately it is also among the most misunderstood verse in the Bible.
- F. It is this kind of misunderstanding that has allowed so many people to believe that just as long as they simply believe they are saved.
- G. Explore with me this verse to determine its meaning and why the verse is such a great statement and also misunderstood.

## II. This statement is great because of the one who loved... *"God so loved"*.

- A. It is the everlasting, unchallengeable, all knowing, omnipresent, and absolutely holy God who created all that is in existence - He loved (Deuteronomy 33:27, Hebrews 6:17-18, Job 34:21, Psalm 139, Leviticus 11:44, Genesis 1, 2).
- B. After making this statement the following questions are produced;
  - 1) If God is all knowing and is love why did He create man knowing before hand that he would chose to sin?
  - 2) If God created man knowing that he would sin, and sin would separate them, where is the love in that?
- C. The answer is, God created man because He is love and desires to be loved.
  - 1) He created man with the ability to choose to love him.
  - 2) God could have easily created man without a choice.
- D. There is no greater love than one created by choice.
- E. Paul gives us a very important insight concerning the power of love in 1 Corinthians chapters 12 and 13.
  - 1) In Paul's correcting them on their behavior toward members in the local church that had different abilities of miraculous gifts he explains that they all are necessary for the edification of the church.

2) Then he told them *...but earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way, 1 Corinthians 12:31.*

3) This more excellent way he then explains in chapter 13 is love.

F. Love is not man's first choice over miraculous gifts.

G. God says it is the greatest

1) you can move mountains, raise the dead, foretell the future, but if there is no love it is worthless.

H. If we want to be like God we must love the way God loves.

### III. **This is a great statement because of who he loves... "For God so loved THE WORLD".**

A. John is not talking about God loving the physical world.

1) He is referring to God's love for mankind. *"But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" Romans 5:8*

a) Clearly proves man is totally unworthy to be a recipient of God's love and demonstrates the greatness of God's love for man.

B. Man tends to give his love to only those who deserve it.

1) This makes the great statement even more impressive considering that He loved the world while everyone was His enemy (**Romans. 5:8**).

C. He still allows His enemies to partake in His Son's atoning sacrifice made on the cross.

1) The extent of God's love is seen in *"that he gave his only begotten Son."*

2) The love of **John 3:16** is unselfish and seeks the well being of the one so loved. The Father loved so much that he gave his "only begotten Son."

3) Jesus was unique (only begotten which means one of a kind).

### IV. **The statement is great because of how many God loved.**

A. The universality of God's love is seen in *"that WHOSOEVER believes."*

1) The Pharisees concept in John's day limited God's love to the Jews (Matt. 5:43 ff.).

B. The Augustinian view would seek to circumvent God's love to the "elect".

1) Those who have been arbitrarily predestined to be saved (called Calvinism today).

- C. The scriptures teach...". *If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will eat with him, and he with me*" (Revelation. 3:20).

**V. The statement is great because of its negative thought.**

- A. The verse says, "That whosoever believes in him *SHOULD NOT PERISH.*"
- B. Perish is the opposite of "everlasting life."
- 1) "Should not perish is literally translated "may not perish" (Marshall in Nestle's Interlinear Greek-English New Testament).
- C. This lack of permission to perish, however, is conditional.

**VI. The statement is great because of its positive thought.**

- A. The opposite of perish, as seen, is "HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE."
- 1) There shall only be two classes of individuals, "*And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life*" Matthew 25:46.
  - 2) Jesus presents in detail the two classes (Matt. 25:31-46).
- B. "Everlasting life" is indicative of the greatness and bliss, which awaits the saved (2 Corinthians. 5:1-9, Revelation 20 - 22).
- 1) "Everlasting life" is the inheritance which is reserved in heaven for the saved (1 Peter 1:4, Titus 1:2).

**VII. The statement is great because of the condition.**

- 1) Upon the meeting the condition man can enjoy the benefits of God's wonderful love.
- B. The condition is:
- 1) "*that whosoever BELIEVES IN HIM should not perish..*"
  - 2) Let it be immediately understood, this "belief" is not a dead, inactive faith (James 2:14-26).
  - 3) This faith is "faith which is worked by love" (Galatians 5:6, 1 John 5:3).
- C. "Faith only," never saved anybody.
- 1) James wrote that... "*You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!*" James 2:19.
  - 2) Demons believe yet we understand they are not saved.

- 3) The Amplified New Testament translation states it as, " whosoever believes in, trusts, clings to, and relies on".
- 4) Jesus said there are people who believe in Him.
  - a) They are doing things they believe are righteous.
  - b) Judgment day He will tell them to go away from Him because they were doing things without the authority of God (Matthew 7:21-22).

D. Belief alone will not save them.

E. Those who believe in him are those who;

- 1) Repent (turn away from a former way of living)
- 2) Confess Jesus as the Christ.
- 3) Are baptized for the forgiveness of sin (Acts 2:38, Romans 10:9,10; Acts 2:38, see Acts 16:30-34.
- 4) The Lord then adds them to his church (Acts 2:47, Galatians 3:26-27).

#### **VIII. Conclusion.**

- A. It's true that *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life"* is a great statement.
- B. It's not true that only believing will save someone.
- C. Understanding God is love and because of that love He provided his only Son as a sacrifice for us, but God has conditions.
- D. When Peter was asked, he explained God's simple conditions
  - 1) *"Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"* Acts 2:38.
- E. This was the very same thing Jesus told his disciples to teach, *"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned"* Mark 16:16.
- F. Don't fall into a false sense of security by thinking that people only need to believe in order to be saved, remember the Demons they also believe!

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