

## **EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT GOD**

**John 3:16**

**By Andy Manning**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. Today we're going to study the most popular verse in the Bible – John 3:16.
2. Theologian Herschel Hobbs called it the Gospel in Superlatives. Bible Scholar A. T. Robertson referred to as the Little Gospel. It's been called the Mount Everest of Holy Scripture. It's been called the most exquisite flower in the Garden of Scripture. Some call it the gospel in a nutshell. Martin Luther called John 3:16 the little Bible, or the miniature Bible, because it contained in the message of the enter Bible.
3. **Jerry Vines** "If all the other verses in the Bible were lost but this one, we would nonetheless still have them since all the rest of the verses of the Bible are contained in John 3:16."
4. Some call John 3:16 the inexhaustible text, because it never gets old. D.L. Moody met a young preacher in England named Henry Moorhead and invited him to preach at his Chicago church, should he ever come to America. To his great surprise, he received a telegram from the young man saying, "I have landed in New York. I will be coming to Chicago to preach for you." Moody was going to be away and instructed that Moorhead be allowed to preach one night. When he returned he discovered young Moorhead had preached several nights with growing crowds and many coming to Christ. Even more surprising, Moorhead had used John 3:16 as his text each night. Even more interesting, Henry Moorhead started preaching at age 16 and continued until his death at 33. His text for every sermon he preached was John 3:16. The sermons were different, but the text was the same. (Jerry Vines)
5. In 2012, Tim Tebow led the Denver Broncos against the Pittsburg Stealers in the playoffs. Tebow was famous for wearing "John 3:16" under his eyes, which caused thousands of fans over the years to search it up online, and many people to get saved. After that game, the stats were amazing. Tebow threw for 316 yards; he average 31.6 yards per pass; and CBS TV ratings peaked at 31.6.
6. This verse is so important because it contains everything you need to know about God.

### **II. TEXT:**

1. **John 3:16** "For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."

### **III. FOUR REVELATIONS ABOUT GOD**

#### **1. The existence of God.**

- i. **John 3:16** "For God..."
- ii. In the Greek text there is a definite article that literally means, "The God." Which God is this verse talking about? The only God there is!

- iii. John 3:16 addresses a number of “isms.” The phrase “For God” addresses atheism, which claims there is no God. The phrase “loved” addresses narcissism, which claims that life is all about me, myself, and I. The phrase “the world” addresses racism, which claims that some races are superior than others. The phrase “He gave” addresses materialism, which claims that it is better to get than to give. The phrase “his one and only Son” addresses Judaism, which claims that the Messiah has not yet come. The phrase “so that everyone” addresses Calvinism, which claims that Christ only died for some. The phrase “who believes” addresses Roman Catholicism, which claims that salvation is by faith and works. The phrase “in him” addresses pluralism, which claims that there are many roads to heaven. The phrase “will not perish” addresses annihilationism, which claims that there is no hell. The phrase “but have eternal life” addresses Wesleyanism, which claims that you can lose your salvation.
- iv. John 3:16 does not declare the existence of God, it assumes it, just as the first verse in the Bible does.
  - v. **Genesis 1:1** “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”
  - vi. There is a God, and you’re not Him.
  - vii. There is plenty of evidence for God’s existence, if you are only willing to see it. Let me make three brief arguments for the existence of God.
    - 1. Something cannot come from nothing. This is called the cosmological argument.
      - a. How do we know there is a God? Because there is something rather than nothing. Where did the earth and the sun and the stars and the universe come from? The big bang? What caused the big bang? To explain the existence of the universe, there had to be a first cause, a first mover, a self-existent God to get it all started.
      - b. **Frank Turek** “According to evidence, the universe began from nothing – literally no thing physical, temporal, or spatial. Once there was no time, no space, and no matter, and then it all banged into existence out of nothing. What caused this creation event? To answer this, it is important to realize that the Big Bang was not an explosion in space but the explosion of space. It was not an explosion in time but the beginning of time. It was not an explosion of pre-existing matter, but the creation of matter itself. Therefore, the cause of the universe must be something beyond space, beyond time, and beyond matter – a Being who is spaceless, timeless, and immaterial. Those are attributes of God!”
    - 2. Design is proof of a designer. This is called the teleological argument.

- a. What are the chances that a tornado might blow through a junkyard containing all the parts of a 747, accidentally assemble them into a plane, and leave it ready for takeoff? The universe is infinitely more complex than a 747. The complex nature of the universe implies that there must have been a designer behind its structure. If you have a watch, there has to be a watchmaker. If there's order, there must be an order maker.
  - b. Or consider the complexity of the human body. Dr. Richard Swenson said that there is nothing in the universe that is as densely organized or complex as the human body. When you look at your cell phone, it is obvious that it had a designer. Someone with a lot of intelligence had to put it together. It is so complex. What is more complex? A cell phone or the human body? The human body. Your DNA, digestive system, nervous system, and cardiovascular system are infinitely more complex than an iPhone. And so if the iPhone obviously had a designer, then it's obvious that the human body had a designer, too.
3. The moral law in our hearts proves the existence of a moral law giver. The is called the moral argument.
- a. The Bible says that God has written His law on the human heart, so that all human beings throughout history have the same basic moral sentiments.
  - b. Who is a better person – Mother Theresa or Hitler? Regardless of your theology, everyone in this room would agree that it is Mother Theresa. But why? How do we know that? Because what we are doing in our minds is comparing Mother Theresa and Hitler to a Moral Law in our hearts; and because Mother Theresa better conforms to that Moral Law, we know instinctively that she is the better person.
- viii. The first revelation of this passage is the existence of God.

## 2. The love of God.

- i. **John 3:16** “loved the world in this way”
- ii. **Jerry Vines** “The fundamental assertion about God in the Bible is “God is love.” God is omnipresent; He is everywhere. God is omnipotent; He is all powerful. God is omniscient; He knows everything. But, supremely, God is love.”
- iii. **1 John 4:8** “God is love.”
- iv. In English we use the word “love” to mean different things. I love my wife, and I love basketball. I love god, and I love the beach. But obviously my love

for my wife is different than my love for basketball, my love for God is different than my love for the beach. The Greek language (of the New Testament) was more specific. It has several words for love that are more specific.

1. *Eros*, from which we get our word erotic, refers to a sensual, romantic affection. This word is not found in the Bible.
  2. *Philos*, from which we get the word Philadelphia, refers to the affection between friends.
  3. *Storge* refers to the affection between family members.
  4. *Agape* love is the word used in John 3:16. It is spiritual love. It is a love that desires to give. It is not based on the worthiness of the object, but the character of the one loving. It is used 36 times in the gospel of John.
- v. “For God love the world in this way.” Other translations say, “For God so loved the world,” or “For God loved the world this much.” The Greek word is *houtos*. The Greek scholar Thayer says it is an adverb of degree, which means it can be translated, “to such an infinite degree.”
- vi. **Jerry Vines** “There are volumes in that little word. God’s love is not like a trickling stream; instead it is like a flooding river. It is not like a leaky faucet; instead it is like a bottomless ocean. It is not like a flickering lightning bug; instead it is like a blinding sun.”
- vii. How can we describe God’s love?
1. God’s love is unconditional.
    - a. **Romans 5:8** “But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
    - b. A young couple left their six year old with a babysitter. When they returned they found their little girl crying in her bed. Why are you crying, darling? “Because the babysitter said if I wasn’t good, you wouldn’t love me.” They quickly assured her that their love was unconditional.
    - c. The hymn, Jesus loves Me: Jesus loves me when I’m good, when I do the things I should. Jesus loves me when I’m bad, though it makes Him very sad.
    - d. Who does God love? The world. Who is the world? Sinful human beings.
  2. God’s love is eternal.
    - a. **Jeremiah 31:3** “I have loved you with an everlasting love.”
    - b. The Hebrew word for everlasting means “beyond the vanishing point.”
    - c. God never started loving you; He always loved you. God will never stop loving you. His love is eternal.

- viii. **Sally Lloyd-Jones** has described God's love as "never stopping, never giving up, unbreaking, always and forever love."

### 3. The gift of God.

- i. **John 3:16** "He gave His one and only Son"
- ii. How much does God love us? So much that He gave His one and only Son to suffer and die for us; to pay for our sins so that we can be forgiven and reconciled to God and receive eternal life.
- iii. **J.I. Packer** wrote, "The measure of love is how much it gives, and the measure of the love of God is the gift of His only Son to be made man, and to die for sins, and so to become the one mediator who can bring us to God."
- iv. Why did Jesus die for us on the cross? God created us to have a relationship with Him, but we are all sinners, and our sin separates us from God. Our sin must be punished, and the punishment is eternal separation from God in hell. But loved us so much that He sent His Son, Jesus to die for us, in our place, for our sins, so that we can be restored to God and have eternal life.
- v. What made Jesus the perfect sacrifice?
  1. He was sinless. He could die for others because He did not need to be punished for His own sin.
  2. He was human. He could suffer and die.
  3. He was God. He could die for the sins of the entire world, and then rise again.
- vi. **Isaiah 53:5-6** "But he was pierced because of our rebellion, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on Him; and we are healed by his wounds. We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way; and the Lord has punished him for the iniquity of us all."
- vii. That God gave His one and only Son for our sins implies three great truths:
  1. The seriousness of sin. **Adam Clarke** "Sin must be an indescribable evil, when it required no less a sacrifice, to make atonement for it, than God manifested in the flesh."
  2. The singularity of Christ. Christ's death is the only hope for mankind. He is the only way to God (Jn 14:6; Acts 4:12). If there was any other way to save mankind, the surely God would not have sacrificed His one and only Son.
  3. The sufficiency of Christ. **Adam Clarke** "The sacrifice of Jesus... is absolutely sufficient to accomplish this gracious design: for it would have been inconsistent with the wisdom of God, to have appointed a sacrifice greater in itself, or less in its merit, than what the urgent necessities of the case required."

### 4. The offer of God.

- i. **John 3:16** "so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life."

- ii. Through the death of Christ for our sins, God makes an amazing offer. Everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. There are four terms that we need to take a closer look at.
  - 1. Perish. Everyone who believes in him will not perish.
    - a. **The NT Dictionary of Theology** defines this word as “an eternal plunge into hades and a hopeless destiny of death... an everlasting state torment and death.”
    - b. “Perish” refers to hell.
    - c. **John MacArthur** “To perish is to receive God’s final and eternal judgment.”
    - d. Hell is real, and Jesus spoke more about hell than anyone else. Thirteen percent of all His teaching was about judgment or hell.
    - e. To perish is what we deserve for our sins. To perish is what happens to people who reject Christ. God gave His one and only Son to save us from perishing.
    - f. Jesus said four things about hell:
      - i. He is painful. A place of weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth.
      - ii. Hell is final. There are no second chances. Those who go to hell don’t get to go to heaven later on.
      - iii. Hell is eternal. You never cease to exist. You will remain in a state of conscious torment for all eternity.
      - iv. Hell is just. The only people who go to hell are those who reject God’s Son.
  - 2. Eternal life. Everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.
    - a. God sent His Son so that instead of perishing in hell, we will enjoy eternal life with Him.
    - b. Bible commentator William Barclay described eternal life as the infusion of peace into our lives.
      - i. It gives us peace with God. We are no longer cringing before a tyrannical king or seeking to hide from an austere judge. We are at home with our father.
      - ii. It gives us peace with men. If we have been forgiven we must be forgiving. It enables us to see men as God sees them.
      - iii. It gives us peace with life. If God is Father, God is working all things together for good. When we believe that God is Father, we also believe that such a father’s hand will never cause his child a needless tear.

- iv. It gives us peace with ourselves. We know that we face life with God. It is not us who live but Christ in us. There is peace founded on strength in his life.
  - v. It gives us peace with death, knowing that we will immediately wake up in heave and spend eternity in paradise with God.
3. Believes in him.
- a. To escape perishing and inherit eternal life there is something that God had to do, and something we have to do. God sent His Son Jesus to die for our sins and rise again. That's God's part. Our part is to believe in Him.
  - b. What does it mean to believe in Jesus? It is not just believing that certain things are true about Jesus. The devil believes in Jesus, and He is not going to inherit eternal life. To believe in Jesus, or better, trust in Jesus, means two things:
    - i. Deny self-righteousness. Deny that you can save yourself; that you could do anything to deserve eternal life. Believe that if God gave you what you deserved, it would be hell. Trust instead that your only hope is the death of Christ for your sins.
    - ii. Deny self-rule. Deny that you have the right to be in charge of your own life. Surrender to the lordship of Jesus Christ. Hand over the steering wheel of your life to Him.
4. Everyone.
- a. The Greek word is *pas*. Sometimes translated whosoever. It means everyone, all, every. It carries the idea of totality.
  - b. The offer of eternal life is made to everyone. Every race. Every age. No matter who you are, or what you've done.
  - c. John "Bull" Bramlett was known as the meanest man in the NFL. He was a drinker and a carouser. His wife came to Christ in Memphis, Tennessee. She immediately began to pray for John. Two men from Bellevue Baptist Church visited John, sharing the gospel with him. The next day he told his assistant to hold all calls. He began to read his New Testament. Several days later he came to John 3:16. When he read "whosoever," he said, "Whosoever?" That could be me!" He knelt and received Christ as his personal Savior."

#### IV. CONCLUSION

1. In the 1870s archaeologists uncovered a giant, red granite obelisk in the sands of Egypt. The Egyptians named it Cleopatra's Needle and gave it to Great Britain.

Cleopatra's Needle was erected along the London Thames River. At the base of the shaft was a time vault. In it were placed several items of the day: coins, clothing, children's toys, newspapers, and photographs. A committee was appointed to include the greatest single verse in the Bible. The committee unanimously chose to place into the vault John 3:16, which had been translated into the 215 known languages of the day. Jerry Vines

2. John 3:16 never gets old because it contains the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ. But the gospel is only good news if you receive it. If you believe it. Will you believe it today?