

# WHAT ABOUT JOHN 3:16?

## BIBLE STUDY BY JAMIE MCNAB

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Last week we started talking about The Love of God. It is preached pretty much universally. Is John 3:16 The Gospel in a nutshell?

There is only about 1 verse in 1,000 that mentions God's love.

All verses about love are addressed to God in praise ... or they are addressed to believers.

Agape love does not imply that we have to like, to be fond of someone.

#### **Matthew 5:43-45**

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall **love** your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, **love (a command)** your enemies, **bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you**, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

We are to love our enemies ... this is a commandment from God ... but ... that doesn't mean we have to like them ... does not mean enjoy their company. Potentially ... our enemies could become a son or daughter of God. Do good where we can!! Love is not a feeling of warmth or attraction ... no hint at all!! Agape means more to bless ... do good to these people ... to pray for them.

There are some people **that God hates.**

#### **Proverbs 6:16-19**

These six things the Lord hates,  
Yes, seven are an abomination to Him:

A proud look,  
A lying tongue,  
Hands that shed innocent blood,  
A heart that devises wicked plans,  
Feet that are swift in running to evil,  
A false witness who speaks lies,  
And one who sows discord among brethren.

### **Psalms 11:4-6**

The Lord is in His holy temple,  
The Lord's throne is in heaven;  
His eyes behold,  
His eyelids test the sons of men.  
The Lord tests the righteous,  
But **the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates.**  
Upon the wicked He will rain coals;  
Fire and brimstone and a burning wind  
Shall be the portion of their cup.

Why shouldn't God hate vile and wicked people? Is God's love unconditional? Does God love Hitler as much as He loved Mary Magdalene ... and me?

Do we graciously accept His love ... and carry on living the way I do? No! God's love is not a sentimental lovey-dovey feeling!!

### **John 3:16**

For God so loved (Agape ... does not necessarily imply that God is attracted to the world) the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

People misunderstand the word, "so". The word, "so" (Greek: Houto ... in this way, in this manner, thus). It doesn't mean ... s-o-o-o-o-o loved.

"For" is a conjunction. It is added to the verses that come before. We can't just start with verse 16.

### **John 3:14-15**

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so (Greek: Houto) must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

### **Numbers 21:4-9**

The Bronze Serpent

Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." So the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.

Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live." So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

**God did not remove His judgement, didn't remove the punishment.** The death penalty is still running. You will all perish unless you believe these instructions ... walk across the camp and gaze at the uplifted serpent on the pole. **He did make a way of escape.** Those who acted on the instructions ... lived and those who didn't ... died.

We have to look to Jesus just as those people had to look at the bronze serpent.

### **John 3:14-16**

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him (look to Jesus)

should not perish but have eternal life. For God so (Greek: Houto) loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes (looks to Jesus) in Him should not perish (apollumi ... to destroy, to perish) but have everlasting life.

### **John 3:17-18**

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

"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.

Those who do not believe shall be condemned!!

### **John 3:36**

He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and **he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.**"  
(Anyone who does not receive God will experience The Wrath of God)

### **John 3:36 AMPLIFIED BIBLE**

And he who believes in (has faith in, clings to, relies on) the Son has (now possesses) eternal life. But whoever disobeys (is unbelieving toward, refuses to trust in, disregards, is not subject to) the Son will never see (experience) life, but [instead] **the wrath of God abides on him. [God's displeasure remains on him; His indignation hangs over him continually.]**

There are three main tenses: present, past and future.

Notice John 3:16 ... God so loved the world that **He gave ... past tense.**  
This does not say anything about present tense.

"whoever **believes in Him**" is ... (present tense ... continually believes ... believes and goes on believing) ... **present tense.**

### **John 3:16 YOUNGS LITERAL**

for God did so love the world, that His Son--the only begotten--He gave, that **every one who is believing in him may not perish**, but may have life age-during.

Notice also ... "Whoever believes in Him should not perish" ... not just believe about Him ... not just believe that He went to the cross and died. The Greek means "believe into Him". We will believe He is Lord and Master. He is in charge. He is Boss. He can command us. **If Jesus is Lord ... then Jesus is Lord ... that means He commands ... and we obey!!**

IF JESUS IS NOT LORD OF ALL THEN HE IS NOT LORD AT ALL!!

### **John 3:1-15**

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, (we Pharisees!!) we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?"

Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you (plural) do not receive Our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who

is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

At that point it appears that Jesus' conversation ended. Then ... from verse 16 to verse 21 ... John continued on ... even though in most Bibles these verses appear in red. Let's read on. Is it really Jesus speaking here? Probably not! There are no personal pronouns ... "I", "Me", etc. ... which suggests that it is not Jesus who is now speaking. Did Jesus ever call Himself "only begotten Son" ... No. He normally refers to himself as "The Son of Man" (over 80 times).

### John 3:16-21

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. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

"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**. 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. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

Let's **see how John refers to Jesus** in the next 2 verses.

### John 1:14

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of **the only begotten of the Father**, full of grace and truth.

### John 1:18

No one has seen God at any time. **The only begotten Son**, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

What that means is that John 3:16 is not Jesus talking to the world. Was John talking to the world ... to unbelievers? Let's read the next verse.

### **John 20:30-31**

And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written **that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,** and that believing you may have life in His name.

Despite these verses ... **he wasn't writing to unbelievers.** He wrote his book about 60 years on after the death of Jesus. John had an opponent (Cerinthus) who preached the opposite to him. **So John wrote to believers to keep on believing.**

(Cerinthus was a popular preacher of his day ... he denied that Jesus was divine, that Jesus was just a man).

John's gospel contained 7 signs, 7 witnesses to Jesus being The Son of God and 7 "I am" statements ... which John deliberately chose.

### **John 20:31**

but these are written that you may believe **(continue on believing)** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

### **John 20:31 NLT**

But these are written (the 7 signs, the 7 witnesses and the 7 "I am" statements) so **that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God,** and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.

So. **The Gospel of John was written to believers** ... so too was the book of Matthew.

So. When we read about The Love of God ... as is nearly always the case, we can know that it is talking about praise towards God ... or to us ... The Saints.

### **Romans 1:15-17**

So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it (the gospel) the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

God is right. God is a judge and He will judge those who don't live the right way. God is creating a new heaven and a new earth ... in which only righteousness dwells.