

JOHN 3:16 CONTINUED
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We have been talking about knowing God ... on a more personal basis ...
fellowshipping with Him.

There is a danger in "just knowing true doctrines" ... yet despite that
knowledge ... not knowing the persons behind the scriptures.

In coming to know God better ... we want to know His nature. What does
He like? What does He not like?

One of the key features broadcast and published everywhere is "God is
Love". Do people really understand what God's love is? Most people don't
really know.

The key message is: GOD LOVES YOU. PLEASE COME TO HIM AND GIVE
YOUR HEART TO JESUS. GOD IS LOVE. It's not down to me or to you ...
after all ... God's love is unconditional.

We see John 3:16 everywhere. Yet ... what do we see in scripture?
Amazingly the Bible itself says very little about the love of God.

Some facts: There are very, very, very few references to "The Love of
God". It is actually very rare ... about 1 verse in every 1,000. Nothing in
Genesis. Exodus ... Once. Leviticus ... none. Numbers ... none. Deuteronomy
... once. Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel ... none. 1 & 2 Kings and 1 &
2 Chronicles ... none. Isaiah ... once. Jeremiah ... once. Ezekiel ... once.
Daniel ... none. Etc. Well of course, that is the harsh God of the Old
Testament.

What about the New Testament? Matthew ... none. Mark ... none. Luke ...
none. John ... a few references. Acts ... none. Maybe a dozen

references up until we get to the last 3 or 4 books of the New Testament. All told ... no more than 35-40 references in the whole Bible ... and most appear in John's writings.

Almost every time the Love of God is mentioned ... it is directed towards God in praise ... or it's a reference made directly to believers. Virtually no verses mentioning The Love of God towards unbelievers.

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 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, (was Nicodemus "top of the totem pole"?) 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 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 (Greek: Houto ... in this manner, in this way, thus) must the Son of Man (this is how Jesus refers to Himself) be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

God didn't remove the danger ... didn't remove the snakes. Numbers 21:4-9

The red letters ... verses 1-15 end. From John 3:16 onwards ... John speaking.

John 3:16

For God so (Greek: Houto) loved the world (past tense) that He gave His only begotten Son (past tense) , that whoever believes (looks to Jesus ... present tense) 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 (present tense ... believes and continues to believe) 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 3:19-21

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."

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)

But ... what about God's Unconditional Love?

Here are a couple of examples from the Old Testament. No unconditional love mentioned here.

Psalms 5:4-6

For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness,
Nor shall evil dwell with You.

The boastful shall not stand in Your sight;

You hate all workers of iniquity.

You shall destroy those who speak falsehood;

The Lord abhors (loathes or detests) the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.

Hosea 9:1

Do not rejoice, O Israel, with joy like other peoples,

For you have played the harlot against your God.

You have made love for hire on every threshing floor.

Hosea 9:15

"All their wickedness is in Gilgal,

For there I hated them.

Because of the evil of their deeds

I will drive them from My house;

I will love them no more.

All their princes are rebellious.

What about the New Testament?

Revelation 6:12

I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.

Revelation 6:15-17

And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

No unconditional love mentioned here either. Note: the wrath of The Lamb ... Jesus.

The Love of God is addressed to BELIEVERS!!

Who were "John's audience"?

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.

Did John write these verses down to "convert" believers? There was a lot of deception in the Church.

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 ... a false teacher ... 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 to make clear that Jesus was not just a man born to Joseph and Mary. This is The Son of God.

John 1:1-3

In the beginning was the Word (Logos), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. Cerinthus taught that Jesus made nothing ... and the world was made by angels.

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 1:29-30

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.'

John 1:34

And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."

1 John 1:1-4

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life— the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us— that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.

John is doing his best to convince the believers that this is the real Jesus.

1 John 2:21-26

I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life.

These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you.

This is a letter from John writing to BELIEVERS. John is writing with a purpose. To prevent deception.

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.

John 20:30-31 NLT

The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book. But these are written **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.

What did the apostles and evangelists preach to unbelievers? We will look at that later.

Let's look at what was written to believers by John?

1 John 3:1-2

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, (believers) that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

1 John 3:1 AMPLIFIED

SEE WHAT [an incredible] quality of love the Father has given (shown, bestowed on) us, that we should [be permitted to] be named and called and counted the children of God! And so we are! The reason that the world does not know (recognise, acknowledge) us is that it does not know (recognise, acknowledge) Him.

1 John 3:1 THE VOICE

Consider the kind of **extravagant love the Father has lavished on us—** He calls us children of God! It's true; we are His beloved children. And in the same way the world didn't recognise Him, the world does not recognise us either.

Romans 8:28-32

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? **He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?**

Romans 8:35-39

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written:

“For Your sake we are killed all day long;

We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”

Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. (Talk about love as much as you want ... as believers!!) For I am persuaded that **neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.** (Paul is talking to BELIEVERS)

Ephesians 2:4-7

But God, who is rich in mercy, **because of His great love with which He loved us,** even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 3:14-19

For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named (The God Family), that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— to know (gnosco ... To know through practical knowledge) the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

It won't be comprehended by non believers.

So ... when you are reading the New Testament and you come across the Love of God ... Remember: it is normally addressed to believers ... it is a family topic.