

## THE GREATEST VERSE

John 3:14-17

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. 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.

The context of John 3:16 covers the Cross - the means of salvation (verse 14,15) and Crown - the mission of salvation (verse 17). Verse 16 is the Message of salvation!

John 3:16 has to be the greatest statement of truth ever written.

Here's why I say that:

For God (He's the greatest Person) so loved (that's the greatest love) the world (the greatest number of people) that He gave His only begotten Son (by far His greatest Gift), that whoever (God's greatest invitation) believes in Him (the greatest power on earth) should not perish (the greatest disaster) but have everlasting life (the greatest future).

1. For God - the greatest Person. According to Psalm 139 He is all-knowing (Omniscient), all-present (Omnipresent) and all-powerful (Omnipotent). He is the Creator and sustainer of all things. The heavens and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him said Solomon. In Isaiah 40:25-26 God asks the question "To whom then will you liken Me, or to whom shall I be equal?..... Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things, who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, by the greatness of His might and the strength of His power; not one is missing."
2. And Ps 103:8 tells us that He is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in mercy. There's so much to say about Him being the greatest Person but here is an answer He gives to Job before He heals and restores him:

Job 38:22 "Have you entered the treasury of snow?"

Wilson Bentley "Snowflake Man" was obsessed with photographing snow crystals as he found "No two snow crystals are identical and once melted that amount of beauty is lost forever!" What we know now is if you melt a single snow crystal and then re freeze it it'll reconfigure to it's original beautiful shape - exactly!!

2. The greatest love! God **so** loved the world of unworthy sinners! This is unconditional love. He loves, 1 John 3:8 tells us, because He is love. As Philip Yancey says in his book 'What's so Amazing about Grace' - "there's nothing we can do to make Him love us more, and there's nothing we can do to make Him love us less!" His love takes the initiative - and it is the Christian's confession that "we love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

3. The world - the greatest number of people!! John 1:29. The Samaritans in John 4:42 said a most profound thing to the Samaritan woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and **we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world!**"

4. That He gave His only begotten - God's greatest Gift! The truly wonderful Incarnation is only the beginning of the story as was His perfect life and service. The greatest giving

was the crucifixion of His beloved Son! John 3:14 "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up!" Stott in his classic book "The Cross of Christ" puts it this way "How then could God express simultaneously His holiness in judgement and His love in pardon? Only by providing a Divine Substitute for the sinner, so that the Substitute would receive the judgement and the sinner the pardon. We sinners still of course have to suffer some of the personal, psychological and social consequences of our sins - BUT the penal consequence, the deserved alienation from God, has been borne by Another in our place, so that we may be spared it!"

1 John 2:2 "And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world!"

**Illustration: Margaret and John Millar**

The Gospel comes in the Person of Jesus Christ! He is the Gospel! He is the Good News! He is God's greatest gift to mankind.

5. "That whoever" - The greatest invitation! That's you and me! That's your parents and your children! That's your friends and your neighbours! That's everyone! Matthew 22:9 "Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding!"

John 1:12 "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become the children of God!"

6. Believes in Him - the greatest power on earth. Jesus said to the father of the epileptic boy in Mark 9:23 "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes!"

Salvation is only possible through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ!! Romans 5:1 - meaning difference between perishing and having everlasting life!!

Ephesians 2:8,9 "For by grace you have been saved **through faith**, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast!"

7. Should not perish - the greatest disaster. 1 Thessalonians 1:7b - 10a "...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe....."

This is the greatest disaster!!

**Illustration: student request**

8. But have everlasting life - the greatest future!!

John 14:1-3 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also!" Psalm 16:11 .... In Your Presence is fullness of joy. At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore!

8 'Greatests'

Greatest Person, greatest love, greatest number of people, greatest Gift, greatest invitation, greatest power on earth, greatest disaster, and greatest future! That's God's greatest verse!!