

## "God so Loved the World"

### The Gospel of John Chapter 3: 16

This verse is perhaps the most famous and memorized in all of the Holy Scriptures. We must remember its' placement within the context of Jesus' discourse on the new birth and the Son of Man being lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. The motivation behind this plan of salvation is God's infinite love. He is love (1Jhn. 4:8, 16), and what He does flows from His character and nature. God does what He does because He is Who He is! He always acts consistent with His nature.

Gods' love is always other centered (1Cor. 13:2-8). It seeks the highest good for others, never being selfish. It is characterized by giving and forgiveness (Lk. 7:36-50; Jms. 1: 17). God does everything according to the good pleasure of His will (Eph. 1 :3-9). He is sovereign and initiates His salvation because of His great love for His fallen creation (Eph. 2:4-7; 1Jhn. 4:9-10, 19). There is no salvation apart from His Son (Acts 4:12).

God demonstrated His love toward us by sending His Son (Rom. 5:68); the One of His love (Matt. 3:17, 17:5). Abraham was commanded by God to offer his only beloved son, Isaac (Gen. 22:2). However, God stopped Abraham, providing instead a ram for the offering. But God orchestrates the death of His beloved Son, the only instance of human sacrifice acceptable to God in the entirety of the Holy Scriptures (Acts 2:23; Rom. 8:32).

God's love is infinite; hence He can love the entire world (Greek *cosmos*). The word world here in this context and many others means all mankind, elect or not (Jhn. 1:10, 3:17, 6:33, 12:47). Christ came to take away the "sin of the world" (Jhn. 1:29; 1Jhn. 2:2). Some teach a limited atonement (the letter *I* in the acronym TULIP; total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints). The Scriptures teach that God wants all men to be saved and to come to repentance (Acts 16:31, 17:30; 1Tim. 2:3-6; Heb. 2:9; 2Pet. 2:1, 3:9). God does not predestine men to eternal condemnation (Matt. 23:37; Jhn. 6:70).

Salvation is a gift from God, a demonstration of His great love. It cannot be merited or earned (Eph. 2:8-9). It is due to His mercy (not getting what you deserve) and His grace (getting what you don't deserve). He receives all the glory! We are called to receive through faith the eternal life so freely and generously given to us (Matt. 7:7-11; Jhn. 1:12; Rom. 10:9-10, 13). Now we are to love others as He loves us (Jhn. 15:12; 1Jhn. 4:7-11).