



## **“God So Loved”** with Joel McQueen

*John 3:1-21*

### **BACKGROUND ON JOHN’S GOSPEL**

The Gospel of John is 92% different than the other three Gospels.

John does not write chronologically, but rather he writes specific scenes that he was an eyewitness to that convinced him that Jesus was God in the flesh, the creator of all things, the Jewish Messiah, and the Lamb of God who would die for the sins of the world. (See John 1:1-33).

John is called “the Evangelist” because he writes with the stated purpose of convincing people that Jesus is the Messiah, so that they would believe and receive eternal life. (See John 20:30-31).

John organizes his message around miracles that Jesus did that were “signs” revealing who He really is. These signs culminate in the crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus, which definitively proved to John that Jesus was exactly who He claimed to be ... the Son God, born to die in order to rise and defeat death and save those who believe in Him. (See John 20:8-9).

### **AN INTRODUCTION**

Subject Question: “What does ‘God so loved the world’ mean?”

First, “what is love?”

Popular culture has many different ideas about love:

Love is a pain-free relationship

Love is an exclusive, intense feeling that lasts

Love is unconditional acceptance, not being judgmental

It is no wonder then that the most popular Bible verse, John 3:16 is often misunderstood and twisted to mean – God should spare us all suffering, God will let everyone into Heaven/everyone will be saved, or that God won’t judge sinners.

But what does John 3:16 mean? We need context to understand meaning, what comes before, what comes after?

### **THE TEXT – JOHN 3:1-21**

Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. <sup>2</sup> He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.”

<sup>3</sup> *Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”*

<sup>4</sup> *“How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!”*

<sup>5</sup> *Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. <sup>7</sup> You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ <sup>8</sup> The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”*

<sup>9</sup> *“How can this be?” Nicodemus asked.*

<sup>10</sup> *“You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things? <sup>11</sup> Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. <sup>12</sup> I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? <sup>13</sup> No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. <sup>14</sup> Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.”*

<sup>16</sup> *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. <sup>18</sup> Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s*

*one and only Son. <sup>19</sup> This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup> Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. <sup>21</sup> But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.*

## THE BIG IDEA

**God loved, so God gave.**

Just as the bronze snake was lifted up in the wilderness and whoever looked upon it would live, so we too have been snake-bitten (see Numbers 21:4-9).

This means that we all will perish/eternally die (see Rom 6:23/Rev 21:8). But God loved the world, in this way, He sent His only begotten Son to die on the cross that we could have eternal life by looking to His sacrifice (John 3:16).

But with this amazing gift also comes a judgment against sinners. Sinners will perish. God has provided one way to be saved – Jesus (John 3:17-18).

And many people, because they want to cling to their sin, reject Jesus (John 3:19-21).

This included many of Nicodemus' fellow Sanhedrin members (John 11:45-53).

## WHAT IT'S NOT SAYING

It is NOT saying that God unconditionally accepts sinners as they are and does not judge them. He most certainly does judge sinners. Not a single liar, thief, sexually immoral, drunkard, greedy, proud, abusive, boastful, disobedient to their parents, rebellious, idolatrous, person will enter Heaven (see 1 Cor 6:9-10; 2 Tim 3:1-9; Rev 20:8)

It is NOT saying that God SO SO SO loved the world (had big feelings for all those in rebellion against Him)

## WHAT IT'S SAYING

God loved the whole world *in this way* – He provided a way for sinners to be saved – His Son took our penalty of death, so that we could live. Jesus suffered and died to pay for our sin, Jesus rose from the dead so we could live. Being united to Jesus by faith is the only way to be saved.

God is a missionary God.

God loved, so God gave.

## THE CHALLENGE

**IF** God is a missionary God, then we must become a missionary people (John 17:18; Acts 1:8).

Do we love the world? Are we willing to sacrifice, to go, to give our lives that others might live?

Have you looked upon and trusted in Jesus' sacrifice?

There are not many ways to be saved, Jesus is the only way.

If you've not trusted in Jesus, come to Him today. If you need Jesus in your life today, come to the altar in response and be prayed for.

## APPLICATION

Become a missionary people! Ideas for how to start:

Ask Pastor Reid about future short-term mission trips ([reid@buffalocov.org](mailto:reid@buffalocov.org))

Take someone new to BCC to lunch and ask them their story

Get involved in CEF (child-evangelism fellowship), host a summer-club

Help with VBS here this summer

Invite someone to the Promise Park or Frisbee golf, go through the Gospel message with them

Join the prayer team and pray for our missionaries

Give to missions

Take the Perspectives Class this Fall

Big Idea: God loved, so God gave.

