

God has used the Love of God in John 3:16 to impact many lives. Tim Tebow, now polarizing quarterback for the Denver Broncos, first started gaining national attention back in 2009, when he wore John 3:16 in his eye black in the national Championship game. He was then quarterback for the Florida Gaiters. On that day, John 3:16 was the most searched term on Google. 92 million people Googled John 3:16. Imagine that, 93 million people in America saw John 3:16 and did not know what it meant. What a witness from Tebow. Hopefully some of those Google searchers are now Tebowing before God.

Some of us who are older than 35, remember Rollen Frederick Stewart or the Rainbow Man. The Rainbow man wore a huge multicolored Afro wig and would show up at all kinds of sporting events with either his t-shirt with John 3:16 or a John 3:16 sign. He would pop up at a World Series games behind home plate. When the national TV cameras zoomed in on a fast ball The Rainbow man would jump up with his John 3:16 sign for millions of baseball fans around America to see. He performed the same stunt at Super bowl games behind the goal posts for extra point attempts and NBA championship games behind the backboard for free throws. Audiences were forced to read his placarded message. He also visually proclaimed John 3:16 at PGA tournaments, Miss USA pageants, World Cups Series, Shuttle launches, and at even the wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana.

Rollen gradually got more violent. "At the '91 Masters Golf Tournament, Stewart was detained by authorities after he allegedly set off a remote controlled air horn, a loud buzzer and several colorful smoke bombs just as Jack Nicklaus was readying to put on the 16th green" (See article *Somewhere Over the Rainbow Man* by Adam Gorightly).

Supposedly, Rollen had gotten born again by listening to a TV evangelist. But eventually he was arrested for holding a hotel maid hostage in Los Angeles. When the Swat Team broke into the room Bible verses were plastered all over the walls. Because of several presidential assassination threats, the Rainbow Man is serving three life sentences. Unlike Tebow, even though Stewart knew John 3:16, the love of God in this powerful verse had no life changing impact.

Just being able to quote John 3:16 from memory is not enough. Most of us have known John 3:16 from pre-school.

John 3:16 is so simple a child can understand its basic meaning and be saved. Yet this verse is deeply profound. There are seven words that are so full of doctrine and meaning that entire books have been written on each of them: God, love, world, Son, believe, perish, and life. I would like to reduce this seven words to five statements can not only help us plum the depth of meaning of John 3:16 but bring us to our knees in worship of the God of love: *The Source of Love* "God," *The Object of Love* "the world," *The Proof of Love* "He gave His Son," *The Necessary Response to Love*, "that whosoever believes," and *the Eternal Consequences of Love* "shall not perish but have everlasting life."

1. The Source of Love is "God"

In Part 1 and 2, we studied the overview of the love of God and discovered God's love for each other within the Trinity in Heaven and the Trinity's love for sinners on earth. When we experience the love of God poured in our hearts at salvation (Romans 5:5), we love God in Heaven each other love on earth. Next we will focus on whom God loves on earth.

2. The Object of Love is "the World"

"World" can have different meanings according to different contexts of Scripture. This is not the "world" or planet earth (John 1:10) or the "world" that has organized itself against God which John in his first epistle forbids us to love (1 John 2:15). This is the world of lost sinners.

A. God's love for the world of lost sinners is unselfish.

Genuine love always has the benefit of others in mind. God loves people and more specifically here God loves all the individual sinners that make up "the world." God has loved every sinner from Adam and will love that last sinner left standing on earth before the Great White Throne Final Judgment.

B. God's love for the world of lost sinners is unlimited.

John helps us understand the extent of Jesus' love and atonement in his 1st Epistle. In 1st John 2:2, John wrote that Jesus "Is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Then in 1st John 5:19, John uses the phrase "the whole world" only once more to describe the extent of the devil's influence: "And we know that we are of God and the whole world lies in the wicked one." How extensive is the influence of Satan? Is the devil's influence limited? No! Neither is the extent of Jesus death and love for sinners. He died for and loves "the world." No person no matter how lonely or rejected can ever say, "no one loves me." The Creator, Sustainer, Controller, Holy, Exalted Ruler of the universe loves you.

For a full discussion on the debate over limited and unlimited atonement see Sermon: Redemption by God the Son (Ephesians 1:17-12)

C. God's love for the world of lost sinners is individual.

God does not just love the world in aggregate, but He loves all individual sinners. Only God can love like this. Only God knows every individual sinners. He knows every living sinner on planet earth at this very moment. He knows their names, e-mail address, sins, and hurts.

Just two quick examples. In John 3, Jesus shows His love for religious Nicodemus. Someone said Nicodemus could have been voted, "The person most likely to go to heaven who is not going there." But in John 4, Jesus loved the very non-religious Samaritan woman. God the extremely religious but lost person and the conversely pagan pervert and every person in between.

God loves the world one sinner at a time. Paul wrote of this individual love in Galatians 2:20. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ lives in me: and the life which I

now live in the flesh I live by the faith of ***the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.***”

In my final post on the Love of God in John 3:16, we will delve into The Proof of Love “that He Gave His only Son,” The Necessary Response to Love, "that whosoever believes," and the Eternal Consequences of Love "shall not perish but have everlasting life."

Glen Beck is very popular among many of us conservatives. I sometimes listen to his radio program when I am on the road. I read his on-line newsletter *The Blaze*. I watched one special Christmas program on his new GBTV. In that program, he said that “Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.” That does not sound like a Mormon. Because Glenn Beck is the new Mormonism that we evangelicals think they are non-traditional Christians. See the debate by Al Mohler on the topic "Are Mormons Christians?" on Beliefnet.com with Orson Scott Card, a prominent Mormon author.

But Mormonism has not changed its doctrines from its inception. It is only marketing its tenets differently.

In 1820, founder of Mormonism Joseph Smith experienced, what he called, the “First Vision”. In that vision, he was told,

All existing churches are wrong . . . all Christian doctrine is an abomination . . . all Christian leaders are corrupt.

The reason for the beginning of Mormonism is the belief that it is radically different from Christianity.

After Glen Beck said, Jesus is the way, truth, and life, he sat down at the Jewish Menorah or candelabra and started celebrating Hanukkah. Of course, Judaism rejects Jesus as the Messiah or “the way, the truth, and the life” and salvation by grace through faith. But so does Mormonism. But Beck talks like an evangelical which masks his Mormonism which rejects Christ as God and is based on works for salvation.

The 5th president of the Mormon Church, Lorenzo Smith reduced the doctrine of the Mormon church to one statement: “As man now is God once was; as God now is, man may be.” In other words, God the Father (and His Son) was once a man before he became God. Man if he is a faithful Mormon can become God the Father. For a good summary of Mormonism's belief that God the Father nor Jesus is eternal see Stephen Davey's sermon on Mormonism (Masquerade - Selected Scripture).

John's message in John 3:16 is that Jesus is the eternal Son of God and that faith in Him is necessary for salvation not works.

1. The Source of Love "God" (See Part 1 and 2)

2. The Object of Love "The World" (See Part 3)

3. The Proof of Love "That He Gave His Son"

The proof of God's love is always giving for the benefit of others. Someone can give and not love, such as those attempting to buy their way into heaven through charitable contributions, but no one can love and not give. The opposite of love is selfishness and taking.

A. God so loved that He gave or as the next verse (3:17) says "sent his Son." God had only one Son and He was a missionary to the lost planet earth. "Sent" comes from the same Greek word that is translated "apostle" who was a sent one by Jesus. Hebrews 3:1 calls Jesus "The Apostle."

B. Jesus loved and gave Himself for our sins. In John 10:11, Jesus said, "I am the good Shepherd: the good shepherd gives His life for the sheep." In 10:17, 18, Jesus added, "I lay down my life. . . . No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself."

Compare Black Friday a month ago with Good Friday 2000 years ago. What happened in Wal-mart Stores around the planet Friday after Thanksgiving? It was not love. Two years ago a Wal-mart employee was trampled to death by shoppers. They may need to change the name from Black Friday if people keep getting killed. It's beginning sound like the black plague. Last Black Friday one shopper pepper sprayed other shoppers because they all wanted an Xbox 360 video game for half price. She later said she did it out of self-defense and she may sue Wal-mart for not providing better security. Just look at some raw selfishness on YouTube.

Compare Black Friday where people had fist-fights to save \$20 over merchandise and Good Friday where Christ was killed on the cross for our sins. Because He loved us He allowed sinners to nail Him to a wooden cross so He could "give his life a ransom for many."

4. The Necessary Response to Love "Whosoever believes in Him."

All religions can be divided into two groups:

1. False religions based on works for salvation.
2. The one true Christianity based on faith in Christ and not works. John will mention some form of the word believe 98 times in his Gospel.

I feel sorry for people who are not grounded in God's Word and the deceptive messages with which they are constantly exposed. Let me give you a personal example of how deceptive religions of works can be. My wife and I visited Saltlake City and were given a tour of Temple Square. The very attractive and articulate Mormon tour guide ended her tour with the affirmation, "We are Christians." Many in the group gave permission for Mormon missionaries to visit their homes and deliver to them a Book of Mormon.

No one gets to heaven by being a good Mormon or Baptist or any other religion. Read Jesus' statement to the religious Jews who wanted to kill Jesus for claiming to be God in John 5:24.

5. The Eternal Consequences of Love “should not perish but have everlasting life.”

There are only two consequences expressed by Jesus in the last line of John 3:16: “shall not perish but have everlasting life.”

A. The consequence of not believing is to “perish” for those in a religion of works.

B. The consequence of believing is to possess “everlasting life” for believers in Christianity.

Jesus expands on these two consequences in verses 17-18. Jesus did not come to earth to condemn sinners He came to seek and to save those who are lost (Luke 19:10).

But why then will sinners be condemned to perishing? Because as Jesus said in 3:18, they are already condemned because they do not believe in Jesus as their Savior.

John added his commentary on this two-fold reality in 3:36, “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life; and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him.”

“Perish” does not mean annihilation in hell which is growing in popularity even among evangelicals. “Perish” means eternal conscious suffering in the lake of fire. John in his last book, the Revelation of Jesus Christ, proves this truth by describing the fate of two of the last Christ rejecters on earth. Those two men who refuse to believe in Jesus as Savior are identified as the Anti-Christ and his False prophets. Both of these individuals are men not demons. Their eternal destiny is detailed by John in Revelation 19:20, when they are cast into the Lake of Fire. Then 1000 years later in 20:10, Devil, who is a fallen angel is also cast into the Lake of Fire. Revelation 20:10 says, “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the anti-Christ and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” When the Devil is cast into the Lake of Fire, the last two Christ rejecters have been suffering consciously for 1000 years. They were not burned up on impact.

Someone might be thinking, well the Anti-Christ, false prophet, and the Devil deserve to be sentenced to the Lake of Fire. John also makes very clear that all unbelievers who do not believe in Jesus as Savior, in 20:14-15, are also cast into the Lake of Fire: “And death and hell were cast into the lake fire which is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

Thank God for the alternative consequence. The consequence of believing on Jesus as your Savior is “everlasting life.” To perish is not just to live for ever but to die for ever or to experience what John called in Revelation 20:14, “the second death.”

To experience “everlasting life” is not just to live for ever either, but to enjoy eternal life for every. We believers are not simply going to live as we are now for ever with all of our problems, pains, sorrows, and pressures.

In Revelation 21, after describing the torments of the Lake of Fire, John exults over the pleasures of eternal life in heaven: “and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are past away.” Our greatest pleasure, however, will be our unceasing worship and service to our Savior (Revelation 22:3).

Just as the Lake of Fire is indescribably worse than any pain on earth, so is Heaven indescribably better than any joy on earth. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."