

CHRISTMAS AND GOD'S LOVE THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF GOD SERIES

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TEXT: John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

INTRO:

1. This is the most famous Bible verse. Millions have memorized this verse.
2. This verse is inside the bottom of an *In-N-Out* soft drink cup.
3. You see signs of John 3:16 at football games and other sports games.
4. Tim Tebow, a Christian quarterback for the University of Florida football team a number of years ago. In the 2009 BCS Championship Game, he wore John 3:16 on his eye black; the verse was the highest-ranked Google search term over the next 24 hours, generating over 90 million searches.
5. Martin Luther said, “This is the gospel in miniature.”
6. Twenty-five words are in this verse. The first 12 have to do with what God has done for us, and right in the middle is the word “Son.” Jesus is central and supreme to the gospel. It is all about Jesus. The last 12 words tell what man has to do to obtain eternal life.

PURPOSE STATEMENT: This verse is broken into three simple but life-changing truths: (1) God's love, (2) God's offer, and (3) God's gift.

I. GOD'S LOVE

A. GOD'S LOVE IS SPECIAL

1. We use the word “love” for so many things: I love football, I love pizza, I love my wife.
2. The Greeks had four different words for love: *eros*, *storgé*, *phileo* and *agapé*.
3. *Agape* love is unique. According to Biblical scholars, Jesus took a Greek word and redefined it to mean God's love. It is used 362 times in the New Testament.
4. *Agape* love is unselfish. It is the unselfish choice of the greatest good of another person.
5. *Agape* love is unconditional. You don't have to do anything to earn His love.

6. *Agape* love is intense. “God *so* loved.” The adverb “so” reveals the intensity of this love. Francis Chan calls this love, “crazy love.”

7. *Agape* love is universal. “God so loved the world.” There are over 7 billion people on this planet, and God loves every one. It has been estimated that there have been 106 billion people since the beginning of humanity, and God loved each person. Why? Because God is love (1 John 4:8 and 16). That is who He is.

B. GOD'S LOVE IS SUPERNATURAL

1. God became man. God became one of us.

2. Mary, a virgin, conceived of the Holy Spirit and gave birth to a baby boy whom she named Jesus. It is a mystery, but Jesus came supernaturally to earth.

C. GOD'S LOVE IS SACRIFICIAL – He gave His only begotten Son. The primary purpose for Jesus to come was to die for our sins.

1. His love gives. This is not just any type of giving, but sacrificial giving.

2. We are all sinners, and because of our sins, we must all die. The Bible says, “The wages of sin is death.” But God loved us so much, God became man, in the person of Jesus Christ, to be our substitute and to pay for the punishment of our sins.

3. The good news of Christmas is that Jesus died for our sins and rose again on the third day to prove that He is God and He can do what He has promised us.

II. GOD'S OFFER: “Whoever believes in Him shall not perish”

A. WHAT FAITH IS NOT

1. Faith is not to believe intellectually. The Bible says, “The demons also believe, and shudder” (James 2:19).

B. WHAT FAITH IS

1. **John 3:36** “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

2. New Testament faith is to so believe with your heart that you give your life to Him and that you are willing to make Him the Lord of your life.

3. **Romans 10:9** that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

III. GOD'S GIFT



A. SALVATION: Forgiveness of sins and deliverance from sin.

B. ABUNDANT LIFE ON EARTH (Heaven On Earth)

1. “I have come that you might have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10).

C. ETERNAL LIFE IN THE NEW HEAVEN TO COME

1. There will be no more death. The last enemy is death.

2. **Revelation 21:1** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea... 4

“and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”