

THE GREATEST VERSE IN THE BIBLE

John 3:16

Many people have favorite verses. It is hard to pick just one. But John 3:16 is at least one of the greatest verses in the Bible. It is a great summary of the gospel and the Bible in one sentence. Martin Luther called John 3:16 “the Bible in miniature.”

1.THE GREATEST LOVER: GOD - “FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD”

- “For” connects us to verse 15 and gives the reason why believing in Jesus means eternal life. It is all because of the love of God. God is the supreme Lover and in His grace He sent Jesus to rescue fallen helpless people – 1 John 3:1; 4:7-11. He “so” loved us means He loved us “to such a great and remarkable extent” or “so dearly” that He gave...
- Some people think God is nothing but love. But He is also holy and just – 1 John 1:5, 6. Others struggle with God’s love in the face of evil and suffering. But God’s love is proven forever in His giving of His Son. God’s love is beyond imagination. God loves the world, not just Israel. He even loves the world which is fallen and organized in rebellion against God. He loved us while we were yet sinners – Romans 5:6-9.
- God’s love for us in Jesus is unchangeable and unfathomable –Romans 8:38,39; Ephesians 3:18,19. If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

2.THE GREATEST GIFT: JESUS - “THAT HE GAVE HIS ONE AND ONLY SON”

- God’s love is so great that He gives up His one and only Son Jesus for us and for our salvation – John 1:14, 18. God’s love is an active love. He gives His Son in His coming to earth, but especially in the cross of Jesus. This giving up of His Son echoes the account of Isaac – Genesis 22:8, 14; Romans 8:32. If love is measured by its gift, God gives the most precious possession He has – His own Son. God’s love is focused on, through, and in His Son Jesus Christ. We are to imitate God’s love in our lives – Ephesians 5:1,2. We must speak of the cross when we talk about God’s love.
- *“Behold the infinite love of God to mankind and the love of Jesus Christ that, rather than God see the children of men to perish eternally, He would send His Son to take our nature upon Him and thus to suffer such dreadful things. Herein God shows His love...It pleased the Father to break His Son and to pour out His blood. Here is the love of God and of Jesus Christ. Oh, what a powerful, mighty, drawing, efficacious meditation this should be to us!” – Jeremiah Burroughs, 1600’s.*

3.THE GREATEST PROMISE: SAVED FROM GOD’S WRATH – “THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH”

- Whoever believes in Jesus is delivered from Hell and God’s wrath. To perish is to be lost and under God’s righteous wrath and judgment. To not believe in Jesus and reject Him is to remain under God’s wrath – John 3:18; 3:36; 8:24. This verse is also the answer to those who think God is only love or that there is no judgment or Hell. Since Adam’s fall, the destiny of humanity has become Hell – Matthew 25:41, 46. Apart from God’s grace we are all doomed to perish eternally.

- God's love does not automatically save everyone in the world. Only those who believe in Jesus are saved. There are no other Saviors or other roads to God – John 14:6. It is only because of God's amazing love that He provided the way out of condemnation in Jesus.

4.THE GREATEST CERTAINTY: ETERNAL LIFE – “BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.”

- Through grace and the promises of God, all who trust Jesus have eternal life. Eternal life begins now and extends through eternity. It is not just endless life, but a new quality and kind of life. Eternal life means knowing God and His Son Jesus and living in a loving relationship with Him – John 17:3. Eternal life means no condemnation before God at the Judgment – John 5:24.
- Those who truly trust in Jesus will never perish or be lost – John 6:37-40. Jesus protects and guards His own. Those who believe in Jesus seek to honor Jesus.

Concluding Applications:

- Have you received and believed in Jesus, God's great love gift? Are you sure you have eternal life?
- Do you treasure God's love in Jesus and love others with His love?
- Are you sharing God's love with others?