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## THIS GLORIOUS GOSPEL

**TRUTH ABOUT GOD**

God loved us so much that He gave Himself for us.

**TRUTH FOR MY LIFE**

I will receive Jesus' gift of salvation for me.



**FOCUS VERSES: John 3:16-17**

<sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

<sup>17</sup> For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

**LESSON TEXT: John 3:16-17**



**Lesson Title:** This Glorious Gospel

**Icebreaker:** What is your favorite Easter tradition?

I. JESUS' CONVERSATION WITH NICODEMUS

A. Jesus' Example of Love

» *If you had the chance to ask God why He loves us, what do you think His response would be?*

B. Jesus Foreshadowed His Death

C. I Will Believe in Jesus' Love for Me

» *What does unconditional love look like to you?*

II. JESUS' DEATH AND BURIAL

A. Jesus Was Crucified

» *Can you share an experience where you were accused falsely?*

B. Jesus Was Buried

C. I Will Praise Jesus for His Sacrifice

» *What do you think when you realize we don't have anything to offer Jesus to repay Him? What do you feel when you realize He doesn't ask us to repay Him?*

III. JESUS' RESURRECTION

A. Jesus Resurrected from the Grave

B. I Will Respond to This Glorious Gospel

» *Others saw Jesus after His resurrection, but they did not recognize Him either. Why?*

**Prayer Focus**

- For God to help us rightly respond to this glorious gospel
- For God to help us share this glorious gospel with others

# BIBLICAL OVERVIEW

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**Lesson Text:** John 3:16-17

John 3:16 is one of the most widely recognized verses in the entire Bible. This verse focuses on God's love for humanity and Christ's mission to save anyone who believes in Him. However, the context of the verse is often neglected. Prior to this verse, Jesus expounded to the Pharisee Nicodemus on the necessity of new birth by water and Spirit (John 3:5), which had its ultimate fulfillment beginning on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2. There believers were baptized by water in Jesus' name and were also filled with the Holy Spirit with the supernatural sign of speaking in other tongues. The belief Jesus mentioned in John 3:16 encompasses far more than mental assent; belief must also include the action of obeying the command of Jesus to experience new birth by water and Spirit.

Several themes in Jesus' interaction with Nicodemus connect directly to John's Prologue. The theme of birth in verses 5-8 recalls John 1:13. The reference to Moses and His comparison to Christ in verses 14-15 recalls a similar comparison between Moses and Christ made in John 1:17. The word *world* (Greek: *kósmos*) found in verses 16-19 recall John 1:9-10. The theme of light and darkness in verses 19-21 recall John 1:4-9. Finally, immediately after this conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus interacted with John the Baptist (John 3:22-30) the faithful witness introduced in John 1:6-8, 15.

THE BELIEF JESUS MENTIONED IN JOHN 3:16 ENCOMPASSES FAR MORE THAN MENTAL ASSENT; BELIEF MUST ALSO INCLUDE THE ACTION OF OBEYING THE COMMAND OF JESUS TO EXPERIENCE NEW BIRTH BY WATER AND SPIRIT.

# DAY 1

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## John 3:16a

For God so loved the world . . . .

### Biblical Insight

Love motivates God's actions. John reiterated this theme several times throughout his writings, famously noting: "God is love" (I John 4:8). John referred to himself five times as the disciple Jesus loved (John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20). John believed humanity's ability and commission to love others directly emanates from God's love for us. (See John 13:34; I John 3:11, 16.)

### Daily Devotion

Cars, trains, and planes need fuel to keep moving. Bodies need food, water, and oxygen to keep living. Fire needs wood to keep burning. Anything active needs fuel.

Love fuels God. Love motivates God to move in our lives. Love is one of the main reasons God made us and saves us. Love is the central heartbeat of this way we walk in. His love for us should fuel our love for others. Love is the fire that keeps us living as He desires, and His love for us is the fuel for that flame. The same John who wrote John 3:16 also wrote I John 4:19: "We love him, because he first loved us."

### Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

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## DAY 2

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### John 3:16b

... that he gave his only begotten Son . . . .

### Biblical Insight

The term “only begotten” can also be translated “one and only.” The phrase indicates uniqueness, with none comparable or existent alongside Him. As with many themes throughout John’s Gospel, this phrase originates in the Prologue of his work. The phrase “only begotten Son” immediately recalls John 1:14: “we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.” With this recollection, the first century readers of John would have immediately associated “only begotten” with supreme glory.

### Daily Devotion

A famous piece of jade jewelry is known to have been sold in a Sotheby’s auction in 2014. The selling price was a cool \$27.4 million dollars. This former possession of American socialite and heiress Barbara Hutton was intricately made of twenty-seven graduated jadeite beads, with a clasp made of rubies and diamonds. It is known as the Hutton-Mdivani necklace and is a one-of-a-kind piece now belonging to the Cartier Collection.

One-of-a-kind items tend to be unmatched in value. The term only begotten means there is only one. Our “one-of-a-kind” Jesus is more spectacularly glorious than any earthly gemstone could ever be and far more priceless in merit and value. The One who hung on the cross was infinitely more precious than any gem hung around someone’s neck. Do we treat Him with the reverence His infinite value deserves?

### Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

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## DAY 3

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### John 3:16c

. . .that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

### Biblical Insight

Birth and death exist on opposite sides of a human's life. In Nicodemus's midnight encounter with Jesus, the Pharisee confused physical birth with spiritual new birth, wondering how he could be reborn since he was already old. With physical birth, physical death is inevitable; however, the spiritual new birth offered by Christ resulted in everlasting, or eternal, life. This statement quickly demonstrated the superiority and necessity of spiritual new birth.

### Daily Devotion

In essence, we are all born dying. One million cells in our body die every single second. This means within the span of a day approximately 1.2 kilograms of bodily cells will be gone. The moment we are born into this world naturally, we begin dying.

Spiritual new birth is comparable to natural birth in many ways. Yet, with spiritual new birth, the old passes away, and we are made completely new in Christ. We are supernaturally born into an invaluable inheritance of eternal life with Him. We are naturally born unto inevitable death. Yet, when we are born spiritually, we are born unto eternal life. Natural birth marks the ticking of a clock that ultimately counts down toward death, but spiritual counts the sands slipping through an hourglass leading toward everlasting life.

### Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

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# DAY 4

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**John 3:17a**

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world . . .

**Biblical Insight**

Paul possibly recalled these words of John’s Gospel when Paul wrote: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). Condemnation is different from conviction. John prophesied that the Holy Spirit would “convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment” (John 16:8, ESV). Conviction always draws us back to repentance which draws us closer to God. Condemnation pushes us away from God and toward Hell because condemnation works to convince us God won’t forgive us. An adulteress in John 8 discovered Jesus did not come to condemn sinners; He came to offer them a path forward out of their sin. But those who refuse to believe in Christ condemn themselves (John 3:18).

**Daily Devotion**

Conviction and condemnation both feel like guilt, but they are not the same. The condemned stop coming to church and walking with God, not necessarily because they don’t love God anymore but typically because they feel like God doesn’t love them anymore. The devil is vicious. He’ll tell you God won’t forgive you. The church won’t forgive you. Don’t bother to repent because God won’t bother to listen.

Yes, sin is hideous and abhorrent, but thanks be to God, sin can be forgiven. John wrote: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

When we fall, let’s stay there just long enough to tell God we’re sorry and ask Him to forgive us. As soon as we ask, He forgives. Then, stand back up and keep walking.

**Reflection and Prayer**

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

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## DAY 5

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### John 3:17b

. . . but that the world through him might be saved.

### Biblical Insight

Jesus' purpose for His incarnation, death, and resurrection was the salvation of the entire world. Again, we see echoes of John's Prologue in this phrase. The Greek word for "world" is *kósmos*, which was used in John 1:9-10. Christ's hope for salvation and redemption was always directed toward the "world" as a whole, even for those He knew would reject Him. "He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him" (John 1:10).

### Daily Devotion

Making a guest list for a party or a wedding can be a treacherous task. For every one person you would like to invite, you can easily find five people less close, less pleasing, less necessary to the occasion who may be wildly offended if excluded. Many potential hostesses have turned away from having a party altogether, worrying they will hurt feelings and burn bridges. Sometimes there might simply not be enough food available for the growing guest list.

The doors of the kingdom of Heaven, however, are open to all who want to enter. No one needs to be excluded except by personal choice. Christ came to seek and save all who were lost, and His arrival heralded salvation and grace for the entire world. Those who would reject Him, those who love Him on sight, those who remain undecided—all are welcome. All are invited in. Have you responded to His invitation?

### Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

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