

JOHN 3:16 EXPLAINED

“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.”

Main Points

For/so : These are link words expanding or explaining something that was said earlier.

Context : We need to look at the preceding verses 14 and 15.

“Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.”

This refers to an event in Numbers 21:4-9. God was angry with the Israelites because of their sin of ingratitude. So God sent poisonous snakes which killed many of them. So they cried out to God.

God refused to take the snakes away, but told Moses to erect a bronze snake on a pole so that when the people who had been bitten looked at the snake they would not die. God provided a way of escape.

Thus, in the same way v 16.

Loved : past tense. (Not “loves”)

Agape love – a love of action, that responds to a need.

World : Sinful, fallen, rebellious world.

Whoever : Everyone

Believes : Believes in, not believes about.

Goes on believing

Perish : Destroyed , made useless (not annihilated). eg a ruined castle.

Have : Go on having.

Eternal Life : Quality and quantity. Everlasting and abundant.

Who spoke these words ? Verses 14 and 15 were spoken by Jesus to Nicodemus. Verse 16 is John's later comment directed to believers (as is all of John's gospel).

A Paraphrase of John 3:16

Indeed, in just the same way, God the Father acted in love on another occasion. This time for the whole rebellious human race, by sacrificing His only natural Son, so that all who go on trusting and obeying Him might never be ruined beyond recovery, but go on having everlasting and abundant life.