

For **G**od so loved the world

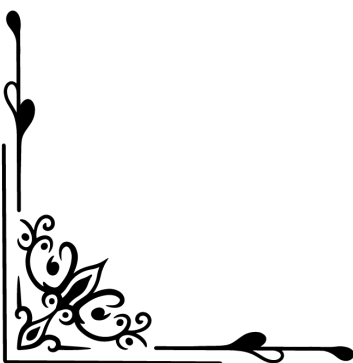
That He gave his **O**nly

begotten **S**on, that whosoever believeth

in Him should not **P**erish

but have **E**verlasting

Life





... prepare to meet thy God...

Amos 4:12

First Stage

Salvation

Realise

Agree with God that you are lost, wayward and bound in sin, not honouring your Creator. *I have sinned against the LORD God (Joshua 7:20)*

Repent

Turn from the sin that you have committed, from your lost behaviours that bring guilt and shame. *Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD. (Lamentations 4:30)*

Receive

Believe what Jesus Christ did for and accept the gift He is offering you. *But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. (John 20:31)*

Second Stage

Service

Baptism

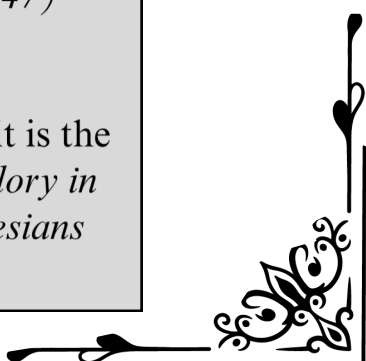
After you are saved, you should be baptized to show that you have received Jesus as your Saviour. *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized (Acts 2:41)*



Church

Your baptism allows you to join an Independent Baptist Church and have a church family. *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized ... And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. (Acts 2:41 & 47)*

Service

Church members have responsibilities & privileges - it is the way a saved person to honour God. *Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages (Ephesians 3:21)*





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.

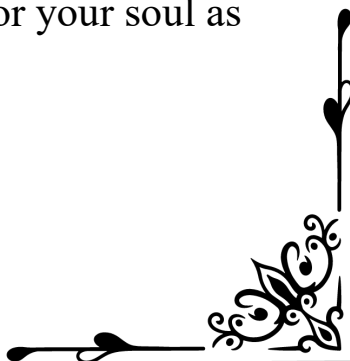
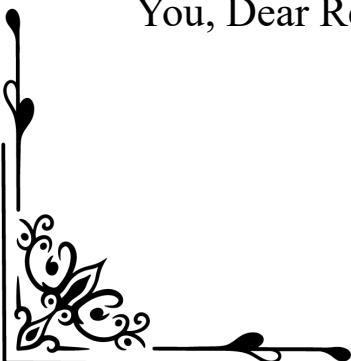
(John 3:16)

This was once the most widely quoted Bible verse across the world. Christians and even those who do not believe in Jesus Christ knew this verse.

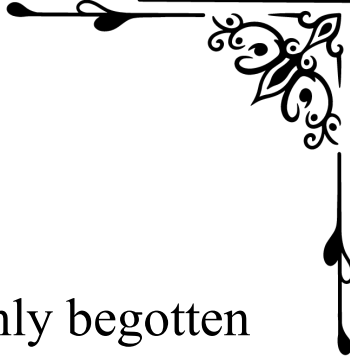
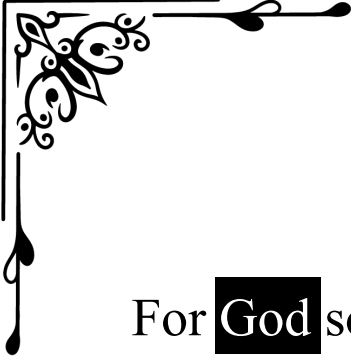
But, over the years our societies have changed, and verses such as *Judge not, that ye be not judged (Matthew 7:1)*, are now the most quoted. This change shows how hearts have hardened over time, preferring to focus on self and harshness, rather than the tender love and care of God.

But in our verse, John 3:16, there are nine special words that seem to summarise the whole verse: **God, loved, world, gave, Son, whosoever, believeth, perish and life.** Each of them was placed there by God to explain to us what He has done for us.

If you will permit me, let us look together at each of these words in turn, and learn what we can about God, His Son Jesus Christ and what He is offering us.



You, Dear Reader, have never known such love and care for your soul as that of God & Christ.



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.

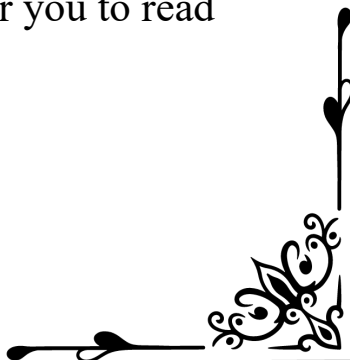
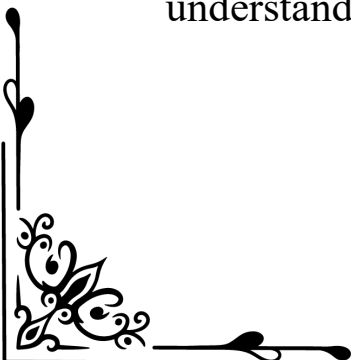
(John 3:16)

Our first word is: **God**. There is much to say about this precious word, God. I should say that we are loved by the Creator Himself, and God is His Name. He is not a statue or simply an artist's painting, unable to do anything for you and I.

We are loved by the Redeemer Himself, not by some agent that He sends on His behalf. We are loved by Jehovah Himself, the Great I Am, Who does not answer to some higher authority. We are loved by the Father, Who withheld not His very own Son, not by some false god that constantly demands we pay him for his favours.

You may have been loved little in this life by friends, family who once loved you may have disowned you and those who should have loved you may have abandoned you. But the love I speak of is the that of God.



You may have sinned terribly, hurt many others and spoken foolishly of God in your past. But I speak of the God of the Bible, the Supreme Being, He Who is Love, Purity, Sinless, Stainless, All Seeing, All Knowing and All Powerful. And because God is not a man, He understands you, and wrote the rest of our Bible verse for you to read and believe and trust.



Dear reader, to be loved by God is to be watched over, jealously guarded and provided for in ways that cannot be counted or measured.

I may not love God as I should with my imperfect love, but He cannot deny Himself: He loves me! And He loves you!

For God | The Greatest Giver
So Loved | The Greatest Degree
The World | The Greatest Company
That He Gave | The Greatest Sacrifice
His Only Begotten Son | The Greatest Gift
That Whosoever | The Greatest Opportunity
Believeth | The Greatest Simplicity
In Him | The Greatest Attraction
Should Not Perish | The Greatest Promise
But | The Greatest Difference
Have | The Greatest Certainty
Everlasting Life | The Greatest Possession



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.


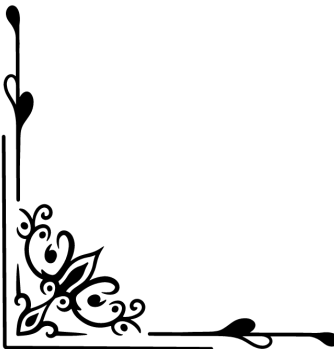
(John 3:16)

To continue our meditation on this special Bible verse, I would have you consider something that all of the false gods cannot do. They cannot see, they cannot feel, they cannot touch, they cannot speak and they surely cannot love.

Our second word is: loved. Every human being has been created by God in His image. Because of this very special design of man, he possesses several character traits that are marks left by his Maker. Just as a potter will inscribe initials into the base of his vessels, so God left His signature on us.

Of these characteristics that mankind has received from God, love is the greatest. Indeed, love, is the greatest of the three abiding graces (Faith, Hope, & Charity). Mankind loves because he has received the ability to do so from God. Love is what we call a communicable trait, which means that it has been passed from God to us.

Love is not something that is natural for sinful man, so we must 'inherit' it from God. And this is made possible because God is inherently love by definition and by his Nature (1John 4:8).



Of all of the characteristics that we know God possesses - holiness, righteousness, peace, et.al. - it is this majestic trait of love that moved God to give His Son. Does God have affection for us? Yes, He does. Does God pity us? Yes, He does. Does God provide for us? Yes, He does. But, far and above affection, pity or provision, it is Love that moved God to send Jesus Christ for us. Very specifically, it was God's Love that motivated Him.


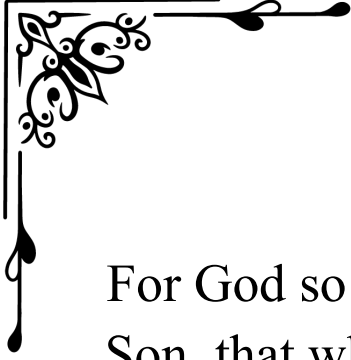
How wonderful to think that God loves. Not that He simply hates, or judges, or despises, or condemns. But that he loves.

So, I ask of you, because He loves you, will you love Him in return?

*Could we with ink the ocean fill,
and were the skies of parchment made;
were ev'ry stalk on earth a quill,
and everyone a scribe by trade;
To write the love of God above
would drain the ocean dry;
nor could the scroll contain the whole,
though stretched from sky to sky.*

J.M. Lehman

The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing. (Zephaniah 3:17)



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.



(John 3:16)

As we continue, may I ask: are you ready to be saved yet? Look ahead at the other words in our verse and see exactly why God so loved. Yet, we must look at our words in order, to make sure you understand the gift that is offered to you, that you should not miss it.

Our third word is: world. If you were to ask a little child how big the world was, they would stretch their small arms as wide as possible and say: This big! And they would be right. We often use another related word to describe everything, and that word is cosmos. God wants you and I to understand that He loves everyone, without exception.

Next, ask the little child if they themselves are included in the world, and the obvious answer would be: Yes. And there, out of the mouth of babes, is a simple demonstration that the world includes everyone. And that also includes you, dear reader.

So, the conclusion is inescapable - God loves everyone, and you are part of everyone, so God loves you.



This is good news indeed! Jesus did not only die for sins, but for the sins of everyone: *And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world (1John 2:2). An honest reader of the Bible must come to the conclusion that they are loved by God, and therefore John 3:16 applies to them.*

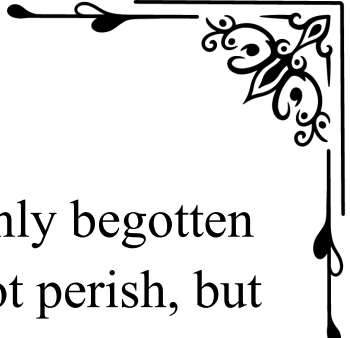
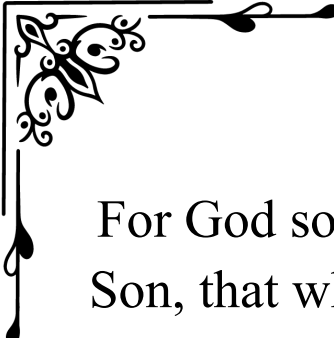
Jesus Christ did not die for some, nor did He die for some select group, nor did He die just for good people, nor even just religious people. No, I do not believe Jesus died for some, I believe He died for the whole world. In fact, my belief - or yours - has nothing to do with what John 3:16 is teaching. This is because every Bible verse is true regardless of what anyone thinks.

Please, begin to take this verse, John 3:16, personally. If God loves everyone, then He desires that everyone would read it and believe.

You have read it. Do you believe it? Would you believe it?

*God loved the world so tenderly
His only Son He gave,
That all who on His Name believe
Its wondrous power will save.*

Fanny Crosby



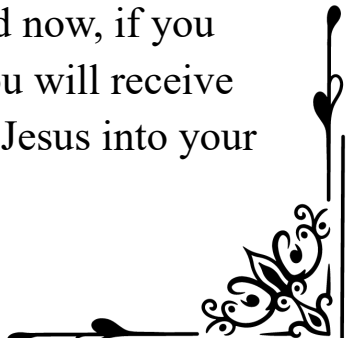
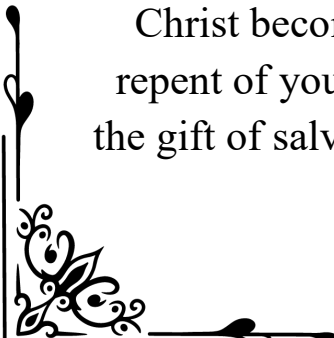
For God so loved the world, that he **gave** his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

(John 3:16)

Have you ever had someone give you a present, only to recycle it and give it to someone else as a present yourself? We might say that the gift you just passed on to someone else was not that practical for you. When God gave us His Son, the **exact opposite** occurred.

Our forth word is: gave. Jesus Christ was given, or allowed by the Heavenly Father, to come down to earth from Heaven and die for our sins. He surely was not given so that you might neglect such a gift!

No, beloved, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was given that you might benefit from Him. Indeed, it can be said that not only was Jesus given **for** you, but that He was also given **to** you. God's plan of salvation is not something to be watched from a distance, but something that you can reach out in faith and accept, just as you might accept a birthday gift. God wants you to partake of this precious gift of His Son.



Our word, **gave**, implies that there has been a transferral of something. In a very real sense, when a soul is saved by repenting of their sins, Jesus Christ becomes their personal Saviour. So, right here and now, if you repent of your sins and believe that Jesus died for you, you will receive the gift of salvation. You will actually and literally receive Jesus into your life as your Saviour.

This wonderful gift of eternal life is available for you! Will you accept it just now? *What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD (Psalm 116:12-13).*



I find it strange that mankind should have to be pursued, reasoned with and convinced that a gift - the Son of God - should be accepted. Surely no sane person would reject such an offer. But, you are reasonable and sensible, aren't you? Surely you see the sense in accepting Christ, yes? It is responsible to this gift from your Creator.

*I gave My life for thee,
My precious blood I shed,
That thou might ransomed be,
And raised up from the dead;*

*I suffered much for thee,
More than thy tongue can tell,
Of bitt' rest agony,
To rescue thee from hell;*

*And I have brought to thee,
Down from My home above,
Salvation full and free,
My pardon and My love;*

Frances Havergal



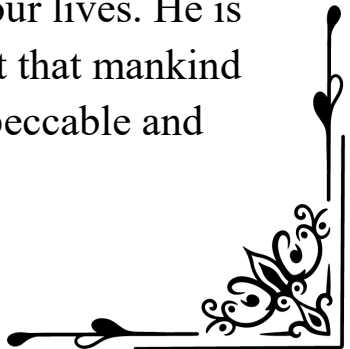
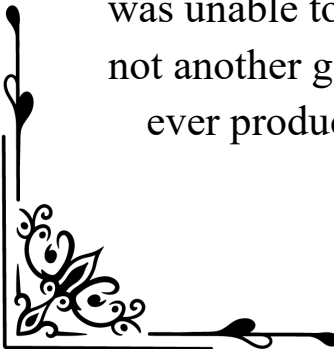
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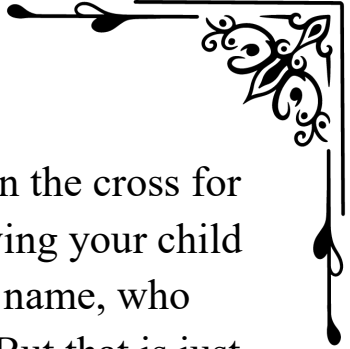
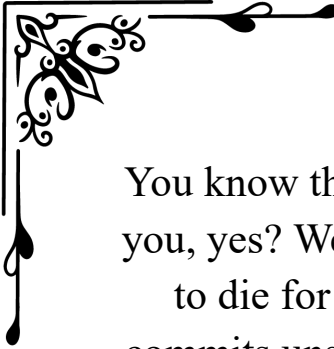
Our fifth word is: Son. We do not need to be theologians to understand this word. Yet you will notice that it is Son, not son.

It is a mighty task to describe Who this Son is. If we were to describe a normal human son, we should need to consider many wondrous things: the amazing process of conception and the beginning of life, the incredible period of growth in the womb under the Hand of God, the birth at which the parents meet the long-awaited baby for the first time, reacting to the world around them, learning to smile, the first spoken word, toddling around the house, running, playing, interacting with their Creator and ultimately trusting Christ as their own Saviour.

Yet, we have neither enough words nor the ability to use them to describe the fullness of this one word, Son. Why so? Because this Son is God's Son. Not just any son. The Son of God.



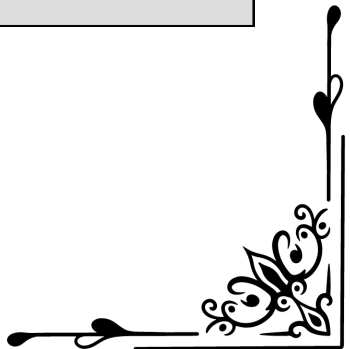
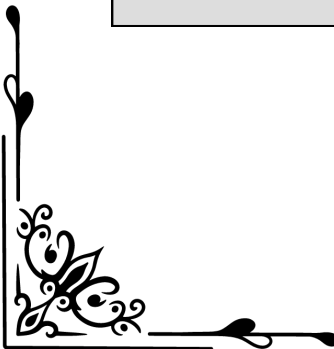
So, how do we talk about **the** Son of God? He is not an angel as some suppose. He is not some proxy sent from Heaven because God Himself was unable to condescend and bow down to intervene in our lives. He is not another god, nor merely a good man, nor even the best that mankind ever produced. The Son of God is sinless, stainless, impeccable and without any darkness at all.



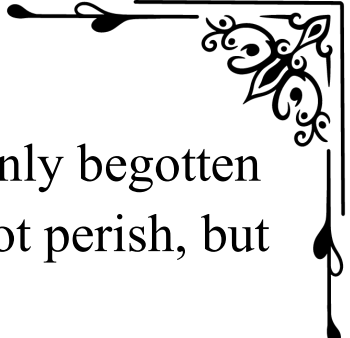
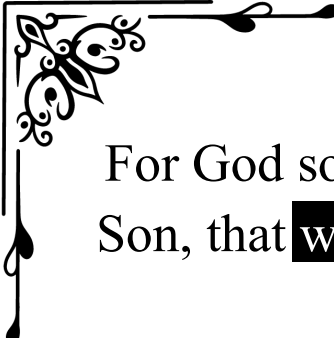
You know that God gave His Only Begotten Son to die on the cross for you, yes? Well then, could you even begin to imagine giving your child to die for another, who despises you, who curses your name, who commits unspeakable evil and mocks your gift to them? But that is just what the Father did with Jesus Christ - He gave Him to die for you, and for many years you have ignored Him.

An Old Testament prophet wrote the following: *Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?' (Micah 6:7).* Of course, this is a rhetorical question with the answer being definitively and absolutely - no. There is only **one** Son that the Father accepts in the matter of payment for sin, and that Son is His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

If you, sinner extraordinaire, condemned to an eternity in the Lake of Fire, were to be delivered from such a catastrophe, what then would be the price of your freedom? What would God the Father accept in order to forgive such a grievous criminal like you? Actually, it is not **What** is that price, but **Who** is that price. It is the Son. And His Name is Jesus Christ.



*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life:
no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.
(John 14:6)*



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.

(John 3:16)

Our sixth word is: whosoever. And what a comforting word this is!

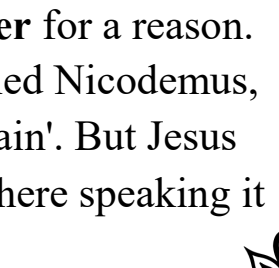
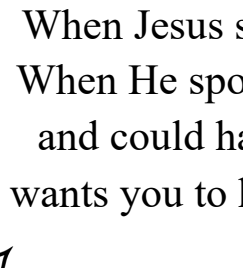
We have spoken of God loving the whole world, which includes you. But there is more to the story of Jesus Christ and the salvation He offers you.

You see, God gave His Son for the whole world, but now it is up to individuals to reach out by faith and accept everlasting life. If God gave His Son and you did nothing with it, you are merely an observer watching an event. But if you want to partake of this salvation, well then, you must receive what God is offering you.

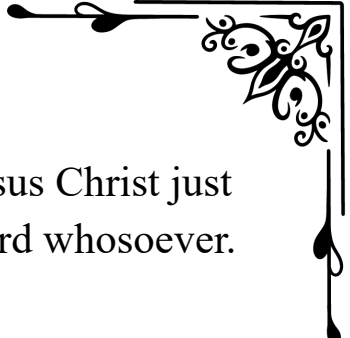
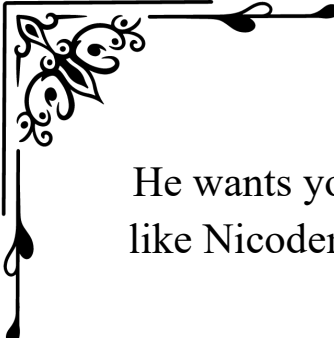
Yes, you are part of this world that God loved and sent a Saviour for, but now you need to be a whosoever, a person who individually receives Jesus Christ and everlasting life.

There is an old time gospel song that has these lines in the chorus:

*Jesus included me, yes, He included me,
When the Lord said, "Whosoever," He included me;*



When Jesus spoke John 3:16, He used the word **whosoever** for a reason. When He spoke this, He was talking directly to a man called Nicodemus, and could have said 'Nicodemus, you need to be born again'. But Jesus wants you to hear this message as well, just as if He were here speaking it directly to you.



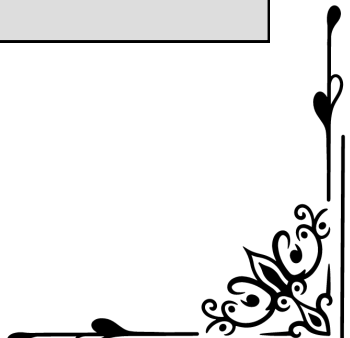
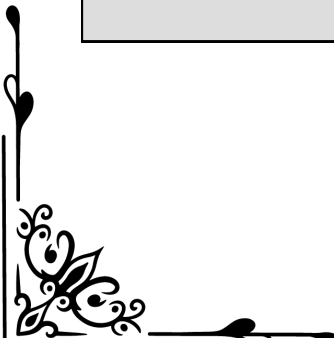
He wants you to know that you are able to believe on Jesus Christ just like Nicodemus was able to do so. So, Jesus used the word whosoever.
You are a whosoever.

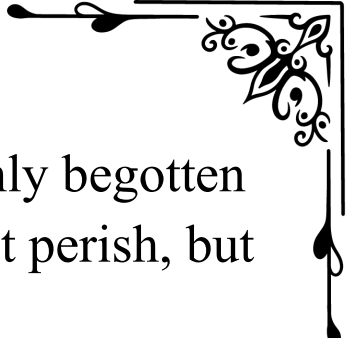
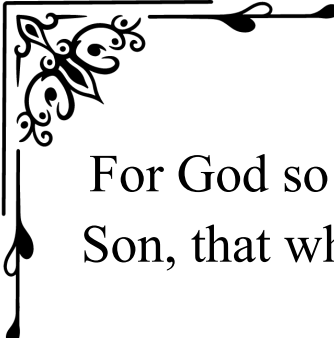
You may be of low status in this world, despised by its systems, marked for persecution by the wicked, excluded from social circles and shunned by family & friends. But there is one thing that you are access to because you are a whosoever - you are able to believe on Jesus Christ unto everlasting life.

Let me once again beseech you to repent of your sin and believe on Jesus Christ! Quickly now, before the day of your death and irreversible entry into hellfire and damnation.

It occurs to me that everyone residing in Hell right now, was a whosoever. They, like Nicodemus, and like you, had an opportunity to be saved. But not now. Their day is passed, their opportunity for salvation is gone. They lived their life and did not accept the gift of salvation offered through Jesus Christ.

*... behold, now is the accepted time;
behold, now is the day of salvation.
(2Corinthians 6:2)*





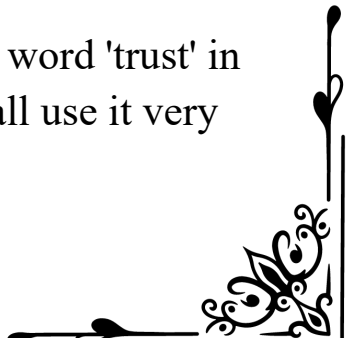
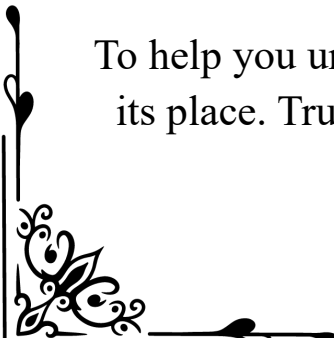
For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

(John 3:16)

If you have ever wondered what the difference is between a genuine Christian and any other religious person, the answer is that he Christian has believed on the LORD Jesus Christ, whereas every other religion tries to do something to please God. Fill the oceans with the efforts of man - pilgrimages, church attendance, financial offerings, serving in a religious ministry, prayers, self-denial - and the soul is still left empty, thirsty and without God.

Our seventh word is: believeth. Such a peaceful, childlike and honest word, believeth. Yet, so damaged and tortured by misuse. God never intended for His greatest gift - eternal life in His Son Jesus Christ, offered to whosoever will - to be hard to receive. If God wants you to be saved, surely He would have made it easy to be saved!

Salvation as a free gift requiring no payment, no religious ceremony, no amount of good works, no special level of spirituality, no turning over a new leaf is required and no church attendance. Just belief. Simply put, believeth means to have faith upon Jesus, or to credit Him to be all Who He says He is, or to put your trust in Him.



To help you understand the word believeth, we can use the word 'trust' in its place. Trust is a word that is easily understood, as we all use it very frequently in our day and age.

There is a Bible verse that shows us how trust and believeth are so similar:
In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise (Ephesians 1:12-13). To trust the gospel is to believe the gospel.


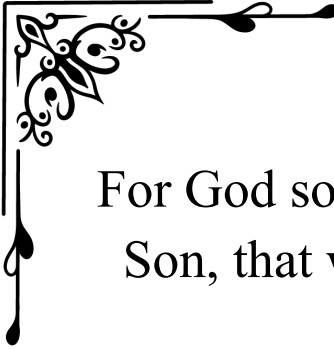
So, there it is! Have you believed on Jesus Christ? Have you trusted Him in the same way you would trust a fireman to save you from a burning building? Then you are saved. And, if you have not yet believed on Him, then you are lost and need to do so! *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved (Acts 16:31).*

The forgiveness of sins is received by actively placing your hope and your confidence in Jesus Christ by simply saying: 'Yes God, I see it all now! It makes sense! I am a sinner and lost, but I see Jesus died for me, and that He will save me, so I trust Him to do that! I turn from me, from my sins, from my efforts and I now believe in Him!'

Now, dear reader, what is so hard about that? The obvious answer is: nothing is hard about that. So stop trying to please God with all of your false religious efforts - so expensive, so complicated, so wearying, so unattainable, so frustrating. With your own efforts, you are trying to earn from God something that is free to start with.

Now there is some good news, yes? Whosoever believeth - you are a whosoever, and you can believe. Would you?

.. trust in the LORD ...
(Psalm 118:8 ... the middle verse in the Bible)



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.

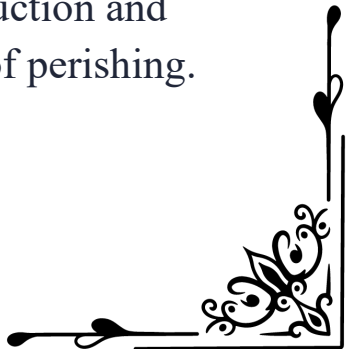

(John 3:16)

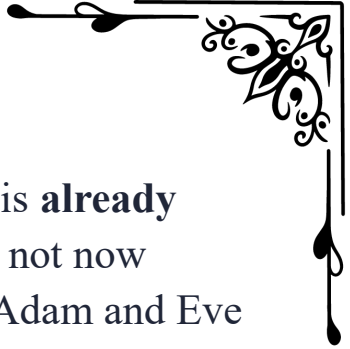
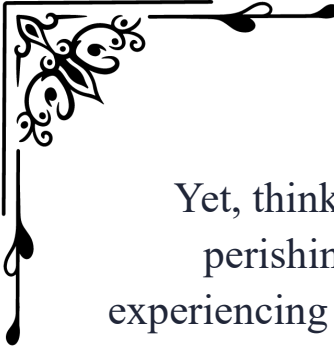
You are in grave danger, dear reader. If you have come this far in our devotions and are still unsaved, then let me explain to you the horrible fate that awaits those who do not trust Christ and receive the gift of everlasting life.

Our eighth word is: perish. We have thus far spoken of such glorious themes - the love of God, the gift of Christ, the freeness of salvation to whosoever. But we need to stop and consider why the price of your salvation was so high.

Outside of Christ, the lost or unsaved soul is simply living out their life here on earth, awaiting death, so that it may enter Hell for all of eternity. This is what is meant by the word 'perish': to die and enter Hell, a state that cannot be remedied. But this result is far more calamitous than you could even imagine.

The soul in Hell is neither numb to its surroundings nor annihilated, rather it suffers the opposite of eternal life in Heaven - eternal perishing, forever separated from God. Such a terrible thought, that a conscious man, capable of free thought, love, self-expression, reproduction and determination, should waste away in an ongoing state of perishing.





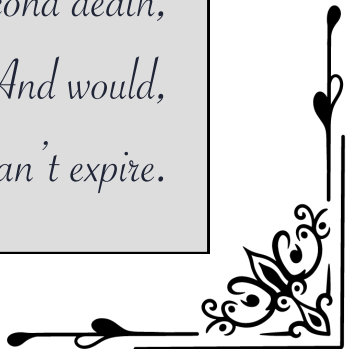
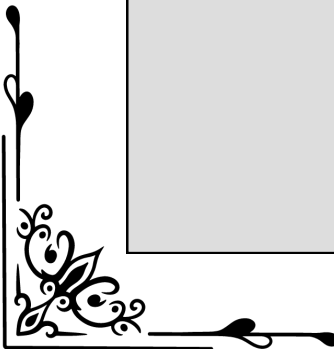
Yet, think further with me: someone who is not saved is **already** perishing! They are not currently a child of God and not now experiencing a wonderful relationship with their Creator. Adam and Eve were created to fellowship with God, but started to perish from the very day they ate of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. Their relationship with God was broken when they sinned.

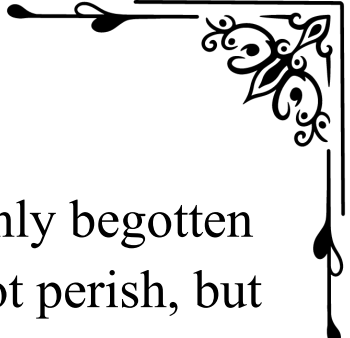
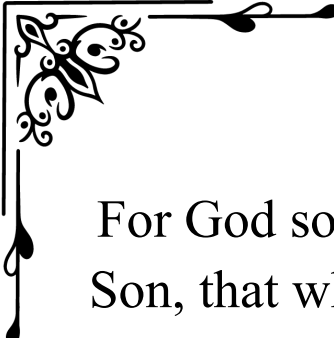
You too, dear unsaved person, are perishing in your current state. Already! Death just ensures that you will remain that way for all of eternity! Such tragedy, such loss, such destruction and wastage of life. But there is hope, and His Name is Jesus Christ. Glance back at our verse and notice that it states should **not** perish.

Today, right now, you may be changed by the Heavenly Father from perishing to not perishing. You may be saved! Will you?

*The Breath of God,
His angry Breath,
Supplies and fans the fire;*

*There sinners taste the second death,
And would,
But can't expire.*





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**.

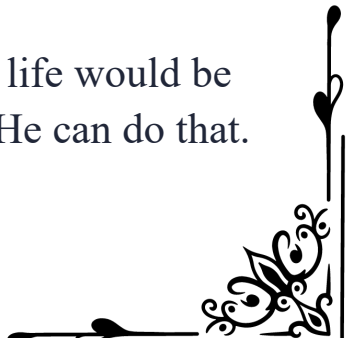
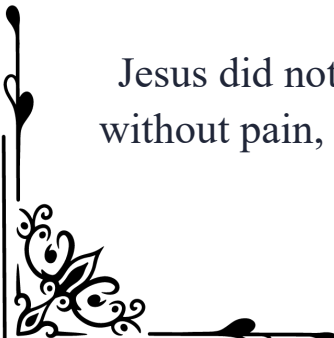
(John 3:16)

So, we arrive at our last word in this short series. Are you in Christ yet? No? Perhaps, at the end of this page, you will bow your heart and call on the Son of God.

Our ninth, and last word is: life. Have you been privileged to be present at the birth of a baby, and hear that first breath being taken? The sound of life - gentle, God-give, precious. Have you resuscitated a poor soul who is not breathing and been overwhelmed to hear them begin to breath again?

The sound of life - necessary, vital, vivacious. Have you ever been in danger of drowning, but then fought your way to the surface and sucked in the air? The feeling of life - strengthening, sustaining, revitalising.

Yet, there is a deeper yearning the human condition needs fulfilling, and that is spiritual life. You have a body and a soul that you use every day, but if you are not saved, then your spirit is dead to God! This is why you do not understand the Bible, why church seems burdensome or pointless and why Jesus Christ is not everything to you. Indeed, you may have struggled to make sense of these very devotions on John 3:16.



Jesus did not come to this world to see that your physical life would be without pain, without sickness or without death, although He can do that.

No, He came because you were born dead in trespasses and sins, unable to communicate with God, judged guilty of your deeds and condemned for your crimes against His Holiness. He came so that you might have spiritual life.

If the word **perish** means to inhabit Hell outside of the presence of God, then the word **life** means to dwell eternally in the presence of God Himself, of course in Heaven. But this will require that you be born again - born anew into another family - God's Family.

Yes, you were born into this world and have life in this world, but to have eternal life and a relationship with God as your Father, you must be born into His Family. Jesus Himself, in the very same conversation with Nicodemus that John 3:16 comes from, explained it this way:

Ye must be born again (John 3:7).

*Before the throne of God above, I have a strong and perfect plea.
A Great High Priest whose name is love, Who ever lives and pleads for me.*

*My name is graven on His hands, my name is written on His heart.
I know that while in Heaven He stands, no tongue can bid me thence depart.*

*One with Himself I cannot die; my soul is purchased by His blood,
My life is hid with Christ on high, with Christ my Saviour and my God!*

Charitie Lees Bancroft



Conclusion

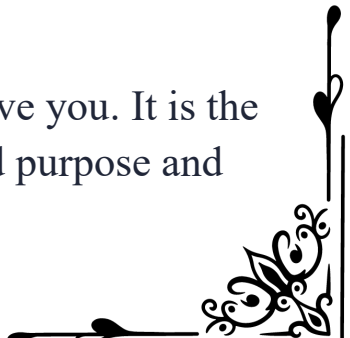
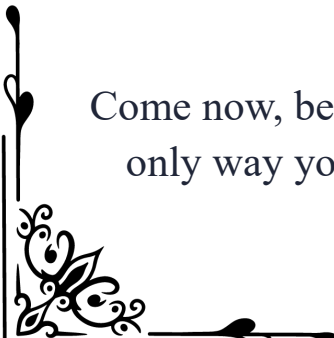
How am I to close out these very short devotions? With your eternal soul at stake, with Heaven waiting and Hell looming, what should I say in farewell?

There is a simple verse that is frequently used to help lost people understand that they are lost: *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*
(Romans 3:23)

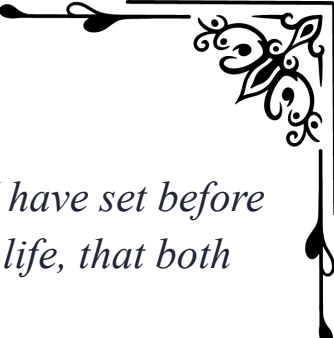
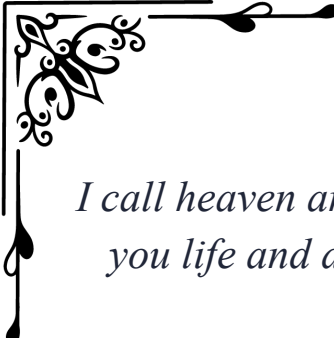
See in this simple verse that life is offered by God in exchange for your death - everlasting life with God for your everlasting death in Hellfire. It all seems so simple now, in light of our nine words.

So as to leave you in no doubt, know that you have earned your place in Hell, wandering in sin this way and that but never toward Jesus Christ. *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way;*
(Isaiah 53:6).

Know also that it is now high time for you to reach out in faith toward Almighty God, confess your deeds to Him, repent of your sins and trust Jesus Christ to save you.



Come now, be reasonable, honour your Creator, let Him save you. It is the only way you can acceptably bring glory to God and find purpose and meaning in your life.



*I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:
(Deuteronomy 30:19).*



Dear Reader, if you have already accepted Christ through these devotions, or do accept Christ in days to come, perhaps you might write to me and let me know of your salvation, so that I might rejoice with you.

But I will continue to pray for you, that together with myself and the many people who have been saved through the Blood of Jesus Christ, you may one day sing:

Saved by His pow'r divine,

Saved to new life, to new life sublime!

Life now is sweet and my joy is complete,

For I'm saved, saved, saved.

Jack P Scholfield





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