

Welcome friends to another broadcast of "Morsels for Zion's Poor"

John 3:16 is probably the most well known scripture verse in the Bible. While thousands can quote this verse from memory, very few ever look at this verse in the context in which it is given and therefore miss the glory that is found in a proper understanding of the truth that it sets forth. Many believe that this verse sets forth a proposition that GOD has made to men wherein HE will bless them if they respond to HIS overtures by believing the gospel. They see salvation as something which is offered for the benefit of men if they can be persuaded to embrace it. GOD is pictured as desiring for all men to take advantage of this offer but HE remains in the shadows waiting to see how men will respond. This is a man centered salvation

Others recognize that the faith spoken of here is the gift of GOD and an evidence that GOD has performed a work of grace in a man's heart to cause him to believe that the record of GOD is true. They believe that this verse sets forth the manifestation of GOD's purpose to bring forth HIS elect from the four corners of the earth and that what JESUS CHRIST did in the behalf of HIS elect is the basis of their salvation. They believe that HE is calling them out of every tribe and tongue and is no respecter of persons. HE is the cause of this faith which is an evidence that these are *"born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."* As the LORD told Nicodemus *"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* This view is "GOD centered" because it views the salvation of men as a function of HIS sovereign purpose carried out for all the world to see.

An examination of the context of John 3:16 requires that we look at who it was that the LORD spoke these words to. Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader had come to the LORD by night so as not to be seen by his peers. He was probably expecting to ask the LORD some philosophical questions. However the LORD beat him to the punch and made a declaration concerning the necessity of the new birth. No doubt, this was a great shock to one steeped in the religious traditions of the Jews, but the LORD told him that this was the basic need that he and every man stood in need of in order to have an understanding of the Kingdom of GOD.

Nicodemus, like the rest of the Jews, thought that they they had the inside track so to speak and that the MESSIAH was meant primarily for them. The LORD dispelled that notion when HE told Nicodemus, "for GOD so loved the world". HE literally intended to convey to Nicodemus that it was not just Jews that HE had come to redeem but rather people from all tribes and tongues of the world. So the world that HE is referring to is not every individual on planet earth but a group of people that are not limited to one race who will believe in HIM.

Those who believe in a man centered salvation easily become perturbed at any thought which would suggest that GOD is not obligated to HIS creation in any way. Had it pleased GOD to create a world simply for the purpose of destroying it and all its inhabitants HE would still be as glorious and perfect in all HIS ways as HE is now that HE has revealed that HE does intend to save some of the inhabitants of this planet. HIS intention to save some is a testimony to the fact that HE has loved the world that HE created. However, it is obviously clear that HE has not loved every inhabitant of it with the same love since all men are not saved. Those who believe in a "man-centered" view of salvation never blink an eye at the thought that the eternal purpose of GOD to try and save all men (according to them) is going to fail. They seem to take some comfort in this thought while those who believe in a "GOD centered" view of salvation, glory in the fact that GOD cannot and shall not fail in any of those things HE has purposed to do.

A perusal of the scripture indicates that the true and living GOD shall "do all HIS pleasure" and shall not fail to accomplish anything that HE intends to do. The GOD who rules over all, would never leave the salvation of those who HE has declared that HE has loved with an everlasting love to any sort of chance but shall bring them to HIMSELF in HIS appointed time.

"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." Have you heard the call of CHRIST unto HIS sheep and do you believe that HE is the SAVIOR of sinners who cannot fail to accomplish HIS purpose?

Thy free grace alone,"#11 **If you would like a free transcript of this broadcast email us at forthepoor@windstream.net**