

John 3:16 (NKJV)

*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

The mission and message of the Lord Jesus Christ is clearly declared in this favorite passage. Here too, the ultimate plot of good vs evil is shown, with divine love totally over-coming and defeating evil.

As with all the Gospel message, this verse starts with God. God is the initiator. God's love for man compels Him to act. He must reach down to man before man can reach up to Him.

*No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.* John 6:44

*Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with loving kindness I have drawn you.* Jeremiah 31:3

God's love is not reserved for a select few. His love is universal, crossing all color, race, and ethnic boundaries. God loves the world, and equally embraces all mankind in the arms of His limitless love.

Could we with ink the ocean fill,  
And were the skies of parchment made,  
Were every stalk on earth a quill,  
And every man 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.<sup>1</sup>

When you love with all your heart, you can't help but give your very best. God the Father could give no greater gift to mankind than His only begotten (special, loved) Son, Jesus Christ. This wording in the Tanakh (the Hebrew name for the Old Testament), is most often reserved for Abraham offering up his special, loved son (and promised seed) Isaac.

"Whoever" is again a universal word. Everyone is included, no one is to be denied. Whoever accepts and receives this gift of love from God by faith, shall not perish (mercy) but also be given everlasting life (grace).

God's mercy keeps us from getting what we deserve and His grace gives us what we could never earn.

The result of God's love and willingness to sacrifice Himself for us, is His promise of everlasting life to anyone who believes.

*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.* Ephesians 2:8-9

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<sup>1</sup> F.M. Lehman, "The Love of God," Hymns for the Family of God (Nashville, TN: Paragon Associates, Inc., 1976), # 18.