

DON'T BE SO _____

INTRODUCTION:

I. JOHN 3:16-18 IS A _____ PASSAGE.

II. JOHN 3:16-18 IS AN _____ PASSAGE IF THERE IS ONE.

III. JOHN 3:16-18 IS EXTREMELY _____ TO MILLIONS.

- A. "For God" -
- B. "So loved" -
- C. "The world" -
- D. "That He gave" -
- E. "His only begotten son" -
- F. "That whosoever believeth in Him" -
- G. "Should not perish" -
- H. "But have everlasting life" -
- I. Verse 17 -
- J. Verse 18 -

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DON'T BE SO OFFENSIVE

INTRODUCTION:

A. Scripture: (John 3:16-18) "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. {17} For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. {18} He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

B. Many people are offended by the strong stance that the Church takes on morality and doctrines. Religious people often say that we should be more tolerant or at least not be so offensive.

C. Maybe if we could just be more like them we would be less offensive. Let us look at a favorite passage of those who don't want us to be so dogmatic about the importance of obedience.

I. JOHN 3:16-18 IS A BEAUTIFUL PASSAGE.

A. This short passage tells the story of the whole Bible in its simplest form.

B. Someone has called John 3:16 "the heart of the Bible -- the Gospel in miniature." It's so simple a child can understand it;

yet it condenses the deep and marvelous truths of redemption into these few pungent words:

"God"	The greatest being
"So loved"	The greatest attitude
"The world"	The greatest number
"That He gave"	The greatest act of selflessness
"His only begotten Son"	The greatest gift
"That whosoever"	The greatest invitation
"Believeth"	The greatest foundation
"In Him"	The greatest person
"Should not perish"	The greatest hope of deliverance from the greatest punishment
"But"	The greatest difference
"Have everlasting life"	The greatest hope of the greatest reward of the greatest quality for the greatest

time

II. JOHN 3:16-18 IS AN INOFFENSIVE PASSAGE IF THERE IS ONE.

A. Surely, this of all the verses in the Bible is free from the kind of "self-righteous, judgmental, offensive" statements that we in the church are always making. Just look at it. There is no baptism, nothing about how to worship, or what women can or can't do in the assembly, no moral teachings, etc.

B. This passage is the one that speaks of good news, the gospel. It even proclaims that Jesus was not here to condemn, but to save. Finally we have a verse that will not offend anyone. Or will it?

III. JOHN 3:16-18 IS EXTREMELY OFFENSIVE TO MILLIONS.

A. "For God" - The word 'God' offends at least three large groups of people. Here we are only two words into the passage and it is already offensive.

1. The Orthodox Jew - They believe it blasphemous to even speak or write out God's name. We would have to say G-d in order to not offend them.

2. The Idolatrous, Pagan, and Polytheist - They would be offended by to singular use of 'God' instead of 'gods'.

3. The Atheist - These would be offended by the doctrine that there is a God in the first place.

B. "So loved" - Surely no one would be offended by that.

1. The Deist - This group does not believe that God cares for the world at all.

C. "The world"

1. The Calvinist - Calvinism teaches that God only loved the elect and not the whole world, so if we teach this part of the verse we will offend them.

D. "That He gave" - Aside from the atheists and deists who would this possibly offend.

1. The Feminist - How truly sexist we are if we insist that God is a He we should say 'she' or 'it' in order to please them.

E. "His only begotten son" - There we have offended the feminists and Jews again, but surely no other groups.

1. The Muslims
2. The Jehovah's Witnesses

3. Neither of these groups believe that Jesus was and is the son of God. There are probably other groups as well

F. "That whosoever believeth in Him" - There we go offending atheists and Jews and feminists again.

1. The Calvinists - They don't believe that 'whosoever', they say only those God calls.

2. The Universalists - We offend them by demanding that they believe. They teach that Everyone is saved regardless of whether they believe or not.

G. "Should not perish"

1. Calvinists - They teach that believers cannot perish

2. There are some groups and many individuals who do not believe in a Hell where anyone will perish

H. "But have everlasting life"

1. There are those who would complain that it isn't fair for some murderer to get eternal life in heaven, even if he/she does believe in Jesus.

2. There are others who do not believe in a heaven where anyone will live eternally.

I. Verse 17 is extremely cruel to our politically correct and ultra sensitive culture.

1. {17} "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

2. Are you insensitive people saying that salvation comes through only Christ. What about all the other religions of the world. Buddhism, Humanism, Judaism, Brahmanism, New Ageism, etc., etc.

3. Furthermore, the Humanist will say that no one can save us and that we don't even need a savior.

J. Verse 18 even more emphatically states the singular nature of salvation.

1. {18} "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

2. Are you saying that even though I am a good person

I am condemned if I don't believe in this Jesus of yours? That is what it says, and that is what it means.

3. This would certainly offend the heathen or pagan who had never heard of Jesus before.

CONCLUSION

A. Even this condensed version of the gospel is offensive to all of these groups. How much more is the expanded, more specific version of the gospel going to offend.

B. Jesus never promised that He and His teaching would not offend.

1. (Isa 8:13-15) "Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. {14} And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. {15} And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken."

2. (1 Pet 2:7-8) "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, {8} And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed."

3. (Mat 10:34-38) "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. {35} For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. {36} And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. {37} He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. {38} And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."

C. We need to avoid offending people when we can, but when the Word is clear, we need never be ashamed of it, or of the offence it brings. We are not what is offending them, the Lord is.