

JNO. 3: 16: A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Ed Dye

I. INTRODUCTION

1. 2Tim.3:16,17 declares the inspiration and profitableness and sufficiency of the scriptures.
2. Since Jno.3:16 is a part of the inspired written word of God, it is thus profitable for us, and we may profit by our study of it if “rightly divided” as 2Tim.2:15 demands.
 - a. To do this we must understand what the verse says and what it does not say.
 - b. We must understand and explain it in both its immediate and remote context in harmony with every thing else the Scriptures say on the subject under consideration.
 - c. And we must not add to, taken from, or substitute for anything the Scriptures teach on the subject.
3. Our plan in this study is to notice what Jno.3:16 says, what it necessarily implies, what it affirms, and what it does not affirm.
4. Therefore, we plan a textual analysis of Jno.3:16.

II. DISCUSSION

A. NOTE CAREFULL WHAT THE VERSE SAYS.

B. WHAT THIS PASSAGE ASSUMES OR PRESUPPOSES AS A FACT OR NECESSARILY INPLIES.

- 1 It necessarily implies the existence of God: “God so loved...”
 - a. This verse doesn’t make a formal argument as to the existence of God, but rather assumes or presupposes the fact.
 - b. Other passages do the same thing regarding God’s existence, Gen.1:1; Heb.11:6; Jno.4:24.
 - c. For the most part the Bible simply begins with or takes up with the fact that God is, with very little formal argument in proof of it.
 - d. However, there is some formal argument in proof of his existence; such as: Heb.3:4; Psa.19:1; Rom.1:18-20.

2. Man's sin, guilt and need of salvation: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish..."
 - a. Other passages affirming man's sin, guilt and need of salvation from the guilt of sin, Rom.3:23; Gal.3:22; Rom.3:9-19; 1Jno.5:19.
 - b. Yet sinful man is without excuse for his sin, Rom.1:20-22
 - c. But the scriptures do not say man must sin, not even 1Jno.1:8,10. How do we know this? Because:
 - (1) Of 1Jno.2:1,2; 3:6-10
 - (2) Of Jno.8:11; 1Cor.15:34; 9:27.
 - (3) Of 1Cor.10:12,13; Jas.1:12.
 - (4) Of this we know 1Jno.1:8 does not mean:
 - (a) Have to sin, 1Jno.2:1; 1Cor.15:34.
 - (b) All are presently sinning, or presently practicing sin, 1Jno.3:6-10.
 - (c) All are presently guilty of sin, or never without the guilty of sin, 1Jno.1:9; Mk.16:15,16; Ac.3:38; 22:16; Rom.6:17,18,22.
 - (5) But, of course, 1Jno.1:8,10 do mean that all have committed sin in their lives; that their lives have been touched by sin, Rom.3:23; Gal.3:22.

B. WHAT JNO.3:16 AFFIRMS IN CAPSULE FORM.

1. God's love for man in sin. But what does it tell us about God's love for man in sin?
 - a. It affirms the **MAGNITUDE** or the greatness of God's love: "God SO love the world..."
 - (1) Tell me how much God loved his Son and I will tell you how much he loved the world – for he "SO: loved the world that he gave his Son to die for this world lost in sin.
 - (2) This is love in the absolute superlative degree; it doesn't get greater than this.
 - b. It affirms the **REACH** or the scope of God's love.
 - (1) God's love reached a sinful world.
 - (2) Even sinners love those who love them – anyone can do that – but God's love reached out to a sin-ful world, Rom.5:8.
 - c. It affirms the **IMPARTIALITY** of God's love.

- (1) God is no respecter of persons and he gave his only begotten Son that “**whosoever...**” Cf. Mt.11:28-30; Ac.10:34,35; Hab.2:9.
- d. It affirms the **PURPOSE** and or **RESULTS** of God’s love.
 - (1) God’s love provided sinful man with a way that he might not perish but have eternal life, Vv.14-17; Cf. 1Jno.5:11-13; 2Pet.3:9; 1Tim.2:3-6; 1Jno.2:24,25; Rom.2:6,7; See 2Jno.9.
- 2. The conditionality of salvation.
 - a. God gave his Son, “that whosoever **believeth** in him should not perish...”
 - b. Salvation is predicated upon **faith**, and the **unbeliever** shall be damned, Jno.3:18,36; Mk.16:15,16; Jno.8:24

C. WHAT THIS PASSAGE DOES NOT AFFIRM, NOR NECESSARILY IMPLY.

- 1. Jno.3:16 does not affirm nor necessarily imply the proposition that salvation from past sins is by faith only, or by faith before and without other acts of obedience; namely, before and without baptism in the name of Christ for the remission of sins. Illustrations:
 - a. Automobile runs on gasoline, but not gasoline alone.
 - b. Rice is produced by water, but not water alone.
 - c. Same is true of salvation by faith. Man is saved by faith, but not by faith alone. Cf. Mt.4:10.
- 2. There are many passages that teach salvation by faith, but not one that teaches salvation by faith only without further acts of obedience.
- 3. There are many who refuse to believe that baptism in water has anything to do with salvation and who claim that Jno.3:16 proves it.
 - a. Why? “Well, Jno.3:16 doesn’t say a word about baptism. Therefore, it must be before and without water baptism.”
- 4. But if salvation were by faith only and if Jno.3:16 proves it because baptism is not mentioned there; it would not only be without baptism, but without repentance and confession, for Jno.3:16 doesn’t mention either of these.

- a. But see Lk.13:3; Ac.3:19; 17:30,31; Mt.10:32,33; Rom.10:9,10; see also Mk.16:15,16.
 - b. Keep this in mind: To be saved one may have to do more, but never less than any one passage says.
5. Jno.3:16 cannot possibly mean that salvation is by faith only because:
- a. The Bible use of the expression “by faith” never means by faith only, Heb.11:7,30, etc. (Gen.6; Josh.6)
 - b. The Bible elsewhere denies that proposition, Jas.2:24.
 - (1) What works? See context of V.24; Rom.4:1-8.
 - (2) Jno.6:29; Tit.3:4-7.
 - c. The Bible says that faith only is dead, Jas.2:26
 - d. The Bible declares that salvation is by the blood of Christ, but that faith and baptism are necessary conditions, Mk.16:15,16; Ac.2:36-38; 22:16; 1Pet.3:21 cf. Eph.1:7; Col.1:14; Heb.9:11-14, 26-28; 10:12.
 - (1) Some argue that baptism is not necessary to salvation because baptism is not the Savior, that Jesus is.
 - (2) True, baptism is not the Savior; but, neither is faith; but both faith and baptism are conditions of salvation, Mk.16:16.
 - e. The gospel of Christ which is God’s power to save, must be both believed and obeyed, Rom.1:16,17; 1Pet.4:17,18; 2Th.1:6-10.
 - (1) Acts, the book of conversions, shows what men did when they obeyed the gospel under apostolic preaching under the Great Commission, Ac.2:36-41; 18:8; 1Cor.15:1-3.
 - f. The Bible reveals the absolute essentiality of obedience in order to be saved, Mt.7:21-23; Ac.6:7; 1Pet.1:22; Heb.5:8,9; Rom.1:5; 16:25,26; 6:16-18; Rev.22:14.
 - (1) And water baptism is a part of one’s obedience, Ac.9:6; 22:16; Ac.10:6; 11:14; 10:48
 - g. That would seem that the Bible denies in the one place what it affirms in another and the writer’s claims of inspiration are destroyed!

III. CONCLUSION

1. Finally, when every shred of evidence is gone to which one clings to support his false idea of salvation by faith before and without water baptism, the cry goes up, “Well, what about the thief on the Cross?”
 - a. Well, what about him?
 - b. “Well, he wasn’t baptized!” How do you know he wasn’t? Mt.3:5,6.
 - c. But what difference does it make? We know he wasn’t baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ?
 - d. But neither was Adam, Moses, Abraham or David, for they, and the thief, all lived under a different law than the one under which we live.
 - (1) The law of Christ on baptism for the remission of sins did not go into effect until after the thief died!
 - (2) The thief lived and died under the law of Moses.
 - (3) Salvation is by “the law of faith”, the gospel of Jesus Christ, not by the “law of works,” or the “law of Moses.” Rom.1:16,17; 3:19-28; Gal.2:16; Rom.8:1,2.
2. Each one in each dispensation of time is to believe and obey the laws under which that one lives, not the one before that.
3. Prior to this dispensation of time no one was told to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin, but we are. That’s the difference.
4. Could Noah have refused to build the Ark and have pleased God? No more can you or I if we refuse baptism for the purpose the Lord gave it. Cf. Lk.7:30; 6:46; Mk.16:15,16.
5. To follow: Jno.3:16: A Divine Denial of Religious Errors.