


# GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD

*Devotions on John 3:16*



**CAROL GEISLER**



**F**OR GOD SO LOVED  
THE WORLD, THAT HE  
GAVE HIS ONLY SON, THAT  
WHOEVER BELIEVES IN  
HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH  
BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.

JOHN 3:16



# The Sign

“For God so loved the world.” Why? If we are honest about things, we have to admit that this world is not always a very lovable place. The world displays beauty and majesty, and we enjoy the love of family and friends. Yet, this world and its people also show a less-than-lovable side caught up in violence and disaster. The beauty, majesty and love are given by God. He created the world and pronounced “everything that he had made” as “very good” (Genesis 1:31). The violence and disaster are our own creation, the result of sinful human rebellion against our Creator.

God loves the world and the people he created because he is love (1 John 4:8). In an astonishing act of self-sacrificing love, God himself creates anew the people he loves and will, at the right time, restore the world in which we live to the paradise he desires for us. And strangely enough, a sign of violence and disaster has become for us the ultimate sign of God’s beauty and majesty and love for the world.

# Refining Fire

He told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." **John 2:16**

**W**e generally think of Jesus as gentle and kind, and he certainly was. But on this day in the Jerusalem temple, he was anything but gentle. Those who sold animals for sacrifice and money-changers who provided (for a profit) the appropriate coins for offerings had set up shop in the temple courtyard. Jesus fashioned a whip and drove merchants and animals alike from the temple. He poured out coins and tipped over tables. This was his Father's house, not a marketplace!

The prophet foretold, "The Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple ... who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?" (Malachi 3:1-2). The promised Lord was here. He came to refine and purify, and so it had begun. And when the time was right, this cleansing, purifying Lord would himself pass through the refining fires of suffering and death to save the world he loved.

**Refining Lord, forgive our sins and purify us  
for service in your name. Amen.**

# What Sign?

Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple,  
and in three days I will raise it up." **John 2:19**

**T**he Lord came to refine and purify his people, but the cleansing of the temple did not go unchallenged. Those who watched Jesus that day demanded proof of his authority to behave in this way. "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" They wanted a sign, and Jesus promised them one. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." It had taken forty-six years to build the temple, and now he was going to tear it down and rebuild it in three days? What kind of impossible sign was that?

False witnesses at Jesus' trial would turn his own words against him (Mark 14:58). The temple of his body would be destroyed in death. But on the third day after his death, Jesus was raised to life. A dead, crucified victim raised to life? Impossible! But as the angel Gabriel told Jesus' mother Mary, "Nothing will be impossible with God" (Luke 1:37).

**Lord Jesus, you have done the impossible.  
By your death and resurrection,  
you have saved us. Amen.**

# GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD



## DEVOTIONS ON JOHN 3:16

The few words of John 3:16 are sometimes called “the Gospel in a nutshell.” These devotions explore the verse that so well sums up the unexpected, self-sacrificing love of God for the world he created. The sign of the cross, an instrument of violence and death, has become for us a sign of forgiveness and life. God sent his Son as the Savior of the world, so that all who believe in him will have eternal life. That is how God so loved the world.

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