

The Greatest Things

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Few verses in the Bible are as well known as John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.” This statement so fully embodies the theme of the Bible that some have called it “the Bible in miniature.” It provides an astounding list of the greatest things of their kind:

1. **The greatest Being—God.** He is introduced to us in the fourth word of the Bible as the Creator of all things (Gen. 1:1). He is the only adequate and rational explanation of the universe.
2. **The greatest force—love.** Love is God’s motivation for blessing men so abundantly: “God is love” (1 John 4:8). We are to love each other because He first loved us (v. 19). Of all ethical forces, love is the one that endures, abides, and prevails (1 Cor. 13:13).
3. **The greatest scope—the world.** God’s love embraces all, so the gift of His Son includes all—“**whosoever**” may accept this great gift. This fact does not mean universal salvation, but universal **availability** of salvation. Jesus is the propitiation for the sins of “the whole world” (1 John 2:2).
4. **The greatest gift—God’s Son.** Men had no claim on this gift to obligate God to give it. He gave His Son as a matter of grace toward us. The Son gave His life, freely laying it down for sinful rebels against their Creator (John 10:17–18). His sinless, spotless blood—worth more than all earthly wealth—can alone redeem men from sin (1 Pet. 1:18–19).
5. **The greatest trust—belief in Christ.** There is none other so great as God’s Son in whom to place one’s faith. *Belief* implies far more than mere mental assent to Jesus’ Deity. It stands as a figure of speech for all the Biblical requirements for salvation: faith, repentance, confession of faith, baptism, and faithful living (Acts 17:30; Rom. 10:9–10; John 3:5; Acts 2:38; 1 Cor. 15:58). The New Testament teaches constantly that salvation is by **faith**, but **never** by “faith alone.”
6. **The greatest loss—perish.** On the cross, Jesus paid the price sufficient to save all, but most will reject Him and be lost (Mat. 7:13–14). If one could gain the whole world, but lost his soul in Hell, he would lose all—eternally and without remedy (16:26).
7. **The greatest blessing—eternal life.** Here we see the aim of God’s gift and Jesus’ sacrifice. God and His Son do not want us to be lost, but to be in Heaven forever with them and all the redeemed where no pain, sin, or sorrow can ever enter (Rev. 21:4).

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