

## The Wonder of God's Love

By Roelf L. Ruffner

We see all about us in the material world evidence of God's love. This physical world is geared towards our survival and to point us toward the Creator. "Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:17). Even in the man-imposed boundaries of nations and states we see the love and forethought of God. "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us" (Acts 17:26,27).

Yet the love of God is more profound than His creation and His providence. I believe one familiar verse encapsulates the all encompassing wonder of God's love for us in words: "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" (John 3:16).

This verse contains the greatest giver of love – God the Father. God saw a world overwhelmed by sin and spiritual decay. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom.3:23). God could have washed His hands of this problem and started over, but He didn't. Why? He didn't obliterate this world because of His love for His children. "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing" Luke 15:4, 5).

**John 3:16** contains the greatest gift of love this world has ever seen Jesus Christ. The "gift" was the life of the Son of His love for my sins (Rom.5:6-8). That gift remains the greatest expression of love this world has ever seen. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).

**John 3:16** also contains the greatest measure of love – "the world." This world in general has always rejected God and His plans for our redemption. Paul and the Holy Spirit describe the utter rejection of God in their own day and even today when they wrote: "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened" (Rom.1:21). Yet in spite of its rejection God chose this sin stained world to bestow His gift upon. And this gift was not just for a select few whom He had chosen beforehand to receive it (i.e. Calvinism and its false doctrine of Predestination.). He intended it to be for all who would hear and obey the Gospel. "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21).

Yet **John 3:16** shows us the greatest future blessing of God's love – eternal life. Sin and rebellion brought the prospect of eternal punishment or the "second death" (Rev.21:4). But God's

love brought the unconditional opportunity of everlasting life. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (John 5:24). That blessing will be undeserved on our part. Yet the wonder of God’s love demands it. His grace is an extended hand of redemption. All we have to do is grab hold of it. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them (Eph. 2:8-10).