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 - All notes, etc. available at: www.htchurch.com/john
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Recap

- The flesh can only give birth to flesh, but the Spirit can give birth to spirit.
- Don't be surprised at the teaching of the new birth!
- Nicodemus the “teacher of Israel” didn't understand these things, nor did he receive the testimony of God concerning Jesus.
- Jesus is the Son of Man, the only one who can reveal the mysteries of God.
- He compares His coming death to the story of Moses lifting up the serpent on a pole in the wilderness. Moses told the Israelites to be cured of their snakebite poison by looking at the thing that had destroyed them. The “lifting up” of is the same: anyone who looks to the Crucified Jesus for salvation will be healed.
- *God made Him who knew no sin to become sin for us, so that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Cor. 5:21)*

For God So Loved (John 3:14-16)

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

- Here is the most famous verse in the Bible –the Gospel in a nutshell!
- Why does this verse begin with a “for” or a “because?” It’s about the absolute necessity of the Son of Man being lifted up, just like the serpent was lifted up.
- Who is actually speaking in vv. 16-21? We can’t be sure.

What Kind Of Love?

1. For...

- This is a good time to examine a verse on a word-by-word level.
- Jesus links the giving of the Son with the idea of Him being lifted up.
- It’s the **Cross** by which God makes salvation available. The Cross fulfills the OT prophecies of the Suffering Servant. (1 Pet. 2:24)

2. For God...

- It was God's plan from the beginning to save humanity through the Lamb bearing our sins. (Rev. 13:8)
- The Persons of the Trinity had been shaping history to bring Jesus into the world and then put Him forward as the sacrifice for sins at the right time. (Gal. 4:4)
- God did what Man **couldn't** and **wouldn't**. We are not by nature, seeking God: *"There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. they have all turned aside..."* (Rom. 3:10b-12a)
- Thank God that salvation began with His initiative or we wouldn't be saved at all!
- God chose to have compassion on a world that had rejected Him.

3. For God so...

- The word “so” here doesn’t mean “so much” but in what way: “In this way God loved the world.”
- John is emphasizing not the **quantity** of God’s love but the **quality** of His love.

4. For God so loved...

What is this love of God? John uses a special word for it, *agape*. “Love” isn’t always a helpful word in English, but Greek has four useful words for different types of love.

- Eros: The expression of romantic or sexual love. Eros is something that needs to stay in its proper place! See Paul on marriage (1 Cor. 7:9).
- Storge: This is “natural affection,” the normal bond of love and affection that exists in close human relationships. In 2nd Timothy 3, Paul talked about the dangers of the last days. He said that *“men shall be ... without natural affection...”* Romans 1 shows us how people reach this condition: when God releases them to it.
- Philia: This is love in the sense of a strong friendship. This is affection we choose to give someone; it’s true (non-sexual) friendship. Jesus was called a *friend* of sinners; James warned of *friendship* with the world; Jesus called His disciples *friends*.
- Agape: None of the three words above is God’s love in John 3:16, which is the special word *agape*. This is the God-kind of love. God loved in such a manner that He loved us this way when we were in fact enemies. (Rom. 5:8)

- Agape is the divine love we read about in 1st Corinthians 13.
- John tells us in 1John that agape love is **of** God, and that He **is** agape love!
- Remarkably, human beings are also able to love with that same love of God.
 - We can love Him back. *We love Him because He first loved us.* (1Jn 4:19)
 - We are able to love our brothers and sisters in Christ with the love of God.
 - We can even be the most like God, loving our enemies as ourselves.
 - “...the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” (Rom. 5:5)

5. He gave His Son...

- When we think of God giving, think of what God knew...
- Jesus lived all His life in awareness of the Cross (Luke 9:44)

6. His Only Begotten...

The only-begotten (*monogenes*) is the only child or most favored child. This reminds people of Abraham being told: *Take your son, your only son, whom you love...* But God could give Himself no reprieve when it came to His own Son.

7. The believing and the perishing...

- Believing: we place our confidence in Him and what He did there on the tree.
- Perish: exist in a state of separation from God, and of torment.
- Everlasting life: life that goes on forever, filled with Resurrection power.

Not To Condemn! (John 3:17-18)

17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. 18 He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

- God knows that the world stands condemned because of sin, and yet He doesn't wish people to be condemned. He didn't send the Son to condemn the world.
- When Jesus returns, He will not be coming to deal with sin.
- Christ was not coming to make a decision about who was condemned and who was not: God sent Him to a world in which everyone was **already** condemned!
- This was the hope of the early Church: *And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit... you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.* (1 Thess. 1:6ff.)

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