

JOHN THREE: SIXTEEN

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CHAPTER SIX -

That Whosoever

"'WHOSOEVER' is a Scriptural word of immense importance. It is general and particular. It embraces all and touches each. It lays its hand upon everyone and says, 'Thou art the man.'" (Brookes).

"God so loved the world . . . that whosoever." "World" means the mass of men; **"whosoever"** means each individual man in that mass. The world is made up of "whosoever." The "whosoever" are men; not animals, not angels.

Herein is the necessity for the Incarnation.

A sacrifice for sin must be made in the nature that sinned. An animal could not be made a sacrifice for man. **"For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins"** (Hebrews 10:4). There is no alliance between the nature of a beast and the nature of a man. An angel could not die for men, hence we read, **"For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham"** (Hebrews 2:16); that is, human nature.

He assumed for Himself a nature of flesh and blood. This is the only way in which GOD could provide a sacrifice sufficient to save the sinner. GOD Himself cannot die, since He is a spirit, self-existent, and eternal. In order to die He took into union with His divine personality a human nature. **"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death"** (Hebrews 2:14). **"God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh"** (Romans 8:3).

In other words, He was made in the likeness of every "whosoever" to the end that He might die for each **"whosoever."**

"THAT WHOSOEVER" MEANS ALL

The provision of salvation is just as far-reaching as sin, and the Word clearly teaches that **"all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"** (Romans 3: 23). It teaches that all the world is guilty before GOD (Romans 3:19). These two Scriptures teach that no race and no individual is free from sin. None can plead "not guilty" before GOD. Every mouth is stopped; hence Paul's

statement, "**The Scripture hath concluded all under sin**" (Galatians 3: 22).

Humanity everywhere the world over from first to last is guilty before GOD. All are under sin and justly condemned to suffer the wrath of GOD which is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

Not only Scripture but universal human experience proves the fact of sin. We do not refer to the experiences of the worst sinners who ever lived, such as Cain, Judas, Jezebel, and Athaliah, but to the experiences of the best men the world has ever known. Sin is sin whether in an angel by the throne or in a harlot in a brothel.

Undoubtedly Adam was the noblest man who ever lived. He was placed in a garden of GOD's own planting, in a perfect environment, with no sin to mar, yet he was driven forth from that garden because he sinned.

GOD said that He had no man in the earth like Job. He was the best man of his day, and yet when he came to realize the presence of GOD, he said, "**I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes... I am vile.**"

- Noah was the only man who found grace in the eyes of GOD in the days before the flood, yet he was found in his tent in drunkenness.

- Abraham is the only man of Old Testament Scriptures ever called the "**friend**" of GOD, yet he practiced such lies and deception that he was twice rebuked by pagans (Genesis 12:18; 20:9).

- Moses is the greatest law-giver this world ever has had, yet he slew an Egyptian and was compelled to flee from Egypt; he spake unadvisedly with his lips and was barred from the Holy Land.

- Isaiah was one of the greatest of GOD's prophets, yet when he saw the vision of the Holy One, high and lifted up, he cried out, "**I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips!**"

- David was one of the greatest kings who ever reigned. He was a man after GOD's own heart whose grievous sin has not been forgotten in three thousand years.

May we pause a moment to explain what is meant by David as a man after GOD's own heart? This does not mean that David was perfect in the natural and the moral sense. If you would understand the expression, make a comparison between Saul, the man after the people's eyes, and David, the man after GOD's heart. You will find that while David was a sinner, he loved GOD supremely and his underlying motive was to do the will of GOD. He was not a man after GOD's heart because of boasted perfections, but of confessed imperfections.

When Saul sinned he said, "**I have sinned.**" When David sinned he said, "**I have sinned against the Lord.**"

When David sinned he said, "**Create in me a clean heart, O God.**" When Saul sinned he said, "Don't let the people know I have an unclean heart."

Saul knew that GOD had anointed David as king, yet he did everything in his power to kill the Lord's anointed. David knew that GOD had rejected Saul as king, yet he refused to lift hands against the Lord's anointed.

When David was reproved he was always humble; not so with Saul. David had true faith in GOD and desired to do His will. He besought the Lord to teach him to that end. He longed and panted after GOD. He made his boast in GOD. David was all taken up with GOD. He was all for GOD and so was a man after GOD's own heart.

- Mary, the mother of our Lord, has been called the "Moss Rose of Palestine." We doubt if a better woman ever lived, yet she recognized the fact of her sin and her need of a SAVIOUR in her Magnificat, "**My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour**" (Luke 1:47).

- Paul was the greatest Christian this world has ever had, yet before his heart was washed white by the blood of CHRIST his hands were stained red with the blood of Christians.

In the light of these confessions we can but own that in the sight of GOD every man is a guilty sinner. Both Scripture and experience justify the statement that with the single exception of JESUS CHRIST, all men are morally depraved at birth, and if they live long on the earth are found guilty of personal sins.

The "**whosoever**" of John 3:16 is just as far-reaching as sin, and so includes every member of the human race. We cannot believe that the "**world**" of John 3:16 is only relative and not absolute, as some teach. The verse does not say, "GOD so loved the elect."

We are sure that CHRIST died for His own; we are sure that CHRIST died for His church, but the Word also says that CHRIST died for all. Hebrews 2:9 says that He tasted death for every man. II Peter 3:9 declares that He is not willing that any should perish. I Timothy 2:6 tells us that He gave His life a ransom for all; I John 2:2, that He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world. John the Baptist declared that JESUS CHRIST was the LAMB of GOD that taketh away the sin of the world.

In I Timothy 4:10 CHRIST is spoken of as the "**Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.**" He is certainly not the SAVIOUR of all men in the sense in which He is the SAVIOUR of the believer. He is potentially the SAVIOUR of all men, but effectually He is the SAVIOUR only of those who believe; or to say the same thing in another way, CHRIST's death is sufficient to save all men, but it is efficient only to believing men.

CHRIST's substitutionary death is conditional. It grants deliverance only to those who receive Him; that is, to those who believe on His Name.

In John 4:42 our Lord is termed "**the Saviour of the world.**" That certainly does not teach that all the world is saved or to be saved, but that He came into the world to save sinners - yea, even the chief sinner (I Timothy 1:15).

The phrase "**Saviour of the world**" implies that His purpose in salvation embraced all men.

We cannot agree with Pink when he says, "Toward His own elect GOD's love never had a beginning, but GOD's love for the non-elect, for those out of CHRIST who despise and reject Him, is something that exists only in the imagination of pious sentimentalists."

We agree with Fowler when he says, "If GOD's love and atonement were not for all men, then His invitations to salvation are mockery. If GOD limits His love, then '**whosoever**' is a rhapsody."

We must take "**whosoever**" at its face value. It includes all. There are no exceptions. Spurgeon writes that when the great mutiny in India had been brought to a close and peace was being made between the rebels and the government, the queen caused a proclamation to be made throughout all the rebel provinces that all who should lay down their arms and come to certain appointed places by a fixed day should receive forgiveness with some exceptions. Ah, these exceptions! The men who knew they could not be forgiven but must be put to death never came. The love of GOD knows no exceptions.

"**THAT WHOSOEVER**" MEANS ANY

"**Whosoever**" does not mean everybody in the sense of Universalism or Restitutionism; that is, that all men will eventually be saved. "**Whosoever**" does mean anybody. We do not believe that anyone is on the "black list," or that anyone has "sinned away his day of grace." We believe that "**whosoever will may come.**" We believe Acts 10:43, "**To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.**" We believe what our Lord said, "**Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.**" In dealing with a man Moody once quoted this verse and then asked the man, "Do you believe CHRIST said that?"

"I suppose He did."

"Suppose He did! Do you believe it?"

"I hope so."

"Hope so! Do you believe it?"

After the man finally had grasped the truth, Moody said, "You are not going to get out of the Devil's territory without trouble. He will come to you tomorrow morning. The Devil always comes. You make this your verse when he comes."

Well, the Devil came before morning. He came before that man got home and said, "How do you know that CHRIST ever said that at all? Perhaps the translators made a mistake."

The man was in darkness again. This went on until about two o'clock in the morning; then he said, "I'll believe it anyway, and when I get to Heaven if it isn't true, I'll just tell the Lord, 'I didn't

make the mistake - the translators made it."

There are some who fear that they are not among the elect, that they are predestinated to be lost, that they are not embraced in the plan of salvation.

This word "**whosoever**," however, is the full warrant for the faith of any and every sinner; The most illiterate and the most degraded, as well as the intelligent and virtuous, are invited and exhorted and commanded to believe on the Lord JESUS CHRIST that they might be saved.

If the reader believes that some are elected or predestinated to be lost, we suggest the instruction of D. L. Moody, who said, "Preach the Gospel to every one and if some one gets saved whom GOD has elected to be lost He'll forgive you." We have heard Clifton Fowler tell of a certain man with whom he was dealing who declared that he was one of the unfortunate individuals predestinated to be eternally lost. Mr. Fowler dealt with the man, using Hebrews 2:9, with its declaration that CHRIST tasted death for every man, with the result that that man who had been predestinated to be finally lost was eternally saved!

You may have read the little tract in which the boy explained to the old man that "whosoever means just anybody."

Even the chief of sinners is included in GOD's provision. The chief of sinners was Saul of Tarsus. He so declared himself. We doubt if a greater sinner ever lived. The Church has never had a more bitter enemy than he. In his personal testimony in First Timothy he describes himself. He was a blasphemer. His evil speaking was directed against the Lord. He compelled others to blaspheme (Acts 26:11), and we doubt if any higher sin can be committed against GOD. He was a persecutor of the Christians. He persecuted the Church of GOD beyond measure, and wasted it. In Acts 8:1 He consented to Stephen's death.

This word "**consented**" means "approved," or, as Dr. A. T. Robertson says, "It describes Saul's pleasure in the death of Stephen. He coolly applauds the murder. It is a heinous sin and a gruesome picture."

"And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities" (Acts 26:11). "I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women" (Acts 22:4).

Paul broke up the church in Jerusalem and then, breathing forth threatenings and slaughter, started for Damascus to persecute the Christians there. He was a bloody man. He punished people even to death with arrogant delight. He was "**injurious**." That word is given as "**despiteful**" in Romans 1:30 and carries the meaning of "*insolent*." It conveys to us the idea of a violent, overbearing person, an ungovernable man, outrageous in his personal insults. Where would you find a more wicked heart?

Following this testimony in I Timothy 1:15, Paul adds, in verse 16, that since he was the first or foremost sinner, he became the foremost sample of GOD's mercy in salvation. He became a pattern or a sample of all longsuffering, or literally the "whole longsuffering" of GOD, for GOD

bore long with him while he was a persecutor.

Alford says, "'All longsuffering' means the entirety of longsuffering - all that is possible, every kind and degree of longsuffering." Try to imagine the exceeding sinfulness of this man for whom GOD reads, "**That in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering . . .**".

Isn't this a demonstration of GOD's willingness to forgive and save any sinner?

When any sinner says, as many often do, "I am too bad to be saved; I am too wicked to be saved," we can tell him that the chief of sinners is already saved so that no sinner today will be rejected when coming to CHRIST.

George Whitfield, while preaching in a tabernacle in London, cried out, "The Lord JESUS will save the Devil's castaways!" Two abandoned and wretched women who stood outside looked at each other, wept and said, "That must mean us." They accepted the truth then and there and were saved. One wrote a little note to Whitfield. Sometime later Lady Huffington said to Whitfield, "Did you not go a little too far when you said the Lord would save the Devil's castaways?"

With saying a word he pulled out that note and gave it to her and she read, "My Whitfield: Two poor lost women stood outside your tabernacle today and heard you say that the Lord would save the Devil's castaways. We seized upon that as our last hope, and we write to tell you that we rejoice now in believing in Him and from this good hour we shall endeavor to serve Him Who has done so much for us."

"THAT WHOSOEVER" MEANS SOME

This text is distorted when it is made to say that GOD will save every one. We must link to the word "**whosoever**" the word "**believeth**." Not one single promise of salvation is given to the thousands who do not and will not believe. The Word of GOD does not hold out the promise of salvation to all. Hebrews 7:25 says, "**He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him.**" That passage limits the promise to those who come to GOD by Him. There is no salvation where there is no faith.

We read many years ago this illustration which concerns a family then living in Philadelphia. As we remember, the family was made up of husband, wife, daughter, and two sons. All were believers save one son. He was wild and wayward, and would have nothing to do with the SAVIOUR of his dear ones. He was degraded and dissipated. Finally his mother died. The family had a hard time finding this son, but when he was discovered he went home in response to the message.

When the mother's body was brought into the home, the other members of the family looked upon that sweet and loved face. Frank was the last to do so. With hard face, unmoved he stood by the coffin of the mother who had prayed for him. Finally he broke. He literally threw himself across the coffin. His body was wracked with sobs. So terrible was his anguish that finally his sister went to him and said, "Don't take it so hard, Frank. We'll see Mother again." Then he stood erect and said, "No, Sis, I think you'll see Mother again. I think Father will see Mother again. I think John will see Mother again. But I'll never see her again. I'm not going that way." And

turning, he dashed out of the house. Three days later he was found in an alley, dead, with a whiskey bottle in his hand.

Surely I need not add that "**whosoever**" cannot possibly include unbelievers who are already dead. For then judgment is settled. Doom is decreed.

"THAT WHOSOEVER" MEANS YOU

A Dutch farmer in South Africa, seeing a Hottentot reading his Bible, said as he kicked him, "That Book isn't for such as you."

"Indeed it is."

"How do you know?"

"Why, my name is in it."

"Your name? Where?"

"Why, right here," and he laboriously spelled out John 3:16 until he came to "**whosoever**" and, slowly spelling that out said, "There it is."

I have often said that I am glad GOD used "**whosoever**" instead of my name; He did not say He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that if Robert Moyer believed he would not perish but have everlasting life. I know several men who are named Robert Moyer, and if John 3:16 had said Robert Moyer, I certainly would not know which Robert Moyer was meant. Most certainly it would not mean you if your name were not Robert Moyer, but "**whosoever**" means you. "**Whosoever**" means me.

Brookes dwells on this thought as follows: "Suppose there were a book somewhere in the world containing the names of all the saved in the past, present, and future. If you were to find your name on one of its countless pages, you would not be satisfied, because there may have been, or may be now, or may be hereafter, another person of the same name. Suppose the voice of GOD should speak down from Heaven, as it did at the baptism and transfiguration of His well-beloved Son, audibly and articulately announcing you to be one of His redeemed children; still you would not be satisfied because you might fear your ears had deceived you, or that the announcement was intended for a different person; but when the voice of GOD saith in the Scripture, "**whosoever believeth**," you know that you are brought within the circle of mercy and designated in a surer manner than by name.

"If a wealthy and benevolent gentleman were to advertise that whosoever applied at his residence before a certain day should receive a valid title to a valuable piece of property, you would not refuse to apply because he had not mentioned your name in the advertisement. If you were traveling on a railroad with a number of passengers, and the conductor should announce that whosoever is going to the place you are anxious to reach must leave the train at the next station, you would not retain your seat and be carried away from your destination because he did not call out your name.

"If you were in a city besieged by a powerful army, and the commanding officers of the opposing forces should order a suspension of hostilities that whosoever among the inhabitants desired to remove to a place of safety might withdraw before the assault was made, you would not complain because your name did not occur in the order. In such cases a class is specified, and if you belong to the class you need no other warrant to act.

"In like manner, you have abundant authority for acting without a moment's delay upon the broad statements and general invitations of the Gospel. JESUS says, '**God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**' Surely, you cannot ask or desire anything more earnest, more tender, more definite than this; and if it fails to convince you that you are authorized to believe on CHRIST, there is no conceivable mode by which you can be assured of GOD's willingness to save you."

You can say with Paul, "**The Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me**" (Galatians 2:20). It is not enough just to recognize this fact as the truth. There must be the personal act of appropriation. There must be a personal decision. Open your Bible to Galatians 2:20. Put your finger on that verse and ask God to enlighten your heart. Press your finger on that word "**me**" and read it. "**The Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me,**" and believe it with your heart.

That is the truth - He died for me, just as if I were the only sinner to be saved by His death. Do not let doubt cheat you of your Saviour's love. Do not think or say, "He loved others." "He gave Himself for some."

Say, "He **gave Himself for me.**" It was for you no matter who you are, no matter how far you have gone in sin, no matter how hard you have been. He died for you. Push hard on that "**me.**" Right now say, "He loved me." When you begin the day tomorrow say, "He loved me." When you go to your place of work or business remember, "He loved me."

"Freely, come, drink," words the soul to thrill!
Oh, with what joy they my heart do fill!
For when He said, "**whoever will,**"
JESUS included me too.

~ end of chapter 6 ~
