

The Inscrutable Question: The Love of God Demonstrated: The Demonstrative Adverb *Houtos* in John 3:16

D. The Love of God Demonstrated:

1. There is a problem with all three of the major English translations of John 3:16 as well as the one we developed exegetically back in October of 1994.
2. The translations each begin with the phrase “For God so loved the world that” Our corrected translation begins “God unconditionally loved the world so much that”
3. The verse begins with an adverb that is translated in the English bibles by the word “for” which is followed in context by the word “so” showing intensity:

οὕτως / *houtos* / - “for”; “so”; “for ...so”

4. However, this adverb may also be translated as a demonstrative. Here are the translations that are appropriate in the case of either a demonstrative or an intensive use:

Thayer, Joseph H. *The New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1981), 468:

1. By virtue of its demonstrative force it refers to what precedes: “in the manner spoken of”; “in the way described”; in this manner.”
2. Marking degree of intensity: “so;” “so greatly.”

Liddell, Henry G. and Robert Scott. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 1276-77:

(Demonstrative) “in this way;” “in this manner;” “as follows.”

(Intensive) “to such an extent;” “so much;” “so very;” “so excessively.”

Yeager, Randolph O. *The Renaissance New Testament*. Vol. 4. (Woodbridge: Renaissance Press, 1979), 414-15:

The usual interpretation is that God loved the world *so much*, that is, with such intensity, that He gave. Thus the implication is that God's love is capable of being felt and expressed with varying degrees of intensity.

The intensive implies that had God loved the world a little less than He did, He would not have given His Son—that the gift of His Son to die for us on the cross was withheld until the intensity of His love, which was on the increase, finally reached proportions that demanded that God give His Son.

The true interpretation of **οὕτως / *houtos*** /, which is demonstrative, is this: “God loved the world in a way that resulted in the gift of His Son,” or “God loved the world like this: He gave”

God demonstrated His love for the world, a love, which was always constant and therefore not subject to gradients of intensity, by giving His Son. It required the divine love for a fallen race of which only God is capable.

5. Therefore, in John 3:16, Jesus explains to Nicodemus that God demonstrated His love for the human race by doing something. We recognize the demonstrative **οὕτως / *houtos*** / with the following corrected translation:

John 3:16 - God demonstrated His love to the world in the following manner:

6. The thing demonstrated is divine love, expressed by the aorist active indicative of the verb:

ἀγαπάω / *agapao* / - “unconditional love”

aorist: Culminative; views the love of God for the human race in its entirety but regards it from the standpoint of its existing results.

PRINCIPLE: The existing result of God loving the world is stated in the result clause that follows which states that God gave His uniquely born Son.

active: God produces the action of the verb by loving the entire human race unconditionally.

- 1) Unconditional love stresses God as the subject and thus it does not depend upon us, but upon God's own integrity.
- 2) The integrity of God is the love of God expressed by several composites: immutable righteousness, incorruptible justice, and unmerited grace.
- 3) In grace, God is free to express His love unconditionally to fallen humanity.
- 4) God expressed his love through the grace provision of His uniquely born Son Whom He gave to the "world."

indicative: Declarative; indicating that this is a statement of absolute fact; an undeniable principle of biblical truth; a part of historical reality.

John 3:16 - God demonstrated His unconditional love to the world in the following manner: He gave His uniquely born Son ...

7. The verb "to give" is the aorist active indicative of:

δίδωμι / didomi / - "He gave"

aorist: Dramatic; presenting a present reality with the certainty of a past event. The present reality is the fact that God gave His Son to the world. The certain past event in view is the Virgin Birth.

active: God produced the action of the verb by presenting to the world through grace, His Son by means of the Virgin Birth.

indicative: Declarative; a statement of historical fact: the Virgin Birth is a reality and is the point at which God gave His Son to the world.

8. The definition of the verb must be expanded in this context, for it expresses the composite of unmerited grace. We call again upon:

Thayer, *The New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 145:

δίδωμι / didomi / : Of one's own accord to give one something to his advantage; to bestow; to give as a gift.

9. The saving grace found in God's gift of His Son does not by definition require any effort, works, deeds, or lifestyle changes on our part. If it did then salvation would no longer be by grace but by works.

Galatians 2:16 - Nevertheless, knowing that a person is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ in order that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law no flesh will ever be justified.

10. Therefore, the gift of God is the demonstration of His undiminished love expressed through unmerited grace. And this gift goes far beyond a restoration to the "perfect life" Adam knew in Eden but the "eternal life" of God and Christ.

Romans 5:15 - But not as that transgression [**Adam's original sin producing condemnation**], so also is that gracious gift [**the Incarnation and substitutionary spiritual death of Christ on the cross**]; for if by the transgression of that one [**Adam's original sin**] the many [**the human race**] died [**spiritual death at birth**], much more the grace of God and the gift of grace [**the demonstration of the unconditional love of God**] by the one Man, Jesus Christ, who has provided super-abundance [**salvation, invisible assets, & escrow blessings**] for the many [**the human race with emphasis on those who believe in Him**].

v 19 - For as through one man's disobedience [**Adam's original sin**] the many were appointed sinful [**spiritual death**], so also through one Man's obedience [**Jesus Christ on the cross**] the many shall be appointed righteous [**those who believe**].

11. The Scripture is clear. Jesus Christ was made sin for us so that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

2 Corinthians 5:21 - For He [**God the Father**] made [**ποιέω / poieo /**] Him [**Jesus Christ in His true humanity**] Who knew no sin [**the impeccability of His true humanity**] to become sin as a substitute for us [**atonement: He became sin on our behalf**] for the purpose that we might become once and for all the righteousness which belongs to God [**the imputation of divine righteousness to those who believe**] through Him [**faith alone in Christ alone**].

12. While Jesus Christ was on the cross, God the Father imputed all the sins of the human race to Him and they were judged in Him.