

John 3:16 NASB

“The difference between light and limelight”

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.

“19 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. 20 Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

“21 But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.”

The first part of our text sounds familiar, doesn’t it? Most of us know John 3:16.

We see John 3:16 written on billboards and under the eyes of football players.

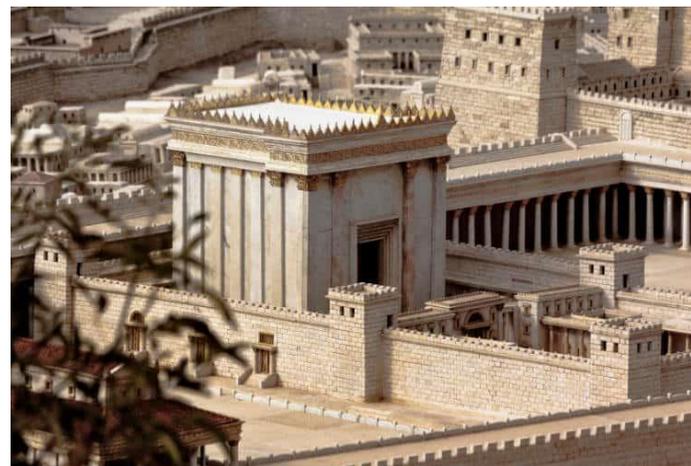
Many call it the Bible’s golden text.

A truth about John 3:16’s context remains untold.

Do you know the context of the golden text?

Knowing it can change your life.

Satan took Jesus to the highest point of the Jerusalem Temple to tempt him.



Model showing how Herod’s Temple might have looked. It stood more than three stories tall.

Some sources say it may have been 180 feet.

Matthew 4:4-6 reads:

“Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 6 ‘If you are the Son of God,’ he said, ‘throw yourself down.

For it is written: “He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.””

Satan quoted from Psalm 91 intimating something like the following: “God’s not going to let you get hurt; he protects his loved ones. Jump and you’ll be an instant celebrity. By 4 PM, you’ll have two million Facebook and YouTube likes.”

Did Satan accurately cite Psalm 91?

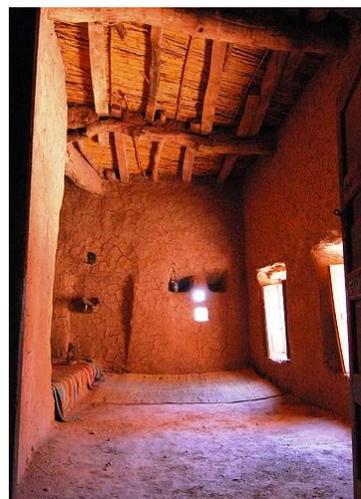
As far as I can tell, considering the different languages involved, Satan did not distort this passage; he quoted accurately.

But Satan did take the verse out of context.

I recently heard a gospel song, that’s lyrics referred to the 18 year mystery in Jesus’ life.

From the age of twelve when his parents found him talking with rabbis and lawyers in the temple courtyard until he reached the age of 30, what did Jesus do?

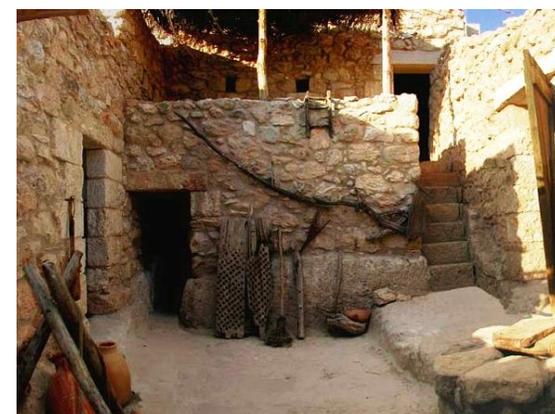
No one can say for certain.



Reconstruction of a type of house that was common in 1st century Galilee: courtyard, living quarters, storage area for animals and equipment.

Source: Jesus-story.net/ancient-building

Biblical evidence leads me to think Jesus worked on construction in Nazareth while spending as much time as he could studying, learning, and memorizing Old Testament Scripture.



Knowing the OT as he did, Jesus knew Satan took the verse from Psalm 91 out of context.

The verses just prior to the Scripture Satan quoted to Jesus read:

“If you say, ‘The LORD is my refuge,’ and you make the Most High your dwelling, ¹⁰ no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent.”

The verses tell me: if we obey God and stay under his protection, He takes care of us.

Doing your own thing is like walking out of the house by yourself wearing jammies at midnight in a bad neighborhood.

Throughout the Bible, context is crucial.

Few people consider John 3:16’s context:

Verse 17 sounds reassuring, doesn’t it?

“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”

“See there: Jesus saves; he doesn’t judge. He didn’t condemn the woman taken in adultery that the hypocritical guys wanted to stone.”

Jesus challenged those men saying: “The one among you without sin, cast the first stone.”

As John 8: 9-11 reads: *“At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there.*

¹⁰ *Jesus straightened up and asked her, ‘Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?’*

¹¹ *‘No one, sir,’ she said. “Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared.*

In recent years, I’ve heard people use Jesus’ statement as an example of him not ever condemning people.

Want to know the last thing Jesus said to the woman?

Check **John 8:11**: His final words to her were: **“Go now and leave your life of sin.”**

Context is vital, isn’t it?

Let’s read on to see John 3:16’s context:

“Whoever believes in him (Jesus) is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.”

This changes our perspective, doesn’t it?

If we don’t believe in Jesus, the verdict is already in; we’re already condemned.

Recall that word “begotten” in the KJV?

Only begotten means:

“The only one of his kind.”

Jesus isn't just another great teacher in the mold of Buddha, Confucius, or Mohammed.

Jesus is entirely unique.

During my junior year of high school I bought my own car and paid for my insurance.

My dad worked as a railroad electrician but gave up driving several years before.

A Christian school in Portland built a new campus on the city's east side. My dad volunteered to do electrical work on some buildings they were constructing. My mother took him there earlier in the day and dad asked me to pick him up later in the afternoon.

For some reason, I was there a little early and waited for dad to complete his project. Workers had put up most of the upright frames for one of the buildings, but had not built any of the roof beams. An unused ladder stood next to the frame. I climbed the ladder and decided to look around from a taller vantage point. Enjoying the view, I pushed my knee between two upright studs. When I decided to move,

my knee refused to cooperate. I was stuck in that awkward position about ten feet off the ground. My dad was involved in a lengthy project he needed to complete.

I called to him for help. He looked at me with disappointment in his eyes and said, “When I finish this, I'll help you.” Suddenly the view didn't seem that great. I could only wait silently. He finally finished his project, got another ladder, climbed it, and used a crowbar to push the studs wider so his foolish son could escape. He never mentioned it again. If he told my mother, she never said anything.



Bob's knee stuck in a place like this.

Jesus never disappointed his Father as I did.

He lived his entire life without sinning.

I wish I could say that I never again disappointed my dad.

I’m glad he never learned about some things I did.

Before I arrived kicking and bawling at my parents’ rented farm house north of Hoisington, Kansas, I wasn’t—period.

In contrast with all of us, Jesus pre-existed.

John’s Gospel begins by telling us that Jesus, the Word, created the Cosmos.

John 1:14 states: **“The Word (Jesus) became flesh and lived for a while among us.”**

Jesus came to this planet, was born of Mary, and lived in a body that experienced every passion and temptation you and I ever face.

But Jesus never gave in once to temptation.

He obeyed God in every situation.

Not only that, Jesus humbled himself in the presence of and served the very people he created.

Philippians 2 tells of Jesus’ coming to earth:

“In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

“⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!” (NIV)

Matthew 26 describes Jesus’ arrest and kangaroo court-like trial.

In the middle of the night, the high priest brought Jesus before an assembly of experts in religious law, military personnel, numerous false witnesses, as well as up to 70 members of the Jewish High Court.

Matthew 26:67 states that members of this group **“spat in his face, beat him with their fists, and others slapped him.”**

Jesus created the Universe and us, its people.

Yet we consistently neglect his wishes and his requirements.

We want to do things our way, and we create gigantic messes.

We resemble out-of-control drones.

The more we try to hide our mistakes and accumulate possessions, the further we separate ourselves from others.

Hiding and covering our mistakes create darkness around us.

What is our real situation?

The Universe belongs to the eternal God and his only begotten Son.

We occupy God’s earth as interim tenants.

Instead of confessing our servant status, pride leads us to creating images of our importance.

We try to gain status through possessions, education, money, and gifts God gives us.

Some of us gain the limelight momentarily, but the camera quickly shifts to fresh faces.

Age and rifts with others bring darkness.

Stubbornly guilty as we are, the eternal God so loved us, he sent his perfect son to act as a servant and suffer criminal execution—for us.

Jesus isn’t just another of history’s legendary, celebrated people.

Only the eternal son of God can help us escape the dark, no outlet streets that entrap us.

“Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he\she has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.

Do you believe in Him?

Jesus proved himself in three great ways:

He lived perfectly because he loved God, learned God’s will, and he fully obeyed God.

Second, as he resisted Satan’s temptations, Jesus turned his back on success in this life

Jesus could have distinguished himself as the greatest athlete of all time.

- Or the greatest scientist.
- The world’s richest person.
- The most profound philosopher.

- The most powerful ruler into perpetuity. Instead he became famous because of a crude, bloody, smelly, humiliating cross that “respectable” people of his time wouldn’t discuss in “refined” conversations.

After his death, Jesus’ disheartened disciples went back to their day jobs.

Convinced that Jesus was real, two rich guys took his bloodied lifeless body from the cross and gave him a proper burial.

Three days later, Jesus arose from death, came out of his tomb, and appeared to his disciples and many other witnesses.

Buddha, Confucius, Mohammed, Plato, and all past greats remain in their graves.

Do you believe in Jesus, God’s Son?

Do you love him more than you love this temporary world and its short-term promises?



Lost -Hancock McDonaldELT



We determine our future today.

The judgment comes with our decision to believe in the one and only Son of God:

“This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

“²¹ But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he/she has done has been done through God.”

Will you walk in Jesus’ light of love, service, and obedience to God?

God loves you so much he gave his one and only Son.

Believe in Jesus and serve him.

For eons after this world is gone, Jesus will share His resurrection victory with you in His perfect light.

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