A Different Take On:

John 3:16

According to Bishop Samuel in one of his Youtube teaching sessions, he makes the following statements about John 3:16:[1]

> *"You have heard those words a thousand times. But you have never heard them in Greek. And in Greek, my friends, that verse does not say what your Bible says – not exactly. The original words of the Apostle John written on papyrus in the year 90 AD contain a single Greek phrase that the King James translators in 1611 chose to render in a way that softened the meaning, made it warmer, made it easier, made salvation feel like a one-time decision instead of what John actually wrote, which is a continuing living state of belief that must remain present in the soul, every single day, until the moment of death. When you understand what the Greek truly says, you will understand why this verse has been quietly translated the same wrong way for 414 years. And you will understand something far more difficult than what you were taught in Sunday school…*
>
> *Now, let me take you back to the year 1604. King James I of England has just inherited the throne. He has a problem. There are two Bibles being read in his kingdom. The Geneva Bible, beloved by the Puritans, contains marginal notes that openly criticize kings. The Bishop's Bible, the official Anglican translation, is so poorly translated that even the bishops do not want to read it aloud in church. James calls a conference at Hampton Court. He summons 54 scholars. By the time the work begins, the number has been reduced to 47. These men will produce what we now call the King James Version [KJV]. Their work will take seven years. They are given six instructions by the king. The fourth instruction is this: "When a word hath diverse significations, that to be kept, which hath been most commonly used by the most of the ancient fathers, being agreeable to the propriety of the place and the analogy of the faith". That sentence, my friends, is the most important sentence in the history of English Bible translation, because what it means in plain language is this: ' When a Greek word can be translated multiple ways, choose the translation that agrees with the doctrine of the Church of England.' The doctrine of the Church of England in 1611 was clear on one specific point – salvation once received is permanent. A believer who has been saved cannot lose his salvation. This was a political doctrine, as much as a theological one. King James needed his subjects to feel that their souls were secure. Because a subject who believes his soul is secure is a subject who fights in the king's wars without fear of damnation. And so, when the 47 translators came to John 3:16, they faced a choice, a choice the previous English translators had also faced. William Tyndale in 1526, Miles Coverdale in 1535, the Geneva translators in 1560, each of them had translated this verse slightly differently. But the King James committee made a choice the others did not make. They chose to render the Greek participle `pisteúōn` [πιστεύων] as a finite verb. They chose to write, 'whosoever believeth' instead of what the Greek actually says. And what the Greek actually says, my friends, will change how you understand your salvation tonight. Let me give you the Greek. The exact phrase is `pas ho pisteuōn` [πας ο πιστευων]. Three words: `pas`, meaning 'all'. `Ho` (the definite article), meaning 'the', and `pisteuōn`, (a present active participle of the verb `pisteuō`), meaning 'to believe'. Pause there – present active participle. In Greek, my friends, a present participle is not the same as a finite verb. A finite verb like 'believes' describes an action: 'I believe', 'you believe', 'he believes'. But a present participle like 'believing' describes a state, a continuing state, a state that must be present right now in this moment or it is not true. The literal Greek of John 3:16 does not say, "Whosoever believeth shall not perish." The literal Greek says, "Every, the believing one shall not perish". Every person who is at this moment in the state of believing, not every person who once believed, not every person who made a decision at age 12 at a summer camp, not every person who walked an aisle and signed a card. The Greek of John 3:16 is speaking only of those who are believing now in the present, continuously, as an ongoing state of the soul."*[2]

1 – "They Changed THIS Line From John 3:16 in 1611 — The Original Says Who Gets Saved" www.youtube.com/watch?v=wVWj2hBLL3s

2 – "They Changed THIS Line From John 3:16 in 1611 — The Original Says Who Gets Saved" www.youtube.com/watch?v=wVWj2hBLL3s [0:17-1:15, 2:19-6:00]

Is that simply justification of a Roman Catholic doctrine, which Bishop Samuel espouses, or is it a genuine reality check for any believer?

Let's check this out.

English Translations

We can't just take Bishop Samuel's word for it, so what do our English translations actually say?

This is how we read John 3:16 in common English today:

> **John 3:16** (NKJV) – 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.

How does this compare with the KJV that he's been referencing?

> **John 3:16** (AKJV[3]) – 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.[4]

So, apart from the archaic words 'believeth' and 'whosoever', there's no difference between the 1611 translation and today's standard rendition.

That being said, did any of the historic translations prior to the KJV actually show the difference that the bishop is asserting?

Here are those 3 versions that were highlighted in his teaching. Some are still written in Old English, so they will not be easy to understand – unless you've studied Chaucer's[5] writings:

> **John 3:16** (Geneva Bible 1599) – For God so loveth the world, that he hath given his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.[6]
>
> **John 3:16** (Mile Coverdale Bible 1535) – For God so loued the worlde, that he gaue his onely sonne, that who so euer beleueth in hi, shulde not perishe, but haue euerlastinge life.[7]
>
> **John 3:16** (Tyndale Bible 1526) – For God so loveth the worlde yt he hath geven his only sonne that none that beleve in him shuld perisshe: but shuld have everlastinge lyfe.[8]

None of those versions demonstrate that the bishop is right in what he's stated about a mistranslation – at least, not in an obvious way for modern-day readers to pick up easily.

So, do any other English translations suggest through their interpretation of the Greek grammar, that Bishop Samuel is right?

Here's two modern versions which expand on the meanings of the text:

> **John 3:16** (EXB[9]) – [[L]For] God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only [only; unique; [T]only begotten;] Son so that whoever believes in him may not be lost [[T]perish], but have eternal life.
>
> **John 3:16** (AMPC[10]) – For God so greatly loved *and* dearly prized the world that He [even] gave up His only begotten (unique) Son, so that whoever believes in (trusts in, clings to, relies on) Him shall

3 – Authorized King James Version
4 – www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%203%3A15-17&version=AKJV
5 – Geoffrey Chaucer (1343-1400) "The Canterbury Tales" en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Canterbury_Tales
6 – www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%203%3A15-17&version=GNV
7 – www.textusreceptusbibles.com/Coverdale/43/3
8 – www.biblestudytools.com/tyn/john/3.html
9 – Expanded Bible
10 – Classic Amplified Bible

not perish (come to destruction, be lost) but have eternal (everlasting) life.[11]

The Expanded Bible (EXB), in this context, is identical to the modern English versions above. However, the Classic Amplified Bible (AMPC) qualifies the word 'believing' as a present continuous state, not a once-off declaration. (See yellow highlighting).

It appears then, that the original Greek may align with the bishop's statements.

Before investigating any further, what do some of the literal translations have to say on John 3:16?

We've found out before that literal translations are often valuable to help Bible believers get past the Christian worldview used by translator's who infuse Christian doctrine into their rendering of NT Greek.

Here are two literal translations:

John 3:16 (YLT[12]) – for God did so love the world, that His Son – the only begotten – He gave, that every one who is believing in him may not perish, but may have life age-during.[13]

John 3:16 (DNLT[14]) – "For God so loved the world that He gave *His* only-born Son, in order that everyone believing in Him may not perish, but may have eternal life.

Yes, both of these do indicate a present continuous state of believing, rather than a past action.

Maybe the bishop is right?

Let's dig deeper.

Greek Codexes

What we've seen so far is that there are some obvious variations in the translations of the NT Koine Greek into English. Could this have come about by translators using different ancient Greek documents (known as codexes, or more properly, codices) in their translation processes.

Let's investigate that possibility.

Here are 4 Greek translations of John 3:16:

- ουτως γαρ ηγαπησεν ο θεος τον κοσμον ωστε τον υιον τον μονογενη εδωκεν ινα πας ο πιστευων εις αυτον μη αποληται αλλ εχη ζωην αιωνιον[15]
- οὕτως γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν [16] υἱὸν τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται ἀλλ᾽ ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον.[17]
- ουτως γαρ ηγαπησεν ο θεος τον κοσμον ωστε τον υιον αυτου τον μονογενη εδωκεν ινα πας ο πιστευων εις αυτον μη αποληται αλλ εχη ζωην αιωνιον[18]
- ουτως γαρ ηγαπησεν ο θεος τον κοσμον ωστε τον υιον αυτου τον μονογενη εδωκεν ινα πας ο πιστευων εις αυτον μη αποληται αλλ εχη ζωην αιωνιον.[19]

11 – www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%203%3A15-17&version=AMPC
12 – Young's Literal Translation
13 – www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%203%3A15-17&version=YLT
14 – Disciple's Literal New Testament
15 – 1881 Westcott-Hort New Testament (WHNU)
www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=%CE%9A%CE%91%CE%A4%CE%91%20%CE%99%CE%A9%CE%91%CE%9D%CE%9D%CE%97%CE%9D%203%3A15-17&version=WHNU
16 – Added. According to which ancient Greek text was used for the translation ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ ΚΑΤΑ ΙΩΑΝΝΗΝ 3:16 **υἱὸν** *supp; add αυτου2
17 – Tyndale House Greek New Testament www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%203%3A16&version=THGNT
18 – 1550 Stephanus New Testament www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%203%3A16&version=TR1550
19 – 1894 Scrivener New Testament (TR1894) www.olivetree.com/bible/?query=John.3&version=TR1894

Comparing the first two with the last two, they're only different in one word. The word αυτου (autou: 'here', 'there'[20]) has been added to 'his son' in the English translation.

Why the differences in the Greek? Surely, if the Bible is inerrant, this should not be?????
Version #2 gives the reason for the change – a particular source that's deemed essential has provided that word.

For more information on the variety of Greek texts, the publishing firm, Tyndale House, in the Q&A section for their 'The Greek New Testament' (produced in 2017), has this explanation:

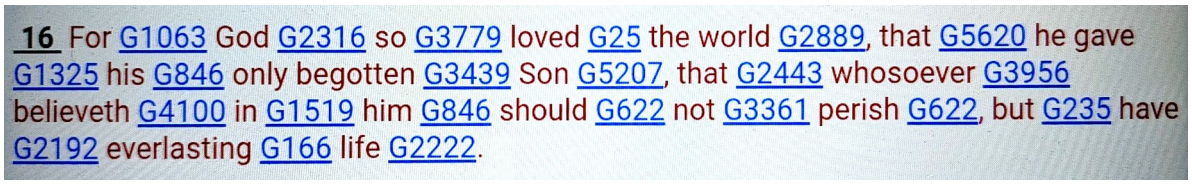
> *"Soon after the publication of Erasmus's first edition of the Greek New Testament in 1516, multiple editions of the Greek New Testament began to be published. Until the nineteenth century, however, these editions differed more in their scope and textual apparatus than in the actual text. But since the mid-nineteenth century, editions of the Greek New Testament have differed more significantly in their text, based on the discovery of, and eclectic selection from, many more Greek manuscripts than were available to Erasmus. Around 1975, however, a number of factors led to the nearly universal adoption of a single standard text, published by the German Bible Society.*
>
> *Since 1975, significant advances have been made in our knowledge of the text of the Greek New Testament. This has included (a) the discovery of further primary material (e.g., early papyri), (b) improvements in the accuracy with which we can use early versions, and (c) careful study of scribal habits. Existing Greek New Testaments have generally not been updated in light of this accumulated knowledge"*[21]

Most believers don't know that there are many versions of the NT in ancient Greek. We know this because of the many codexes of the NT which have been found over time. That means translators of NT Greek into English can make use of more than 5,800 Greek manuscripts, 10,000 Latin manuscripts, and 9,300 manuscripts in various other ancient languages including Syriac, Slavic, Ethiopic and Armenian.[22] For example: the main variants which are commonly used by translators are: Textus Receptus,[23] Codex Alexandrinus,[24] Codex Sinaiticus,[25] and Codex Vaticanus[26]. That means that there's not one original NT codex that's perfect accurate. Therefore, any of those thousands of manuscripts can be used to change the NT text in English, all according to the whims, beliefs, or theologies of the translators.

So, could the difference in English translations of John 3:16 which Bishop Samuel chose to point out be related to what codex was used for the translation?

The answer is "Yes", but it may not be the whole answer.

Here's the verse in an interlinear Greek-English NT used in the FREE computer app 'My Sword'[27] for android devices:



This version uses Strong's Greek word #4100 which is rendered in this KJV as 'believeth'. That's pisteuō (πιστεύω), not pisteúōn (πιστεύων).

20 – en.wiktionary.org/wiki/%CE%B1%E1%BD%90%CF%84%CE%BF%E1%BF%A6
21 – static.crossway.org/excerpt/esv-greek-new-testament-tyndale-house-nb.pdf
22 – en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Testament#Textual_variation
23 – en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Textus_Receptus
24 – en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codex_Alexandrinus
25 – en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codex_Sinaiticus
26 – en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codex_Vaticanus
27 – www.mysword.info/download-mysword

That's a huge difference, compared to the others we've seen. And, it's the difference that the bishop is referring to: `Pisteuō` is a finite verb, but `pisteúōn` is a present active participle of the verb.

Some Fallacies

Many theologians subscribe to the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) as the source of valid proof for the correct text of the NT. However, recent scientific research of the scrolls utilizing DNA analysis[28] of the animal hides that the text was written on,[29] has shown up the fallacy of that belief. What the scrolls revealed in this analysis was that they are a collection of writings of the time, which included any number of translations and interpretations:

> *"By studying the genetic traces preserved inside the parchment itself, scientists gained access to answers that once seemed permanently unreachable. And what they uncovered was bigger than anyone expected. The Dead Sea Scrolls are not simply the library of one isolated desert sect hiding from Rome. They are something far larger. They represent the collected sacred writings of ancient Israel. Diverse, complicated, sometimes contradictory, shaped by many communities and many traditions, different voices, different beliefs, different versions of scripture. And each manuscript was carried by real people into caves in the Judean wilderness during one of the darkest periods in their history."*[30]

It's clear, then, that claiming that the fragments and papyri found in the Dead Sea caves are more accurate than any others is a fallacy. It's an accidental fallacy based in archaeological paradigms, rather than on textual accuracy.

Similarly, a fallacy occurs when translators prefer to use the Alexandrinus, Sinaiticus,[31] and Vaticanus Codexes, because Carbon-dating has assigned an older age to them, compared to other intact NTs. A false assumption is made with these codexes, written closer to the 1st century and therefore are older, as they are deemed by translators to be more accurate with the original author's composition.

Results

What have we uncovered during this short investigation?

1. The NT is not fixed. It has changed over time and various places. The many historic codexes and fragments attest to that.
2. The English translations which don't have expanded understanding (comments) included within the sentences, do not give the reader a very clear understanding of what the Greek was intended to convey.
3. Bishop Samuel is actually not correct in his assertion of what John 3:16 says, because it depends on which grammatical form of `pistis` (πίστις) – either `pisteúōn` or `pisteuō` – the codex has in the text that was used for translation.
4. Whether John, the original writer who put Hebrew understanding into Koine Greek for his 1st century readers, was stating a once-off belief for 'salvation' or a continuous belief is non-defensible. That is, no one knows what he was really wanting to convey to his readers of the time of his writing.

Conclusion

We can conclude from what we uncovered that:

1. There's too much interference with the translation process from a writer's Hebrew mindset, to

28 – "The Dead Sea Scrolls Just Got DNA Tested — And the Truth Terrified Experts" (29-5-2026) youtu.be/cEMml4FD5Yc
29 – "The Dead Sea Scrolls contain genetic clues to their origins" (2-6-2020) www.sciencenews.org/article/dead-sea-scrolls-dna-genetic-clues-origins-hebrew-bible
30 – "The Dead Sea Scrolls Just Got DNA Tested – And the Truth Terrified Experts" (29-5-2026) www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEMml4FD5Yc [25:52-26:44]
31 – en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codex_Sinaiticus

Koine Greek understanding, to English interpretation, caused by the proliferation of conflicting codexes and manuscript fragments.

2. There's no definite proof that the modern understanding of John 3:16 was exactly what the writer (John) meant to convey.
3. Bishop Samuel is partly right in his declaration about believing, but he's chosen only to use codexes and manuscript fragments (including the Dead Sea Scrolls) which align with his theology as a Roman Catholic priest.
4. Bishop Samuel's assertion does seem to be a justification of a Roman Catholic doctrine. Specifically, that unless a person remains in attendance at Catholic masses until they die, they are excommunicated and lose their salvation.
5. Also, from what we've learnt from our investigation into salvation,[32] the bishop's argument or stance on salvation is not a genuine reality check for any believer.

Implication

John 3:16 as a once-off acquisition for salvation from Hell by a person is not what the verse is all about. It's actually a statement of Father's heart towards his creation. The reason we see it as a salvation invitation is because we don't understand Kingdom realities. One such reality is the Kingdom principle that when something is created by a higher order being, it's entirely the creator's responsibility to look after it. That principle can't be found in the Bible – just like the vast bulk of all spiritual knowledge isn't there. Mike Parsons was informed of the responsibility that goes with creation when Father schooled him on our role to be creators or co-creators. As one of the members of the Creation team, Father is responsible for all creation, especially humanity who they made just like themselves, so we're just like him.

(See Kingdom Perspective below for the better purpose of the verse.)

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Kingdom Perspective

Remember, the Kingdom doesn't align with theologians beliefs or Bible translators. It fully aligns with the Trinity's heart and mind. That's a huge difference. Translators and theologians use logic and their worldviews to translate what they believe the 1st century writers wanted to say to their readers. However, that decoding into English is based on using the Knowledge of the Tree of Good and Evil, whereas, the Kingdom operates from the Tree of Life. Therefore, what we need to get out of John 3:16 is Father's message to all of humanity.

François Du Toit has done this decoding by rendering the ancient Koine Greek in alignment with Father's heart. That means, we can now look at John 3:16 so that its actual meaning comes out clearly to a reader living under the New Covenant. Here's what it looks like. *(Du Toit's comments are in grey)*:

> **John 3:16** (MIRROR[33]) – The entire cosmos£ is the object of God's affection. And he is not about to abandon§ his creation – the gift‡ of his Son is for mankind to realize their origin in him who mirrors their authentic birth€ – begotten not of flesh but of the Father. [See John 1:13] In this persuasion¥ the life of the ages echoes¥ within the individual and announces that the days of regret and sense of lost-ness§ are over. (The KJV reads, 'Whoever believes¥ in him shall not perish§ but have eternal life'. The same word translated in the KJV 'to perish' is translated in Luke 15 to be 'lost'. In order to underline the value of the individual, Jesus tells the famous three parables in Luke 15 of the lost sheep, coin, and son; now all found, safe and sound. In everyone he repeats the word 'lost'§, `apollumi`, 'to lose', to emphasize the fact that you cannot be lost unless you belong – to begin with. The word `apollumi`§,

32 – What is Salvation?" series canberraforerunners.org/?page_id=6853#salvation
33 – THE MIRROR translation

also suggests a sense of 'uselessness'; that which comes to ruin and amounts to nothing. The word didomi‡, 'to give', in this case to give something to someone that already belongs to them; thus, 'to return'. The fact that they already are his own, born from above, they have their beginning and their being in him is now confirmed in their realizing it. He is the 'only begotten', monogenes€; begotten only by the Father and not of the flesh; in him we recognize our true beginning – as in the authentic original mold. See my commentary note to John 1:12.[34] The word echo¥, 'to hold', or 'embrace', as in echo. The word, kosmos£ in the NT refers to the entire human family.)[35]

~ The MIRROR commentary notes for John 1:12 are over the page ~

IMPORTANT: As far as the Kingdom is concerned, what Father's heart is towards humanity is more important than what any NT translation says. Any inference by anyone that the MIRROR translation is erroneous or heretical, is a sign that the asserter[36] of such statements is speaking from a religious mindset, not as a mouthpiece for Father.

"They Changed THIS Line From John 3:16 in 1611 — The Original Says Who Gets Saved" LINK

"The Dead Sea Scrolls Just Got DNA Tested — And the Truth Terrified Experts" LINK

"The Dead Sea Scrolls contain genetic clues to their origins" LINK

Believe It or Not!
The choice is yours

Whatever you choose to believe won't negatively impact Father's relationship with you

►►My archived teaching articles are HERE & HERE ◄◄

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(Readers will need to look up for themselves any scriptures alluded to in this document)

34 – This is located at the end of this document
35 – Scripture taken from THE MIRROR. Copyright © 2012. Used by permission of The Author. Mirror Bible: www.mirrorword.net
36 – www.dictionary.com/browse/asserter

MIRROR commentary note to John 1:12

John 1:12 (MIRROR[37]) – Everyone who [1]realizes their association in him, [6]convinced that he is their [2]original life and that [7]his name defines them, God [5]gives the assurance that they are indeed his [4]offspring, [2]begotten of him; he [3]sanctions the legitimacy of their sonship.

(The word often translated, to receive, [1]lambano, means 'to take in hand', 'to lay a hold of that which already belongs to you'; 'to comprehend', 'to grasp', 'to identify with'. This word suggests that even though he came to his own, there are those who do not [1]identify with their true [2]origin revealed in him, and like the many Pharisees they behave like children of a foreign father, the father of lies [John 8: 44]. Neither God's legitimate fatherhood, nor his ownership is in question; mankind's indifference to their true [2]origin is the problem. This is what the Gospel addresses with utmost clarity in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus has come to introduce the individual to themselves again; mankind has forgotten what manner of person they are by design. [James 1:24, Deuteronomy 32:18, Psalm 22:27]

The word, [2]genesthai, from ginomai, means 'to generate'; 'to become'; John employs this verb in the Aorist Infinitive tense, which indicates prior completion of an action in relationship to a point in time. Greek Infinitives could have either a present or Aorist form. The contrast between the two forms has more to do with aspect than with time. The Present Infinitive is used to express progressive or imperfective aspect. It pictures the action expressed by the verb as being in progress. The Aorist Infinitive however does not express progressive aspect. It presents the action expressed by the verb as a completed unit with a beginning and end. This is an important point since many translations of this verse suggests that God's ability to make us his sons can only be in response to something we must first do in order to trigger God into action. Our grasping [lambano] is simply the awakening to the fact that our genesis is already completed in the Logos. [See John 1:3] The Logos is the source; everything commences in him. He remains the exclusive Parent reference to their genesis. There is nothing original, except the Word. We are his offspring. [see also Acts 17:28]. "He has come to give us understanding to know him who is true and to realize that we are in him who is true." [1 John 5:20]

The word, [3]exousia, often translated 'power'; as in, "he gave power to [2]become children of God", is a compound word; from ek, always denoting origin or source and eimi, 'I am'; thus, 'out of I am'. This gives [3]legitimacy and authority to our sonship; [4]teknon, translated as 'offspring', 'child'. "He has given", εδωκεν the Aorist Active Indicative of [5]didomi, in this case 'to give something to someone that already belongs to them'. See Acts 3:6. The fact that they already are his own, born from above and that they have their [2]beginning and their being in him is now confirmed in their realizing it. Convinced, [6]pisteo; [7]his name onoma, is mankind's family name. [See Eph 3:15].

"He made to be their true selves, their child-of-God selves." — The Message)[38]

37 – THE MIRROR translation

38 – Scripture taken from THE MIRROR. Copyright © 2012. Used by permission of The Author. Mirror Bible: www.mirrorword.net