

“The Great Divide!”

I. **INTRO:**

- A. **Prayer:** May we be lost on wonder, love, & praise.
- B. The **Continental Divide** of the Americas, or merely the **Continental Divide** or **Great Divide**, is the name given to the principal, and largely mountainous, hydrological divide of the Americas that separates the watersheds that drain into the Pacific Ocean from those river systems which drain into the Atlantic Ocean. [Starting in Alaska; running through Canada; through the center of the U.S.; through Mexico; then through South America]
1. They say **a house** situated on top of this **Great Divide** determines whether a drop of rain fall will end up in the **Pacific** or **Atlantic**...determined by a fraction of an inch, on where it hits the peak of the roof. Δ
 2. In this portion of Scripture we are shown **the Scriptures Great Divide**.
 - a) Those **condemned**/those **saved**; Those who **believe**/those who **don't believe**;
Those who **love the light**/those who **love darkness**;
Those who **will perish**/those who **will inherit eternal life**.
- C. We have in this section the **most familiar verse** in all of scripture, and for good reason - **Jn.3:16** presents the **clearest, simplest** statement of the good news of Jesus Christ.
- D. **Outline:** The Persons: The Father **gave** His Son; The Son **will give** His life.
The Purpose: Is not to **Condemn** Sinners; Is to **Convert** Sinners.
The People: Condemnation for those who **Reject** Christ; Salvation for those who **Receive** Christ

II. **THE FATHERS LOVE!**

- A. **THE PERSONS!** (16)
- B. **The Father gave His Son!** (16a)
- C. **For God** - The initiation in all salvation lies w/God the Father!
1. Bad theology that says, “the Father is mean, the Son is nice”.
 2. Listen to Paul in Eph.1:5,6 **having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself(Father), according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.**
 3. It was with **God the Father** that this all started!
 - a) **God is Love!** 1 Jn.4:8

D. **So loved** - Love is the **mainspring** of God's being.

1. Not God so...**manipulated** the world; or so finally **broke** the world; or **disciplined**; or **punished**, or **scourged** the world...until they came to Him!
2. No, it wasn't a **power-move** acting for **His** sake, **but** a **love-move** acting for **our** sake!
 - a) **And that love will not be satisfied till every last sheep** is brought into **His fold!**

E. **The world** - not just a nation.

1. Not just the **elite, rich, powerful**(by man's standards) that He reached out to, **but** to **unlovables**(Lepers); the one's that **detest him**(Manaseh); to the ones that are **too busy** for God(like Matthew the tax collector); to those **too rich** for God(Zachias); to those **working against** God(Saul).
2. **For God so loved a sinful world.** Every race; rich & poor; powerful & powerless; male & female; those who stayed home from church to watch the **Daytona 500** today, & those who didn't :-0

F. **Mirror Story: Fort Hancock** is on the farthest tip of **Sandy Hook**, which reaches out into the Atlantic on the **New Jersey coast**. **During World War II** it was a **military training center**. A civilian of the area was eager to bring the good news of Christ to the thousands of young men stationed there. The military authorities would not permit him to enter in person. Not to be denied, he asked a firm that specialized in **novelties** to make several thousand **mirrors** about 3" in diameter. On the **back** of each mirror he had printed the words of **John 3:16**. Beneath these words he had this direction, "If you want to see **who it is that God loves**, look on the other side."

1. Charles Wesley Hymn: **Amazing love! How can it be That thou, my God, shouldst die for me?**

G. **He gave** - The measure of love is always its willingness to **give**; its capacity for **sacrifice**.

1. **If we would measure the love of God, we must measure it by Calvary.**
2. Someone wrote: **Love ever gives, forgives, outlives; And ever stands with open hands; And while it lives it gives; For while it gives it lives; And this is Love's prerogative - To give - and give - and give.**
3. **We can never know the costliness of Calvary to God, nor can we ever measure the love that lay behind it.**
 - a) All we can do is fall back on that **elastic particle** "so", God **so** loved!
 - b) It's not simply that **God is love**...because what if **He never gave it away?**
 - (1) The **good news** is that He didn't keep it, **He gives it away!**

- H. **Only begotten** = unique, only one of His kind.
1. Some translate it then, **He gave His *one & only Son***.
 2. **Some say, *repent & believe* seems so cheap. No! It was a **costly** rescue!**
 - a) (It cost pain, separation, blood, death)
- I. **The Son will give His life!** (16b)
- J. **Whoever believes** - *Belief* means far more than **intellectual assent** to the claims of Christ. **It means placing one's life & trust** in complete *surrender* to the One in whom we believe.
1. **Popular story** is told of a missionary having a difficult time finding the right word for "**belief**" in the native dialect. Finally one native ran into his hut, completely exhausted, after running for a long way, threw himself upon a nearby hammock, breathed a sigh, & uttered a word in his dialect. He asked the native what he said. He said, it is a word that means "***I am resting all my weight here***". "This is just the word I need," & finished his translation.
 - a) Many today are trying to come up with the **right feeling**, or the **right type of faith**. They fail to realize that it is **not faith but Christ who saves!**
 - b) The Devil makes them concentrate on **their poor, weak faith**, rather than on the **object** of that faith.
 - c) Look at the native again. At the end of himself, he does nothing but just **rests his all** upon the hammock.
 - (1) So, too, believing is just casting one's self **unreservedly** into the open arms of the Lord Jesus & saying, "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief". **On You I rest my soul for all eternity!**
- K. **Not perish** - If we **believe** on Him we'll **never perish**.
- L. **But have eternal life** - When we believe we gain eternal life as our present possession **have**
1. **Not just quantity later, but quality now!**
- M. **THE PURPOSE!** (17)
- N. **It is not to Condemn sinners!** (17a)
- O. **Q: Why do we as Christians often think this was His, or is our mission?**
1. Jesus didn't come into the world to **Kill** the world, but to **Cure** the world!
- P. **It is to Convert sinners!** (17b)
- Q. **More than 100,000 people die in the U.S. every year from preventable diseases.**
1. There are cures but for one reason or another people **refuse to take** the vaccines or medicines for their particular disease.

2. **More tragic** are the 100's & 1000's who die uncured every year, of the worse disease of all..***the spiritual disease of sin!***
 - a) We've been ***snake-bitten by sin*** & only Jesus provides the ***snake-bite kit!***
 - b) **Read Jer. 30:12-17** - The **incurable** become **curable**.

R. **THE PEOPLE!** (18-21)

S. Here we have a ***theological postscript***, explaining **why** some believe & others don't.

T. There are only 2 possible **responses** to Jesus: belief **or** unbelief. **And**, There are only 2 possible **destinies** to which those responses lead: eternal life **or** eternal death.

U. **Condemnation for those who *Reject Christ!*** (18b-20)

V. (19) Sinners not only **live in** darkness but **love** it, & **refuse** to come to the light where their sins will be **exposed** & can be **forgiven**.

W. **This is the condemnation-** Here is **the process** of condemning, not **the sentence** of it.

X. **Men loved darkness rather than light** -

1. **Why do men hate the light? It exposes**(20) **where** we are & **what** we are!
2. **Loves darkness, What does he mean? - You know it well...**
 - a) It's every **lustful/desirous** thought or picture, memory pulls up to dance with.
 - b) It's that **adulterous affair** you've carefully tucked away in the dungeon of your mind
 - c) It's the **lies** you've carefully hidden away in a dark dank corner.
 - d) It's those **seething anger** filed away in a black file cabinet, ready to be pulled up at will.
3. **Darkness** has always been a "***slow, subtle, brainwashing process***" that gradually **desensitizes** all to evil.
 - a) Like the **Irishman** who came over here, then **his wife** joined him a year later. She said, "***they sure talk funny over here,***" to which he responded, "***you should of heard them a year ago!***"
4. **Q:** Are you more interested in ***how to live in the dark*** rather than ***how to walk in the light?***

Y. **Salvation for those who *Receive Christ!*** (18a, 21)

Z. **Comes to the light**(21) - is allowing the H.S. to shine His **Mag-light** upon those dark crevices in our life. [**Watch those rats & cockroaches run!**]

AA. **End:** He *gave* His only begotten Son - Jesus is a *GIFT!*

1. What is our normal response to a gift? Do we **pay** for it? Do we **work** for it? Do we **beg** for it? Do we **work** for it? [No. We just **take** it; & it is **ours**]
2. Yesterday many asked *Will you be mine?* Today Jesus asks *Will you be Mine?*
3. **In 1983 I proposed to Kelly.** It wasn't much of a proposal. We pulled up in her parents driveway. I went & opened her door. I got down on my knee & asked, will you marry me? (God out did me!)
 - a) **Gods proposal to us...**hanging on a cross; a bloody, beaten, body; asking, "Will you be mine?" - Will **you** accept God's proposal today?

BB. **God...**The greatest Lover; **So loved...**The greatest degree;
The world...The greatest number; **That He gave...**The greatest act;
His only begotten Son...The greatest gift; **That whoever...**The greatest invitation;
Believes...The greatest simplicity; **In Him...**The greatest Person;
Should not perish...The greatest deliverance; **But...**The greatest difference;
Have...The greatest certainty; **Everlasting Life...**The greatest possession;

CC. Spurgeon said, If we never had another gleam of love from God's face again, we could live on this one text!

1. Henry Morehouse said(after preaching for a week on Jn.3:16 in Moody's pulpit), "I have been trying to tell you how much God loves you. **Suppose** I could borrow Jacob's ladder. **Suppose** I could ascend that shining stairway until my feet stood on the sapphire pavements of the city of God. **Suppose** I could find Gabriel, the herald angel who stands in the presence of God. **Suppose** I could say, *'tell me, Gabriel, how much does God love the world?'* I know what he would say. He would say, *"Henry Morehouse, God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. Thats how much God loves the world."*

DD. **Analogy, "The Electric Chair":** You've lived a life of sin. You've been tried, convicted, found guilty! The judge has pronounced the sentence...**Death!** Now you await execution. Knowing you're deserving of this punishment, though repentant now, you know this is your consequence. Your strapped in the chair, & the switch is about to be thrown. **Then,** you hear footsteps...**it's the judge?** He sets you free – you can't believe it. As you're walking away down the corridor you pass a man who is heading for the same chair. **Who is that?** you yell back out of curiosity. **What did he do to deserve execution?** Nothing at all! He's a good man, the best I've known. I know this because He's my Son!

1. "For God **so so** Loved...."