

# God so loved the World even John Calvin can be saved if he believes

written by Alfred Persson | November 10, 2024



*“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. (Jn. 3:16 NKJ)*

The opportunity to be saved by Jesus is universally offered to “whosoever

believes”, but against this Calvin argued “world” refers to all groups of people and the elect among them are the only ones who will believe and be saved.

Conclusion: Calvinists are wrong because:

1. Limiting *kosmos* to the elect contradicts the plain and repeated use of *kosmos* in John 3:16-19, which clearly indicates an inclusive, universal scope.
2. The phrase “whoever believes” in John 3:16 supports an open invitation to all humanity, not just the elect.
3. 1 John 2:2 explicitly states that Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the entire world (*holos kosmos*), which cannot be limited to the elect without ignoring the clear textual emphasis on universality.
4. The context of condemnation and salvation described in John 3:18-19 applies universally, implying that the *kosmos* receiving the light includes all people, even those who reject it.
5. Christ’s universal proclamation to the living and the dead (1 Peter 3:18-22, Ephesians 4:9-10) further supports that His mission and the reach of His light are not restricted to an exclusive group but extend to all humanity.

Final Conclusion: The Calvinist interpretation that limits *kosmos* in these passages to only the elect fails to align with the clear, repeated, and contextually consistent use of the term in Scripture. The natural reading of *kosmos* in John 3:16-19 and 1 John 2:2 supports a universal understanding that includes all of humanity, affirming that Christ’s atoning work and the offer of salvation are genuinely extended to all.

Notes:

### The Meaning of *Kosmos* in John 3:16-19 and 1 John 2:2

**Premise 1:** In John 3:16, *kosmos* (world) is used to convey that “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

**Premise 2:** In John 3:17, the purpose of sending Jesus is stated: “God did not send His Son into the world (*kosmos*) to condemn the world (*kosmos*), but that the world (*kosmos*) through Him might be saved.” The repetition of *kosmos* indicates a consistent meaning throughout the passage.

**Premise 3:** John 3:18 states, “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” This implies that the opportunity for belief and condemnation applies universally within the *kosmos*.

**Premise 4:** John 3:19 reinforces the universal application by stating,

“And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world (*kosmos*), and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” The phrase “light has come into the world” confirms that Christ’s light reaches the entirety of the *kosmos*.

**Premise 5:** The repeated use of *kosmos* in John 3:16-19 suggests that the author is emphasizing a comprehensive meaning, analogous to metaphors like “the four corners of the earth” (Isaiah 11:12) or “east, west, north, and south” (Luke 13:29), which are used to indicate the entire world.

**Premise 6:** In 1 John 2:2, it is stated, “And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole (*holos*) world (*kosmos*).” The addition of *holos* underscores that Christ’s atoning work applies to all of humanity and not only a specific group (e.g., the elect).

**Premise 7:** The idea that Christ’s light shines universally is further supported by 1 Peter 3:18-22 and 4:5-6, where it is implied that the gospel is proclaimed to all, including the dead. Ephesians 4:9-10 also supports this by stating that Christ descended to the “lower parts of the earth” to ensure no realm of human existence was left out.

**Premise 8:** If *kosmos* were meant to refer only to the elect, the repeated emphasis on universal terminology in John 3:16-19 and 1 John 2:2 would be misleading. The use of “whoever believes” in John 3:16 reinforces the open nature of the invitation.

**Conclusion:** The consistent use of *kosmos* throughout these passages, along with the additional support from metaphors and theological affirmations of universality, indicates that *kosmos* refers to the whole of humanity, not just the elect. Therefore, the distinction between “ours [the elect]” and “the whole *kosmos* of humanity” is unsustainable in this context. Christ is the propitiation for the entire world, providing the opportunity for salvation to all who choose to believe.