

GOD IS LOVE

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INTRODUCTION

There are many things that should be known about God; but there is one thing that should be firmly established in our minds and it is “God is love”. It is a well established fact within the Word of God that “God is love”. The love of God can be found beginning at Genesis chapter one all the way through Revelation chapter twenty two.

God demonstrated His love for Adam by creating Adam in His own image: (Genesis 1:26-27) *“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. (27) So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”* God also showed His love for Adam in that He saw it was not good for Adam to be alone: (Genesis 2:18) *“And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.”* Seeing it wasn’t good for man to be alone God did something about the situation; He created a woman to be Adam’s companion and helper: (Genesis 2:20-23) *“And Adam could not find a help meet for him among the beasts of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. (21) And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; (22) And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. (23) And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”*

As we move on in history we see the love of God demonstrated to the children of Israel. They had been in bondage for four hundred years when God heard their cries: (Exodus 3:7) *“And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;”* What was it that God would do for those people who were afflicted daily by their task masters? He would send them a leader who would lead them to freedom: (Exodus 3:10) *“Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.”* That leader was Moses! Now Moses could not accomplish the task by himself; in fact it would take ten miracles from God before the children of Israel were permitted to leave; these miracles are known as “the ten plagues”. Not only did God provide a way of escape from the slavery He also promised and gave them a land described as a land of “milk and honey: (Leviticus 20:24) *“But I have said unto you, Ye shall inherit their land, and I will give it unto you to possess it, a land that floweth with milk and honey: I am the LORD your God, which have separated you from other people.”* Let it be understood that God did not just hand this promised land over to them; they had to fight many battles in order to possess the land. God was with them when they went to battle and he gave them the victory. Was this not done in love?

In his many years of service to Christ and God the apostle John came to know about the love of God very well and he described the love of God very well and he described God’s love as a part of God’s character: (1 John 4:8) *“He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”* John did not hesitate in describing God, John described God perfectly with four short words: ‘FOR GOD IS LOVE’! The history of God’s dealings with mankind makes John’s statement undeniable.

God's love was especially directed to His Son Jesus Christ as Jesus declared: (John 15:9) "*As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.*" (John 17:26) "*And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*" What great love the Father had for Jesus; how it must have grieved God to watch Jesus being crucified! By allowing the crucifixion to take place only goes to show how much God love you and me: (John 3:16) "*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.*"

A study of the word "love" is a very interesting study; here is Mister Webster's definition: "LOVE: The sense is probably to be prompt, free, willing, from leaning. advancing, or drawing forward.

1. In a general sense to be pleased with; to regard with affection, on account of some qualities which excite pleasing sensations or desire of gratification. We love a friend, on account of some qualities which give us pleasure in his society. We love a man who has done us a favor; in which case, gratitude enters into the composition of our affection. We love our parents and our children, on account of their connection with us, and on account of many qualities which please us. We love to retire to cool shade in summer. We love a warm room in winter. We love to hear an eloquent advocate. The Christian loves his Bible. In short, we love whatever gives us pleasure and delight, whether animal or intellectual; and if our hearts are right, we love God above all things, as the sum of all excellence and all attributes which can communicate happiness to intelligent beings. In other words, the Christian loves God with the love of complacency in his attributes, the love of benevolence towards the interest of his kingdom, and the love of gratitude for favors received.

LOVE, n.

An affection of the mind excited by beauty and worth of any kind, or by the qualities of an object which communicate pleasure, sensual or intellectual. It is opposed to hatred. Love between the sexes is a compound affection, consisting of esteem, benevolence and animal desire. Love is excited by pleasing qualities of any kind, as by kindness benevolence, charity and by the qualities which render social intercourse agreeable. In the latter case, love is ardent friendship, or a strong attachment springing from good will and esteem, and the pleasure derived from the company, civilities and kindness of others.

Between certain natural relatives, love seems to be in some cases instinctive. Such is the love of a mother for her child, which manifests itself toward an infant, before any particular qualities in the child unfold. This affection is apparently as strong in irrational animals as in human beings."

Of course the Bible uses many different forms of the word "love" and must be studied each time.

I will never forget my first day at Bible college; we had just introduced ourselves and we were given a pop test. One of the questions was; "What is love"? I was sure that he wanted a scriptural answer; I thought of the words "God is love" but I could not remember the book, chapter and verse. This was a class filled with young people; many were just out of high school and they gave all kinds of answers. The instructor became upset and finally said, "I don't care what you put down count it as right". Remember, I could not think of the scripture reference so I left it blank so I had to count it as wrong. The sad part is my answer would have what he was looking for. Every time the subject of love comes up I can still see myself sitting there very disappointed.

If you are ever asked to define “love” quote (1 John 4:8) *“He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”*

CHAPTER 1

God’s Love Described

God’s love is described as sovereign: (Deuteronomy 7:8) *“But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.”* The word “sovereign” means: supreme in power’ possessing supreme dominion; as a sovereign ruler of the universe. This verse describes God as having a “mighty hand”. Though there is some who would deny this, God does certainly rule the universe and He rules with love. Everything that God has done and will do He does so with “love” as a motive. God has a supreme “love” for His people: (Deuteronomy 10:15) *“Only the LORD had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day.”* Moses reminds the people how much God loved their fathers; then he tells them that God loved them “above all people”. Where is the love of God directed today? Is it not directed toward the Christian? Please don’t misunderstand me, I am not saying that God does not love everyone; I’m simply saying that God has a special love for those who do His will.

God’s love is described as being “great”: (Ephesians 2:4) *“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,”* If you believe one single thing that the Bible tells us you will certainly believe that God’s love for His creation is “great”. Consider all that God has done for His people throughout the history of mankind and you are required to say; “God’s love is GREAT”. When you consider the love that God demonstrated to you and me you must say; “God’s love is GREAT”. (John 3:16) *“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.”* It was indeed God’s love that caused Him to send His “only begotten Son” to die for the sins of all who come to believe in Jesus and obey the gospel commands to repent, confess and be buried with Christ in baptism for the remission of our sins. The time once was when the children of Israel [I.e. the Jews] were God’s chosen people; however the “great” love God has for everyone has changed that: (Romans 10:12) *“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.”* There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek [or Gentile]. The Jews considered anyone who was not a Jew to be a Gentile. This is great news for the multitude; because there are not many in our societies who are Jews by birth.

God’s love is “unfailing”: (Isaiah 49:15-16) *“Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. (16) Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.”* It would be a very unnatural action for a mother to forget her baby; it does happen though. But it would be unnatural for God to forget us; this just will not happen. If you have someone’s name written or tattooed on your hand you will never forget that person. A very close relative of mine tattooed his girlfriend’s name on his hand; they have been married for many years now and I’m sure he has never forgotten her. Some may have their girlfriend or wife’s name tattooed on their arm or some other place on their bodies, but if it is on your hand

you are not apt to forget that person [especially true if you marry someone else]. I doubt that God had to do this to help Him to remember but it certainly informed them that they would not be forgotten.

God's love is "unalienable": (Romans 8:39) "*Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" Paul is convinced that nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. It would serve us well to recall that Paul is referring to only God's love for us; Paul is not writing that there is nothing that can separate us from God because that would be an untrue statement as sin will separate us from God: (Isaiah 59:1-2) "*Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: (2) But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.*" Even if we separate ourselves from God through sin: God still loves us and desires for to repent: (2 Peter 3:9) "*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*" God's love is abiding and forever!

God's love is "constraining": (Hosea 11:4) "*I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them.*" It is God's work and nature to draw sinners to Himself and no one can come to God except those whom God draws: (John 6:44) "*No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*" How does God draw us to Himself? It is a fact man is drawn to that which he delights in. God through His written word has shown us we are sinners; He has also shown us a savior who He has sent, does this not give you delight? Doesn't this make you love God and cause you to want to be pleasing to God? God does not throw a rope around our necks and draw us to Himself; He draws us through love which He has expressed in His Word.

Perhaps I have saved the best description of God's love to the last; God's love is "everlasting": (Jeremiah 31:3) "*The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.*" Please notice that this verse emphasizes what I said above; God draws with love! God's love for us does not fade; it remains constant and is "everlasting". I have told many young couples whom I have married you may think you love one another now but in years to come you will know the true meaning of love. Regardless of what we may do or say God will always love us. God even loves the sinner; He hates their sin but He will always love the individual. God is patiently waiting for us to love Him as He loves us. Just like the married couple there may be times one of the two will disappoint the other but love is patient and so is God. Let us always be aware that God does not love us because of what or who we are: (Job 7:17) "*What is man, that thou shouldst magnify him? and that thou shouldst set thine heart upon him?*" The Lord does not love us because of who we are: (Deuteronomy 7:7) "*The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:*" Verse 8 through 11 tells us that God loves us because of an oath He made and because we keep His commandments: (Deuteronomy 7:8-11) "*But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. (9) Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; (10) And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he*

will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face. (11 Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them.” We do not deserve such unfailing love; we should ever be thankful that we serve a God whose love never fails.

CHAPTER 2

God Manifests His Love

It may be hard for us to comprehend but God does love sinners who are perishing: (John 3:16) *“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.”* I think that everyone will agree that there are sinners in the world who are perishing; Jesus said that “God so loved the world”; he did not put any restrictions on God’s love, therefore God gave His Son for sinners and saints alike. Paul wrote this: (Titus 3:4-7) *“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, (5) Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; (6) Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; (7) That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”* God manifested His love toward us not because we were “righteous” but because of His “mercy”. How very fortunate we are who are sinners that God has taken “mercy” upon us!

The Bible also says a lot about God’s love for His saints: (John 16:27) *“For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.”* Those who believe that Jesus came from the Father will most likely obey the gospel command and become Christians and Jesus declared that for this very reason God loves the obedient. We know that God loves Jesus; what would you think if I through God’s Word were to tell you that it is possible for you to be loved even as God loves Jesus? My friends it is possible: (John 17:23) *“I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.”* This is more than we have a right to expect; but Jesus said it and I believe it. Actually it makes no difference whether I believe it or not; if Jesus said it, it is the truth. It is through God’s love and grace that we have hope of eternal life in heaven: (2 Thessalonians 2:16) *“Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,”* The apostle known as “the apostle of love [I.e. John] wrote these words: (1 John 4:16) *“And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”* It is very important to know and believe that God loves us. Doesn’t it make you feel good to know that the God who created you loves you?

There is a grave danger for those who are living in plenty to forget those who are living in desolation; but this is not true with God: (Deuteronomy 10:18) *“He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment.”* If God remembers those who are destitute should we not do likewise? We need to look around ourselves. When was the last time you gave clothing to the cold? When was the last time you gave food to the hungry? If we expect God to continue to love us let us remember those who are less fortunate!

God love the “cheerful giver”: (2 Corinthians 9:7) *“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”* If we consider all that God has given us and all that He has done for us we should delight in being able to give to God “cheerfully”. We are to give as we “purpose in our hearts”; too many just give God what is left over. In my household we give the scraps to the dog; God deserves better! If you give “grudgingly” you would be better off taking your money home.

CHAPTER 3

God Shows His Love

Of course God showed His love by sending Jesus: (John 3:16) *“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.”* Much later John wrote a similar statement: (1 John 4:9) *“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.”* Without doubt this is the greatest love that has ever been shown or seen by mankind. Although there have been many who have died for another their love does not even compare to the love of God. We may be willing to give our own life for a good person but God gave His Son while man was still in sin: (Romans 5:8) *“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”* Here Paul is speaking to all those who are unworthy of God’s love. He is referring to those who are powerless to deliver themselves. Paul makes a comparison in verse 7: (Romans 5:7) *“For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.”* We should never classify the good man and the righteous man in the same category because before God they are not the same [this is the position of Calvin]. I find it hard to see the contrast between God’s love and man’s love; can’t we see how much greater God’s love is over man’s love? God sent His Son to die for us while we were yet sinners and man may be hesitant to die; even for a good man.

God has shown His love toward us by forgiving our sins: (Isaiah 38:17) *“Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.”* Although the book of Isaiah does not mention any sin of the King we do find this: (2 Chronicles 32:26) *“Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah.”* Perhaps you may think the sin of “pride” is a very small thing; but what do we have to be proud of; aren’t we all sinners? (Romans 3:23) *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”* If you remember who and what you are you are headed in the right direction!

God has shown His love by “extending salvation to all”: (Titus 3:4-7) *“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, (5) Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; (6) Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; (7) That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”* God freely offers salvation to us; not because of any works of righteousness that

we have done, rather He offers salvation because of His own mercy and grace. Friends, this is love!

CHAPTER 4

God's Love is Perfected In Christians

God's love is perfected in those who are obedient: (1 John 2:5) "*But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.*" God's love cannot be obtained unless we obey; so it is when we are obedient that God's love is "perfected" or brought to its complete and final goal. God's design in sending Jesus to die for the sins of the world is accomplished when we obey; in this manner the love of God is "perfected".

Conclusion

I have shown how much God loves us; now I want to discuss our love for God. Why do you love God? I love God because He first love me: (1 John 4:19) "*We love him, because he first loved us.*" I trust this is the reason that you love God also. It is from God that we learn how to love. Can you imagine how wonderful this world would be if everyone loved as God loves? I doubt that this will ever come to pass on this earth; but to give

I close this booklet with a question; "Does God love you"? Whether you are aware of it or not I will state that God does love you the same as He loves everyone. Won't you accept His extended love by obeying the commands of the gospel? By doing this the love of God is perfected.

If you have questions or comments

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Notes

