

Introduction: People always have a distorted view of love. A current distortion is that if parents and adults love children, then they must let children choose to do what they feel is best for them so they can become their 'best selves'. But, true love for children is to take care to protect them from making mistakes, and even possibly being trapped by predators. All people, and especially young people, need to understand that we can all be our own worst enemies. *** However, this is a difficult truth for many people. They do not feel like this is love, especially in a world that is increasingly decadent and selfish! Therefore, correcting love needs to be delivered by someone who can identify with the person needing correcting. *** This is what the incarnation, God taking on human flesh and blood two thousand years ago, is all about. What we now call Christmas, is in reality the Son of God becoming like us in every way; but, still being fully God. *** This is incomprehensible, beyond all human understanding: THE infinite, all-powerful, perfect and righteous God, allowed Himself to be conceived through the Holy Spirit in a young virgin named Mary. He was born like every human being. He grew up into a man like every boy. Then, He began to reveal Himself to His people at the age priests began their ministry before God: thirty years old (Numbers 4:1-4). His mission on this earth was to show and tell the Truth of God in LOVE (Ephesians 4:14-15) *** His LOVE is – hear me carefully: Life-giving, Life-changing and strong. This love is what is needed in parents and adults today, but is sadly lacking. Jesus ultimately proved His love in three one-time miracles, two done in one weekend, and the third less than two months later. He gave Himself up to die a cruel death on a cross, in our place, to pay the penalty for our sins; He rose to life on the third day to make new life possible for all people; then, He ascended to the Throne in heaven to give the Holy Spirit to whomever receives the grace to trust and obey Him. *** Let's now examine the apostle John's testimony on what God's LOVE is, how He gave it to His people, and how His LOVE can transform people, become complete in them, and take away the fear of judgment. We will also consider what David said about how the God who hears every prayer can cover over the transgressions of people, giving them an awe-inspiring salvation.

I. God is love, giving His love to those born of Him through His Son who was sent as the means of forgiveness, so His children ought to love one another by remaining in Him so others may see His love in them. (1 John 4:7-20)

A. God is love and gives His love to those born of Him through His Son, whom He sent in love, to be the means of the forgiveness of their sins. (Verses 7-10)

1. Beloved! Let us love one another, for love is from God, and everyone loving, from God has been born, and is knowing God. (Verse 7)

God's work: John addresses believers as beloved, exhorting them to love each other. They can do this because love is from God and all who love have been born (passive, meaning God acted!) from God.

2. Anyone not loving, (is) not knowing God, because God is being love. (Verse 8)

God's love: The essence of God is His strong giving love! Those born of Him know Him through the love He has given them, and His love is so good, they want to pass it on to others.

3. This is the love of God manifested (made visibly known) in us: God sent His only Son into the world that we may live through Him. (Verse 9)

God's plan: Jesus' mission was that everyone, even us, might live through Him. So, it is not about us or our efforts. It was not obvious to everyone that Jesus was visibly God's love, another passive verb.

4. In this is being love: not that we, ourselves loved God; but that He, Himself loved us and sent His Son (as) the means of forgiveness for our sins. (Verse 10)

Atonement: Only John uses the word translated 'propitiation'. In the Torah the word is 'atonement', featured in the most important fall Feast of Atonement (Leviticus 23:26-32).

When Jesus died on the Cross, He made atonement of sins possible for all people, so the Cross is God's Christmas Tree!

Application: We must all thank Christ for all He has done, is doing and will do to cover over our sins and give us new life because of His LOVE for us – supremely demonstrated on the Cross!

B. Because God loves us, we ought to love one another; and, if we remain in God, those not yet knowing Him, may see the Savior's love in us. (Verses 11-14)

1. Beloved! If God loved us in this way, (then) we also are obligated to love one another. (Verse 11)

If-then: Logically, God has loved us sacrificially, so we can and must love 'one another' – a word that runs through the letters to the churches

Because of Jesus' sacrificial love, we can love

2. No one has ever closely observed God (but) if we may love one another, (then) God is abiding in us, and His love in us is being perfected. (Verse 12)

People see God's love in our love: No one with a dead spirit can see God. But, when people see God's love being perfected in His people sacrificially loving each other because of Jesus, they might see God.

Because of Jesus' sacrificial love, we can love

3. In this we are knowing that we are dwelling in Him and He in us because from His Spirit He has given to us. (Verse 13)

Bottom line: The obedience of loving one another as Jesus loved us (John 13:34-35) is impossible in people who have not been born of the Spirit.

4. We ourselves had seen and are testifying that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. (Verse 14)

Salvation: The very Name of Jesus, Yeshua, means salvation!

With this statement, John sums up his testimony of Jesus being the savior of His Church!

Because of Jesus' sacrificial love, we can love

II. Those remaining in God have His love completed in them and do not fear His judgment, but must not hate; in stillness God's people thank Him for covering their transgressions, and trust in His awe-inspiring salvation.

(1 John 4:15-20; Psalm 65:1-5)

A. If we remain in God who is love, His love will be completed in us so we do not fear the judgment – but do not hate.

(1 John 4:15-20)

1. If anyone may confess that Jesus is the Son of God, (then) God is dwelling in him and he in God. (Verse 15)

God IN us: This is much more than with us God – Im-manu-el. This is Bu-manu-el – in us God.

The greatest gift God gives to people is to dwell or live in them by the Holy Spirit!

2. And we ourselves had known and believed the love God is having in us, God is being love; and, the person dwelling in love is dwelling in God AND God is dwelling in him. (Verse 16)

Joined in love: John always takes care to say things both ways if both are true of God.

In the middle of this he restates God is love; and, those who have continued to know and believe this are joined to God.

3. In this had been completed love among us in order that we may be having boldness in the judgment day, because as this one (God's only Son) so also we ourselves are being in this world. (Verse 17)

God's Word completed: Children of God in Jesus may have confidence in the final judgment when they know God's Word is being perfected (obedience to it being made complete through faith) and they are being as Jesus was in the world.

Application: We must have assurance of salvation IN Jesus through the Holy Spirit to receive confidence and courage to live in the world as Jesus lived: disturbing the 'comfortable' AND comforting the 'disturbed'

4. Fear is not being in love, but complete love casts out fear because fear is having (to do with) punishment; anyone fearing has not been made complete in love. (Verse 18)

Love over fear: God's love is greater than human fear (Psalm 56:10-11; 118:5-11; Hebrews 13:1-6).

5. We love because He first loved us. (Verse 19)

Seven simple words: If we are living in God, knowing His love is being completed in us, these seven words, simple enough for a child to hear and know, will remind us we can love difficult people through Jesus who gave His life for us!

Because of Jesus' sacrificial love, we can love

6. If anyone may say: I am loving God and he is hating his brother, he is being a liar, because not loving his brother he has seen, the God he has not seen he is not being able to love. (Verse 20)

Closing warning: How we relate to people springs from how we relate to God. John closes with a strong warning: anyone who hates a close relative is lying if he or she claims to love God!

Application: We must commit to go deeper into God through His Word and prayer led by His Spirit so we will encourage and exhort 'one another' in the LOVE of God IN Jesus to genuinely love one another.

B. We must be still before God, thanking Him for hearing prayer and covering the disobedience of His chosen ones who trust in His awe-inspiring salvation. (Psalm 65:1-5)

1. { to the chief musician, psalm to David, song } To Thee still (silent) praise, God in Zion / and to Thee will be performed vows. (Verse 1)

Stillness: David's key thought is silent stillness offered to God as praise is the same as offering a sacrificial vow to God.

In silence, after noise, we can hear God's voice (1 Kings 19:8-13).

2. One hearing prayer / to Thee all flesh will come. (Verse 2)

Grateful praise: Because God hears prayer and receives all who come to him in contrition and repentance, spoken and sung grateful praise is an appropriate offering to Him.

3. Words of iniquity prevailing against me / our transgressions Thou will cover over (Thyself). (Verse 3)

Forgiven: It more likely David is confessing to the thought of his own wrong words overwhelming him, as well as his and the people's transgressions. The good news is David fully trusts God will cover over (atone – kippur) all of it!

4. Blessed (the one) Thou will choose and bring near / he will dwell in Thy courts // We will be satisfied in the goodness of Thy house / Thy holy Temple. (Verse 4)

Chosen: Now Jesus has come the first time, all who are IN Him by faith are chosen to dwell in the presence of God in His new Temple – His Church (Ephesians 2:11-22).

5. (With) what is awe-inspiring, in righteousness Thou will answer us, God of our salvation / (Thou are) the trust of all the ends of the earth and the farthest seas. (Verse 5)

Trust awe-inspiring Savior-God: The God who inspires awe in all who know Him and His powerful LOVE, can be trusted to answer His people with the salvation of covering over their transgressions.

God covers the transgressions of all who pray in faith

Application: In light of the introduction to David's song we must resolve to take time every day to be quiet to hear God's still, small voice; pray in the faith of His goodness; and, receive His forgiveness: even for what we hate most about ourselves.

Conclusion: God is love, giving His love to those born of Him through His Son who was sent as the means of forgiveness.

Therefore, His children ought to love one another by remaining in Him so others may see His love in them.

Those remaining in God have His love completed in them and do not fear His judgment, but must not hate.

It is in stillness God's people thank Him for covering their transgressions, and trust in His awe-inspiring salvation.

Because of Jesus' sacrificial love, we can love