

## **God's Love Is Unconditional**

This falsehood is closely related to the "once saved always saved" lie and has also done great harm to the church. Once again, this lie would have no foothold in the church if God's people really knew Jesus Christ and the truth of His Word. Nowhere in the Bible does it say God's love is unconditional. In fact, from Genesis to Revelation, both the Old and New Testaments clearly state that God's love is conditional. The Bible emphatically says of God: "You love those who love You and obey You (Daniel 9:4)." In the Old Testament, God promised His people a long life and fruitfulness if they loved and obeyed Him; otherwise His wrath would burn against them and He would wipe them off the face of the earth (Deuteronomy 6:1-15). God also warned His people, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot out of My Book (Exodus 32:33)." In the New Testament, God also promised His people lovingkindness and eternal life if they continued to be faithful to Him; otherwise He would reject them, cut them off and erase their names from His Book of Life (Romans 11:22; Revelation 3:5, 16).

## **Above All God is Holy**

In order to understand the conditional nature of God's love, we must understand the very nature of God Himself and the reason for Christ's Atonement. Above all, God is holy. God Himself says, "I the Lord your God am holy (Leviticus 19:2)." A study of the Bible confirms that "holy" is the primary word which the Scriptures use to describe the Person of God. The Bible says, "There is no one holy like the Lord (1 Samuel 2:2)." In fact, the Bible uses "holy" and its related words holiness and sanctification more than one thousand times to describe the nature of God. The Hebrew and Greek words for "holy" in the Old and New Testaments mean separate and pure. Our triune God is holy - completely pure and void of evil. "God is Light and in Him there is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5). God the Father is holy, God the Son is holy, and God the Spirit is holy.

## **God Hates Sin**

Because God is holy, His love is a holy love; His justice is a holy justice; and His anger is a holy wrath. Because God is holy and pure, He hates the evil of sin (Psalm 5:5; 45:7; Proverbs 6:16-18; 8:13; Hebrews 1:9). The Bible says, "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all godlessness and wickedness of men (Romans 1:18)." The Bible says everyone who does evil hates God and is separated from God (John 3:20; Isaiah 59:2). "The face of

the Lord is against those who do evil (1 Peter 3:12).” The Bible defines sin as unbelief (Romans 14:23), unrighteousness (1 John 5:17), disobedience (Hebrews 3:18-19; 4:6) and lawlessness toward God (1 John 3:4). In essence, sin is rebellion against God’s righteousness and sovereignty. The Bible says everyone has sinned against God. “There is none righteous, not even one... for all of have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:10, 23).” Sin is the rejection of God’s love. Sin is the rejection of God’s Person. That is why sin is so evil and deserves eternal separation from God in hell.

### **The Soul that Sins Will Die**

The Bible says we have all sinned against God because we were born sinners (Psalm 51:5). All of us inherited a sinful spiritual nature from the first man, Adam, who disobeyed God (Romans 5:19). Consequently, the Bible says men’s hearts are desperately sinful and beyond cure (Jeremiah 17:9) and that men are by nature children of wrath, which means they deserve the wrath of God for their sins (Ephesians 2:3). The Bible says that the outcome or the sentence for our sins is physical and spiritual death (Romans 6:23). “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way *death came to all men because all sinned* (Romans 5:12).” The Bible declares this to be a universal spiritual law that no man can escape: “The soul who sins will die (Ezekiel 18:4)” and “man is destined to die once and after that to face the judgment (Hebrews 9:27).”

Therefore, all of us were separated from God because of our sinful nature and were destined to face God’s judgment and wrath and certain doom. But God in His great love sent His Son who offered to die in our place so that we might live through Him. “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16; see also 1 John 4:9).” Only the death of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who was perfectly sinless (Hebrews 4:15; 7:26), could save us from God’s wrath. The Bible says, “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through Him (Romans 5:8-9)!” When Jesus Christ died on the cross for us, God in His mercy performed a divine heart transplant and replaced our sinful heart with His Son’s divine heart (Romans 6:6-8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Colossians 2:11; 3:3-4). Therefore, at Christ’s expense, the free gift of eternal life is now available to all who receive Him into their hearts as their Lord and Savior (John 1:12; Romans 6:23; 10:9).

### **The Whole Gospel Includes Both the Mercy and Wrath of God**

But Christ's blood cries out for our repentance. God gave His only Son so that we would have a chance to repent and be saved from eternal damnation. Jesus said, "If you do not repent, you will perish in your sins (Luke 13:3). If you do not repent from your sins and receive God's mercy available to you through His Son's death, you will face God's wrath. The Bible says, "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient (Ephesians 5:6)." But God's love is longsuffering and He desires that no one would perish (2 Peter 3:9). The Bible says that God's lovingkindness is intended to lead us to repentance (Romans 2:4). But if we do not repent, God's love is also a jealous love. "For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God (Deuteronomy 4:24; see also 1 Corinthians 10:22; James 4:5)." The Bible says if you reject God to serve other gods, He will not forgive you of your sins because He is a holy God and a jealous God (Joshua 24:16-19). Thus the whole gospel includes both the kindness and severity of God (Romans 11:22).

### **If We Reject God's Mercy, We Will Face His Wrath**

If we reject God's mercy, we will face His wrath. Therefore, we cannot preach on the love of God to the exclusion of preaching on the wrath of God. If we do so, we are accountable to God for not preaching the whole gospel. The gospel has not changed God's hatred of sin but the gospel has made it possible for the sinner to now be reconciled to God. The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ reveals both the mercy of God and the wrath of God – mercy to those who submit to Christ's authority and wrath to those who rebel against Christ's authority. Jesus said if we love Him, we must obey Him. "Whoever obeys My commands is the one who loves Me (John 14:21)." The Bible says if we do not obey Jesus, we will face God's wrath. "He who does not obey the Son will not see life, *but the wrath of God abides on him* (John 3:36)." The Bible also says, "If we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins but a terrifying expectation of judgment (Hebrews 10:26-27)." Jesus loves sinners and died for sinners but He is also going to judge sinners. Therefore, if you reject Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior now, you must face Him later as your Judge. "Because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when His righteous judgment will be revealed (Romans 2:5)."

The myth that God's love is unconditional has become widely accepted in the church today. Once again, the primary reason this lie has gained such a foothold in the church is because most Christians do not experience the

overcoming, sanctified Christian life, which is the fruit of believing and acting on the entirety of Christ's completed work on the cross. Since most Christians' normal experience is to be defeated by sin and then seek God's forgiveness, they do not want to hear Biblical teaching on the judgment of God that specifically pertains to them as Christians. In other words, they only want to hear messages on the mercy of God instead of the severity of God. Consequently, "there is no fear of God before their eyes (Psalm 36:1)." Yet Jesus said, "I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that they have no more that they can do. But I will warn you who to fear: Fear the One who after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him (Luke 12:4-5)!" Because many Christians do not fear God, they do not even try to stop sinning. The Bible says, "The fear of God is to hate evil (Proverbs 8:13)." If God's people feared Him, God would bring them into His deliverance from sin and death. "The eye of the Lord is on those that fear Him, on those who hope for His lovingkindness, to deliver their soul from death (Psalm 33:18)."

If God's people feared Him, He would divinely reveal the full meaning of the power of Christ's Atonement to them: when Christ died, He included us in His death so that He might sovereignly live in us. This is both the promise and fulfillment of the New and Eternal Covenant (Hebrews 13:20). The Bible says, "The secret of the Lord is for those who fear Him; and He will make His Covenant known to them (Psalm 25:14)." What Adam lost for us by his disobedience, Christ regained for us by His obedience to the point of death. "For if, through the death of the one man (*Adam*), death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ (Romans 5:17)."

### **Repentance and the Wrath of God Are No Longer Preached**

Every Sunday, many pastors reassure their flocks that God loves them, forgives them and is pleased with them. But this is only true **if** God's people repent from practicing sin. Yet God's command for His people to *repent* from practicing sin and *believe* in Christ's completed work on the cross is hardly ever heard from the pulpit. If God's love were unconditional, then all those who are rebellious and unrepentant would go to heaven because God would have no requirement of repentance necessary for anyone to enter His kingdom. However, this is clearly not Biblical. John the Baptist preached, "*Repent* for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matthew 3:2)." And Jesus preached, "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. *Repent*

and believe in the gospel (Mark 1:15).” The lie that God’s love is unconditional has spawned a dozen other lies. Perhaps the most poisonous lie that has grown out of this one is the falsehood that all of mankind will be eventually saved. Another gross lie that stems from the lie that God’s love is unconditional is that sinners will face annihilation when they die and not eternal punishment.

Still another deadly lie that has sprung up from the false belief that God’s love is unconditional is that we must never offend others with the gospel because that would not be love. This Satanic lie has caused many of God’s people to stop witnessing to the lost with a clear and bold gospel. Instead, many Christians have adopted a passive form of witnessing in which they wait for sinners to approach them and ask what makes their life different. And if any sinners ever do eventually ask you about your life, you then invite them to attend church instead of offending them by sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. This type of passive or lukewarm “witnessing” is no witnessing at all! It only cowardly tries to avoid the offense of the cross and gives the false impression to all that hear it that becoming a Christian means you merely start going to church. If everyone practiced this type of secular witnessing, at least 99% of those who are lost would never hear the gospel of Christ before they go to hell. Another devilish lie that has sprung up from the lie that God’s love is unconditional is that we should not confront people in church who practice sin, otherwise they might be offended. This deception has even led many churches to adopt the informal “fellowship” greeting that “we accept you into our church family just as you are.” The truth is God never accepts anyone in His family who does not truly sincerely repent from sin and turn to Him.

### **A Little Leaven Leavens the Whole Church**

When Christians turn away from God and the truth of His Word, they become unrighteous. As a result of the lie that God’s love is unconditional and the refusal to deal with sin in the church, many Christians are now practicing sin and there is virtually no difference between churchgoers’ behavior and those of unbelievers outside the church. In fact, hypocrisy and lawlessness have become so common in the church that many ministers have now invented a variety of bizarre rationalizations to explain it away such as “All of us are hypocrites but only those of us in church will admit it” and “None of us are perfect, we’re just all in process” and “We’re all sinners just like everyone else, only forgiven.” These are the thoughts of a church defeated by sin and Satan. The Bible clearly teaches us to lovingly but firmly

confront fellow Christians who are practicing sin (Matthew 18:15-17; Galatians 6:1). The Bible also clearly states that because a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough, we should not fellowship with any Christian who does not repent and continues to practice sin (1 Corinthians 5:6-13). Tragically, the leaven has already leavened the church and the resulting apostasy is nearly ripe for God's judgment.

Today is still the great day of God's amnesty although the fading hours of His mercy are soon coming to an end. If you are a rebel, God offers to forgive you and restore you if you will submit to His Son's authority. "For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:9)." You can repent and choose His blood for the forgiveness of your sins today or you can face His fire in the coming Day of Judgment. It is your choice: we beg you on behalf of Christ and His cross – be reconciled to God!

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