

Loved and Loving Johns Epistles Lesson 8 3Q 2009

Loving Brothers and Sisters

SABBATH

Read the story beginning with the first paragraph, "A pastor was..." - thoughts?

What do you think about the pastor's advice? What was the pastor trying to do? What was his motive? Do you agree with his motive?

What if the woman would have, after acting loving, divorced her husband and then told people her pastor told her to do this? Did the pastor take a risk? If things had gone differently, by the freewill choices of the woman, could the pastor's reputation have been hurt?

Does God ever do this? Examples?

- Moses when God said He was going to wipe out the people
- Abraham instructed to sacrifice his son
- 10 plagues of Egypt
- Genesis 3 the curse of the ground
- Threats and thundering in the Old Testament

SUNDAY

Read last paragraph "First John..." thoughts? Can someone explain the meaning of this paragraph?

Do we agree that the cross of Christ is central to God's plan of salvation and resolving the problem of sin in the universe? Does Satan know this? Do you think Satan has spent any energy focusing on the cross of Christ, in order to twist and distort the true significance?

How do you hear atoning sacrifice? What is the Biblical view of this idea? How has Satan twisted it? In other words, what is the pagan view of atonement?

- I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one... “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ²³ I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. John 17:11,21-23
- And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. Ephesians 1:9,10

What is the Biblical definition of atonement? At-one-ment, being at one, being unified, reconciled, in harmony, did Jesus come to achieve this? Absolutely!

How has this idea been corrupted? Any idea that causes disparity, divergence, splitting amongst the Godhead so that one member of the Godhead has to do something to another member of the Godhead to change that member is a lie, perversion and distortion of the truth!

From a 1999 article published in Christianity Today entitled “A call for Evangelical Unity”

Jesus paid our penalty in our place on his cross, satisfying the retributive demands of divine justice by shedding his blood in sacrifice and so making possible justification for all who trust in him (Rom. 3:25-26). The Bible describes this mighty substitutionary transaction as the achieving of ransom, reconciliation, redemption, propitiation, and conquest of evil powers (Matt. 20:28; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; Rom. 3:23-25; John 12:31; Col. 2:15). It secures for us a restored relationship with God that brings pardon and peace, acceptance and access, and adoption into God's family (Col. 1:20, 2:13-14; Rom. 5:1-2; Gal. 4:4-7; 1 Pet. 3:18).

- We affirm that the atonement of Christ by which, in his obedience, he offered a perfect sacrifice, propitiating the Father by paying for our sins and satisfying divine justice on our behalf according to God's eternal plan, is an essential element of the Gospel.

We deny that any view of the Atonement that rejects the substitutionary satisfaction of divine justice, accomplished vicariously for believers, is compatible with the teaching of the Gospel.

Thoughts? Do you see any error that has crept into the thinking of Christianity?

Notice the idea that Christ is propitiating the Father – that Christ had to die to do something to the Father, that Christ's death somehow changes the Father, that the Father needed Christ's blood, death, sacrifice in order for the Father to be satisfied in some way.

This idea is pagan and comes from Satan's view of God who will not sacrifice self but requires some sacrifice to meet His demands. What does Scripture say?

- What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Romans 8:31-34
- God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 2Cor 5:19 NASB95
- Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. John 14:9
- In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice.** When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor. God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner. {DA 761.4}

This idea that Jesus was doing something to propitiate the Father is part of Satan's attempt to misrepresent the truth of what God accomplished at the cross.

Our text for today's lesson 1John 4:10

- This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. NIV
- Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. KJV

What does this mean? How do you hear it?

According to the *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains* the Greek translated atoning sacrifice or propitiation is:

ἵλασμός (*hilasmos*), οὐ (*ou*), ὁ (*ho*): n.masc.; = Str 2434; TDNT 3.301—LN 40.12 **means of forgiveness**, an atoning sacrifice (NRSV, NIV, REB), expiation (RSV, NAB, NJB), propitiation (KJV, NKJV, ASV, NASB), the remedy for defilement (NEB), (1Jn 2:2; 4:10+) note: expiation focuses on the means for the forgiveness of the sin, propitiation would focus on God's view of satisfaction or favorable disposing. There is much debate which English word is the better rendering.¹

n. noun, or nouns

masc. masculine

Str *Strong's Lexicon*

TDNT Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*

LN *Louw-Nida Greek-English Lexicon*

NRSV New Revised Standard Version

NIV New International Version

REB Revised English Bible

RSV Revised Standard Version

NAB New American Bible

NJB New Jerusalem Bible

KJV King James Version

NKJV New King James Version

ASV American Standard Version (1901)

NASB New American Standard Bible

NEB New English Bible

+ I have cited every reference in regard to this lexeme discussed under this definition.

¹Swanson, James: *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Greek (New Testament)*. electronic ed. Oak Harbor : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, S. DBLG 2662

Thoughts? When we bring the rest of the Bible to bear on the subject which rendering do you think is most accurate? My paraphrase of 1John 4:10:

This is what love is: not that we have loved God or done something to get him to love us, but he loved us so much he sent his Son to become the remedy and cure for the infection of sin and selfishness, so that through him we might be restored into perfect unity with God.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph “The negative example...” – thoughts? Beautiful description of love as self-sacrifice for others. What do you think about love means to forgive and forget? Does this mean amnesia, memory erasure or something else? In the new heaven and earth will we actually have no memory of events that transpired here on earth?

- David, Uriah, Bathsheba, Solomon – will they know each other?
- Woman who anointed Jesus feet – those who are forgiving much love much – will we remember what we have been forgiven for?
- Revelation the redeemed sing a song of their experience
- Do we retain our own identity, individuality in heaven? What makes us who we are? Is it not our memories? What happens to someone when memory is erased? Do you know someone with Alzheimer’s as memories are erased what happens to the person? Will God erase memories?

Then what does it mean to forgive and forget? And when is it safe to do so?

Read second paragraph “But love is...” thoughts? What do you think about the example given? What is the problem with the example? They have taken one of love’s counterfeit’s and used it as an example. Love is never without the focus on another

person, love is never meaningless, love is never capricious or presumptuous, thus the example given is empty and actually introduces a false idea into our minds.

What might have motivated this example being placed in the lesson? Fear of the Moral Influence Theory, which states Jesus died merely as a demonstration of God's love and not as a payment for our legal debt. The Moral Influence Theory states that Christ's death was necessary to reveal God's character of love in order to influence sinners to be moral or to turn away from sin and live moral lives. It might be the lesson is trying to undercut this theory by this statement.

What is a better way to demonstrate the weakness of the Moral Influence Theory?

If you are terminal with a condition you have no power to cure and there is a person who has what he says is a remedy, but that person is Adolf Hitler and you are Jewish would you take it? Why not? Because you don't trust him, does trust in the one providing the remedy need to be established? Yes, so Christ did come to demonstrate the truth about God to restore trust.

But what if you have a physician father who you trust but he has no remedy for your condition will your trust get you well? The Moral Influence Theory states Christ only had to restore trust, and therefore it falls short in its attempt to explain all that Christ accomplished to save us.

But the MIT is a reaction against the pagan penal substitution theory of Christ appeasing the wrath of His Father or propitiating Him. The MIT rejects these ideas and is right to do so, it just hasn't taken us the next step in understanding what else was needed besides the restoration of trust.

Are these two (MIT and Penal Substitution) the only two ways to understand what Christ accomplished? Christ had to reveal

truth to restore trust, but more was needed, Christ came to remedy sin, to cure the condition.

Read last paragraph, “However, the statement...” What do you think they are trying to say in this paragraph? Are they saying that those who love but don’t keep the commandments are not born of God and don’t know God? Can someone genuinely love another on their own, without the Holy Spirit working in them?

What do you think the passage means?

TUESDAY

Read 1John 3:19-22

This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence ²⁰ whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

²¹ Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God ²² and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.

Read first paragraph “What Christian at...” thoughts?

From where does condemnation arise? Does condemnation come from God? When Adam sinned, why did he run? Was he afraid? Why was he afraid? Who told him he was naked, where did the awareness arise? Was God condemning Adam?

Condemnation, shame, guilt are the natural way our minds respond to living outside of the law of love. Just as an engine will grind, and smoke and eventually freeze up without lubricant so our minds naturally malfunction experiencing condemnation, shame, guilt and eventually death when we operate outside of God’s law of love.

If you assessed an engine that was running without oil and heard it squealing, grinding and preparing to seize up, and you made a judgment about the problem, diagnosed the issue and said, “This engine, if something isn’t done, is going to die, going to seize up, going to break down.” Is your conclusion causing the engine to die? Is your conclusion a “condemnation” of the engine in its current condition? Is the problem that the engine needs to get a substitute engine for you to look at so that you will then say the malfunctioning engine is running perfectly? What is the problem? What is the solution? How does this apply to our situation?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph “John is not...” thoughts? Does this remind you of Jesus’ words? Why is it true that if we hate in our hearts we are murderers? What happens to the character, the brain, the neural pathways if we hate in our hearts? Will our character be different from a murderer if we hate in our heart but never carry it out?

Read third paragraph “However, John is opposed...” thoughts?

What does love in action look like?

The obvious:

- Ministering to those with sickness
- Helping people where famine arises
- Rescuing people from persecution, torture, genocide
- Protecting people from exploitation and abuse
- Using one’s resources to promote the welfare of others
- Speaking kind and encouraging words
- Putting self in harms way to rescue others

The less obvious:

- Your son has drug problems and isn't paying his utility bills and his electricity is going to be turned off
- Your son is in prison for the 6th time for drugs, stealing, fraud, weapons, each time in prior incarcerations you have used your money on lawyers to get him out and each time he has gone back to destructive living. What does love do?
- An alcoholic, living on the street, asks you for money for food
- A family member, who has a disability, asks you to help them with activities they could do for themselves, but it would be significantly more difficult for them to do the activity than prior to the disability.
- Someone has cheated you, lied about you, stolen from you, abused you in some way – how do you treat them?
- “If a man will not work, he shall not eat.” 2Thes 3:10

THURSDAY

The first sentence of the lesson states, “Both passages that we have studied this week end with a reference to the commandments.” And then the lesson asks, “What do the passages teach about the commandments apart from that they should be kept?”

Thoughts? Do the passages talk about the commandments?
Read 1John 3:21-24

Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God ²² and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. ²³ And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. ²⁴ Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother. 1John 4:21

Do these passages speak about the commandments? Can love be commanded? Can you say to someone I command you to love me and legitimately expect that to work?

Can what God wants from us be commanded from us? If so why didn't God, when Lucifer started his rebellion, just simply command obedience and be done with it?

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power. {DA 759.1}

What happens if we change the word commandment to command, which is how the NIV translates it, does that change how you hear it?

What if we change command to directive, or direction, or prescription?

1 John 3:21 Therefore my friends, if our hearts and minds have been healed and no longer condemn us, we are no longer afraid of God 22 and will follow his prescription and do the things that please him. 23 And this is his prescription: to value, cherish and trust in his Son, Jesus Christ, and to be like him loving one another as he has prescribed. 24 Those who take his prescription live in oneness with him and his character of love and he is in unity with them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: His Spirit dwells in us and heals us to be like him.

God's prescription is this: Internalize God's love which transforms the entire being so we love both God and man. So whoever loves God will also love others. 1John 4:21 (Jennings paraphrase)

Thoughts?

Read second paragraph "John says that..." thoughts?

Do we work to keep the commandments so that God will hear our prayers?

FRIDAY

Read first two paragraphs – thoughts?

Question 3 read and discuss