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## The Three-Fold Love of God

Part 1 - God's Love for Us

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Until Christ's return, Christian believers only know in part. What we see, we see only dimly compared to what we will see and know at the return of Jesus Christ.

I Corinthians 13:12,13

For now we see through a glass darkly; but then [at Christ's return] face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

And now abideth faith [*pistis*, believing], hope and charity [*agape*, the love of God in the renewed mind in manifestation], these three; but the greatest of these *is* charity [*agape*].

Even though we do not yet see face-to-face, until Christ's return believing, hope, and the love of God abide wherever the Word of God lives in the hearts of God's people. And God's Word says the greatest of these three is the love of God in the renewed mind in manifestation.

As indispensable as believing is, with over nine hundred promises available in God's Word to claim; as indispensable as the hope is, with our anticipation of Christ's return being the anchor to our souls against any tempest; still, the Word of God declares that the greatest of these is the love of God.

The subject of the love of God is vast in the Word of God. This series of three articles will hardly be able to begin to scratch the surface of its vastness and its depth. The purpose of

these articles is to begin to outline what God's Word shows to be three basic aspects of the love of God.

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This series will not deal with what the world calls "love," which is basically either *eros*, which is physical love, or *phileo*, which is conditional love. It is interesting to note along these lines that the Greek word *agape*, and its verb form *agapeo*, do not occur in any ancient Greek writings outside of the Greek New Testament.

The study of the love of God, *agape* in its usage of that which originates with God, deals with a new kind of love. It is the love that the Father has for the world, shown by giving His only-begotten Son. It is the love that Jesus Christ lived to the uttermost to redeem mankind. It is the love that Christian believers have born within and are commanded to manifest via the renewed mind.

When this love of God is put on in our hearts and lives to the end that we love one another, something that is rare, precious, and seldom seen in this tired and sin-stained world is shed abroad.

John 13:33-35

Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go ye cannot come; so now I say to you.

A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love [*agapeo*] one another; as I have loved [*agapeo*] you, that ye love [*agapeo*] one another.

By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love [*agape*] one to another.

Jesus did not say that his disciples would be known by their great knowledge, their immense wealth or their great good looks, but by their love toward one another.

This love of God should be living and real among those who name the name of Christ. When it is, the contrast of its genuine and unique greatness with the second-class substitutes offered by the world becomes hard to miss.

***The first and foundational aspect of the three-fold love of God is that it is love from God. It is God who is the prime mover. It is God who first loved***

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The first and foundational aspect of the three-fold love of God is that it is love that is from God. It is God who is the prime mover. It is God who first loved.

John 3:16  
For God so loved [*agapeo*] the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

I John 4:10  
Herein is love [*agape*], not that we loved [*agapeo*] God, but that he loved [*agapeo*] us, and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

The Word of God does not indicate that mankind loved God so much and desired truth so sincerely, that God decided to send us a savior. It shows that God acted in Christ to accomplish for mankind what mankind could never have accomplished for itself, and for no other reason than that He so loved.

Now by His great love all men have life available – everlasting life!

Romans 5:6-10

For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

But God commendeth His love [*agape*] toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved [made

whole] by His life.

To come face to face in the Word of God with the Lord Jesus Christ, is to come face to face with the love of God. While we were yet sinners, enemies of God, Christ died for us. This is the love God Himself commended toward us. This truly is a new kind of love.

Isaiah 53:4-6

Surely he [Jesus Christ] hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *He was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

When Christ hung dying on the cross at Calvary, he was not dying for his own sins or transgressions. He, alone among all men who have ever lived, was without sin. He, alone among all men who have ever lived, carried out God's will perfectly.

Jesus Christ did not endure the endless hours of the most hideous and agonizing torture that any human being has ever faced – after which he was no longer even recognizable as a human being – because of his own sins or shortcomings. He was not dragged to Golgotha, the place of the skull, and nailed to a stake because he was at enmity with God. He was executed and murdered, dying a criminal's death, because we were.

He died for you and for me – for our griefs, for our sorrows, for our transgressions, for our iniquities, for our lack of peace, for our sicknesses. Such love is fathomless. And look at where it is that this love has raised us:

Ephesians 2:4-6

But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love [*agape*] wherewith He loved [*agapeo*] us,

Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us [made us alive] together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved);

And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus.

Love, so rich in mercy that it would by grace – divine favor without any regard to merit whatsoever – bestow on any and all who will simply believe, the salvation, the wholeness, the very life of the resurrected, ascended, and seated Christ – even seating us in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus – such love defies language to describe.

***The love of Christ is so great, so wonderful, so rich, it goes beyond the ability of the mind to grasp even as it stretches language to the limit to describe.***

Ephesians 3:17-19

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith [believing]; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love [*agape*],

May be able to comprehend with all saints what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

And to know [*ginosko*] the love [*agape*] of Christ, which passeth knowledge [*gnosis*], that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.

At the pinnacle of God's revelation in the book of Ephesians, the book that is the pinnacle of

the revelation given to the Church of the Body during the Administration of Grace, God's prayer is that we know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge.

The Greek word for

"know" in Verse 19 is *ginosko*, meaning to know by experience. The word for "knowledge" in the same verse is the noun form, *gnosis*, meaning experiential knowledge.

It is impossible, literally, to know something by experience that passes experiential knowledge. This brings up an interesting and important Biblical research key.

Whenever a word or words in the Word of God are not literally true, as in Ephesians 3:19, they always contain a figure of speech. This key never varies throughout the Word of God, and therefore is very important to accurate Biblical research.

The figure of speech in Verse 19 is Oxymoron, which rhetorically unites words whose literal meanings appear contradictory, in order to convey a deeper meaning.

The love of Christ is so great, so wonderful, so rich, it goes beyond the ability of the mind to

grasp even as it stretches language to the limit to describe.

Yet despite its vastness and depth, we who are born again of God's spirit – having confessed with our mouths the Lord Jesus, and believed in our hearts that God has raised him from the dead according to Romans 10:9,10 – we have Christ within, and thereby we can know by experience that very same love.

So are we filled with the fullness of God.

*When I survey the wondrous cross,  
On which the prince of glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride.*

*See from his head, his hands, his feet,  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down?*

*Did e're such love and sorrow meet,  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?*

*Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small,  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.*

The first aspect of the three-fold love of God is that it is love from God to man, seen nowhere as vividly as in the face of Jesus Christ.

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