

WHAT IS THE TRUTH ABOUT GOD?

12 Aug 2018 by Abri Brancken

INTRODUCTION

How many of you love going on holiday, being in nature or eating at a nice restaurant? We love all kinds of things. We even love doing some things that might not be good for us, e.g. smoking, drinking alcohol when you have high cholesterol, etc. How often have you heard someone say, "I know I should not do this, but I love it".

THE "TRENDING"

People have various ideas about what love is and when it comes to God, we project our ideas of love into our relationship, or lack of relationship, with God. People also have various ideas about what God's love is towards us as people.

We hear the word "trending" and "going viral" a lot. There are views concerning God that has gone "viral" and people build their lives upon it without doing the research to see whether it is true or not. There is a lot of "fake news" being promoted among believers that is not built upon Biblical truth. There are a number of ideas that are built upon humanism and false religions but sound Biblical. In today's "culture of tolerance," many have assumed God is just as tolerant and unbothered by sinful behavior as is politically correct at the moment. We've presented a picture of God as being full of grace, love and peace—and that's correct, but what about the other side of side of God? The scale is out of balance!

It is very important that we grow in our full understanding of God's character and nature. If we highlight certain parts of God too much we can fall into error. To have a balanced view of God's nature is vitally important. We need to look at God's character in totality as revealed from Genesis to Revelation.

OVER EMPHASIS ON LOVE

I do believe that today there is an over emphasis on the love of God at the cost of God's other attributes. When we speak about the love of God, we all have different opinions and understandings about what love is.

People think that because God loves them, they can do what they want. That love overrides God's justice and righteousness. This is a misconception. When we say that God is loving, people assume that at the end of the day, everything goes and there is no accountability.

The popular idea in the world and even in the church today is that God will never bring about difficulty in your life. That God will never punish, God will never cause disaster, because His is loving. We should not think that God is there simply to make us happy and wealthy and give us pleasure. This picture of God is simply not true. We have made love the overall message and that is creating confusion.

The popular message today is that God is love and it does not matter what you do, God loves you which makes everything all right. It has led to a sentimental view of God rather than a Scriptural view of God. People construct their own image of God, what they want God to be. Everyone has a different view of what love is and therefore people have their own view and image of God. We often focus on one aspect of God, namely that God is love.

MAKING AN IDOL OF GOD

Many people have a wrong picture of God. We must be careful not to worship an idea of God, that what we want Him to be. Idolatry is when you make up a god for yourself, ascribing attributes and character traits that you want him to be. Who God truly is, is not a guessing game. The Bible clearly shows us who God is.

THREE KINDS OF LOVE

There are different types of love and words for love in the Greek New Testament. Let's take a look at 3 words for love.

Eros love, Phileo love, Agape love

Eros love

Eros (pronounced AIR-ose) refers to a love of attraction. It refers to romantic love, a love of the heart, lust, etc. It is the physical, sensual intimacy between a husband and wife. It expresses sexual, romantic attraction. You fall into it and out of it. Eros is also the name of the mythological Greek god of love, sexual desire, physical attraction, and physical love. Cupid, with its love of attraction.

Phileo love

Love of affection, to be a friend. Two minds have something in common and love each other. It is voluntary, you choose it. You choose who are your close friends.

Agape love

This is a love of action. It is a selfless love. Doing something good to help others. It is voluntary that you choose to do. You can ignore the need, or you can choose to help.

Matthew 22:37

Jesus replied: "'Love (agapao) the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'

We are to love God with the selfless love.

THE BALANCE IS NECESSARY

We often quote John 3:16 when referring to God's attitude towards us, but we neglect John 3:36.

John 3:16

"For God so loved (*Agapao, a selfless self sacrificing love*) the world (*cosmos - arrangement*), that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

How will we have eternal life? By believing in His Son. What happens if we don't believe?

John 3:36

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

THE BIBLE SAYS MANY THINGS ABOUT GOD THAT DO NOT SEEM LOVING

The Bible says many things about God that does not seem loving to us. We hear a lot about the love of God but very little about the hatred of God, for example:

Matthew 10:28

" Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell."

Mark 16:16

" Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."

Acts 17:31

For (inasmuch as) he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed."

Romans 12:19

Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay,"[12:19 Deut. 32:35] says the Lord. (Romans 12:19)

God hates the ways of the wicked:

Proverbs 15:9

The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, But He loves one who pursues righteousness.

God hates the thoughts of the wicked:

Proverbs 15:26

The LORD detests (hates, despises) the thoughts of the wicked

God hates these 7 things:

Proverbs 6:16-19

There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him...

Noah's days

God regretted that He made man in Noah's days.

Those who pollute the earth morally, God removed them.

Parable of the weeds

Matt 13:30 – Let them grow together then when they are mature then the weeds will be judged.

First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn."

THE LOVE OF GOD WAS AN INTERNAL CONVERSATION

The focus of God's love was a conversation between Jews and early Christians. It was a topic for private conversation. Today we speak the love message to everyone, the world, and their understanding of love is not Biblical and therefore it even comes across as a licence to sin. This message of love was not the early church's message to the world. Paul and the apostles preached all over the place, but the book of Acts don't mention God's love as the central focus in Paul's messages to the unsaved. Only those who have been redeemed can understand the intensity of God's love.

WHAT DO WE MAKE WITH ALL OF THIS?

What do we make with this? Is God schizophrenic or moody? No. What binds these seemingly opposite character traits of God together? His righteousness (goodness). He always has a righteous reason for punishing and for blessing. The verses mentioned in the Bible about

God's hate and God's love is about equal and when the Bible speaks about God who hates, two thirds of it refers to wicked people.

Psalm 89:14, ASV

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of thy throne: Lovingkindness and truth go before thy face.

Psalm 89:14, KJV

Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.

Illustration:

If a judge knows that someone murdered someone you love and says that we must just love one another and there are no more consequences for evil, we will say "it is not justice." The same is true of God. He must punish evil. God's love is in no sense in conflict with His holiness, righteousness, justice, or even His wrath. All of God's attributes are in perfect harmony. Everything God does is loving, just as everything He does is just and right. The justice of God must be satisfied. God Himself had to intervene to satisfy His justice.

SIN IS NOT ABSTRACT

The Bible teaches that every person is guilty of crimes against God and deserves to be punished, but that message doesn't give non-believers a warm, fuzzy feeling. So, we attempt to soften the blow of this bad news with a cliché, "God hates the sin, but loves the sinner." That phrase is not in the Bible. Sin does not exist on its own. It has no moral quality apart from the person who commits it. God is not going to punish some abstract thing called sin. Sin is inseparably tied to a personal being with moral culpability, humans. The guilt falls on the person, which means the person is guilty and need to be punished. That's the bad news. The good news is that God does love His creation and He's done everything to keep them from getting what they deserve. "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," writes Paul (Romans 5:8). Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Then He willingly succumbed to crucifixion on our—sinners—behalf.

8 Whoever does not love (agapao, selfless love in action) does not know God, because God is love (agapao, selfless love in action). 9 This is how God's love (agapao, selfless love in action) was revealed among us: God sent His one and only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him.

Proverbs 9:10, ASV

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

CONCLUSION

When God saved you, He not only saved you from sin, but from His wrath. God is holy and the wrath of God is revealed against all unrighteousness. God can even demonstrate his love at the object of His wrath.

Heaven is heaven because God is there, but hell is not hell because God is not there. No, hell is hell because hell is the wrath of God. His perfect justice demonstrated towards mankind who rebel against Him. We must warn men that there is mercy towards us but it will not always be so. God cannot be loving and not move against wickedness? Can God be good and apathetic towards evil? No. Jesus' death satisfied the wrath and justice of God.