

The Problem with Evil and God's Plan to End It – Part I

Love And the Godhead

God is Love

1 John 4:16-19 KJV And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. **God is love** (a); and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God (b), and God in him. (17) Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: (c) because as he is, so are we in this world. (18) There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.(d) (19) We love him, because he first loved us. (e)

1 John 4:7-10 KJV Beloved, let us love one another: for **love is of God**; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. (8) He that loveth not knoweth not God; for **God is love**. (9) In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. (10) Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Romans 8:38-39 KJV For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, (39) Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us (f) from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ephesians 2:4-5 KJV But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, (5) Even when we were dead in sins, (g) hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

John 15:13 KJV Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Psalms 63:2-3 KJV To see (h) thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. (3) Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.

Love is Other-Centered

1 Corinthians 10:24 KJV Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth.
1 Corinthians 10:33 KJV Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

1 Corinthians 13:4-5 KJV Charity (i) suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, (5) Doth not behave itself unseemly, **seeketh not her own**, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

Philippians 2:4-5 KJV Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. (5) Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

Galatians 6:1-2 KJV Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; (j) considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. (k) (2) Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Galatians 5:13-14 KJV For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh,(l) but by love serve one another. (14) For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

(a) When we use the word love, we usually mean that we find some quality in the object of our love that we like, therefore we love it. We find it hard to love when we find in others things that disagree with us. But God's love is constant. It does not depend upon something in its object to draw it out of Him.

- Love is not something that God does, it is what He IS - God IS love.

(b) Anyone who has found this kind of love is from God.

(c) If God is love then even His final judgment is an act of love.

(d) God's desire is that we be not afraid!

(e) It is in SEEING His love that we can lose our fear and, instead, love to honor Him.

(f) Paul is convinced that no outside influence can dim our vision of God's love once we have seen it revealed in the character of Jesus.

(g) Not even sin will keep God from pursuing us to lift us up and teach us better things.

- Sin has made a change in us, and God's heart goes out to restore us to His original intention for us.

(h) To see and understand the goodness of God's plan for sinners on earth, allows us to see beyond the cares of this life and have peace in the midst of calamity.

- It is how we see things that determine how we think and feel and ultimately how we behave.

(i) **Agape** - love, that is, affection or benevolence
- *Strong's Greek Dictionary*

-- Benevolence

1. The disposition to do good; good will; kindness; charitableness; the love, of mankind, accompanied with a desire to promote their happiness.

---*Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary*

(j) **Meekness** - Softness of temper; mildness; gentleness; forbearance under injuries and provocations.
---*Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary*

Philippians 2:3 KJV Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves.

(k) Often even when trying to help others, our own self interest can be the motive.

(l) **Flesh**- Independent, self centered thinking

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1 John 3:14-20 KJV We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. (a) (17) But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? (18) My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. (19) And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. (20) For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

Matthew 22:35-40 KJV Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, (36) Master, which is the great commandment in the law? (37) Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. (b) (38) This is the first and great commandment. (39) And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (c) (40) On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Matthew 7:12 KJV Therefore all things whatsoever ye would (d) that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Ephesians 5:28-29 KJV So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. (29) **For no man ever yet hated his own flesh;** but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

Luke 6:28-33 KJV Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. (29) And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also. (30) Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. (31) And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. (32) For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. (33) **And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners (e) also do even the same.**

The God Head

Genesis 1:1 KJV In the beginning God (f) created the heaven and the earth.

Matthew 3:16-17 KJV And **Jesus**, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the **Spirit of God** descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: (17) And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is **my** beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

John 1:1-2 KJV In the beginning was the Word, and the **Word was with God**, and the Word was God. (2) **The same was in the beginning with God.**

John 1:14 KJV And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, **the glory** as of the only begotten **of the Father**;) (g) full of grace and truth.
John 1:18 KJV No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is **in the bosom** of the Father, (h) he hath declared him.

John 10:30 KJV I and my Father are one.

(a) The way of thinking that is other-centered (giving) is the way of life that is capable of continuing forever.
- The contrary self-centered (taking) view of life is destructive and could not stand the test of time.
- Love is circular in that what it gives it receives again from others. In a world of perfect love all needs are met with joy and delightful surprise. But in a world of selfish pursuit, the direction is straight, soon leaving the circle of warmth. It grows cold and lonely--always grasping, only content when getting its way.

(b) This love we cannot come up with on our own. We can only find it as we seek to learn it from God.

(c) The next two texts describe the kind of love that we have for ourselves and that we should also have for others.

(d) Other versions say "whatever you **desire** that men should do to you" or "whatever you **want** men to do to you."

- We may not like the circumstances that life has dealt us, or we may hate the outcome of the mistakes we have made, but no one wishes for more trouble. Everyone desires success.

- God desires our success. This is the attitude of love.

(e) Sinners – self-centered thinkers – are good only as it benefits them.

(f) 'elohiym *el-o-heem'*

Plural of H433; *gods* in the ordinary sense
Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries

If love is other-centered, can there be love if there is only one? If God is love, should we be surprised that God is plural?

(g) Here we see a glimpse into the relationship that exists within the Godhead. **Each one's purpose was to glorify the other.**

(h) Different from the multiple gods of other religions, the members of the Godhead are of the same mind, hold the same experiences, and have the same attitudes. All have existed from the beginning of eternity. There is no rivalry

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John 14:6-10 KJV Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (7) If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. (8) Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. (9) Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? **he that hath seen me hath seen the Father**; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? (10) Believest thou not that **I am in the Father, and the Father in me**? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

Matthew 12:15-21 KJV But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all; (16) And charged them that they should not make him known: (17) That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, (18) Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; **my beloved**, (a) in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. (19) He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. (20) A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. (21) And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

Isaiah 42:1-7 KJV Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, **in whom my soul delighteth**; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. (2) He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. (3) A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. (b) (6) I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; (7) To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

Philippians 2:5-11 KJV ... Christ Jesus: (6) Who, **being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God**: (7) But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: (8) And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. (9) Wherefore **God also hath highly exalted him**, and given him a name which is above every name: (10) That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; (11) And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, **to the glory of God the Father**.

John 8:29 KJV And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for **I do always those things that please him**.

Zechariah 13:6-7 KJV And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. (7) Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the **man that is my fellow**, (c) saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.

Here wisdom is personified as Christ.

Proverbs 8:30-31 KJV Then I was by him, as one brought up (d) with him: and **I was daily his delight**, (e) **rejoicing (f) always before him**; (31) Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.

8:30 Contemporary English Version ...I made him happy each day, and I was happy at his side.

8:30 Good News Bible ... I was his daily source of joy, always happy in his presence.

(a) Matthew here quotes a prophecy in Isaiah where God the Father promises to send his Son to show judgment and truth. You can sense the joy that exists in their relationship.

(b) Sense the attitude of God toward those struggling in the darkness of sin:

A bruised reed ... - The reed is an emblem of feebleness, as well as of fickleness or want of stability. A bruised, broken reed is an emblem of the poor and oppressed. It means that He would not oppress the feeble and poor, as victorious warriors and conquerors did. It is also an expressive emblem of the soul broken and contrite on account of sin, weeping and mourning for transgression. He will not break it; that is, He will not be severe, unforgiving, and cruel. He will heal it, pardon it, and give it strength.

Smoking flax - This refers to the wick of a lamp when the oil is exhausted--the dying, flickering flame and smoke that hang over it. It is an emblem, also, of feebleness and infirmity. He would not further oppress those who had a little strength. He would not put out hope and life when it seemed to be almost extinct. He would not be like the Pharisees--proud and overbearing, trampling down the poor. It is expressive, also, of the languishing graces of the people of God. He will not treat them harshly or unkindly, but will cherish the feeble flame, minister the "oil" of grace, and kindle it into a blaze.

(c) Other versions read: "The man who is my close companion or associate."

(d) Here Christ is declared to have always been with his Father. The Father has had no experiences without the Son present.

(e) **sha'shua'** *shah-shoo'-ah*
From H8173; *enjoyment*: - delight, pleasure.

(f) **śachak** *saw-khak'*
A primitive root; to *laugh* ...; by implication to *play* ... make merry ...rejoice, be in (make) sport.
Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries

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John 17:1-26 MKJV Jesus spoke these words and lifted up His eyes to Heaven and said, Father, the hour has come. **Glorify Your Son so that Your Son also may glorify You**, (a) (2) even as You have given Him authority over all flesh so that He should give eternal life to all You have given Him. (3) And this is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. (4) I have glorified You upon the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. (5) And now Father, glorify Me with Yourself **with the glory which I had with You before the world was**. (b) (6) I have revealed Your name to the men whom You gave to Me out of the world. They were Yours, and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. (7) Now they have known that all things, whatever You have given Me, are from You. (8) For I have given to them the Words which You gave Me, and they have received them and have known surely that I came out from You. And they have believed that You sent Me. (13) And now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world **that they might have My joy fulfilled in them**. (c) (14) I have given them Your Word, (17) Sanctify them through Your truth. Your Word is truth. (18) As You have sent Me into the world, even so I have sent them into the world. (19) And I sanctify Myself for their sakes, so that they also might be sanctified in truth. (20) And I do not pray for these alone, but for those also who shall believe on Me through their word, (21) **that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us, so that the world may believe** (d) that You have sent Me. (22) And I have given them the glory which You have given Me, that they may be one, even as We are one, (23) I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them as You have loved Me. (24) Father, I desire that those whom You have given Me, that they may be with Me where I am, **that they may behold My glory which You have given Me, for You have loved Me** (e) **before the foundation of the world**. (25) O righteous Father, indeed the world has not known You; but I have known You, and these have known that You have sent me. (26) And **I made known to them Your name**, (f) and will make it known, so that **the love with which You have loved Me may be in them**, and I in them.

- (a) Again and again we see within the Godhead the essence of love. That is each one desiring to glorify and lift up the other.
- (b) The relationship existed before Jesus was born on earth as a man.
- (c) Jesus longed that we might share in the joy that filled Him as the recipient of His Father's love. His love for us is that we might be fulfilled, happy, and satisfied in hope.
- (d) Awesome thought that we are invited to enter into the pure and perfect unity of the Godhead. Yet, this is the beauty of God's kingdom: a harmony of love and a unity of purpose among the various personalities and abilities of His creatures.
- (e) The glory of God is His love, something that we now only faintly understand. It is our privilege to enter into and experience it, growing in our knowledge and appreciation of His love. We will never reach the end of it. It will continue to deepen and widen throughout eternity.
- (f) A person's name when used in this way in the Bible represents that person's character. Jesus came to make known to us what the Father is like. A careful look at the life of Christ reveals that **God IS Love**.