

## **“The Infinite Love and Goodness of God”**

**God is love (1 John 4:8, 16).**

**God’s love and goodness fall like the rain on all humanity.  
Yet only Christians know the saving, eternal love of God.**

God does not owe sinners anything. We all fell in Adam’s first transgression (1 Corinthians 15:21-22). We are born spiritually dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1, 5; Colossians 2:13). Our salvation is all of God, all of grace.

Because God is infinitely holy, He hates sins. And therefore He hates those who commit sin and live in rebellion against Him. “God *is* a just judge, And God is angry *with the wicked* every day. If he does not turn back, He will sharpen His sword; He bends His bow and makes it ready” (Psalm 7:11-12).

In the last book of the Old Testament, Malachi, God says, “I have loved you,” says the LORD. “Yet you say, ‘In what way have You loved us?’ Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?” Says the LORD. “Yet Jacob I have loved; But Esau I have hated, And laid waste his mountains and his heritage For the jackals of the wilderness.” (Malachi 1:2-3) The apostle Paul quotes this passage in Romans, chapter 9, in explaining the doctrines of election and reprobation.

God is not only infinitely holy and just; He also is infinitely loving and good. Since God is love, there is a sense in which His goodness, kindness, and love reach even to the reprobate, even to those who will to reject God and choose hell over heaven.

### **1. God is so loving and good that His love and goodness fall like the rain on all humanity.**

All human life is sacred, because God created men in the likeness and image of God (Genesis 1:26). Even after the fall, God is still God, and human beings are still His creation. We are God’s masterpiece. In one sense, there is a sanctity, a sacredness, to all human life (Genesis 9:6; Exodus 20:13).

Christians and unbelievers, the chosen seed and the reprobate, we both enjoy many of the same blessings in this life, the blessings of Creation and Providence. God sustains the universe He created, to the benefit of all alike.

In the sermon on the mount, Jesus said, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’” “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, “that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. “For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? “And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more *than*

*others?* Do not even the tax collectors do so? "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. (Matthew 5:43-48)

The Bible calls us to love sinners, just as Christ did. The apostle Paul said, "And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these *is* love" (1 Corinthians 13:13).

To love sinners does not mean that we should love sin. Far from it! The apostle Paul exhorts us, "*Let* love *be* without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good" (Romans 12:9).

There are times when we pray against the wicked in general, as David sang the imprecatory psalms against the wicked and their evil deeds. But we must love sinners, as individuals, treating them as those who are made in the image and likeness of God. As the golden rule says, "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12); "And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise" (Luke 6:31).

As Christians, we must love everyone, even our enemies. That is what Jesus taught in the sermon on the mount. He even said to bless those who curse us, do good to those who hate us, and pray for those who abuse and persecute us. And he explained that our heavenly Father does the same thing for ALL mankind.

The God of love and goodness, the Creator of all mankind sends the sun and rain on Christians and unbelievers alike. Therefore, there is a sense in which God loves the entire human race:

We all enjoy the same sunrise and sunset.

We all see the same birds and butterflies and flowers.

We all hear the songs that the birds sing.

We all partake of the produce of the land, grains, meat, wine, chocolate, coffee.

We all enjoy music, family, and friends.

In many nations, we all benefit from electricity, heat, and maybe air conditioning.

We all share the same phones and technologies.

We all enjoy many of the same pleasures in this life.

If God did not shower His love, kindness and goodness on the wicked and reprobate to some degree and in some sense, they all would die quickly from a thousand different deaths.

But that is not the case! Many unbelievers have large families, and some live to be over 100 years old. Some are very successful and even satisfied in this life.

It is logical that Christians may live better, healthier lives because they flee from carnal vices that destroy the body, mind, and soul, and they pursue virtues that promote

health, life, and prosperity. Yet, in some cases, Christians' lives are more difficult in this life due to persecution or suffering or other trials (e.g., Job, the martyr Stephen).

All of us face the same reality that our life on earth is very short. The Bible says, "It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away" (James 4:14). "As *for* man, his days *are* like grass; As a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, And its place remembers it no more" (Psalm 103:15-16).

## **2. Only Christians know the saving and eternal love of God.**

The Bible teaches that those who don't know Christ as their Savior and Lord are hopeless; they are "without hope" (Ephesians 2:12).

Since God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His goodness, He commissioned the Church (which is all of us): "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20).

Jesus had compassion on the lost, and so should we: "But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd" (Matthew 9:36).

To love our neighbor means above all to tell them the Gospel, the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ alone. To tell the wondrous story of how God sent His Son, born in a low condition, in a humble stable, born to the Virgin Mary, born under the law, to redeem us from the law. That Christ was the only man who ever lived a perfect life. That He was crucified unjustly upon a Roman cross. That He was buried, and the third day He rose again from the dead and ascended into heaven, and is now seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from which He will come to judge the living and the dead. That He is the King of kings and Lord of lords.

"Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:9-11)

"That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9)

Only Christians are recipients of God's special grace, of God's saving grace. Only believers are vessels of honor, made for an honorable purpose (Romans 9:21; 2 Timothy 2:20-21). Only Christians are protected by an army of guardian angels (Psalm 34:7-10; 2 Kings 6:15; Psalm 91:11; Luke 16:22; Hebrews 1:14). Only Christians are loved eternally for the sake of Christ alone, our Redeemer, who died for His sheep, the sheep of his fold (John 10:11, 15-16).

Since only God knows who the elect and reprobate are, we cannot and should not question whether someone is elect or reprobate. The Bible teaches God's predestination, but it has only been revealed to us *in part*. God has revealed truths about election and reprobation in His Word to help us understand His ways and perfections. However, the eternal destiny of every human beings remains hidden in God's secret counsel. Therefore, it is futile to dwell on this doctrine excessively or to be make conjectures from it.

Are you one of "the chosen"?

The question you must ask is, Do you love the God of the Bible, trust in Him alone, and seek to obey Him, to keep His commandments? If so, then you are presumably one of the elect. Jesus said, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him" (John 14:23; cf. John 14:15).

Do you reject Christ and refuse to live according to the revealed Word of the Triune God? Do you have no interest in loving God, praying, meditating in His Word, and seeking to obey His commands? Then, you are unsaved (John 14:24). And you need to repent and place your trust in Christ alone today, for "behold, now *is* the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

To say you cannot because you are "reprobate" is only a foolish, self-fulfilling prophecy, an excuse that has the most sad and severe of consequences, for your life now and, most importantly, for your eternal destiny. The apostle Paul said that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15). Why was the devil condemned? Because he was "puffed up with pride" (1 Timothy 3:6). "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5).

## **Conclusion**

In this life, we can be certain that God shows His amazing love and goodness to all mankind, as He created this world and He preserves and sustains it by His Almighty power.

But for unbelievers, this life is all they have. An eternity in hell is promised to all who reject the free offer of salvation.

Jesus said at the end of the Bible: "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Revelation 21:6-8).

For the Christian, God has promised us “every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3).

If you are not a Christian, you must repent of your sins, turn from them, and trust in Christ. Are you thirsty? Do you desire eternal life? Do you want to experience the love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control that only God provides? Do you desire freedom from the slavery of sin and addiction? Jesus calls you to drink “of the water of life freely”!

I leave you with some excerpts from Ephesians, chapters 1-3, where God exalts the glory of His own love and goodness for us, His chosen people, those whom He has predestinated unto life and made willing and able to believe. May we rejoice in the infinite love and goodness of our God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!

Ephesians 1—Election and predestination. Redemption, forgiveness, adoption.

Ephesians 1:3-12: “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth -- in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.”

Ephesians 2—Regeneration (new birth), justification, sanctification, glorification.

Ephesians 2:4-10: “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 3—The eternal, infinite love of Christ for His chosen people.

Ephesians 3:14-19: “For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant

you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height -- to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.