

LOVE FROM ABOVE
(Love That Goes Beyond Emotion to Devotion)
Studies in 1 John

'All the Children of the WORD'

A favorite children's song goes: "*Jesus loves the little children – all the children of the world – red and yellow, brown and white, they are precious in His sight – Jesus loves the little children of the world.*" In a general sense the lyrics are true according to **John 3:16**, but in a theologically specific sense His *agape* love is for all who have become *children of God* through repentance from sin and faith in the cross-work of Christ (**1 John 3:1**). In reality there are two kinds of *children of the world* - *children of God* and *children of the devil* (**1 John 3:7-8, Ephesians 2:1-3, etc.**). Truly, as the song says, the color of their skin is completely irrelevant, but what makes them *precious in His sight* is the spiritual condition of their soul – is it a spiritually darkened heart full of selfishness and sin or is it spiritually light within because of the indwelling presence of His Holy Spirit (**John 3:19-21**). The universal love or what is referred to as 'common grace' of God for all human beings is a gracious blend of good will, kindness, pity and concern is sort of like what anybody feels for a new born or child whether its theirs or not (**Matthew 5:44-45 & Acts 14:16-17**). But that universal love is different from and inferior to the *everlasting, eternal love of God* that is reserved for His *elect* (*those specifically chosen by God to experience His awesome mercy, forgiveness and new life in Christ* – **John 6:37 & 44; Acts 13:48; Romans 9:11; Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Peter 1:10**).

This special divine love from God is implanted by the Holy Spirit deep within the believer's soul at the moment of salvation and changes everything from the inside out in a truly born-again child of God (**Romans 5:5**)! This 'agape' (unconditional, altruistic, sacrificial love) fills the heart and mind with an awesome awareness of the abiding power and presence of the Triune God at all times (**1 John 1:3,7**). This love also transforms the mind that falls in love with God's Word, the Bible, which becomes the voice of God to the believer's heart and mind (**Hebrews 4:12, 2 Timothy 3:16-17**). Agape love also loves righteous behavior and holy living while at the same time increasingly despises wickedness, sin, and blasphemy (**1 John 3:10**). This 'God-quality' love also has a deep sense of caring commitment to other truly born-again brothers and sisters of the family of God (**John 13:34-35, 1 Peter 1:22-23, 1 John 2:9-11**).

Finally, agape love feels that universal love of God for all unbelievers who are still in love with themselves, their sin, this world and other sinful people. Children of God see them recklessly careening through life toward death, judgment, hell, and the lake of fire (**John 3:36**) while deceiving themselves that they are going to heaven. These are characteristics of the kind of love that only God and His true spiritual children have. It is this inner spring of the heart that flows within cleansing the 'inner parts of the soul' and wells up to flow upward to God in worship and outward to others in ministry and witnessing (**Philippians 1:9-11**). To have it is to know you are a child of God; to lack it is to know that you are not a child of God, but still a child of wrath and Satan (**Ephesians 2:1-3**).

Another beautiful little child's song says: "*Jesus loves me, this I know – for the Bible tells me so – little ones to Him belong – they are weak, but He is strong – Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! – the Bible tells me so*". The song is nice but leaves open the question of which love does He have for you? A general, universal love He has for all humanity, or the unconditional, eternal, agape love He reserves for only that select part of the human race who meet Him repentantly at the cross of His Son, Jesus? The former will do during this lifetime as a sort of sentimental comfort that God is around until you die; the latter is infinitely better because it begins right now, when you trust Jesus and receive Him into your heart. That love is everlasting so it doesn't end when you die – it starts now and changes you from the inside out during this life and continues on in heaven forevermore.

In order to become one of God's children, one must be *adopted* into His family. There are no natural children in the family of God (**John 1:12-13**). Nothing you do or some other person or religious organization does to you can make you a child of God. It is a miraculous work of the Holy Spirit that brings *fear of the Lord* over your mind and heart with a deep sorrow and disgust for your sinfulness (this is repentance). It is a passionate desire to live a life that is free of sin to become holy and righteous that proves God has chosen you to belong to Him. It is a humble conviction that on that cross Jesus was dying for you personally and you are sorry for your sins that did that to Him. It is a precious and personal prayer to Him Who has risen from the dead and is seated in heaven, alive forevermore, that He will forgive you, cleanse you, change you, and make you a true *child of God* (**Romans 10:9-13**). This is what makes you ready for *adoption* into the family of God and makes you His child. This is because '*the Bible tells (thee) so*' (**John 14:23**).

The World or God – ‘Love One or the Other’

(Fullness of Joy = Faithful to Him; Aloof from ‘It’)

1 John 2:15-23

The World is Not Your Friend

(Worldly lusts will corrode your love for the Lord)

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him (or her). For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life - is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world is passing away and the lust of it; but he (or she) who does the will of God abides forever.” 2:15-17

The enemy’s three-pronged trap: Eve (Genesis 3:6);
Jesus (Luke 4:1-13);
and You (1 John 2:15-17)

The Apostates are Not Your Friends

(Deserters love you and leave you – let them go, it’s a blessing)

“Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Anti-Christ is coming, even now many anti-Christ have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.” 2:18-19

Last days ‘deserters’: 1 Corinthians 5:9-11 & 15:33-34,
1 Thessalonians 3:14-15,
1 Timothy 4:1-2,
2 Timothy 4:3-4,
Titus 3:10,
Jude 4-5, etc.

The Holy Spirit is Your Best Friend Forever

(The Holy Spirit’s anointing detects friends and foes of Jesus)

“But you have an anointing from the Holy One and you know all things. I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is anti-Christ who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.” 2:20-23

‘The Anointing’ is the Holy Spirit: John 14:15-17, 14:25-26, 15:26-27, 16:8-15, etc.