

**GOD IS LOVE –
BUT NOT
LOVE ALONE**

- God's love is one of God's **most talked-about attributes**.
- There are many **false or incorrect ideas** about God's love in the church.
- We need to focus on **knowing God as a whole**
- We need to accept **God is greater than we can understand**.

J.I. PACKER

“Johns’s twice repeated statement, ‘God is Love’ (1 John 4:8, 16) is one of the most tremendous utterances in the Bible – and also one of the most misunderstood. False ideas have grown up round it like a hedge of thrones, hiding its real meaning from view, and it is no small task cutting through this tangle of mental undergrowth.”

KNOW GOD THROUGH THE BIBLE

- The Bible is our primary source.
- It is the word of God and is inerrant (without mistakes or errors).

KNOW GOD THROUGH CREATION

“¹The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies
proclaim the work of His hands.”

- Psalm 19: 1

KNOW GOD THROUGH HUMAN EXPERIENCE

“²⁶Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

²⁷So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

- Genesis 1:26-27

GOD'S LOVE IN THE BIBLE

“¹⁶For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”

- John 3: 16-17

GOD'S LOVE IN THE BIBLE

“⁷Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

- 1 John 4: 7-10

GOD'S LOVE IN THE BIBLE

- The love of God is closely linked to our salvation.
- We must recognize how vast and impossible God's love for the world is.
- Drawing too much on our own experiences, cheapens God's love and detracts from his holiness.

CONTEXT OF “GOD IS LOVE” BIBLE VERSE

“This statement presupposes all the rest of the biblical witness to God. The God of whom God is speaking, is the God who made the world, who judged it by the flood, who called Abraham and made of him a nation, who chastened his old Testament people by conquest, captivity, and exile, who sent his son to save the world, who cast off unbelieving Israel and shortly before John wrote had destroyed Jerusalem and who would one day judge the world in righteousness. It is this God, says John, who is love”.

- J.I. Packer

J.I PACKER ON GOD'S LOVE

“The modern habit throughout the Christian Church is to play this subject down. Those who still believe in the wrath of God say little about it; perhaps they do not think much about it.”

GOD'S WRATH AND ANGER IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

- God's wrath is in response to Israel's unfaithfulness.
- Sometimes God himself measures out his judgement.
- At other times, he uses worldly men and kingdoms to measure out his judgement.

GOD'S WRATH AND ANGER IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The people of Israel...

“... ¹¹burned incense on all the high places, like the nations whom the Lord had carried away before them; and they did wicked things to provoke the Lord to anger, ¹²for they served idols, of which the Lord had said to them, “You shall not do this thing.” ...

¹⁸Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them from His sight....

²⁰And the Lord rejected all the descendants of Israel, afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of plunderers, until He had cast them from His sight.”

- 2 Kings 17:11-20

GOD'S WRATH AND ANGER IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

“¹⁴ And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. ¹⁵ When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. ”

- John 2:14-17

“⁴⁵ Then He [Jesus] went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, ⁴⁶ saying to them, “It is written, ‘My house is a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’ ”

- Luke 19: 45-46

GOD'S WRATH AND ANGER IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

“¹²I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. ¹³And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. ¹⁴Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. ¹⁵And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! ¹⁷For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

- Revelation 6:12-17

WE DON'T LIKE TALKING ABOUT IT

- We minimise what we do wrong and inflate what we think we have right, so think we are more worthy of God's love and less worthy of God's wrath.
- We don't like to think of a loving God measuring out judgement. His anger doesn't fit our image of a good God.
- We might think God's wrath is overly harsh.

RECONCILING THE SEEMING CONTRADICTION

- We must recognize and accept that both attributes are presented in the Bible.
- God is holy – his attributes are holy.
- God's anger is not like our anger.
- God is not unfair, cruel or vindictive.
- We deserve his wrath.

IN HIS LOVE, GOD MAKES A WAY OUT FROM HIS WRATH

“⁸But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. ¹⁰For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

- Romans 5:8-10

GOD MAKES A WAY OUT FROM HIS WRATH

“²⁵God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished.”

- Romans 3: 25

GOD OFFERS HIS LOVE FREELY TO THOSE WHO WILL ACCEPT IT.

“¹⁶For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

- John 3:16

“¹⁸ He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

- John 3:18

KNOW GOD, REFLECT GOD

- We need to know God so that we can reflect God.
- J.I. Packer: True knowledge of God must lead to a real relationship with Him through Jesus Christ, and a life that is transformed as a result.
- We must consider all of God's attributes, without rejecting any part of God so we can truly witness to the world.
- The world might hate us for it, but it is our calling in Christ.