

147 - Where's the love?

Three times in the past week, three pastors on the radio have preached three very similar messages about going to Heaven if you're saved, going to hell if you aren't, and how they know that hell is a real place full of real torment, without escape, and is "eternal." Each pastor used as a primary basis for his message the story that Yeshua told of the rich man, Lazarus, and Abraham's bosom. I just shook my head when I heard the first pastor preach his message. "Pathetic," I thought; a man with a seminary degree, who ostensibly knows Greek, and who continues to preach a message based on almost 2,000 years of error.

The second I heard virtually the same message, I felt outraged. "Are they all saying the same thing? I wondered, rhetorically only, because of course all the preachers teach the same things -- at least those who come from the same kind of training. Then, just last evening, I heard a third pastor go through the whole thing again, an almost identical teaching as the two pastors I had heard before him. All of a sudden, my feelings of outrage and disdain turned to sorrow. "This is tragic," I thought. It is a tragedy that the evangel of God has turned into an evangel that is in direct opposition to God -- a message of the adversary, a message of sa-tan.

Right after one of the second message I heard, there came an appeal for money to reach more people. Now, the fact is, every program ends in an appeal for money to keep that particular ministry going. And Why? Well, if the compelling reason for your ministry and message is to save people from hell and get them to heaven, you'd better inspire your listeners to empty their wallets of as much as you can! Better yet, you'd better inspire tons of "PARTNERS" who will support you monthly, because you think you're doing God's work -- never mind that the scriptures you're relying on are twisted almost beyond recognition and the conclusions you've reached -- or more likely, the conclusions you've been taught -- are based on mistranslations,

misunderstandings, and therefore misapplications that have been perpetuated seemingly without question for almost two millennia!

Then I thought this: Something is going on right now with the preaching side of Christendom. If I can hear three different pastors use the same material, I wonder if there's a preaching series out there that they're all using, some kind of program of messages to deliver at certain times; and I wouldn't be surprised if somehow it is preparing for the season of lent that leads to Easter Sunday on the Christian religious calendar.

I've stopped listening to preachers on Sundays, pretty much, because they all preach the same basic, "Come to Jesus and be saved" message, which always has a threat of hell somewhere in it. Some are more obvious about it and some are more cagey, but it's always there. "Come to Jesus and be saved so you can go to Heaven forever, or miss out and find yourself in hell forever."

Today, Bible Gateway's scripture of the day was **1 Corinthians 13:6-7**:

6 is not rejoicing in injustice, yet is rejoicing together with the truth,

7 is forgoing all, is believing all, is expecting all, is enduring all.

All of a sudden, it hit me: this describes our Father! Read **verse 7** again...

Forgoing all = forgo is "refrain" -- "to cover; to protect or keep by covering, to preserve; to cover over with silence; to keep secret; to hide, conceal.

Think of it this way: The Father has covered and is covering, protecting, preserving, and is Himself silent about, keeping secret in significant ways, hiding or concealing Himself, His purpose, certainly His timing, and even the Body of the Messiah itself. Think about it: where do you find God putting on some kind of massive show of Himself? Now, I know every pastor with any kind of media outreach thinks that his or her ministry is revealing the One True God

and is preaching the one true Gospel of God. That's not how I see the application of this scripture. I see this as referring to the Father Himself, and I'll show you why as we continue our study.

Believing all = trusty, faithful, *easily persuaded*. God doesn't have to work hard at believing; after all, everything He is and says is the truth and in Him there is no lie. People, on the other hand, seem to be easily persuaded toward lies, because lies are easy, whereas the truth takes work to uncover and to hold on to. The "all" that people believe is often directly opposed to what God says and, therefore obviously believes and is easily persuaded by since He is the author of it.

Expecting all = Other versions read, "hopes all," but we studied hope versus expectation well over a year ago. We learned that hope rarely appears in the actual Greek text, but expectation is found instead. Hope, you may recall, has a kind of powerless quality about it; it's iffy -- maybe, maybe not -- it has no real certainty. Expectation, on the other hand is both powerful AND certain. Now think about how we know our Father: Is He not utterly powerful and certain; far beyond lame hope, but firmly committed to His purpose and His promise or declaration, as we have read many times in Psalm 138:2:

"For You have magnified Your name, Your promise, above all else."

Enduring all = Remaining, tarrying behind; not receding or fleeing, but bearing calmly. This is a quality we would hope to achieve and express, but it seems to me unnatural to humans to bear much calmly, and not to be fleeing. Enduring, however, does describe God's astonishing calm in this eon, in which there exists such utter wickedness, perversity, blasphemy, and maligning of His character -- indeed His very nature, as well as His Son's name that is exalted above every name that is named.

Sometimes I think we could define Grace as our Father's unmerited patience and endurance, rather than His unmerited favor! We'll soon learn that it means neither of those two, and it's much bigger than I ever knew before today!

1 John 4:8 and 4:16 declare that **"God is love."** Let's look at them now:

1 John 4:8

He who is not loving knew not God, for **God is love.**

1 John 4:16

And we know and believe the love which God has in us. **God is love, and he who is remaining in love is remaining in God, and God is remaining in him.**

17 In this is love perfected with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judging, seeing that, according as He is, so are we also in this world.

Twice the Apostle John declares quite plainly, **“God is love.”** At the end of **1 John 4:17**, he makes this captivating statement: **“according as He is, so are we also in this world.”** You have to read this several times for the impact to settle into your mind and heart: **“according as He is, so are we also in this world.”**

When I look at Christianity through the lens of the leaders who purport to speak for God in the sense that they preach what they no doubt believe to be His word, I don't see many, if I see any at all, who measure up to **1 John 4:17: “according as He is, so are we also in this world.”**

So, beloved, what are **we** in this world? Let's go back in **1 Corinthians to Chapter 12**, beginning with **verse 27**:

27 Now **you are the body of the Messiah**, and members of a part **[of His body]**,

28 whom also **[the Father]**, indeed, placed in the ecclesia,

Stop right there with me. The Father is the One Who places the ones coming up next. They don't place themselves there, and neither does an organization. Beware of those claiming titles. Yeshua claimed His title as the Messiah only once, and that was in His “high priestly prayer” in John 17. He never claimed it publicly. He only claimed publicly the title, “the Son of Mankind.” The Apostle Paul claimed his office by qualifying his right: “a called apostle,” or “an apostle

by the will of God.” And, let’s not forget how that office was placed upon Him by the risen Lord Himself, and at what price.

What follows is the list of offices, occupied by people whom God sovereignly places in the ecclesia. After that comes a list of gifts. As we go through this, note the order in last part of **1 Corinthians 12:28**:

first, apostles, second, prophets, third, teachers, thereupon powers, thereupon graces of healing, supports, pilotage, species of languages.

29 Not all are apostles. Not all are prophets. Not all are teachers. Not all have powers.

30 Not all have the graces of healing. Not all are speaking languages. Not all are interpreting.

31 Yet be zealous for the greater graces. And still I am showing you a path, suited to transcendence.

Note the distinction between the “offices” of apostle, prophet, and teacher, compared to the so-called “gifts” of healing, supports (aiding or supporting), pilotage (steering or governing), species -- or families -- of languages or tongues.

“**Graces**” does not mean gifts. The Greek word for “**graces**” is Charisma, which means literally, “*JOY-effect*.” Indeed, the word, Grace, or “*charis*” in Greek, which we toss around as meaning “unmerited favor” -- including me -- literally means “*JOY*.” Grace bestowed is “*JOY-ize*.” “**Graces**,” like those to which Paul refers in **1 Corinthians 12:28 and 31**, means “*JOY-effect*.”

We’re not done with **1 Corinthians** here, by a long shot, but we have to stop and get a grip on our understanding of “**Grace**.” It’s so important to the Father, because it is the nature of salvation itself:

Ephesians 2:8-9

For in [the] grace [in THE JOY], through faith, are you saved, and this is not out of you; it is the Father’s approach present,

9 not of works, lest anyone should be boasting.

10 For **His** achievement are we, being created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God makes ready beforehand, that we should be walking in them.

Whose JOY is it in which we are saved through faith? The article tells us: THE GRACE, THE JOY -- THIS is the Father's own JOY we're seeing -- indeed, it is His joy we are experiencing, and what we're experiencing now is NOTHING compared to HIS joy at the soon-coming transforming of our bodies of corruptible mortality into bodies, like the Messiah's, of incorruptible immortality!

I got so excited studying this today, because I never saw the grace of our Father like this before! I never saw it as His JOY! I also never saw before that His Joy bestowed upon us -- "**which He lavishes on us,**" **Ephesians 1:8** says -- "JOY-izes" me; He gives me the capacity to experience receiving the same JOY He does in lavishing it on me!

Somehow, a new dimension of my understanding and my experience of my Father has opened up today. My vocabulary is too limited to describe the life this revelation carries -- The Father's life -- that makes all other life seem like death! I pray you see this too and receive the JOY-izing that His Joy imparts as He lavishes it on you!

So, now, let me ask a question: How does the picture of our Father, Who is joyously lavishing His joy on us square with the picture of our Father sentencing some people to a place in which they are tormented and from which they can never escape? Is He as furious -- as angry, as full of wrath -- that His vengeance is as great as or greater than His Joy?

Now I have a follow-up question: Why are Christians so eager in their defense of an eternal hell, as if they were defending God Himself, and so adamant that the Father's Grace -- that is His Joy -- is insufficient or incapable of winning absolutely everyone; and then defend their position with the caveat of "free will," which is a totally unscriptural notion? By this they mean, "Hey, God would love to save everyone; but we can refuse salvation today and wind up in the

place God has prepared just for those who DO refuse His invitation. That place is one of eternal torment, in which I am fully conscious of both excruciating physical agony and the agony of knowing what I missed and can never again enjoy.

Now we're back to the story of the rich man and Lazarus, where a chasm separates the ones resting in Abraham's bosom from those in torment. The chasm is fixed, says the preacher today, as have so many throughout almost 200 centuries, as he emphasizes the irrecoverability of the ones in torment, and the inability of anyone in the Heaven of Abraham's bosom – and, I suppose, by association, the Christian Heaven -- to reach these poor lost and tormented souls, or offer them the least comfort.

Brothers and sisters, this is a tragic maligning of our Father's character and an insidious, debilitating deception perpetrated on His children. It flies in the face of His stated purpose, and most importantly, it completely opposes His declarations in the scriptures – in His own word!

As I said when we began, the Christian message of an eternal hell is sa-tan. It pushes people to come to Christ, because the motivation is to avoid a place of eternal torment; as opposed to inspiring people with a realization of the Son of God, and receiving the Joy-izing impartation of salvation out of the sentence of death and into life beyond its reach from the hands of a loving Father Who is lavishing His joy over them. That this awaits everyone whoever lived -- as Paul says, celestial, terrestrial, and subterranean -- leaves no one out, any more than God all in all leaves anyone out. And if anyone thinks He or she could thwart God's will that all mankind be saved and come into a realization of the truth; that every knee should bow and every tongue should confess that Yeshua the Messiah is Lord, to the glory of the Father, has not the love of the Father in Him or her; and therefore the Father Himself and the Son is not in Him or her.

Now, let's finish with **1 Corinthians 13**:

1 If I should be speaking in the languages of men and of the messengers, **yet should have no love**, I have become resounding copper or a clanging cymbal.

2 And if I should have prophecy and should be perceiving all secrets and all [entire] knowledge, and if I should have all [entire] faith, so as to transport mountains, **yet have no love**, I am nothing.

3 And if ever I should be morselling out all my possessions, and if I should be giving up my body, that I should be boasting, **yet may have no love**, in nothing do I benefit.

4 Love is **patient**, is **kind**. Love is **not jealous**. Love is **not bragging**, is **not puffed up**,

5 is **not indecent**, is **not self-seeking**, is **not incensed**, is **not taking account of evil**,

6 is **not rejoicing in injustice**, yet is **rejoicing together with the truth**,

7 is **forgoing all**, is **believing all**, is **expecting all**, is **enduring all**.

8 Love is **never lapsing**:

Paul then launches into a list of functions that will be discarded, as Paul says in verse 10, "**whenever maturity may be coming.**" He singles out prophecies, languages, and knowledge, particularly, all of which are operating today, or ought to be, in the Body of the Messiah, and which many in Christianity dismiss as irrelevant, or worse, denounce as "of the devil,"

1 Corinthians 13:8-

yet, whether prophecies, they will be discarded, or languages, they will cease, or knowledge, it will be discarded.

9 For out of an instalment are we knowing, and out of an instalment are we prophesying.

10 Now whenever maturity may be coming, that which is out of an instalment shall be discarded.

11 When I was a minor, I spoke as a minor, I was disposed

as a minor, I took account of things as a minor. Yet when I have become a man, I have discarded that which is a minor's.

Sadly, even the Concordant folks have misconstrued these scriptures, in my opinion, failing even to apply their own principles to correctly cutting the word of the truth here. They perform no better than Judeo-Christian Pharisaism does when they dismiss the infilling of the Holy Spirit, the gifts and manifestations which accompany it.

1 Corinthians 13:12

12 For at present we are observing by means of a mirror, in an enigma, **yet then**, face to face. At present I know out of an instalment, **yet then** I shall recognize according as I am recognized also.

When is “yet then,” which Paul refers to here? It should be obvious, but only when we take down the barriers to a revelation of the Father and of Yeshua the Messiah that religious traditions erect. Well, just in case it isn't obvious to all who may hear by recording, let me offer this help: the maturity that Paul refers to will come in the Day of the Lord Yeshua, as it is written in 1

Thessalonians 4:16-17

16 for the Lord Himself will be descending from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the Chief Messenger, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall be rising first.

17 Thereupon we, the living who are surviving, shall at the same time be snatched away together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And thus shall we always be together with the Lord.

18 So that, console one another with these words.

Let's finish looking at **1 Corinthians 13:13-14:2**

13 Yet now are remaining **faith, expectation, love** -- these three. Yet the greatest of these is love.

The GREATEST of these is love, yet he mentions it last in the order. What that means to me is that Paul indicates without saying it outright is that we have to

come into faith, then come into the expectation OF that faith, BEFORE we'll recognize love, let alone be capable of expressing it the same way that God Himself does. Let me say that again (and I'm giving you my take on this; this is how I see it):

We have to come into faith, then come into the expectation OF that faith BEFORE we'll recognize agape love, let alone be capable of expressing it the same way that God Himself does which is in His lavishing His grace – His JOY -- over us, as He carries His offering of salvation to us; and also as He disciplines us as His children who still need to grow up -- and even scourges us as we get closer to Him.

Finally, 1 Corinthians 14:1-2

1 Be pursuing love. Yet be zealous for spiritual endowments, yet rather that you may be prophesying.

2 For he who is speaking in a language is not speaking to men, but to God, for no one is hearing, yet in spirit he is speaking secrets.

Lord Yeshua, I pray for the religion that bears Your name. I pray that all who call upon your name will look with eyes that penetrate through the fog of religious tradition and find You standing as the light and in the light of the truth of the Father's word and Your word. Holy Father, if by any means, shake the foundations of the deceptions that your children have embraced in their ignorance. Shake and break 'till all hell comes out, for out it must come to make room for your grace – your Joy that could joy-ize them as You lavish it on them. Let those who call themselves Your children find repentance, Father – a true change of mind -- I pray.

Father, we give You all our worship, all the praise and glory and honor, as we pray in agreement IN the Name of Yeshua the Messiah, Our Lord. AMEN.