

Bible Expositor and Illuminator

March, April, May 2017

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SPRING QUARTER

For Adults Ages 26 & Up



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The Love of God

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LOOKING AHEAD

This quarter looks at some much-needed reminders of God's deep love for people. The first unit is about the nature of that love, the second unit is about the work of that love, and the third unit is about the extent of it. Lesson 1 is about the source of all love, as described in I John 4, where we learn that God is love and that we should love one another with the godly affection we see in Him. Lesson 2 describes God's overflowing love, a love so great that in His mercy all people can be saved through the simple act of faith.

Lesson 3 reminds us that we manifest God's love best by abiding in Him and bearing fruit. In lesson 4, we encounter the Old Testament prophet Joel describing how desperately Israel needed to repent of sinful living and experience God's merciful love and how God would provide it in a wonderful way for them in the future.

The beginning of the second unit takes us to Psalm 23 (lesson 5), where we see that God's work includes being our Shepherd. His constant presence and attentiveness in our lives means we are led and protected all the way through life. Lesson 6 then looks back to Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus and reminds us that God's love is so great that He sent His only begotten Son to die for us. That love culminated in His resurrection, the triumphant event we celebrate on Easter Sunday (lesson 7).

Lesson 8 then reminds us that we are reconciled to God through the work of Jesus and are guaranteed that nothing will ever separate us from Him. He remains with us as our Good Shepherd, knowing us intimately, guiding us safely, and protecting us from enemy dangers (lesson 9).

The third unit helps us see that God's love reaches far beyond what we might expect. His love refused to allow Jonah to run from His will and leave the Ninevites without warning of their danger (lesson 10). When Jonah fled, God protected him anyway, as we see in lesson 11, where we study his prayer from inside the fish. In lesson 12, Jonah is seen as receiving a second chance. God insisted that He loved even pagan unbelievers and wanted them to be warned of judgment.

In lesson 13, we see the puzzling reaction of Jonah to the repentance of the Ninevites. God reminded him that his attitude was wrong; He still loved those people.

—Keith E. Eggert.

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History of Redemption

JAMES JORDAN

From the very beginning, God has had a plan of redemption for His creation. That redemption story is given to us in the Scriptures, making His whole revelation about the love that God has for His creation.

God loves His prized creation—human beings—so much that He even allows them to choose whether or not to accept His love.

Perhaps it was for this reason that Satan, in the form of a serpent (Gen. 3), tempted the first couple. As a result, Adam and Eve sinned. This is called the Fall of mankind. From that point on, our sin natures have prevailed, and we naturally turn away from God.

God’s plan was to start redeeming mankind from that point onward. Notice that it was God who sought Adam and Eve out after they had sinned.

For the first time, Adam and Eve realized they were naked. They realized that they had sinned against God. When God called out to Adam, he responded by saying, “I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself” (Gen. 3:10).

Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the serpent. That has been the human condition since that time. We sin, we hide our sin, and then we try to excuse it or blame someone else when we are caught.

Sin entered the world through Adam, which is what we call original sin. We are guilty of Adam’s sin, and just as Adam sinned, we too sin. We are guilty of our sin as well. We also inherit from Adam the propensity to sin. “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the

world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Rom. 5:12).

But God sought out Adam, and God’s righteousness required that sin be dealt with by punishment. They were kicked out of the Garden of Eden, and the history of the fallen world began.

The history of God’s redemption also began in Eden. Adam and Eve covered themselves with fig leaves to hide their nakedness. It could also be said that it was to hide their shame.

But God made them coverings of animal skins to clothe them, a blood sacrifice that also atoned for their sin. “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them” (Gen. 3:21). This was the first hint of what God had in store, which was our ultimate redemption through Christ’s sacrifice.

Hebrews 9:22 tells us, “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”

From the time of Adam through the end of the Scriptures, we see a plan of redemption emerge. From the beginning to now and into the indefinite future, God seeks to be reconciled with sinful man. It is God who has always initiated the relationship because we are weak within ourselves and because we are naturally rebellious.

From the time of Adam to the time of Noah, there was lawlessness, which resulted in the Flood and a cleansing of the entire earth. Only a few people were saved, and the earth started over.

(Editorials continued on page 186)

Scripture Lesson Text

I JOHN 4:7 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.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spir'it.

14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

15 Whosoever shall confess that Je'sus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: 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.

19 We love him, because he first loved us.

NOTES

The Source of All Love

Lesson: I John 4:7-19

Read: I John 4:7-19

TIME: about A.D. 90-95

PLACE: probably from Ephesus

GOLDEN TEXT—"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (I John 4:11).

Introduction

The concept of love is a point of confusion in our culture. A prominent example is selfish love, in which the person seeks only his own interests. For example, some parents, wishing to make themselves look good, push their children into performing arts of public prominence. While they claim they love their children, theirs is a self-centered love that does not promote what is best for those they supposedly love. Such selfish love often interferes in the child's relationships or life direction.

Another example of selfish love is when a man or woman coerces someone of the opposite sex to give in to activities against the person's will and convictions. "If you really love me, you will do this." In reality, such a demand

does not qualify to be referred to as love.

True love seeks the best for the one loved. This often requires a degree of sacrifice, something that is given gladly when the heart is right. The greatest example is the love God has for us; remarkably, that love can be reproduced through us.

LESSON OUTLINE

- I. **THE PAST: LOVE'S ORIGIN—
I John 4:7-11**
- II. **THE PRESENT: LOVE'S
GROWTH—I John 4:12-16**
- III. **THE FUTURE: LOVE'S
DELIVERANCE—I John 4:17-19**

Exposition: Verse by Verse

THE PAST: LOVE'S ORIGIN

I JOHN 4:7 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