

Let's Talk About Jesus: Him Who Loved Us

Rev. 1:5

I. REVIEW: JESUS AS THE FIRST AND THE LAST

- A. In Revelation 1-3, John shares a vision highlighting 30 descriptions of Jesus and 18 eternal rewards. Each communicates a specific insight about Jesus that is necessary in equipping the Church to overcome compromise, endure persecution, and engage in partnership with Him. The three titles in verse 5 sum up Jesus' human destiny and give insight into the measure of His love.

Rev. 1:5-6 *Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father...*

- B. Jesus is the "One who loved us." He is a **king with power** who anoints us to do His work and a **Bridegroom with desire** who anoints us to love. He loves in different ways, as a lion and lamb. No area of Jesus' supremacy is expressed or experienced more than when His love is manifest.

- C. The clearest and strongest statement that elaborates on this glorious truth is from the lips of Jesus Himself in the dramatic announcement that **God loves us in the way that God loves God**. The Father feels the same intensity of love for us that He feels for Jesus. The ultimate statement about our worth and value is that Jesus has the same measure of love or affection towards us that His Father has towards Him. It gives every believer the right to view themselves as "God's favorite." This is a gold mine of truth that deserves our focused attention all of our days. At the last supper, Jesus emphasized this truth to His disciples just before their failures in denying Him.

Jn. 15:9-11 *"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love..."These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full."*

1. **Abide:** We are to stay focused on God's love. By abiding, beholding Him, and living in this truth, we position ourselves to experience it more. Do not be distracted from this truth. Go deep in it. Surrender to it without resisting or negotiating with God about it.

1 Jn. 3:1 *Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us.*

Jude 21 *Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord...*

2. **My joy:** When we experience Jesus' love for us, it changes how we feel. Feeling God's affection for us exhilarates our hearts with joy—a deep sense of well-being. Jesus is telling us where satisfaction and emotional transformation are best found.

- D. The revelation of God's love for us gives us **confidence** before God, even in our weakness. It reveals to us our **value and dignity** in God's eyes, empowers us to walk in **deep partnership** with Jesus, gives our lives **relevance** in knowing that our obedience moves God's heart and is remembered and rewarded forever; thus it motivates us to obedience (Rom. 2:4). The Bridegroom message is about Jesus' emotions for us, His beauty, His commitments to us (to share His heart, home, throne, secrets, and beauty), and our response of wholehearted love (obedience) that moves Him.

E. Love is God's eternal nature. He does not just do acts of love; it is who He is. He loves us so intensely because He is love. Because God is love, He has deep desires. Desire implies want, but not lack. The God who has everything still wants something. He wants us not because He is needy or lacking something, but because He is a fountain of overflowing desire for us. He is self-sufficient and fully satisfied in the fellowship of the Trinity.

1 Jn. 4:16 *God is love...*

F. God's love is much more than desire. He is a self-replenishing fountain of desire for His people. God's love and desire are **infinite in measure** and **eternal in duration**. His love is sustained forever with intensity because it is like a self-replenishing volcanic explosion of desire that has no end. A million years from now, we will still be discovering more of God's love. It will be new to us, but not new in reality. It has always been true. It is as true now as it will be then.

G. The nature of Jesus' love is that He desires to be deeply involved with us and to bring us into relationship with Himself; He desires to make us **feel loved**, to **celebrate** our dignity and value, to find **pleasure** in us, to **share** His heart with us, to deeply **relate** to us and to **partner** with us in His work.

H. It is impossible for God not to love in the fullness of who He is. God's love for you will never increase because His love is infinite and eternal. That is who He is. Our ability to receive, enjoy, and express God's love will forever increase.

I. From God's point of view, His love never increases. The day we were born again, He had infinite love for us. As we mature spiritually, His love for us does not increase, we simply enjoy more of it. He expresses love effortlessly. It never diminishes when He gives it away. When He pours love out on you, He does not have less love. His love has the same intensity forever. His love does not increase because His love cannot be other than it always is. His love exists in 100% fullness 100% of the time.

J. John gives us insight into the centrality and supremacy of love. It defines God's personality and His kingdom purposes. The perfect or mature knowledge of His love drives fear of being rejected by God out of our heart. We love more by seeing His love for us. Love is the way God created the spirit of His Bride (1 Jn. 4:16-19). The fear of judgment or rejection involves torment. We close (guard) our heart to God when we feel judged; then we run from God instead of to God.

1 Jn. 4:16-19 *God is love...¹⁸There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment...¹⁹We love Him because He first loved us.*

K. When God wants to empower us to love Him, He reveals Himself as One who loves us. Whatever we understand about God's heart for us is awakened in our heart back to God. We are equipped to love Jesus with all our heart when we see that He loves us with all His heart, etc.

Mt. 22:37-38 *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. ³⁸This is the first and great commandment."*

L. Jesus' first and great commandment reveals the *why* behind the *what* of creation and redemption. God's purpose for creation was to provide a family for Himself and an eternal companion for Jesus, who would be equally yoked to Him in love. The glory of His triune love will be shared with His people. The gospel flourishes most when we understand the extravagant passions of God's personality. It is not enough to know what He has done for us on the cross and

will do for us in the future. We need to understand that He does these things because He loves us so deeply.

Eph. 2:4-7 *Because of His great love with which He loved us...⁶and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places...⁷that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

M. Paul gives us insight into the vast ocean of God's love.

Eph. 3:18-19 ... *the width and length and depth and height [of His love]—¹⁹to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

1. **Width:** It embraces every person, personality type, and rank—it is not narrow
2. **Length:** It reaches beyond even our greatest sin and lasts forever—it is not short-lived
3. **Depth:** Jesus went so low in becoming a man to save us because of love—it is not shallow
4. **Height:** Jesus exalts us so high, even to reign with Him, because of love—it is not superficial

N. **Passes knowledge:** Jesus' love will never be fully calculated or measured and it requires the supernatural aid of the Spirit to understand and experience it. Whatever measure of His love we grasp, there is so much more that we do not yet grasp.

O. **Fullness:** Understanding His love is what equips us in each season of our life, both in this age and in the age to come, to experience the fullness of what He wants for us at that time.

P. **Summary:** God is filled with desire. Love finds pleasure in others. It is the *desire* to serve and relate to the one you love, to make them feel loved, to celebrate their dignity and value. The God who has everything still wants something because He is love. He wants not because He is needy, but because He is the fountain of overflowing desire. Desire implies want, but not lack.

II. GOD'S BELOVED

A. Jesus is the Father's beloved. This is Jesus' core identity. This gives us insight into how much the Father loves Jesus and, thus, into the quality of love that He has for us. At the time of Jesus' two greatest trials, the Father strengthened Him by speaking of His love. He spoke this to Jesus before His temptation in the wilderness (Mt. 3-4) and just before He went to the cross (Mt. 17).

Mt. 3:17 *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*

Mt. 17:5 *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"*

B. Paul reveals that all believers are **God's beloved** because of our standing in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). This is the place where our disillusionment is conquered and our love for God is awakened. We must go to the Father to find out **who we really are**, not to people. Here, we understand our true identity. Satan's accusations are a primary battleground in our life, telling us that we are not God's beloved, but are rejected by God. Satan tells us that we have gone too far to be loved.

Rom. 1:7 *To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you...*

C. Living in the reality of our "belovedness" before God changes our emotions dramatically.

Ps. 60:5 ...*that Your beloved may be delivered*

D. John wrote of himself five times as one who Jesus loved (Jn. 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20). John built his life and identity on this truth.

Jn. 13:23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.

Jn. 19:26 Jesus saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by...

Jn. 20:2 She ran to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said...

E. Jeremiah received a revelation of God's love that strengthened him and established his paradigm of prophetic ministry in calling Israel to give themselves fully to God.

Jer. 31:3 The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you."

Jer. 9:24 "I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment...for in these I delight..."

F. Two different angels revealed to Daniel how God felt about him. This tells us more about God's personality than it does about Daniel's lifestyle. It reveals how God feels about His people.

Dan. 9:23 "I [Gabriel] have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved..."

Dan. 10:11-19 And he [an angel] said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you..."¹⁸ Again, the one [angel]...¹⁹said, "O man greatly beloved..."

G. David understood that God delighted in him and treated him with gentleness.

Ps. 18:19, 35 He delivered me because He delighted in me...³⁵Your gentleness has made me great.

Ps. 147:11 The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him...who hope in His mercy.

H. This revelation is essential for the end-of-the-age prayer movement.

Isa. 62:4-5 But you shall be called Hephzibah...for the LORD delights in you...⁵As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.

Hephzibah – "my delight is in her"