

Grace Bible Church
Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries

The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.

The Tree of Life from the week ending 01/18/09

**The Sovereignty, Righteousness, and Justice of God as it relates to the theology of God's plan.
Part 4.**

We are studying the Doctrine of the Theology of God's Perfect Plan.

Under Point 2 we have been noting the importance of the Essence of God.

So far we have noted the fact that God is sovereign. God is perfect righteousness. God is also just. One of the things that God has been revealing to us is the fact that God loves Himself because God's holiness includes His justice as well as His righteousness. (Psa 11:7; Psa 33:5; Psa 37:28; Psa 45:7; Psa 146:8).

We need to make sure we understand the best known verse in the Bible:

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." (Joh 3:16)

This familiar verse covers God's entire plan of love and grace. It begins in eternity past when the destiny of the Second Person of the Trinity, the Lord Jesus Christ, said that He was going to be born true humanity, and go to the Cross to be judged for the sins of mankind.

A great deal of basic doctrine is covered in Joh 3:16. In it our Lord was presenting the plan of salvation to Nicodemus, a religious unbeliever. The Lord Jesus Christ was explaining the Gospel to him in extremely simple terms, drawing such analogies as being born again, or hearing the wind blow. However, even with this artistic explanation from the greatest pastor-teacher of all time, this intellectual Pharisee was still slow to catch on.

If He was struggling with these basic doctrines, how could he understand the inner functions of God's nature? The Lord Jesus Christ could not speak to Nicodemus as He might have spoken to a mature believer. In our Lord's day, as today, few people understood the essence of God, but nearly anyone could comprehend love in some sort of human relationship.

When we truly learn about the divine essence of God, and how He tries to communicate that heaven's ways are higher than our ways, and that His thoughts are higher than our thoughts, then we are truly beginning to not just understand the divine essence of God, but we are now having the essence of God. **"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways My ways," declares the Lord. "For {as} the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa 55:8-9).**

In 1Co 2:9 we read, **But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.**

We all are spiritually blind. We cannot discover God's character or His divine essence if it were not for the fact that situations, or seemingly dark times, are designed to reveal to us the grace and the love of God. This is because the greatest way God can reveal Himself to man is through His love. **"He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay; And He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm"** (Psa 40:2).

The apostle Paul said, **For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; (2Co 4:5-8).**

The Greek word for "afflicted" is the verb "thlibo" which means to be pressed as grapes bring forth wine, to press hard upon to trouble, to afflict, to distress, to suffer tribulation:

The Greek word for "persecuted" is "dioko" meaning to persecute, to follow after, to be given over to undeserved suffering, to pursue in a hostile manner, to harass, to suffer persecution on account of something. The phrase "struck down" is the Greek word "kataballo" means to cast down, to throw to the ground.

Here's how the true issue of the love of God, the motivator of the entire divine essence of God is revealed. Here's how believers who love God let their light shine:

Keep on doing all things without complaining, grumbling or arguing; In order that you yourselves may become blameless and not diluted by evil, students of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you appear as light giving bodies in the world, (Phi 2:14-15).

Always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. (2Co 4:10)

What is the dying of Jesus? It is the fact that as an innocent individual, He went through undeserved suffering and He didn't complain, didn't quit. He went forward in the plan of God for His life. The word "life" is the Greek noun "zoe" which means the state of one who is possessed of vitality; it is used of the absolute fullness of life which belongs to God.

If Isa 55:8 is true, and it is, **"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways My ways," declares the Lord.** Then when Isa 53:10 says, **But the Lord was pleased To crush Him, putting {Him} to grief;** why do most believers have a difficult time understanding this?

In Isa 52:13 it says, **Behold, My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up, and greatly exalted.**

How will He prosper?

Well, **“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways My ways,”** declares the Lord,” The Last Will Be First.

“Why are the nations in an uproar And the peoples devising a vain thing? The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together Against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, Let us tear their fetters apart And cast away their cords from us! He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them.”

(Psa 2:1-4)

How would He prosper?

He would be deserted by His friends. **"Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, And against the man, My Associate," Declares the Lord of hosts. "Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered; And I will turn My hand against the little ones. (Zec 13:7)**

How will He prosper?

He would be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver. (Zec 11:12)

How will He prosper?

In Psa 22, He would be crucified. **“I am poured out like water, And all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It is melted within me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And my tongue cleaves to my jaws; And Thou dost lay me in the dust of death. For dogs have surrounded me; A band of evildoers has encompassed me; They pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me;” (Psa 22:14-17)**

How will He prosper?

We have the prophecy of certain events which took place around the Cross. **"But I am a worm, and not a man, a reproach of men, and despised by the people. All who see Me sneer at Me; they separate with the lip, they wag the head, saying, Commit Yourself to the Lord; let Him deliver Him; let Him rescue Him, because He delights in Him" (Psa 22:6-8).** This was totally fulfilled. **And the people stood by, looking on. And even the rulers were sneering at Him, slaying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen one" (Luk 23:35).**

We have the prophecy of His hands and feet being pierced in Psa 22:16. This was fulfilled throughout the Gospels when they nailed His hands and feet to the Cross, Mat 27:31 and Mar 15:24.

Then there was the prophecy of casting lots for His garments (Psa 22:18). This was totally fulfilled in Mat 27:35.

There is the prophecy that not one of His bones would be broken (Psa 34:20). **is broken." This fulfilled in Joh 19:34-36. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water. For these things came to pass, that the scripture might be fulfilled, "not a bone of Him shall be broken." (Joh 19:34-36)**

Then there is the prophecy of the false witnesses. **"Malicious witnesses rose up; they ask Me of things that I do not know" (Psa 35:11).** This was fulfilled in Mar 14:57-58. **And some stood up**

and began to give false testimony against Him, saying, "We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands.'" (Mar 14:57-58)

There is the Old Testament prophecy of the betrayal of Judas Iscariot. **"Even My close friend, in whom I trusted, who ate My bread, has lifted up his heel against Me" Psa 41:9).** This was fulfilled in Luk 22:47-48. **While He was still speaking, behold, a multitude came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was preceding them; and he approached Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of man with a kiss?" (Luk 22:47-48).**

There is the prophecy that they would offer The Lord Jesus Christ gall and vinegar. **"They also gave Me gall for My food, and for My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink." (Psa 69:21).** This was fulfilled in Mat 27:34. **They gave Him wine to drink mingled with gall; and after tasting it, He was unwilling to drink. (Mat 27:34).**

There is the prophecy of the physical abuse and humiliation of Jesus. Isa 50:6 **"I gave My back to those who strike Me, and My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spiting" (Isa 50:6).**

This was fulfilled in Mat 26:67. **Then they spat in His face and beat Him with their fists; and others slapped Him (Mat 26:67).**

Before we go on, let's be sure we know the difference between impersonal and personal love.

And we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us (1Jo 4:16). God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. When John says **"we have come to know,"** he uses the per-act-ind of "ginosko" which is "egnokamen," meaning to know, to become aware, to perceive, to understand, to be conscious of, to comprehend intellectually.

The reason it is translated **"we have come to know the love which God has for us"** is because knowing that God loves you is a process that comes from learned facts. The more doctrine you learn the more you will realize how much God loves you. What is it that we have come to know and have believed? It is the love, or the agape, which God has for us. Agape love is used here in the sense of virtue love and divine love. This is the love which God has from His own virtue or perfect righteousness. It is from His own perfect character, His own perfect integrity, from His own perfect virtue.

Everything begins with understanding the fact that God loves you. **We love, because He first loved us (1Jo 4:19).** Our relationship with God begins by truly understanding the agape love that God had toward us. God's love for us is based upon who God is, not who we are. Just like agape love, or impersonal unconditional love, in us is based upon who we are, not those who we are showing love to. God loved us billions and billions of years ago without any strings attached. In fact, God's love impersonally and unconditionally all believers, whether they are living in His plan for their lives or not. This is why even though God knew in eternity past who would be a winner and who would be a loser, He still blessed losers. Those believers with negative volition toward doctrine, and who could care less about the plan of God have an escrow account. Losers have equal privilege and equal opportunity. How can God love losers? How can God love the carnal believer? The same way He loves winners and the same way He loves the mature believer: Impersonal unconditional agape love.