Who is God?
Wednesday, September 11
Part Six in the Series

THE AMAZING LOVE OF GOD

1 John 4:7-8 - 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.

1 The Mariana Trench is the deepest-known part of any ocean, dropping to 38,000 feet below sea level. Now think this amazing lyric through as it pertains to the love of God:

Could we with ink the ocean fill
And were the skies of parchment made
Were every stalk on earth a quill
And every man a scribe by trade
To write the love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry
Nor could the scroll contain the whole
Though stretched from sky to sky

What a concept! Think of it - an ocean thousands of miles wide, seven miles deep and consisting of ink. Furthermore, every blade of grass is a pen. Add to it that every person ever born is a writer. And his or her sheet of paper is the sky. To write the LOVE OF GOD would drain the ocean; the writer would run out of paper. We are not certain who wrote that astounding lyric or how long ago it was completed; but this we do know: the human mind cannot comprehend the LOVE OF GOD.

BUT GOD HAS ALL THESE RULES! HE IS CRUEL AND ARBITRARY!

Years ago, our son David and his family were missionaries in Africa. Darlene and I visited them quite often. We learned that cobras, one of the deadliest snakes in the world, abounded in that region. One night David found three of them IN THEIR HOUSE. He searched through the dark hours until he had found and exterminated every one of them. Why? Because he hated snakes? No. It was because he dearly loved is wife and children. That’s how God feels about sin! Sin, unless
obliterated, kills people. God loves people. He hates sin. A loving parent is a 
protective parent. Sometimes our loving Heavenly Father needs to protect and/or
discipline us for our own sake. Hebrews 12:6-11 (New Living)

For when he punishes you, it proves that he loves you. When he whips you, it
proves you are really his child.

[7] Let God train you, for he is doing what any loving father does for his
children. Whoever heard of a son who was never corrected? [8] If God doesn't
punish you when you need it, as other fathers punish their sons, then it means
that you aren't really God's son at all—that you don't really belong in his family.
[9] Since we respect our fathers here on earth, though they punish us, should we
not all the more cheerfully submit to God's training so that we can begin really
to live?

[10] Our earthly fathers trained us for a few brief years, doing the best for us
that they knew how, but God's correction is always right and for our best good,
that we may share his holiness. [11] Being punished isn't enjoyable while it is
happening—it hurts! But afterwards we can see the result, a quiet growth in
grace and character.

My father never hit me. Not one time. He didn't have to. One look from his
eyes told me more than any whipping could ever do. I behaved most of the time
MAINLY because I didn't want to disappoint my father. Shouldn't that be the
way we, His children, should conduct our lives? But...still we often disappoint
Him and He loves us so much He brings us around by way of needed discipline.
If He didn't care for us... He wouldn't bother.

Never mistake God's loving discipline with anger or lack of loving us. The Bible
speaks to that so clearly.

GOD'S LOVE IS ETERNAL

Today we hear of so many marriages - that began with true love - ending in sad and
messy divorces. But the love of God to us is not emotionally-based. Thiessen
writes that His love is a rational and voluntary affection, fueled by His free choice
and the purest of holiness. Lectures in Systematic Theology / Thiessen / page 130 / Eerdman Publ

Nor is His love some emotionally-based, too-sweet musical experience... under the
moonlight... you know, teen-age affection. But consider this: God is not the
stone-hearted, cold deity that some think Him to be. True love involves feeling
and if there is no feeling with God, then there is no true love. However, as is the
case with human love, God’s love toward us does not run up the scale between cold or hot. It is a constant extension of His heart to ours.

Many truly believe that they have somehow sinned away their day of grace, and that God has permanently turned against them. Such conviction has no fertile soil in the Scriptures. Quite the opposite: Rev. 22:17 *The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ Let each one who hears them say the same, ‘Come.’ Let the thirsty one come--anyone who wants to; let him come and drink the Water of Life without charge.*

A human lover can get miffed and turn away "on that proverbial dime" and leave in a huff. Not so with God. Are you aware that scriptures teach that you can get as close to God as you want to - and furthermore, at this very moment, you are as close to God AS YOU WANT TO BE! If you feel alienated from Him, it is not His doing. It is yours either because someone has fed you a line that is not valid or because of your own thinking.

**BUT WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES TEACH ABOUT THE LOVE OF GOD?**

1. The Holy Word of God declares Him to be the very personification of real love. He is, in fact, the definition of love.

On McGregor Boulevard, just south of the church here, has stood a sign for many years, its bright green letters declaring to all who pass it, GOD IS LOVE. So true, as emphasized in the Bible:

2 Cor. 13:11

*Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.*

1 John 4:8

*He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.*

1 John 4:16

*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.*
Because God is love, it is therefore His very nature to love you and me. What a contrast to the verbalized hatred we hear on newscasts and in print. Think of the horrors of road rage on our highways. Oh, dear friend, His love is not the cold and mechanical love of the philosopher; but a love that caused Him to so love us that He gave the world His only begotten Son to die for us.

He does not love ONLY the loveable. John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Think of God’s love reaching down to those tens of thousands of Bahamians who were devastated by Storm Dorian. What destruction! What loss! Since we are the children of God, it only stands to reason that we respond in a tangible way to those sad people. MORE ABOUT THIS A WEEK FROM SUNDAY.

2. God loves the Jews

Deut. 7:6-8

*For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. [7] The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: [8] But because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.*

Today we are seeing an arising flow of antisemitism around the world, but especially in the Middle East and Europe. One of our responsibilities as Christians is to love the Jewish people and to tangibly reach out to them whenever possible. This does not mean we give unthinking support to all the policies of the government of Israel, but we do support the Jewish people. God is not done with the Jews. Anyone who thinks so should read once again the book of Revelation. Especially this passage which takes place in the FUTURE:
The coastline of Eilat, Israel, situated on the northern shore of the Red Sea - the sea parted by Moses as he led the Children of Israel from Egyptian bondage to the Promised Land. The mountains to the east, behind Eilat, are part of the Kingdom of Jordan.

Rev. 7:1-10 And after these things, I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. [2] And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, [3] Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. [4] And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. [5] Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. [6] Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nepthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. [7] Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. [8] Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand. [9] After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; [10] And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.
This extended passage of Holy Scripture teaches that perhaps the greatest ingathering of the lost will come to Christ during the Great Tribulation, and will come about because of the ministry of 144,000 born-again, Spirit-filled Jewish people. During this time they will be divinely protected against any threat or hostility from the God-hating, satanic action. That passage should put to rest any credibility of the super-cessionism teaching against the Jews that is raising its head today.

UNDER THE GENERAL HEADING OF THE LOVE OF GOD

As time permits, in future sessions we will study:
- the benevolence of God
- the mercy of God
- and the grace of God