

## **Devotional Questions – 1 John 4:7-21**

1. *According to 1 John 4:7-8, where does love come from?*
2. *1 John 4:9-10 say that Christ's birth and death show us God's love. How do these two events help you to understand God's love?*
3. *How does God's love motivate you to love others (1 John 4:11-12)?*
4. *How do we know that we are in God and God is in us? What evidence is there (1 John 4:13)?*
5. *Because God is love, what do we know about those whose lives are full of love (1 John 4:16)?*
6. *What does John mean by [H]is love is perfected\* or completed in us (1 John 4:17)? \*Perfected is the correct term, not completed.*
7. *Since we can't 'see' love, how does this passage help us to see the effects of God's love?*
8. *What does Jesus say about loving others (1 John 4:21)?*
9. *Why should we find it difficult to show love?*
10. *Recognising that love is not based on feelings, what are some practical ways you can show love to others?*

## Devotional Questions – 1 John 4:7-21

### Answers to Questions

For detailed comments see Dr Ruckman's comments<sup>1</sup> on John 21:15-17 for debunking the Christian fundamentalist urban myth about *agape* and *phileo* as superior and inferior forms of love respectively. See John 21:15, 16 for "*lovest*" *agape* twice and John 21:17 "*lovest*" *phileo* "*the third time.*" See also Matthew 23:6/Luke 11:43 *phileo/agape*, John 5:20, 11:3, 16:27 *phileo* each time, 2 Timothy 4:10 *agape*, 2 Peter 2:15 *agape*, 1 John 2:15 *agape* each time.

1. According to 1 John 4:7-8, where does love come from?

1 John 4:7-8 state "love is of God...for God is love."

The reference here is similar to Jeremiah's reference to "*the LORD, the fountain of living waters*" Jeremiah 17:13, as David also refers to the Lord.

*"For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light"* Psalm 36:9.

Noting therefore that "*the Word was God*" John 1:1 and "*In him was life; and the life was the light of men*" John 1:4 and "*that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all*" 1 John 1:5, then, with 1 John 4:7-8, for believers individually to have *life, light* and *love*, a *trinity* in themselves, requires that "*Christ be in you*" i.e. "*the Spirit of Christ...the Spirit of God*" because "*the Spirit is life because of righteousness*" Romans 8:9, 10.

2. 1 John 4:9-10 say that Christ's birth and death show us God's love. How do these two events help you to understand God's love?

Paul and John explain why, John citing the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

*"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"* Romans 5:8 i.e. Christ died to *save* sinners.

*"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons"* Galatians 4:4-5 i.e. Christ was born to *redeem* sinners.

*"...I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly"* John 10:10 with John 6:51 "*my flesh...I will give for the life of the world*" and 1 John 4:9 "*...God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him*" 1 John 4:9 i.e. Christ was born to *regenerate* sinners.

*"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins"* 1 John 4:10 i.e. Christ died *in place* of sinners<sup>2</sup>.

Note that for:

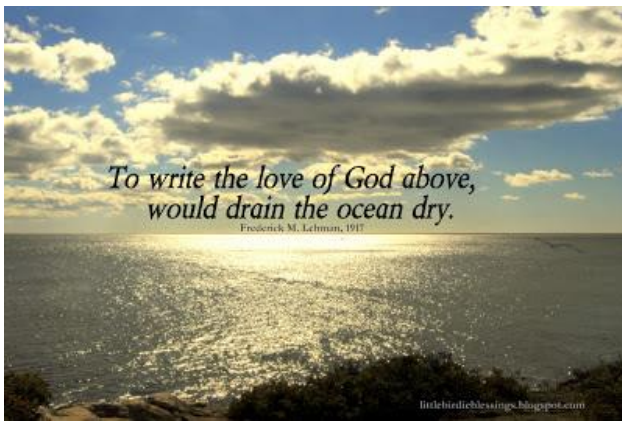
**"Propitiation" from the Scriptures:**

**Propitiation is a Person** 1 John 2:1-2

**Propitiation is "Christ our Passover"** 1 Corinthians 5:7

**Propitiation is "the Saviour" and "savour"** Ephesians 5:2, 1 John 4:14

God's love is why today's believer has *redemption* from sin, *adoption* as a son, *propitiation* for sin and "*the salvation of God*" Acts 28:28 *over* sin "*through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord*" Romans 5:21. That is "*the love of God toward us*" 1 John 4:9:



*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.*

*One day, during short intervals of inattention to our work, we picked up a scrap of paper and, seated upon an empty lemon box pushed against the wall, with a stub pencil, added the (first) two*

*stanzas and chorus of the song... Since the lines (3<sup>rd</sup> stanza from the Jewish poem) had been found [pencilled] on the wall of a patient's room in an insane asylum after he had been carried to his grave, the general opinion was that this inmate had written the epic in moments of sanity.*

- Frederick M. Lehman, History of the Song, *The Love of God*, 1948<sup>3</sup>.

***“For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God...”*** 2 Corinthians 5:13.

3. *How does God's love motivate you to love others (1 John 4:11-12)?*

*By the Lord's example through Himself*

***“...I am among you as he that serveth”*** Luke 22:27.

***“For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you”*** John 13:15.

*By the Lord's exhortation through Paul*

***“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law”*** Romans 13:8-9.

***“...by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself”*** Galatians 5:13-14.

*By the Lord's enabling through the individual believer*

***“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work”*** 2 Corinthians 9:8.

***“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me”*** Philippians 4:13.

4. *How do we know that we are in God and God is in us? What evidence is there (1 John 4:13)?*

1 John 4:13 states ***“Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.”***

John is referring here to the witness of the Spirit of God in the believer, as Paul explains:

*Spiritual Witness in the Believer*

***“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God”*** Romans 8:15-16.

Other witnesses of the believer being in God and God in him are:

*Scriptural Witness by the Believer*

**“But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him”** 1 John 2:5.

*Servant Witness of the believer*

**“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death”** 1 John 3:14 with Galatians 5:13 **“...by love serve one another.”**

*Steadfast Witness from the Believer*

**“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed”** Romans 10:9-11.

**“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God”** 2 Timothy 1:8.

5. *Because God is love, what do we know about those whose lives are full of love (1 John 4:16)?*

See *Question 4* and with “love” as the first of “***the fruit of the Spirit***” Galatians 5:22, note Paul’s exhortation to the Ephesians, insofar as *those whose lives are full of love* are those who are “***filled with the Spirit.***” They show consistent praise and thanks to God as Paul also exhorts.

**“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord”** Ephesians 5:18-19.

**“By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name”** Hebrews 13:15<sup>4</sup>.

*How deep the Father’s love for us,  
How vast beyond all measure  
That He should give His only Son  
To make a wretch His treasure*

6. *What does John mean by [H]is love is perfected\* or completed in us (1 John 4:17)? \*Perfected is the correct term, not completed.*

Note that *completed* is not correct as Gail Riplinger shows in *New Age Bible Versions* pp 160-161 in that students may have completed their course but are not “***blameless***” or “***perfect***” as the Lord Jesus Christ intends for “***the children which God hath given me***” Hebrews 2:13.

**“The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master”** Luke 6:40.

**“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”** 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

**“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth”** 1 Peter 2:21-22.

1 John 4:17 describes a stage of perfection. It states “***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.***” Noting that “***We love him, because he first loved us***” 1 John 4:19 “***our love made perfect***” is certainty of oneness with and open identification with the Lord Jesus Christ.

**“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”** Romans 8:37-39.

**“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God”** 2 Corinthians 5:19-20.

Full perfection is **“when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is”** 1 John 3:2 i.e. changed by beholding **“even as by the Spirit of the Lord”** 2 Corinthians 3:18. The change is now at work via **“the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby”** 1 Peter 2:2.

7. Since we can’t ‘see’ love, how does this passage help us to see the effects of God’s love?

**“God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him”** 1 John 4:9.

**“God...sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins”** 1 John 4:10.

**“he hath given us of his Spirit”** 1 John 4:13.

**“the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world”** 1 John 4:14.

In sum **“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”** John 3:16. Note that John 3:16 does not mean that God loves, present tense, the world of the unsaved. **“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him”** John 3:36. See the Ruckman Reference Bible p 1388 on John 3:36.

8. What does Jesus say about loving others (1 John 4:21)?

**“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another”** John 13:34-35. John 13:34-35 shows that to **“love one another”** is to **“bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us...that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ”** 1 John 1:2-3. It may not, of course, be appreciated.

**“Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you”** 1 John 3:13.

9. Why should we find it difficult to show love?

Paul shows why with respect to the term **“charity”** that is the precise Biblical term for the kind of unfaltering love that saved individuals should exercise between one another. See the Ruckman Reference Bible p 1524 and *The Certainty of the Words* by Kyle Stephens Chapter 3 - Example – Charity Cases.

Paul describes some of the attributes of **“charity”** as follows.

**“Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,”** 1 Corinthians 13:4.

**“Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;”** 1 Corinthians 13:5.

**“Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;”** 1 Corinthians 13:6.

Unfaltering love between unsaved individuals should manifest those qualities of **“charity”** consistently. That may be difficult but some scriptures that will help by way of prayerful application, James 1:5, 22, are as follows:

**“...Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth”** 1 Corinthians 8:1.



**“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others”** Philippians 2:3-4.

**“For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise”** Hebrews 10:36.

**“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth”** 3 John 4, particularly applicable with respect to Dave and Mike.

10. Recognising that love is not based on feelings, what are some practical ways you can show love to others?

*Example of Life to Believers*

**“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity”** 1 Timothy 4:12.

**“Effectual fervent prayer”** *for Believers*

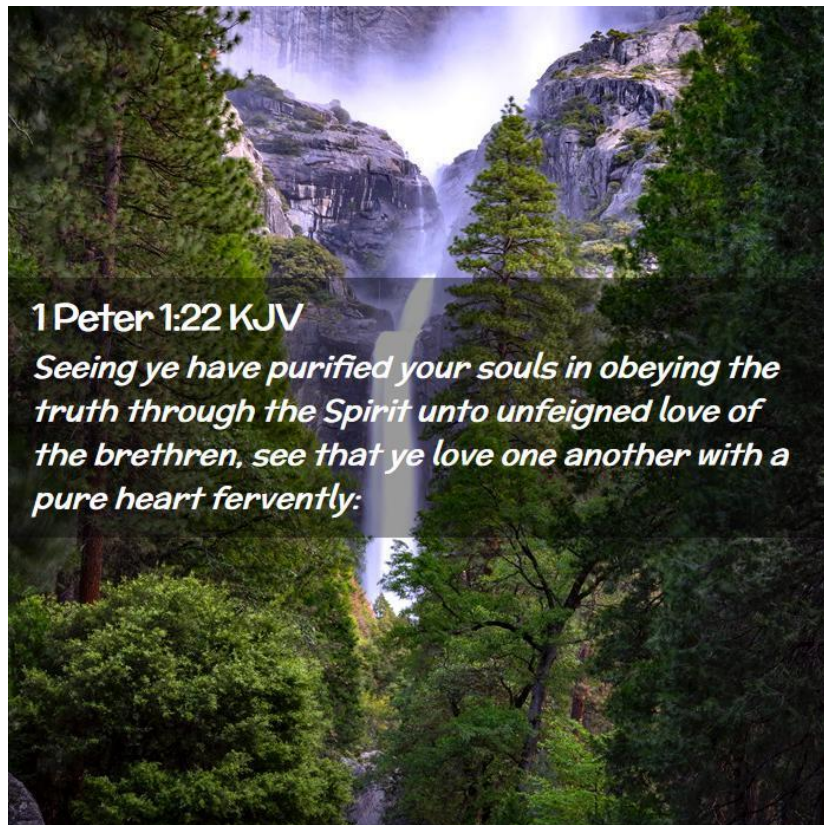
For example, for an injured member of a local church of long-standing friendship with this writer and immediate family, *Please, Lord, help \*\*\*\*\* to mend soon and not do too much in the meantime.*

**“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much”** James 5:16.

*Exercise of Spiritual Gifts on behalf of Believers*

**“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen”**  
1 Peter 4:10-11.

In sum<sup>5</sup>:



**Appendix – “We love him, because he first loved us” 1 John 4:19**

From Will Kinney<sup>6</sup>:

**1 John 4:19 KJB - “We love HIM because he first loved us.”**

**ESV, NIV, NASB - “We love because he first loved us.”**

*There are several textual variants in just this one verse with so few words in it, and once again, the so called “oldest and best” do not agree with each other. The Majority of all remaining Greek manuscripts read as does the King James Bible and the Reformation bibles - “We love HIM because he first loved us.” - Ἡμεῖς ἀγαπῶμεν αὐτόν.*

*However Sinaiticus actually reads “We love GOD because he first loved us.” - Ἡμεῖς ἀγαπῶμεν τὸν θεόν - whereas the Vatican manuscript simply has “We love because he first love us.” - ἡμεῖς ἀγαπῶμεν - and thus the modern Vatican Versions like the ESV, NIV, NASB, Holman, NET and ISV.*

*The New Living Translation 2007 just made up their own text and says: “We love EACH OTHER because he loved us first.” There is NO Greek text that reads this way. But the Living Bible of 1971 had it right even though it was a paraphrase with - “our love FOR HIM comes as a result of his loving us first.”*

*Agreeing with the King James Bible “We love HIM because he first loved us.” are Tyndale 1525 - “We love him for he loved vs first.”, Coverdale 1535, the Great Bible 1540, Matthew’s Bible 1549, the Bishops’ Bible 1568, the Geneva Bible 1587 - “We loue him, because he loued vs first.”, Mace N.T. 1729, Wesley’s N.T. 1755, Worsley N.T. 1770, Living Oracles 1835, Young 1898, J.B. Phillips Translation 1962, New Life Version 1969, NKJV 1982, Amplified Bible 1987, Green’s literal Translation, Third Millennium Bible 1998 and the Jubilee Bible 2000-2010 - “We love him, because he first loved us.”*

*Foreign language Bibles that have the same reading as the KJB are the Spanish Sagradas Escrituras 1549, Cipriano de Valera 1602, the Reina Valera 1909-2011 - “Nosotros lo amamos a él, porque él primero nos amó.”, Luther’s German Bible 1545 and Schlachter Bible 2000 - “Lasset uns ihn lieben; denn er hat uns zuerst geliebt.”, the French Martin 1744, Ostervald 1996 and Louis Segond 2007 - “Nous l’aimons, parce qu’il nous a aimés le premier.”, the Portuguese A Sagrada Biblia and O Livro 2000 - “Ns o amamos a ele porque ele nos amou primer.”, the Italian Diodati 1649, La Nuova Diodati 1991 and Nuova Riveduta 2006 - “Noi lo amiamo, perch egli ci ha amati per primo.”*

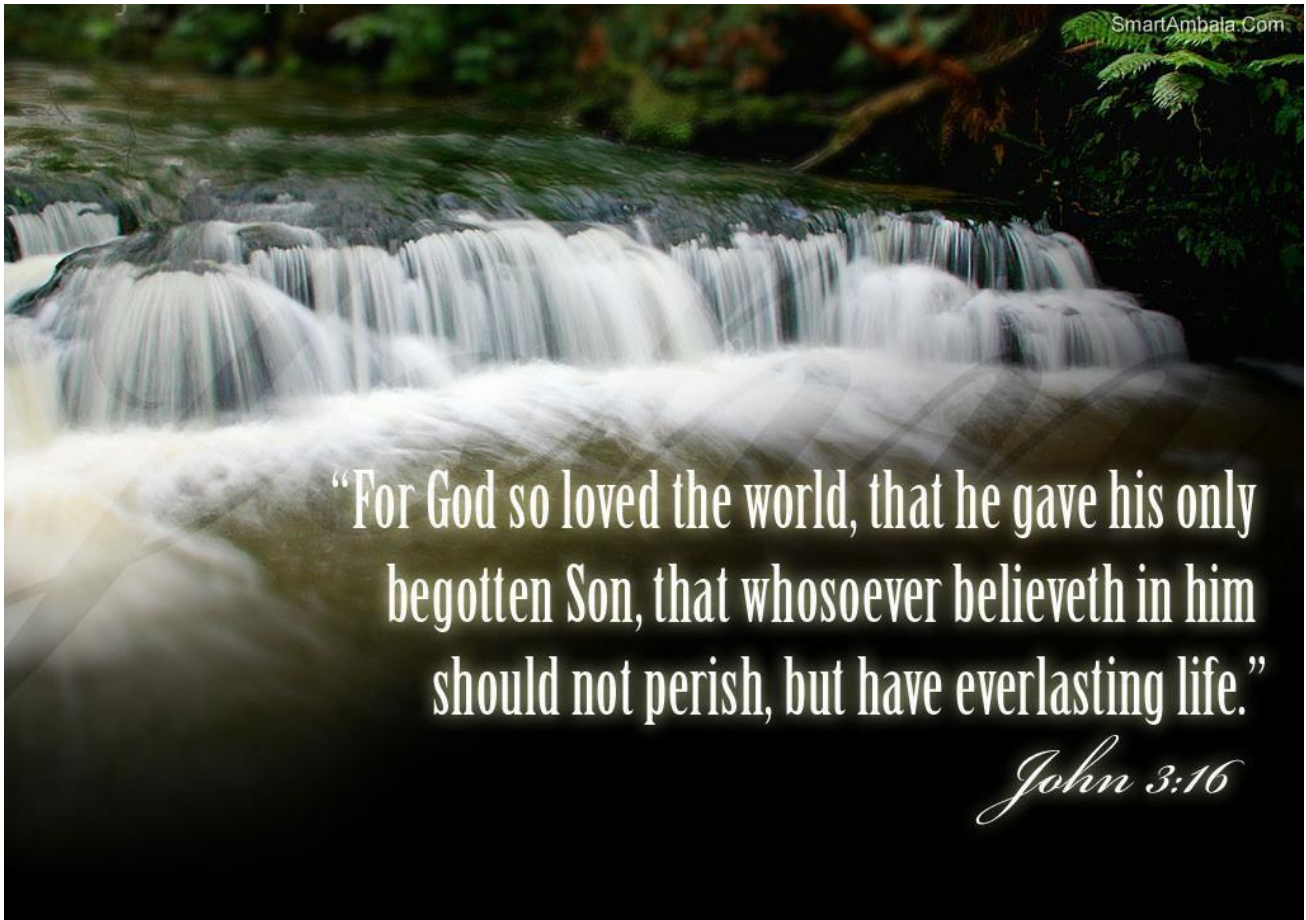
*Those that have adopted the Vaticanus reading and say merely “We love because he first loved us.” are the RV, ASV, NASB, NIV, RSV, ESV, ISV, NET, the Jehovah Witness New World Translation and the modern Catholic Versions like the Douay 1950, St. Joseph NAB 1970 and the New Jerusalem 1985.*

*The earlier Douay-Rheims of 1582 followed the Latin Vulgate, and not the Greek texts, which had the word “God” in the verse 2 times. The Douay-Rheims reads – “Let us therefore love God: because God first hath loved us.” and the Latin Vulgate of 407 A.D. said “Nos ergo diligamus Deum, quoniam Deus prior dilexit nos.” However, in typical fashion the Catholic church has now “updated” the New Latin Vulgate 1979 and it reads just like the modern Vatican Versions - “Nos diligimus, quoniam ipse prior dilexit nos.” = “We love, because he first loved us.” (Just a “coincidence”, right?)*

*Even though the English version of the NIV says “We love, because he first loved us.”, the NIV Spanish version - Nueva Versión Internacional 1999 - follows a different text and says “We love GOD because he first loved us.” - Nosotros amamos a Dios porque él nos amó primero.”*

*So you have a choice to make, either the Reformation text of the King James Bible or the new Vatican Versions. God did not inspire three different readings in the same verse in the same place. One is right and the others are wrong. Guess who wants you to be in continual doubt as to what God really said in His Book. The same serpent we see in Genesis 3 who asks the first question recorded in the Holy Bible - “Yea, hath God said...” (Genesis 3:1). Finally<sup>7</sup>:*

*“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us,  
and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” 1 John 4:10*



#### References

All web references were current at the time of writing. Web reference and author are given the first time a particular work is cited. Only the work itself is cited in subsequent references.

See [shop.timefortruth.co.uk/ruckman.html](http://shop.timefortruth.co.uk/ruckman.html) for Dr Ruckman’s books.

<sup>1</sup> [store.kjv1611.org/](http://store.kjv1611.org/)

*The Books of the General Epistles Volume 2* by Dr Peter S. Ruckman, pp 133-161

*Ruckman Reference Bible* p 1425

<sup>2</sup> [www.timefortruth.co.uk/bible-studies/alan-oreillys-studies.php](http://www.timefortruth.co.uk/bible-studies/alan-oreillys-studies.php) *1 John 2 Part 1 Propitiation*

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<sup>3</sup> [library.timelesstruths.org/music/The\\_Love\\_of\\_God/](http://library.timelesstruths.org/music/The_Love_of_God/) *The Love of God* by Frederick M. Lehman

[www.hymntime.com/tch/](http://www.hymntime.com/tch/) *The Cyber Hymnal, Titles, The Love of God (Lehman)*

<sup>4</sup> [www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00trks2](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00trks2) *How Deep the Father’s Love for Us*

[www.ap0s7le.com/list/song/28](http://www.ap0s7le.com/list/song/28) *How Deep the Father’s Love for Us lyrics*

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<sup>5</sup> [www.scripture-images.com/bible-verse/kjv/1-peter-1-22-kjv.php](http://www.scripture-images.com/bible-verse/kjv/1-peter-1-22-kjv.php)

<sup>6</sup> [brandplucked.webs.com/kjbarticles.htm](http://brandplucked.webs.com/kjbarticles.htm) *The so called “Science” of Textual Criticism. 1 John thru Revelation*

<sup>7</sup> [www.imagesbuddy.com/img/god/page/4/](http://www.imagesbuddy.com/img/god/page/4/)