

## DOES GOD LOVE SINNERS OR HATE THEM?

Bryan Matthew Dockens

The answer to the above question is a definite Yes. It is a paradox that God loves sinners and that He hates sinners, but Jesus assures the incredulous, *"The things which are impossible with men are possible with God"* (Luke 18:27). Mankind may have trouble reconciling these apparently discordant facts, but the Almighty is not so limited as man. Within Him is the ability to love whom He hates.

Scripture affirms the Lord detests evildoers: *"You hate all workers of iniquity"* (Psalm 5:6). Concerning the Canaanites, Jehovah said, *"I abhor them"* (Leviticus 20:23). He warned the Israelites that if they apostatized and reverted to idolatry, *"My soul shall abhor you"* (26:30). Multiple psalms verify it: *"Jehovah abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man"* (Psalm 5:7), *"The wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates"* (11:5), *"When God heard this, He was furious, and greatly abhorred Israel"* (78:59), and *"The wrath of Jehovah was kindled against His people, so that He abhorred His own inheritance"* (106:40). Through the prophet Hosea, the Lord said, *"I hated them because of the evil of their deeds"* (Hosea 9:15).

In a rather well-known passage, it is written, *"These six things Jehovah hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren"* (Proverbs 6:16-19). Notice, it is not only a look, a tongue, hands, a heart, or feet engaged in wrongdoing that He hates, but also a false witness and one who sows discord, meaning the people who do such things.

Despite the popular adage that "God loves the sinner, but hates the sin," the reality is that He hates the sinner. An enormity of Scripture cannot be ignored simply to fit preferred misconceptions.

Nevertheless, He also loves sinners! *"God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:8). Indeed, this teaches what love actually is: *"By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us"* (1<sup>st</sup> John 3:16). *"In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins"* (4:9-10).

God hates sinners, but He loves them even more than He hates them!

– Continued from page 1 –

Whether orally or in writing, it is fair to refer to accurate statements, regardless of their source, when presenting the gospel. The convenience of such quotations is the editorial ability of the writer or speaker to limit the material to only what is relevant and true, whereas inviting the person being quoted to speak to a congregation would not.

While they may be quoted, outsiders must not be invited to address the church, for the church is capable of its own edification *"according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love"* (Ephesians 4:16). Non-Christians must never be engaged to speak before the congregation. There is simply no authority for it and prudence shows the spiritual danger of entrusting teaching and influence to those who have not, themselves, accepted the truth and obeyed the same. Jesus warned, *"He who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber"* (John 10:1), and *"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly"* (10).

Even within the church, hazards arise that must be opposed. Paul warned the elders overseeing the church of Ephesus, *"Savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves"* (Acts 20:29-30). How to handle these false teachers is expressly communicated throughout the New Testament. In particular, Paul urged the brethren in Rome, *"Note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them"* (Romans 16:17). And the apostle John wrote, *"If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him"* (2<sup>nd</sup> John 9).

Churches are required to exercise great caution in putting only fellow brethren to work edifying the church, and only those brethren who speak *"sound doctrine"* (Titus 2:1). Nevertheless, quoting a person is not the same as welcoming him to the pulpit, and no hearer should infer any such reference to be an endorsement of that person's character or approval of any other content not quoted.

**"WHAT MUST I DO  
TO BE SAVED?"**

**ACTS 16:30**

**LEARN THE GOSPEL**

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

**BELIEVE IN CHRIST**

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

**CONFESS CHRIST**

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

**REPENT OF SIN**

Acts 3:19; 17:30

**BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST**

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

**REMAIN STEADFAST**

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF  
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

**HEBREWS 10:24-25**

**SUNDAY**

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

**WEDNESDAY**

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard  
Belén, New Mexico

Seekers Welcome.  
Members Expected.

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN  
ANY TRESPASS...  
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"**

**GALATIANS 6:1**

**CONFESS TRESPASSES**

James 5:16; 1<sup>st</sup> John 1:9

**REPENT OF SIN**

Acts 8:22

**PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS**

Acts 8:22

**REMAIN STEADFAST**

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN IS  
LIKE APPLES OF GOLD IN  
SETTINGS OF SILVER"**

**PROVERBS 25:11**

"Repetitive complaining will attract things for you to complain about. Repeated gratitude will attract things for you to be thankful about."

**"WHOLE COUNSEL"**

**ACTS 20:27**

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**STOPPED CLOCKS**

Bryan Matthew Dockens

Because even a stopped clock is right twice per day, it is true that those outside the body and false teachers from within the body will sometimes speak truth. In such instances, the words may be printed in church bulletins or quoted in sermons without fault.

To idolaters in Athens, Paul preached, *"For in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring'"* (Acts 17:28). The apostle quoted the third century B.C. stoic poet Aratus because, despite not believing in the true God of heaven, he was correct. Man is made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26).

To the evangelist on the island of Crete, Paul wrote, *"For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain. One of them, a prophet of their own, said, 'Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.' This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith"* (Titus 1:10-13). In his letter, the apostle shared the words of a sixth or seventh century B.C. philosopher Epimenides because that man's observations substantiated his own inspired awareness of sins needing correction in that culture.

- Continued on page 3 -

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