

# ***The Covenant Breaker***

---

## ***Unconditional Love's Sinister Plan***

### **Volume 4**

### ***Unconditional Love Versus the Conditions of Repentance***

Prepared by  
Elder Dwight Burford  
[www.hisworkmanship.net](http://www.hisworkmanship.net)  
November 23, 2016 DRAFT

## **Table of Contents**

Introduction .....	3
O for a Faith That Will Not Shrink ... Beneath the Chast'ning Rod.....	5
Mine Ordinances, Your Sacraments.....	7
A Broken Heart and Contrite Spirit.....	8
If God Peradventure Will Give Them Repentance.....	10
Come and Dine .....	12
God Will Provide Himself a Lamb .....	13
Exhort One Another Daily.....	13
I Am the Light of the World.....	15
For This is the Love of God .....	17
How Dwelleth the Love of God in Him?.....	19
I Know Thy Works .....	21
Covenant Breakers Versus The Faithful Servant.....	23
The Conditions of Repentance .....	25
Offer Unto the Lord an Offering in Righteousness .....	28
Bring Forth Fruits Meet for Repentance .....	30
Repentance to the Acknowledging of the Truth .....	34
If My People.....	36
Repent Ye, and Believe the Gospel .....	38
Today if Ye Will Hear His Voice .....	40
End Notes .....	43

# Unconditional Love Versus the Conditions of Repentance

Prepared by  
Elder Dwight Burford  
[www.hisworkmanship.net](http://www.hisworkmanship.net)  
November 23, 2016 DRAFT

*And the Lord appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, **I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for a house of sacrifice.** If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; **If** my people which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; **then** will I hear from heaven,<sup>1</sup> and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. (II Chronicles 7:12-14)*

*This **then** is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. **If** we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But **if** we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. **If** we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. **If** we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **If** we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. But **if** any man sin and repent, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. (I John 1:5-2:2)*

---

## Introduction

For many people, loving unconditionally simply means loving others regardless of who they may or may not be and loving them regardless of what they may or may not have done.<sup>2</sup> If advocates of unconditional love are to be consistent in their approach to loving others unconditionally, this will also be their approach to loving Jesus Christ.

Taking such an approach to loving our Lord fails, however, to love Him for who He is as our Savior and to love Him for what He has done on the cross to save us from our sins. Thus, their choosing to love others unconditionally, including Jesus Christ, diminishes both their witness of Him as Savior and their confession of His right to rule as Creator Lord over them and those they love.

Since unconditional love does not depend upon who Jesus Christ is or what He has done, those who would choose to love others unconditionally will find no specific need to share the good news about His work of redemption attested to by His death and resurrection, and soon don't. Neither will they see a specific need to speak to others about Jesus' teachings and His commandments, and soon won't (contrary to *the Great Commission*).<sup>3</sup>

Being unconditional by definition, unconditional love separates itself and sets itself apart from the conditions of the New Covenant mediated by Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup> Invoking unconditional love serves, in essence, to reject His witness that He rules in the heavens above and in the earth beneath based upon these conditions.<sup>5</sup> It disregards Jesus' claim that our lives depend upon the salvation He alone can offer and is offering to everyone who will and does receive Him.<sup>6</sup> It does not recognize nor support Jesus' claim that we must repent of our sins to receive salvation and rest in His everlasting kingdom.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, it dismisses His call to repent<sup>8</sup> and come to Him in order to be saved from *the wrath to come*.<sup>9</sup>

These are irreconcilable departures from *the gospel of the kingdom* as it was taught by Jesus Christ.<sup>10</sup> In its sphere of influence, unconditional love renders as irrelevant and meaningless His atonement and resurrection. These simply are not needed nor respected by unconditional love. Some advocates of unconditional love may choose simply to ignore Jesus and His message while others may choose to dismiss, and even revile against Him and the reports of His miraculous ministry, passing them off as mere folklore. A practical effect of such irreconcilable departures from the gospel Jesus Christ preached is that unconditional love must operate independent of and outside of our Lord's presence, and thus independent of and outside of His light and love, that is, in *outer darkness*.<sup>11</sup>

Because God is infinite and eternal, His love is the same, infinite and eternal.<sup>12</sup> In the words of the prophets, His love is everlasting love.<sup>13</sup> It would, therefore, be wrong to hold a simplistic view of God and His love, one that concludes God's love is either *conditional* or *unconditional*. God is love, and in His presence of light and truth – not outside of His light in darkness – we may experience the fullness of His love. God does not cease to be *love* if we fail to obey Him. His love endures all things.<sup>14</sup> However, according to Jesus Christ and His disciples, only those who love God unto obeying His voice and walking in the light as He is in the light will come to *abide* fully in His love.<sup>15</sup>

Summed up, unconditional love excludes from its considerations and practices all conditions, including those outlined in both the Old Testament and the New Testament of the Bible. This includes *the conditions of repentance* as described in II Chronicles 7:12-14 and in I John 1:5-2:2 at the beginning of this volume. Herein lies the impasse. Unconditional love is in conflict with the New Covenant, in particular, the conditions of repentance. If one is valid, the other is invalid.

Tracing each to its source, advocates of unconditional love pit themselves against Jesus Christ and His gospel, which He first introduced in His ministry with the command to repent and believe His gospel.<sup>16</sup> According to His testimony, whoever falls upon Jesus will be broken and whomever He falls upon will be ground to dust.<sup>17</sup> But whoever builds upon Him as the *chief cornerstone, as a precious rock of offense*<sup>18</sup> will have Him for a *sure foundation*.<sup>19</sup> I have chosen Jesus – to build upon Him as my Rock, my Foundation.<sup>20</sup> I have chosen His covenant love.

## **O for a Faith That Will Not Shrink ... Beneath the Chast'ning Rod**

William H. Bathurst<sup>21</sup> wrote a hymn with a phrase that serves well as an introductory theme for this volume. The hymn “*O for a Faith That Will Not Shrink*” goes as follows, with the bolded phrases highlighting the topic for this opening section:<sup>22</sup>

- 1 ***O for a faith that will not shrink,***  
*Though pressed by many a foe,*  
*That will not tremble on the brink*  
*Of any earthly woe,*
  
- 2 *That will not murmur nor complain*  
***Beneath the chast'ning rod,***  
*But in the hour of grief or pain*  
*Will lean upon its God.*
  
- 3 *A faith that shines more bright and clear*  
*When tempests rage without,*  
*That, when in danger, knows no fear,*  
*In darkness feels no doubt,*
  
- 4 *That bears unmoved the world's dread frown,*  
*Nor heeds its scornful smile,*  
*That seas of trouble cannot drown,*  
*Nor Satan's arts beguile,*
  
- 5 *A faith that keeps the narrow way*  
*Till life's last hour is fled*  
*And with a pure and heav'nly ray*  
*Lights up a dying bed.*
  
- 6 *Lord, give us such a faith as this,*  
*And then, whate'er may come,*  
*We'll taste e'en here the hallowed bliss*  
*Of an eternal home.*

“*Beneath the chast'ning rod*” no doubt refers to the principle of God's chastening, which is expressed clearly in the scriptures:

*I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire,<sup>23</sup> that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see. **As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent.** Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will*

*sup with him, and he with me. (Revelation 3:18-20)*

*And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, **despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.** If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, **whereof all are partakers**, then are ye bastards, and not sons. For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; **nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.** (Hebrews 12:5-11)*

Against God's wisdom and knowledge, *unconditional love* despises chastening, especially the chastening of the Lord. Those who hold to unconditional love either do not understand or do not accept His counsel and wisdom to receive gladly His chastening correction.

***My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction; For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.** (Proverbs 3:11)*

*Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, **so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.** (Deuteronomy 8:5)*

***Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law.** (Psalms 94:12)*

*Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth; therefore **despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty.** (Job 5:17)*

*For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, **we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.** (I Corinthians 11:31,32)*

The chastening spoken of here is not some petty form of routine or mundane nagging that is meant to keep us in line. No, it is of much greater worth to our souls and not to be despised.

In the next several sections the importance of the Lord's chastening will be discussed in fuller detail in terms of *ordinances* and *sacraments*. Briefly understood, an ordinance is an appropriate arrangement prepared and governed by God to provide us with a setting in which to offer up our sacraments unto Him. Said another way, God establishes ordinances as lawful venues in which we are to offer Him our sacraments as the sacrifices He requires of us.

In the terms of this section, any chastisement the Lord brings upon us represents the

*ordinance* or *venue*. The principal sacrament we are to offer Him in response to His chastening is the sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Put in terms of repentance, the conditions of repentance define the ordinance (setting, timing, events, etc.) and the act of repenting of our sins on our part is our sacrament. Together, *ordinances* and *sacraments* hold the promise of reconciliation and restoration between God and mankind.

### **Mine Ordinances, Your Sacraments**

God sets appointments for us, known as *ordinances*,<sup>24</sup> based on His wisdom and His determination for our lives. According to these appointments, we are to meet Him in specific places, in right conditions of heart and mind, and at set times to address matters and fulfill purposes of His own choosing. God creates for these appointments certain *venues*<sup>25</sup> (places, settings, timings, actions, events, etc.) in which we are to engage God on His terms and according to *the conditions* He defines. They are specially crafted by Him according to His design and are set apart for His unique purposes.

There, in these unique *venues* of His choosing and preparation, the Lord gives us the means and the guidance needed for offering to Him the right and lawful<sup>26</sup> response to His callings and the demands He places upon our lives. There, in these special venues (ordinances), our God intends to bestow upon us fitting blessings that are needed by us<sup>27</sup> and graciously given by Him to fill us with the abundant life He designed and created us for in Christ.<sup>28</sup> Each venue into which He calls us is appropriate to and in accordance with the blessings to be granted. Neither can exist independent of Him or the other.

The Lord's Supper demonstrates how our Lord establishes *ordinances*<sup>29</sup> in which we are to offer appropriate *sacraments*<sup>30</sup> unto Him so that He might bless our lives and set us apart for His service. The night Jesus instituted this precious meal, He referred to it as an *ordinance*.

*And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them; and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is in remembrance of my blood which is shed for many, and the new testament which I give unto you; for of me ye shall bear record unto all the world. And as oft as ye do **this ordinance**, ye will remember me in the hour that I was with you and drank with you of this cup, even the last time in my ministry. (Mark 14:22-23)*

Yet, today the Lord's Supper is often referred to as *the sacrament*.<sup>31</sup> Without delving deeply into the history of its use, the word *sacrament* was defined by Daniel Webster in his 1828 Dictionary as follows.<sup>32,33</sup> Based on its etymology, it involves a sacred oath producing an obligation.<sup>34</sup>

SAC'RAMENT, n. [L. sacramentum, an oath, from sacer, sacred.]

1. Among ancient christian writers, a mystery. [Not in use.]
2. An oath; a ceremony producing an obligation; but not used in this general sense.
3. In present usage, an outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual grace; or more particularly, a solemn religious ceremony enjoined by Christ, the head of the christian church, to be

observed by his followers, by which their special relation to him is created, or their obligations to him renewed and ratified. Thus baptism is called a sacrament, for by it persons are separated from the world, brought into Christ's visible church, and laid under particular obligations to obey his precepts. The eucharist or communion of the Lord's supper, is also a sacrament, for by commemorating the death and dying love of Christ, Christians avow their special relation to him, and renew their obligations to be faithful to their divine Master. When we use sacrament without any qualifying word, we mean by it,

4. The eucharist or Lord's supper.

As the Lord's ordinance, the Lord's Supper is the proper and lawful venue in which we are to offer to God our sacrament of remembrance of Jesus Christ according to His words, "*this do in remembrance of me.*"<sup>35</sup> The venue He prescribes is fitted with all that is needed for us to offer our oaths and devotions to Him in a manner designed of God, e.g. emblems, prayers, body of believers, sacramental charge (preaching), etc.<sup>36</sup> In effect, He provides the setting into which we bring Him our service. This principle was stated most succinctly by Jesus when He spoke to the woman at the well.

*And the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. For unto such hath God promised his Spirit. And **they who worship him, must worship in spirit and in truth.*** (John 4:25,26)

Note the pattern and the promise. Our *worship* is the sacrament. The ordinance described by Jesus is "*in spirit and in truth.*" Combining these elements together, God has promised His Spirit to those who offer Him the sacrament of their *worship* in this special venue called "*in spirit and in truth.*" The New Testament provides many direct references to this special venue, allowing us to explore it in greater depth and to enter into it appropriately.<sup>37</sup> However, without *the mind of Christ* spoken of by Paul,<sup>38</sup> we will miss its meaning and the opportunity to enter into this unique venue in a manner prescribed and acceptable to God.

### **A Broken Heart and Contrite Spirit**

This leads us to examine more carefully the nature of the sacrament that we are to offer to God. As discussed in the prior section, the Lord creates venues<sup>39</sup> in which His people are to offer Him the specific sacrifice He desires and requires. Common to all sacraments is that of *a broken heart and contrite spirit*<sup>40</sup> as attested to by David the Psalmist.

*The Lord is **nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.*** (Psalm 34:18)

*O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise. For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt offering. **The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*** (Psalm 51:15-17)

God hates *pride* and has *purposed* to *stain* the *pride* of *all glory* so that no flesh *glories* in *His presence*.<sup>41</sup>

*These six things doth the Lord hate; yea, seven are an abomination unto him; a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren. (Proverbs 6:16-19)*

*The Lord of hosts hath **purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth.** (Isaiah 23:9)*

*And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are mighty; **That no flesh should glory in his presence.** (I Corinthians 1:28,29)*

As you will recall, *being lifted up with pride* is the *condemnation of the devil*.

*A bishop then must ... not [be] a novice, **lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.** Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. (I Timothy 3:2,6,7)*

John warns us accordingly with these words:

*Love not the world, neither the things that are of the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all in the world that is of the lusts of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; **but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.** (I John 2:15-17)*

It is the Lord's will, then, that each and every time we enter into one of His venues, we do so in a contrite and humble manner so He might *revive* our spirits and our hearts.

*For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. (Isaiah 57:15)*

There, in each of His ordinances, we must offer to God the sacrifices He requires of us and in the manner ordained of Him, not as we feel most appropriate or convenient.

Not everyone is happy with this arrangement. Hence, the call for unconditional love by them. However, if it were allowed to prevail, unconditional love would make all the world and the heavens above a venue in which anything and everything goes. Pride, especially, would be allowed to flourish and, with it, would come anarchy and conflict; for, as it is written, "*Only by pride cometh contention.*"<sup>42</sup> In the end, everything would become profane and

could not be sustained.

Consider Cain for an example of someone who despised God's dominion<sup>43</sup> along with His covenants and commandments.<sup>44</sup> Cain was not satisfied with the sacrifice that God required of him – namely, that of *a broken heart and contrite spirit* – so he yielded to temptation and changed the ordinance to suit or fit his alternate sacrifice, one he could be proud of, one that reflected his own industry and ingenuity, one that was self-justifying. In fact, Cain was first in a long line of people who try to justify themselves by their works. Rather than relying upon the commandments and ordinances of God, they prefer to keep their own ordinances so they can offer the sacrifices they prefer.

*And he said unto them, Yea, altogether ye reject the commandment of God, **that ye may keep your own tradition.*** (Mark 7:9)

God had respect for the sacrifice Abel offered Him in righteousness. In this way, Abel obtained the justification that comes of God through Jesus Christ by obeying Him in keeping His ordinances.<sup>45</sup>

The same is true of those who would offer up the sacrifice of unconditional love. It sounds good and seems appropriate, at least to the *carnal mind*.<sup>46</sup> However, it is not the sacrificial love God requires of us, which is charity.<sup>47</sup> Our Lord requires us to take up our cross and follow Him.<sup>48</sup> Unconditional love subverts this ordinance of the Lord by keeping its own traditions. It dismisses and dispenses with God's justice and mercy without so much as a second thought, and it offers nothing in return to God in terms of compensating Him for their departing from His righteousness, which is established in His ordinances and covenants. It only serves to rob Him of His justice and to deny His mercy the opportunity to carry out its gracious and perfecting work.

With these concepts in mind, we can better understand why Jesus began His ministry with the command to *repent and believe the gospel*.<sup>49</sup> He was calling people to enter into the ordinance (venue) of *repentance*, which God has equipped with certain conditions, called *the conditions of repentance*.<sup>50</sup> These conditions are designed to provide the necessary venue in which we might repent of our sins and be received back into His fellowship.

### **If God Peradventure Will Give Them Repentance**

Repentance is not something we can arrange or establish independent of the ordinance of God. Rather, *repentance* is something God *grants* or *gives* as an ordinance in which we are to meet Him to repent of our sins as led by His Spirit.<sup>51</sup> Consider the time when Peter testified of how God had brought salvation to the house of a Gentile named *Cornelius*. The other disciples replied to his report by acknowledging that God had *granted* repentance to the Gentiles *unto life*.

*When they heard these things, they held their peace and glorified God, **saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.*** (Acts 11:17-18)

Consistent with this understanding is the following counsel which Paul gave Timothy regarding repentance:

*And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; **if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth**; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. (II Timothy 2:24-26)*

Outlined, the several elements discussed above look like the following:

- **Ordinance** (venue): The conditions of repentance, or simply the repentance which is granted by God
- **Sacrament**: The act or process of our repenting of our sins which we offer to God as the sacrifice He requires of us
- **Promise**: Reconciliation and restoration by God

An excellent example of this order is found in the record of King Solomon, David's son, at the time of the dedication of the temple of God. There we read of how God put in place His ordinance in which His people were to offer to Him their sacraments.

*And the Lord appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for a house of sacrifice. If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; If my people which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. (II Chronicles 7:12-14)*

- **Ordinance** (venue): “a house of sacrifice” and “... shut up heaven ... no rain ... locusts to devour the land ... pestilence among my people”
- **Sacrament**: “If my people which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways”
- **Promise**: “then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land”

Noting again the pattern, God chastises those He loves by placing them in certain circumstances designed by Him and equipping them with certain means, methods, and effects for their repentance. God then calls to His people to turn back to Him and receive healing by way of the pathway He lays before them. If they repent and offer the sacrifice He requires and return to Him, they will be healed. Otherwise, the harvest may pass (time of accounting) and the summer end (limits when venue is open) without their souls being saved.<sup>52</sup>

## **Come and Dine**

Consider Peter as another example of how the Lord prepared the venue in which He might chasten and recover Peter unto Himself. It occurred in a meeting Jesus set up between them on the shore of the Sea of Galilee following Jesus' resurrection. We read from John's account the following:

*Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine... Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise... So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs... (John 21:12-15)<sup>53</sup>*

Peter had just been out fishing with others of his fellow apostles when Jesus called them to shore to dine with Him on some bread and fish. Jesus provided the venue, complete with the backdrop of the sea and the shore, the fire and the fish, and a specific conversation with His disciple. Peter had given up all, he said, to follow Jesus and become a fisher of men.<sup>54</sup> Yet, when Jesus was arrested in the garden, Peter went on to deny Him, three times.<sup>55</sup>

As the scene unfolds in John's narrative describing their meeting on the beach that day, we see the compassion in Jesus' correction of His beloved Peter. Through the course of it, Peter was restored and began anew to follow Jesus, more humbly and carefully in his thoughts toward God and His calling on his life.

Many similar examples are provided for us in the scriptures. Each one helps us understand and appreciate the calling of God on our lives and how He leads, even takes us into many different venues throughout our lives to mold and shape us as a potter molds clay into useful vessels and to care for us as the Good Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.<sup>56</sup>

*I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God besides me; I girded thee,<sup>57</sup> though thou hast not known me; That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none besides me. I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things. Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness; let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the Lord have created it. Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands? (Isaiah 45:5-9)*

*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (Psalm 23)*

## **God Will Provide Himself a Lamb**

Consider, for example, Abraham and Isaac. God called them to the mountains of Moriah to offer a sacrifice – the ordinance. There, Abraham was to offer Isaac, his promised son whom he loved, in sacrifice unto the Lord – a unique sacrament which God required of Abraham.<sup>58</sup> They carried out His instructions up until the angel of the Lord stopped Abraham, saying, “*Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only Isaac from me.*”<sup>59</sup> God then completed both the ordinance and sacrament by providing the lamb.<sup>60</sup> With their cooperation and obedience in carrying out what God had commanded, Abraham and Isaac met their appointment that day, and thus fulfilled, not only the will of God, but they also worshipped Him in spirit and truth with broken hearts and contrite spirits.

Another of God’s promises to Abraham was to give his posterity the land from *the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates*.<sup>61</sup> This land and how it is equipped to sustain them is to be a venue which will be completed at the appointed time to fulfill the New Covenant. Of that time and place of fulfillment, it is written:

*For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; **I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people; And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.** For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away. (Hebrews 8:8-13)*

## **Exhort One Another Daily**

Unconditional love balks at this approach and process, which God has established as the conditions of repentance of the New Covenant. It believes it has a better way, one which includes no covenant terms and conditions, no commandments, no meddling by God, just His bestowal of blessings and no cursings. Like Cain after him, the author of this love chose a self-justifying path, one in which an individual would be able to take his or her own direction and have no one to account to or call him back to the path that God had established for him.

With the help of unconditional love, many people have and continue to take divergent paths away from the ordinances of God, only to become lost and without a way or a guide to bring them back to God. Nonetheless, Jesus Christ is gracious, and when one of His *sheep* becomes lost, because He is not willing that they perish,<sup>62</sup> the Lord seeks after His *sheep*, to

bring him to repentance where he might be restored unto Him.

*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; Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously; Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed. **For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.** (I Peter 2:21-25)*

But He limits the time in which we may repent and come to Him.

*Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. **But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; While it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.** For some, when they had heard, did provoke; howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. (Hebrews 3:12-19)*

Referring to this wilderness journey taken by the house of Israel, God prepared it specifically as a venue into which He could bring His covenant people for the express purpose of bringing them out of bondage. This was just the first step. There, He sought to prepare His people for entering into a *land of promise* (venue) in which they could live according to the covenants He had made with their fathers before them. But because they hardened themselves against Him, instead of finding rest with Him in heaven, this venue became the final resting place for many.

As God's workmanship, each of us must accept the Lord's chastening.<sup>63</sup> With the chastening He causes us to pass through, He addresses our needs and provides every needful thing for our salvation. This includes our growth in the knowledge of Jesus Christ and the New Covenant He mediates. Choosing a manner of love which runs counter to the New Covenant means we must walk in darkness outside of God's presence. But praise be to our God, He is gracious and has provided conditions by which we may repent and be saved to enter into His fellowship of light and love in the very person of His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

*This **then** is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. **If** we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But **if** we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. **If** we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the*

truth is not in us. **If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. But if any man sin and repent, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.** (1 John 1:5-2:2)

### **I Am the Light of the World**

This is the gospel: Jesus Christ is *the light of the world*. He was sent by our heavenly Father as a *great light* to bring salvation to those who *sit in darkness*.<sup>64</sup>

*Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, **I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*** (John 8:12)

*Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And **he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.*** (John 12:44-46)

He is Emmanuel, *God with us*.<sup>65</sup> He is the very light of God which is to dwell in the lives of as many as *receive Him*.<sup>66</sup>

*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give **the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.** But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.* (II Corinthians 4:6,7)

*This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that **God is light**, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But **if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*** (I John 1:5-7)

Of truth, then, as we read in the scriptures, we are complete (i.e. made whole) in Him. He came to give to us *the light of life*; and He will give us this precious light if we are not *spoiled* through *philosophy and the vain deceit, after the tradition of men and the rudiments of the world*.

***As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him; Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.*** (Colossians 2:6-10)

With Jesus abiding in us we will know and experience the true light and the love of God. The opposite is also true. Without Jesus abiding in us, we cannot know and experience God's presence – His light and love – in our lives.

*Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, **hath not God.** **He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.** (II John 1:9)*

*And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. **And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.** (I John 3:23,24)*

*We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love. **In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.** (I John 4:6-9)*

*And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, **God dwelleth in him, and he in God.** 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.** (I John 4:14-16)*

*And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. **He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.** (I John 5:11,12)*

This last statement made by John is true of Jesus and no one else: Jesus alone is able to fill us with God's light and love. In His words, Jesus is *the way, the truth, and the life*, and no one comes to His Father in heaven but by Him.

*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (John 14:6)*

*For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth; and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; That all should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father who hath sent him. (John 5:20-23)*

*He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. ... If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. (John 14:21-23)*

Notwithstanding the fact that the light of Jesus Christ has been revealed in the world for many generations now, not everyone has received Him or even *perceived* (noticed, comprehended, recognized) God's precious gift found in Christ alone, even when it is plainly revealed to them.

*And the light shineth in the world, and the world perceiveth it not. (John 1:5)*

Why? Jesus explained the matter this way:

*And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and **men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.** For every one who doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he who loveth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest. (John 3:19-21)*

In a word, the issue is a matter of love: who we love and what we love. Those who love God rather than *darkness* will gladly receive His word of truth *line upon line*<sup>67</sup> until they are filled with a perfect knowledge of the truth according to the full measure of Jesus Christ.<sup>68</sup> Those who do not love God will remain under the *condemnation* spoken of by our Lord, even to the point that any truth they may have known will be taken from them until they eventually sit again in darkness.

*Take heed therefore how ye hear; for whosoever receiveth, to him shall be given; and whosoever receiveth not from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have. (Luke 8:18)*

### **For This is the Love of God**

John tells us that "*if we walk in the light, as he [God] is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*"<sup>69</sup> Unconditional love speaks otherwise, having no knowledge of any such conditions. As such, unconditional love is not redemptive love. It does not speak of the redemption of Jesus and our need for the atonement which He offered for us on the cross.<sup>70</sup> Instead, it seeks to give its adherents love independent of and separate from any conditions related to Jesus Christ and the judgments of God. It does not direct their thoughts to His call to repent of their sins and be converted in order to be saved in the kingdom of heaven. In effect, then, it serves only to free their thoughts of the Lord and His claim upon their lives based upon His work of creation and redemption. As a direct result, it does not convict them of sin nor call them to forsake their sins.

Practically speaking, unconditional love speaks out of a desire on the world's behalf to be loved by God without being judged by Him. Redeeming covenant love, on the other hand, speaks from God's hope and perspective for us, not from our vantage point. It speaks of His work of salvation and His invitation to each of us to forsake our sins and to enter into His presence through the saving merits of Jesus Christ.

Unlike the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ,<sup>71</sup> unconditional love does not fulfill either of the two great commandments. Rather, it purposes to exist independent of any and all of the Lord's commandments established in and by His covenants. This goes contrary to what John has written to the church, the Lord's *bride* (a covenant term):<sup>72</sup>

*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and everyone that loveth him that begat [God] loveth him also that is begotten of him [His children by faith]. **By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous.*** (I John 5:3)

*And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. **And this is love, that we walk after his commandments.** This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. **For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.*** (II John 1:5-7)

Note how these words penned by John run counter to the definition and objectives of unconditional love. They are, however, consistent with the first of the two great commandments, to *love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.*<sup>73</sup> Likewise, John's words are consistent with the second great commandment – which *is like the first* – to love our neighbor *as our self*. Given the conditional nature of each of these commandments, they clearly are not commands to love unconditionally. Rather, they are calls to love sacrificially, even as Jesus loved us and gave Himself *to redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

*For the grace of God which bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared; teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, **that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*** (Titus 2:11-14)

*As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love. **If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.** These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye*

*love one another, as I have loved you.* (John 15:9-12)

### **How Dwelleth the Love of God in Him?**

John explained how we may perceive the love of our Lord: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us that He might take it up again.

*For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. **Hereby perceive we the love of Christ, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*** (I John 3:11-16)

This Jesus affirmed when describing Himself as the Good Shepherd who gives Himself for the sheep.

*Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.* (John 10:17,18)

Because of the costs associated with the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ, it is tempting to choose the easier path of unconditional love, which requires little to nothing on our part simply because it places no conditions on its love for us or on our love for others. Reading on in the third chapter of John's first letter to the church, however, we have his reply to those who would love others unconditionally, i.e. without due consideration of or regard for any conditions:

*But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, **how dwelleth the love of God in him?** My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue only; but in deed and in truth.* (I John 3:17,18)

These verses describe well the true nature of unconditional love and its inability to address the specific needs of others. Because it is unconditional, it simply does not take into consideration the particular conditions of others and, therefore, can never be moved by compassion or sense the needs of others. In practical terms, unconditional love limits itself to affirming others without judging them. If a person is engaged in harmful behavior, that is of no concern to unconditional love. Thus, unconditional love provides no direction or leadership relating to specific actions or *good works* that might be called for due to the decisions of others. Its motives exist separate from the choices of others. It abides in a realm

aloof of needs and the commandments of God.

Coupled with the counsel given by John, the following words of James serve to highlight this deficiency in loving others without due regard for their actions or their conditions resulting from their actions.

*For if a brother or sister be naked and destitute, and one of you say, Depart in peace, be warmed and filled; notwithstanding he give not those things which are needful to the body; **what profit is your faith unto such?** (James 2:16)*

By its very nature, unconditional love readily says to others, *be warmed and filled*, without actually *giving those things which are needful to the body*. If it did give due regard to the needs and choices of others, it would no longer be truly unconditional, but would have its motives to act influenced by the conditions and decisions of its recipient. The constraints of the love of Jesus Christ could only then be viewed as interfering in the life of others.

It should be recognized that this instruction applies to preachers of the gospel who tell others that God loves them unconditionally. In effect, they are saying *be warmed and filled*, but without actually meeting their needs to be freed from the bondage of sin.

Those in whom the love of God truly dwells, there will be motivation and compassion. They will lead others to repent of their sins and receive Jesus Christ into their hearts by faith. Equally important, they will recognize the ordinance principle of timing. While it is yet called "*Today*,"<sup>74</sup> they will encourage others to receive from Jesus the *power* to be like Him *in this world*, to love even as He loves.

*He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he **power** to become the sons of God; only to them who believe on his name. (John 1:11,12)*

They know a certain fearful judgment awaits those who reject His love by refusing to repent of their sins.

*For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. (Hebrews 10:26,27)*

Because the love of God dwells in them, those who would have compassion act as Jesus would act and choose to make a difference in the lives of others.

*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. 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.** (I John 4:16,17)*

***And of some have compassion, making a difference; and others save with fear, pull-***

*ing them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. (Jude 1:22,23)*

Unconditional love is ill-equipped for such work. Being blind to conditions, it cannot rightly discern *the garment spotted by the flesh*, and therefore, allows such to remain in the fire to be burned.<sup>75</sup>

### **I Know Thy Works**

There are adverse consequences for not being moved by the conditions of others. Jesus spoke of a man named Lazarus and a rich man who showed him no mercy in this life. Consequently, no mercy was shown the rich man in the life to come.

*For there was a certain rich man, who was clothed in purple, and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, who was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried of the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died, and was buried. And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. **And he cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus, evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And besides all this, between us and you, there is a great gulf fixed; so that they who would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence.** (Luke 16:24-31)*

The lesson of Lazarus and the rich man is consistent with the judgment Jesus spoke of as recorded in the second half of the 25<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew. There Jesus described how the peoples of every nations will be gathered together before Him, with some on His right hand and the others on His left. To those on His right hand He will invite into His kingdom to be rewarded for their labors. The reason? They ministered to and cared for others while *in their lifetime*. Those on His left will be sent away into everlasting punishment because, like the rich man mentioned in the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of Luke quoted above, they failed during their *lifetimes* to serve others who were in need.

The lesson about Lazarus and the rich man also illustrates the judgment which awaits those who would live by unconditional love. Like the rich man, they pass by people every day without so much as noticing their needs and their conditions and, therefore, merely affirm their love for them absent their concern for them and their needs.

Because of its devotion to loving without conditions, unconditional love becomes blind to all conditions. As explained elsewhere, it simply applies a one-size-fits-all love to everyone and in all situations. It knows nothing of the particular needs of each person. If it does, it cannot be moved by or motivated by such knowledge. Further, it operates as if all conditions in a person's life are equal and unimportant.

Ultimately, then, an unconditional approach to love robs people of their identity. In the end, it not only fails to acknowledge the importance of obeying God to do good to others, but it also fails to prepare its advocates for the judgments to come.

A witness worth mentioning here is the personalized messages the Lord had John send to the seven churches listed in the second and third chapters of the Book of Revelation. Each of these messages serves to amplify the importance of our preparing to be accountable to the Lord in the stewardship He charges us with and the appointments He sets for us. In His opening address to each of the seven churches, the Lord makes it clear that He knows their *works* and will reward them accordingly.

*Unto the servant of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; **I know thy works** ... (Revelation 2:1,2a)*

*And unto the servant of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; **I know thy works** ... (Revelation 2:8,9a)*

*And to the servant of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; **I know thy works** ... (Revelation 2:12,13a)*

*And unto the servant of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; **I know thy works** ... (Revelation 2:18,19a)*

*And unto the servant of the church in Sardis, write; These things saith he who hath the seven stars, which are the seven servants of God; **I know thy works** ... (Revelation 3:1a)*

*And to the servant of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; **I know thy works** ... (Revelation 3:7,8a)*

*And unto the servant of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; **I know thy works** ... (Revelation 3:14,15a)*

Again, because unconditional love knows no conditions and is blind to the works and deeds of others, it simply has nothing to offer in this matter. Thus, it obviously does not represent the Lord's perspective or the framework of love and light in which He operates. This we know because He clearly makes it an issue to point out the works of the seven servants, saying He knows what each is about and, therefore, promises to reward them accordingly. And so, it is written:

*Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also*

*reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary **in well doing**; for in due season we shall reap, **if we faint not.** (Galatians 6:7-9)*

*For the grace of God which bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared; teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, **that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.** (Titus 2:11-14)*

By comparing such scriptures with teachings on unconditional love, we can see that unconditional love not only denies the works and judgments of God founded in His covenants, but it also defies them. Clearly, this is an abandonment of the conditions of repentance.

### **Covenant Breakers Versus The Faithful Servant**

Unconditional love is detached from all of God's covenants because it neither knows nor acknowledges any of the terms and conditions that are expressly associated with such covenants (e.g. marriage, baptism, etc.). Accordingly, this approach to loving others renders His covenants meaningless and irrelevant within its sphere of influence. In so doing, it removes any sense or awareness of God's justice and mercy from its adherents and, further, it seeks to affect its recipients in the same manner.

Such love simply cannot be passive in nature. Ultimately it must resist, even fight against the terms and conditions of the New Covenant which Jesus Christ mediates.<sup>76</sup> In consequence of the conflict which exists between its unconditional nature and our Lord's covenant terms and conditions, unconditional love pushes its adherents to separate themselves and those they would so love from all that is associated with this precious covenant, including the Savior Himself. Otherwise, they would not be free to love unconditionally, simply because its terms and conditions would hinder or block their access to and expression of unconditional love. Thus, choosing to love unconditionally involves their choosing to not just ignore, but to resist the New Covenant our Lord mediates, overtly and/or covertly.

In practical terms, unconditional love chooses to ignore Jesus as the Christ, the one appointed by God to save our souls from *the wrath to come*.<sup>77</sup> In fact, it chooses not to recognize any need to consider His call to us to repent of our sins and to believe the message of salvation He came into the world to preach. Rather, it stands separate from and seeks to operate independently of God's justice and mercy and, thus, independently of His wisdom and will. It attempts to exist outside the power<sup>78</sup> Jesus Christ has been given according to the conditions of repentance to save us in the kingdom of God through faith on His name and repentance from our sins.<sup>79</sup>

For unconditional love to try to maintain such independence, it must deny our Lord's claim on our lives and His overarching motivation for intervening in our lives. It must work toward freeing itself of any and all things having to do with our need to be reconciled to

God through faith in Jesus Christ alone. It must remain distant and detached from what His prophets and apostles have spoken about Him and His work of sacrificial redemption.

Because unconditional love pays no attention to the justice of God and the mercy He extends to each of us for the sake of His Son, it fails to acknowledge or account for Jesus Christ's advocacy for us before God's throne of justice. Ultimately, it overlooks the need for mankind to be reconciled to God. In doing so, it fails to see that Jesus Christ fulfilled our need for a Savior by laying down His own life for us upon the cross of His sufferings. Thus, it not only denies Him in all aspects of the gospel, but it also identifies itself as anti-Christ in its very nature, and thus exposes its adherents to *the wrath of God to be revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*. Why? To love unconditionally they must break His covenants; and for those who do, there awaits the wrath to come.

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men; ... For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections ... receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet ... being filled with all unrighteousness, ... **covenant-breakers**, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful; ... (Romans 1:18-32)*

Summed up, unconditional love has no need or respect for Jesus Christ and His work of redemption. It does not declare His lordship nor follow His leadership. Rather, it denies His claim that no one comes to the Father except by Him, which is an essential condition attested to in and by the New Covenant established in His blood. Thus, this love that knows no conditions can only serve to disconnect us from His life and ministry and thereby sever us from the gospel of the kingdom of God.

How do we know this is true? Remember how Jesus said that *except* we are born again (note the condition) we cannot see or enter into the kingdom of God.<sup>80</sup> Remember also how the scriptures do not say God loves us with an anti-covenant love, one without conditions. Rather, all scripture declares that He loves us according to those covenants which are based in His justice and mercy and according to His wisdom and judgment. We must therefore conclude with Jesus that except we are born again we cannot abide in His fellowship and thereby know and experience the joy of His presence and wonder of His love.<sup>81</sup>

The redemptive sacrificial love Jesus Christ revealed upon the cross of His sufferings stands as a witness against unconditional love. His love is the only love that is able to free mankind from sin and its consequences by making us one in and with Him based upon the New Covenant He mediates.

While those who hold to unconditional love sense no real and lasting need for Jesus Christ in their lives or the lives of those around them, all who enter into the New Covenant find their identity and significance in Him. That is, in Jesus alone do the faithful find a certain and pervading peace and joy which comes of being grafted into Jesus Christ, even as a branch grafted into a vine is secure and nourished by the same. This grafting is an expression of covenant love. It is what makes believers secure in Christ. By this unique form of love, sacrificial covenant love, they become forever rooted and built up in His light and love through the work of His redemption.<sup>82</sup> There, the faithful begin to grow and bear the Father the fruit He seeks by ministering to one another, especially to those in need.

*Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh. **Who then is a faithful and wise servant**, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing; And, verily I say unto you, he shall make him ruler over all his goods. **But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming**; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the Lord of the servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and shall appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And thus cometh the end of the wicked according to the prophecy of Moses, saying, They should be cut off from among the people. But the end of the earth is not yet; but bye and bye. (Matthew 24:52-56)*

Whether or not we repent and are born of God does not change who God is. God is love, and He has expressed the love He has for us in the person and ministry of Jesus Christ. His love is an everlasting love. However, to be reconciled to Him and to be restored to His fellowship – to abide in His light and love – we must abide the terms and conditions of the New Covenant Jesus Christ mediates, which are briefly understood by *the conditions of repentance* outlined in II Chronicles 7:14, 1 John 1:3-10, and other similar scriptural passages.

### **The Conditions of Repentance**

The *conditions of repentance* are truly amazing. It is *because of repentance* that the Father has given Jesus Christ *power* to redeem us *from* our sins.

*O remember, remember, my sons, the words which King Benjamin spake unto his people; yea, remember that **there is no other way nor means whereby man can be saved, only through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ**, who shall come; yea, remember that he cometh to redeem the world. And remember also, the words which Amulek spake unto Zeezrom, in the city of Ammonihah; for he said unto him, that the Lord surely should come to redeem his people; but that he should not come to redeem them in their sins, but to redeem them from their sins. **And he hath power given unto him from the Father, to redeem them from their sins, because of repentance; therefore he hath sent his angels to declare the tidings of the conditions of repentance, which bringeth unto the power of the Redeemer, unto the salvation of their souls.** And now my sons, remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation, that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds; yea, his shafts in the whirlwind; Yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you, to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build, they can not fall. (Helaman 2:71-75)*

With these conditions in place, there can be and is great joy in heaven among the angels when even one sinner repents.

*I say unto you, that likewise **joy** shall be in heaven over one sinner **that repenteth**, more than over ninety and nine just persons, who need no repentance. (Luke 15:7)*

*Likewise, I say unto you, there is **joy** in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner **that repenteth**. (Luke 15:10)*

The *conditions of repentance* are essential to the gospel of Jesus Christ, for except we repent, we will *perish*.

*And there were present at that time, some who spake unto him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus said unto them; Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? **I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish**. Or those eighteen, on whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them; think ye that they were sinners above all men who dwelt in Jerusalem? **I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish**. (Luke 13:1-5)*

*Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, **and shall die in your sins; whither I go, ye cannot come**. Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. Ye are from beneath; I am from above; ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not that I am he, **ye shall die in your sins**. (John 8:21-24)*

*Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, **and repent**, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, **except thou repent**. (Revelation 2:5)*

This is why Peter wrote how the Lord is *not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*.

*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise and coming, as some men count slackness; but long-suffering toward us, **not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance**. (II Peter 3:9)*

We can see this in His ministry, which Jesus began by preaching:

*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel. (Mark 1:13)*

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his Only Begotten Son, that whosoever be-*

*lieveth on him should not **perish**; but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be **saved**.* (John 3:16,17)

Without *the conditions of repentance* there could be no New Covenant and, therefore, no one could be saved in the kingdom of heaven.<sup>83</sup> But the Lord has established the conditions necessary for us to enter into a covenant relationship with Him. What is needed on our part is to repent and believe in Jesus Christ.

*For the Lord covenanteth with none, save it be with them that repent and believe in his Son, who is the Holy One of Israel.* (II Nephi 12:78)

*For behold, if the knowledge of the goodness of God at this time, has awakened you to a sense of your nothingness, and your worthless and fallen state; I say unto you, if ye have come to a knowledge of the goodness of God, and his matchless power, and his wisdom, and his patience, and his long suffering towards the children of men, And also, the atonement which has been prepared from the foundation of the world, that thereby salvation might come to him that should put his trust in the Lord, and should be diligent in keeping his commandments, and continue in the faith even unto the end of his life; I mean the life of the mortal body; I say, that this is the man who receiveth salvation, through the atonement which was prepared from the foundation of the world, for all mankind, which ever were, ever since the fall of Adam, or who are or who ever shall be, even unto the end of the world; **and this is the means whereby salvation cometh. And there is none other salvation, save this which hath been spoken of; neither are there any conditions whereby man can be saved, except the conditions which I have told you.*** (Mosiah 2:8-12)

These precious conditions are our lifeline in Him and to Him. Our Lord has extended them to us in mercy to provide a way for us to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

*O all ye that are spared, because ye were more righteous than they, **will ye not now return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you?** Yea, verily I say unto you, If ye will come unto me, ye shall have eternal life. **Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you, and whosoever will come, him will I receive;** and blessed are those who come unto me. Behold I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are. I was with the Father from the beginning. I am in the Father, and the Father in me; and in me hath the Father glorified his name. I came unto my own, and my own received me not. And the scriptures, concerning my coming, are fulfilled. And as many as have received me, to them have I given to become the sons of God; and even so will I to as many as shall believe on my name, for behold, by me redemption cometh, and in me is the Law of Moses fulfilled. I am the light and the life of the world. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. And ye shall offer up unto me no more the shedding of blood; yea, your sacrifices and your burnt offerings shall be done away, for I will accept none*

*of your sacrifices and your burnt offerings; and ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit. And whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost, even as the Lamanites, because of their faith in me, at the time of their conversion, were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and they knew it not. (III Nephi 4:41-50)*

From God's vantage point, *the conditions of repentance* are the *conditions* upon which He is willing to grant repentance to those who are under the condemnation of sin and rebellion.

*Yea, it behooveth him, and becometh expedient that he dieth, to bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, that thereby men may be brought into the presence of the Lord; Yea, behold this death bringeth to pass the resurrection, and redeemeth all mankind from the first death; that spiritual death for all mankind, by the fall of Adam, being cut off from the presence of the Lord, or considered as dead, both as to things temporal and to things spiritual. But behold, the resurrection of Christ redeemeth mankind, yea, even all mankind, and bringeth them back into the presence of the Lord; Yea, and it bringeth to pass the conditions of repentance, that whosoever repenteth, the same is not hewn down and cast into the fire; But whosoever repenteth not, is hewn down and cast into the fire, and there cometh upon them again a spiritual death, yea, a second death, for they are cut off again as to things pertaining to righteousness; Therefore repent ye, repent ye, lest by knowing these things and not doing them, ye shall suffer yourselves to come under condemnation, and ye are brought down unto this second death. (Helaman 5:69-74)*

From the vantage point of repentant souls, these conditions reflect and manifest the conditions which must be present in their hearts when offering to God the sacrifice He requires of them.

### **Offer Unto the Lord an Offering in Righteousness**

The Lord is described by the prophets in many different ways. Malachi, for example, informs about the day of our Lord's return in judgment. Of that day and concerning the Lord's glory, Malachi asks who can abide the day of His coming and stand when He appears.

*Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap; And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. (Malachi 3:1-3)*

The Lord clearly intends to do work when He returns, a work that is everlasting.

*He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. (Revelation 22:11-14)*

Ultimately, the purpose of *the conditions of repentance* – i.e. that for which they are designed – is to prepare us for our Lord’s return. They are specifically designed to bear in us the fruit God desires of us, which is the fruit or works which are *meet for* (agreeable to, in keeping with, worthy of, appropriate to) repentance. This is the only fruit that will remain, the only treasure we can lay up in heaven. For, as quoted above, Jesus plans to come again and *reward every man according as his work shall be*. If we have sown to the Spirit and born the fruit thereof, we will reap a rich harvest to our souls; otherwise we will reap the fruit of the flesh which is corruption.

*Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. (Galatians 6:7-10)*

For a person or a people to be *granted access to the conditions of repentance*, they must recognize and accept God’s justice and His pronouncements against sin. Through atoning for our sins and by being resurrected from the dead, Jesus Christ demonstrated the *power*<sup>84</sup> He received from our heavenly Father to redeem us *from* sin based upon *the conditions of repentance*.<sup>85</sup> From the establishment of these conditions by God, we are to understand that Jesus Christ did not come among us to redeem us *in* our sins. Rather, as testified by His very name *Jesus*,<sup>86</sup> our Lord came to redeem us *from* our sins. Consequently, those who repent and bring forth fruit meet for repentance will be redeemed, while those who harden their hearts against the Lord will die in their sins and enter into eternity as if there had been no redemption made.<sup>87</sup>

In and through Jesus Christ and His ministry of redemption and reconciliation, God has provided the means whereby He might establish an everlasting friendship and fellowship between Himself and repentant mankind.<sup>88</sup> God sent His Only Begotten Son to reconcile us unto Himself according to His plan of salvation. His plan is based upon the righteous restitution of our Lord’s atonement and His covenant of everlasting advocacy.<sup>89</sup> In loving obedience, Jesus came to fulfill His Heavenly Father’s will by honoring His justice and extending His mercy to all who would repent of their sins by exercising faith on His name.

God’s justice and mercy are equally satisfied when we honestly and humbly acknowledge and accept 1) God’s judgment against our sin, meaning each and every one of our sins, and 2) all of His provisions for our salvation and eternal life in the person of Jesus Christ. We honor God and His justice and mercy by accepting the payment Jesus Christ has

made to atone for our sins and then by repenting of our sins to be reconciled unto God's will. The faith upon which we rely must be *the faith of the gospel*<sup>90</sup> of Jesus Christ which rests solely upon the atonement He has made for those who repent of their sins and follow Him.

When we comply with the commands of Jesus Christ, God promises to forgive us and claim us as His own dear children by His sovereign grace.<sup>91</sup> Only in this way may His mercy claim us without violating His justice.<sup>92</sup> Only in this way may the justice and mercy of God be equally honored and preserved. Only in this way can we abide with God in His light and His love. Unconditional love, on the other hand, has no use for God's mercy because it has no regard for His justice.

### **Bring Forth Fruits Meet for Repentance**

The *conditions of repentance* are of great worth to God and are highly prized by Him. They bring to Him the precious fruit He desires and which He so diligently seeks to cultivate in the lives of His children by faith. The harvest He is seeking and the fruit He desires to come forth from our lives is, of course, *the fruit of His Spirit* manifest as *works of righteousness* in our lives.

*Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; But in every nation **he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.** (Acts 10:34,35)*

*Little children, let no man deceive you; **he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.** He that continueth in sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. **For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.** Whosoever is born of God doth not continue in sin; for the Spirit of God remaineth in him; and he cannot continue in sin, because he is born of God, having received that Holy Spirit of promise. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; **whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.** (I John 3:7-10)*

*For ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light; **(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)** Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. (Ephesians 5:8-11)*

*But **the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law.** And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another. (Galatians 5:22-26)*

*For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but **righteousness, and peace, and joy***

***in the Holy Ghost.*** (Romans 14:17)

*And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; And to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; And to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. **For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.** But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall; For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.* (I Peter 1:5-11)

*That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ; **Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.*** (Philippians 1:10,11)

While these are truly exciting promises and assurances, it is important to understand the connection that exists between the fruit we bear and the salvation which is ministered to us in Jesus Christ. God is at work within each of us for a purpose, both *to will* and *to do* His good pleasure.

*For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* (Philippians 2:13)

What is His good pleasure? He created us in His image in the beginning. Now, Jesus Christ is restoring in us His image so that we may work the good works He has ordained *that we should walk in.*

*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.* (Ephesians 2:10)

The works that we do in and of ourselves cannot last nor can they bring about the righteousness of God. In the words of Jesus, *without Him we can do nothing.*<sup>93</sup> Conversely, like Paul, we can do all things through Christ Jesus who strengthens us.<sup>94</sup>

The manner in which the Father brings forth the fruit He desires in us and which He chooses for Himself is illustrated for us in a number of ways in the scriptures. Jesus described Himself, for instance, as the True Vine and His Father as the husbandman (gardener, vinedresser, vineyard keeper). All those who believe in Jesus may be grafted into Him by the Father through receiving His Spirit into their hearts by faith.

*I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.* (John 15:1,2)

*For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; **that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith**; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. (Ephesians 3:14-21)*

As the husbandman or vine keeper of the True Vine, the Father is at work bringing forth the particular fruit He desires from each branch. Since everything that lives brings forth after its own kind, the True Vine also brings forth after its own kind, that is, the truth, even the word of God.<sup>95</sup>

If any given branch fails to bring Him this precious fruit, Jesus states that the Father discards the branch. Yet, on the other hand, all branches which bring forth the fruit of His expectation, He prunes (chastens) all the more so that they may bring Him even more fruit or works which are meet for repentance.

In the prophecies of Hosea we read of the call to break up our fallow or unplowed ground and ready ourselves for the planting of the Lord. In preparation of preparing the soil as a sacrament, the Lord provides the conditions of repentance with which we may condition the soil of our hearts to bring forth fruits meet for repentance (the conditions of repentance).

*Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you. (Hosea 10:12)*

In the words of Paul, some plant and some water, but it is God who *gives the increase*.

*I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one; and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. (I Corinthians 3:6-8)*

*Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. (James 5:7)*

Through this means our heavenly Father intends to harvest the fruit of His Spirit at work in our lives. It is a harvest which is precious to our heavenly Father. Again, as the gardener, He cultivates and prunes to increase the yield. His objective is to bring forth even more fruit meet for repentance.

Consider John the Baptist whom God sent to prepare the way before Jesus Christ in

preparation of His ministry and preaching. As God's messenger, John was sent to declare a very specific message. He came to *preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins* and to baptize accordingly.

*The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; as it is written in the prophets. Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. John did baptize in the wilderness, **and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.** And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and many were baptized of him in the river Jordan, **confessing their sins.** And John was clothed with camels' hair, and with a girdle of skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey; and preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed have baptized you with water; but he shall not only baptize you with water, but with fire, and the Holy Ghost. (Mark 1:1-6 [1:1-8 KJV])*

John's work was a preparatory work that was founded upon the call of repentance, true repentance that is evidenced by *fruits* which are *meet for* or *worthy of repentance*.<sup>96</sup>

*Repent, therefore, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance. (Matthew 3:35 [3:8 KJV])*

This special witness sent of God came with an axe in his hand. For John said *the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire.*

*Then said John to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, crying against them with a loud voice, saying, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? **Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance,** and begin not to say within yourselves, Abraham is our father; we have kept the commandments of God, and none can inherit the promises but the children of Abraham; for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also, **the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire.** (Luke 3:12-14 [3:7-9 KJV])*

By relating the same message in his defense before king Agrippa, but with the word *fruits* replaced by the words *works*, Paul helps us understand the equivalence of fruit and work.

*Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision; but showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that **they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.** (Acts 26:19,20)*

The message is clear. Borrowing from words prophesied by Isaiah, we are to *take root downward, and bear fruit upward*.<sup>97</sup> Unless the Lord's words are allowed to take sufficient root within us, by sinking deep in our hearts, according to Jesus, when persecution comes,<sup>98</sup> His word will *wither* away in us.<sup>99</sup>

### **Repentance to the Acknowledging of the Truth**

Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ, taught Timothy that God *grants repentance* to those who are *accepted with Him*. When advising Timothy on how to minister to *those who oppose themselves* and are *taken captive* by the devil *at his will*, Paul wrote:

*And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; **if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth**; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. (II Timothy 2:24-26)*

In seeking to understand when and why God gives the gift of repentance, Paul's instruction to Timothy clarifies why God does not simply grant repentance to just anyone. God gives repentance to those who are willing to **acknowledge the truth**. That is, everyone who is willing to repent unto the acknowledging of the truth are *accepted with God*, while those who are not willing to *acknowledge* the truth are not *accepted with God*. This conclusion is in agreement with words penned by John.

*This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. (I John 1:5-10)*

For anyone to receive this precious gift unto life, a person must be willing to acknowledge the truth as God sees it, not as they see it. Those who seek to hedge and shade the truth, even a little bit, will not receive the gift of repentance. In the words of John, repentance comes to all those who are willing to walk in the light as God is in the light, not to those who live in darkness or even the shaded light of half-truths or falsehood or misrepresentation.

Repentance and the associated cleansing of God come to those who live a full disclosure life before God and before their fellowmen. Only these will be accepted with God. Only men and woman who walk in the light as God is in the light will enjoy His fellowship and the fellowship of His church. All else have their reward already in the darkness in which they hide. In the words of Jesus, they are already under condemnation.

*He who believeth on him is not condemned; but he who believeth not **is condemned already**, because he hath not believed on the name of the Only Begotten Son of God, which before was preached by the mouth of the holy prophets; for they testified of me. **And this is the condemnation**, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. (John 3:18,19)*

Oh, then, come to the light and be healed, my friend. Jesus is the Christ, and He is able to save you. Just be willing to come into His light humbly and with a contrite spirit, and He will receive you unto Himself.

Repentance involves returning to the truth from lies and vanity. It involves following the Spirit of truth into all truth according to the words of Jesus Christ. This is why those who came to John the Baptist, when he was preaching repentance and baptism for the remission of sins, came confessing their sins. They came speaking the truth. They no longer excused themselves and their sin. Rather, in order to come into the presence of the God of truth, they came acknowledging the truth about themselves and what they had done. No longer relying on self-justification and deception, on the cloak of darkness and secrecy, of denial and deceit, they came accepting of honesty and justice. They came valuing the truth over vanity and lies. They loved the truth and embraced it.

As noted previously, repentance is a gift of God, a gift the early church soon learned God gives to everyone who is *accepted with him*.<sup>100</sup> Peter had been called by the Spirit of the Lord to minister to a Gentile, a man called Cornelius, who was *a centurion of the band called the Italian band*.<sup>101</sup> Luke reports that Cornelius was *a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always*.<sup>102</sup> Upon hearing Cornelius testify of God's goodness to him and his household, Peter declared:

*Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with him. (Acts 10:34b,35)*

When Peter returned to Jerusalem, some of Peter's brethren contended with him for fellowshiping with Gentiles. Luke, a Gentile himself, recorded the events of this meeting in his second treatise to Theophilus (now called *The Acts of the Apostles* or simply *Acts*) beginning as follows:

*And the apostles and brethren that were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying, ... (Acts 11:1-4)*

After sharing the details of the matter with his brethren, Peter concluded with these words:

*Forasmuch then as **God gave them the like gift**<sup>103</sup> as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I, that I could withstand God? (Acts 11:17)*

What was their reply to Peter's testimony? They concluded that God had *granted repentance* to the Gentiles just as He had *granted* it to them.

*When they heard these things, they held their peace and glorified God, saying, **Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.*** (Acts 11:18)

May this be our joy and desire as well, that all would come to repentance and repent unto the acknowledging of the truth.

### **If My People**

Returning now to the Lord's message to King Solomon, the Lord spoke to him saying *if* they would prayerfully humble themselves before Him and repent of their sins by turning back to Him, He promised to turn His judgments away from them and heal their land.

*And the Lord appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for **a house of sacrifice.** **If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; If my people which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; Then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*** (II Chronicles 7:12-14) <sup>104</sup>

With these instructions, God highlighted for His people five elements of the *conditions of repentance*. These special conditions provide the way whereby, according to His justice and mercy, God might bless and prosper His people. On their part, they were to:

- Honor the Lord's name, by which they were called<sup>105</sup>
- Humble themselves (under the hand of God)<sup>106</sup>
- Pray in faith<sup>107</sup>
- Seek the Lord's face<sup>108</sup>
- Turn from their wicked ways<sup>109</sup>

It was only in fulfilling these five *conditions* that they held claim to the promise of the healing of their land. These five *conditions* were to be taken together. They provided God's people with a means whereby they might be reconciled unto God.

In an earlier day, when the Lord's people rebelled against Him while under the leadership of Moses, the Lord provided another means which foreshadowed Jesus Christ on the cross.

*And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people*

came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole; and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived. (Numbers 21:5-9)

Then, when speaking of God's love being revealed in His being lifted up upon the cross, Jesus referred to this serpent which Moses was instructed to lift up in the wilderness. In the same manner of healing, Jesus said that whoever believes on Him might not perish but have everlasting life.

*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so **must** the Son of Man be lifted up; That whosoever believeth on him **should not perish**, but have eternal life. **For God so loved the world, that he gave his Only Begotten Son, That whosoever believeth on him should not perish; but have everlasting life.** For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him **might** be saved. He who believeth on him is not condemned; **But he who believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the Only Begotten Son of God, which before was preached by the mouth of the holy prophets; for they testified of me.** (John 3:14-18)*

While the condition seems uncomplicated – believe and you shall be saved – it is an exacting condition. Jesus Christ completed the work His Father had given Him to redeem mankind from the fall of Adam, a work that none of us, not even all of us together, could have accomplished.<sup>110</sup> He alone is capable enough, competent enough, and caring enough to complete such a work.<sup>111</sup> Our Lord conquered death and rose from the grave and ascended into heaven to ever intercede for us before the throne of justice and mercy.<sup>112</sup> As a result of His work of intercession for all mankind – for everyone who was, and is, and will ever be – all will be raised from the dead to stand before Him to be judged of their works.<sup>113</sup>

Had Jesus not completed this work for us, the judgment that was first pronounced upon mankind as a result of the fall of Adam would have remained in place forever.<sup>114</sup> But praise be to God, our Lord did come to set men free from this *first judgment* so each one might choose for himself or herself whether or not he or she will be restored into the fellowship of God's light and His love through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>115</sup> How each of us will be judged depends upon how each of us has responded to our Lord and His call to repent and come unto Him to be freed from sin, i.e. to become dead to sin.<sup>116</sup>

Since mankind was shut out from God's presence because of the fall,<sup>117</sup> Jesus Christ came to provide the way whereby we may enter back into the presence of God. Therefore, to be freed from the condemnation which rests upon those who do not believe in the name of Jesus Christ, we must come unto Him as the only One who is able to save us *from* our sins (not *in* our sins), and we must come according to *the conditions of repentance*. That is, we

must seek His justification alone, not seek to justify ourselves before God.

For this reason, our Lord called and ordained ministers like His Apostle named Paul, who testified before King Agrippa that he was faithful to the Lord's calling on his life, showing those to whom he ministered *that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance*, as opposed to the works of self-justification.<sup>118</sup> Everyone must forsake their own ways of justifying themselves before God. They must come to believe that without Jesus they cannot be saved, and that He, by Himself, is able to save them. For we must come to rely solely upon His mercy and merit and none of our own. Otherwise, we cannot be saved in His kingdom.

### **Repent Ye, and Believe the Gospel**

In preparation of closing this volume of study we return here to Jesus' first commandment which He issued in His ministry: *Repent and believe the gospel.*

*Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God; and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; **repent ye, and believe the gospel.*** (Mark 1:12,13)

Jesus maintained this theme of repentance throughout the years leading up to the time He offered Himself upon the cross as the atonement for our sins. During the intervening years, Jesus testified of how He had come to call *sinner*s to repentance.

*Jesus answering, said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* (Luke 5:31,32)

Consistent with this theme of repentance, Jesus spoke of certain *conditions* that must be met in order for us to be saved in the kingdom of God. He explained, for example, that unless we have been born again we will not enter into the kingdom of God, let alone see it.

*Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*** Nicodemus said unto him, *How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born of water, and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*** *That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit. **Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*** (John 3:3-7)

After His resurrection Jesus continued with this theme by testifying of how *repentance and the remission of sins* were to be taught among all nations.

*Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise*

*from the dead the third day; and **that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations**, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. (Luke 24:44-47)*

This was His calling and to this end He had come into the world, to preach deliverance to the captives of sin, to those who had become the servants of sin.

*And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and as his custom was he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And there was delivered unto him, the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, **The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and the recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised; To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.** And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and he sat down. And the eyes of all those who were in the synagogue, were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears. (Luke 4:16-21)*

*Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man; how sayest thou, ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.** And the servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the Son abideth ever. **If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.** (John 8:31-36)*

This same message continued on through His disciples. Here are a few examples from Paul's letters.

*Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? (Romans 6:16)*

*For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:23)*

*Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. (Galatians 6:7,8)*

The message is clear. Except we repent of our sins, we will remain in torment and the bondage of sin.

## **Today if Ye Will Hear His Voice**

God has limited the time we may enter into His love.<sup>119</sup> Recall how John wrote of how God first loved us.<sup>120</sup> Our Lord took the initiative to establish a loving relationship with mankind after our first parents, Adam and Eve, fell from God's presence as a result of their transgressing His commandments.<sup>121</sup> In our fallen state, we are enemies to God (through rebellion and the deceitfulness of sin). Yet God sent His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to atone for our sins and to reconcile unto Himself all those who believe in His name.<sup>122</sup> Now Jesus Christ calls us to respond to God's initiative of love by yielding our wills unto God's will through loving obedience.<sup>123</sup> He calls us to follow Him back into the presence of God according to His instructions and commandments that preserve His covenants.<sup>124</sup> Why? The doorway leading from the state of sin to life everlasting will not always remain open to us.<sup>125</sup> The time has been *limited*.

*Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, **Today if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts**, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness; When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; While it is said, **Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts**, as in the provocation. For some, when they had heard, did provoke; howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. (Hebrews 3:7-19)*

*Again, he **limiteth** a certain day, saying in David, **Today**, after so long a time; as it is said, **Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts**. (Hebrews 4:7)*

It is imperative then that we retain in remembrance these truths about God and His kingdom:<sup>126</sup>

- God is just. When we violate God's commands and go contrary to His laws, we will be brought into judgment and, if we do not repent through faith in Jesus Christ, we can come under the condemnation which is founded on His justice, with Him resisting us, fighting against us, and eventually shutting us out of His presence if we persist in our rebellion against Him.<sup>127</sup> For it is written, God's Spirit will not always strive with man.<sup>128</sup>
- God is merciful. To those who repent of their transgressions (sins) against His laws and commandments and come unto Him through faith in Jesus Christ, God

grants mercy according to the riches of His own grace and kindness as well as His justice and wisdom.<sup>129</sup>

**God's justice and His love are equally satisfied when: 1) we honestly acknowledge and accept God's judgments against sin, and 2) we acknowledge and accept His provisions for us in the person of Jesus Christ (i.e. in the redemption He has made for those who repent of their sin and follow Him).** God's justice and mercy are both satisfied when we honor and accept the payment Jesus Christ has made for our sins and then repent of our sins to be reconciled to God's will. When we comply with the commands of Jesus Christ, God promises to forgive us and claim us as His own dear children by His sovereign grace.<sup>130</sup> Only in this way may His mercy claim us without violating His justice.<sup>131</sup> Only in this way may the justice and mercy of God be equally honored and preserved. Only in this way can we abide with God in His light and His love. Unconditional love, on the other hand, has no use for mercy because it has no regard for justice.

We are to abide in our Lord's love by keeping His commandments. God extends His mercy and compassion toward us for the sake of Jesus Christ, the only one willing and able to satisfy the demands of justice for us by atoning for our sins. His redemption is effectual for all repentant souls who come to rely upon Him by loving Him and His ways unto the keeping of His words. It is by our failing to, or choosing not to keep His commandments and covenants that we *separate ourselves* from God and thereby choose to abide outside of the love of God.

*But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who **separate themselves**, sensual, having not the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, **praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.** (Jude 1:17-21)*

Recall further that it is written of Jesus Christ that He is *the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him*.<sup>132</sup> It is through this condition, the keeping of His commandments, that we have the promise that He will regenerate our souls through the baptism of His Spirit of truth.

*If ye love Me, keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; who the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you. (John 14:15-18)*

To those who would claim Jesus as their Lord and Savior but do not follow Him, Jesus Christ simply asks, "And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?"<sup>133</sup> Obedience to the call to repent and believe the gospel reveals us a true follower of Jesus Christ.<sup>134</sup> Drawing near to the Lord with our lips is not sufficient; our actions will either

reveal our love and devotion for Him, or they will betray us.<sup>135</sup> Those who keep His commandments will be blessed.<sup>136</sup> Those who do not will be cut off from His presence.<sup>137</sup> What are His commandments? Paul *briefly* explains:

*Therefore owe no man anything, 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 neighbor as thyself.** Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.* (Romans 13:8-10)

*For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.* (Galatians 5:14)

Jesus Christ fulfilled the law by loving us redemptively, by honoring justice and extending mercy to us through providing an eternal payment for our sins, by offering Himself as an infinite atonement for our sins. Satan, as unconditional love, does not seek to fulfill the law through sacrifice. Rather, he seeks to put away the law by disposing of *the conditions of repentance* and the terms of restitution and reconciliation.

The Lord loved us so much that He taught us the true words of God and thereby showed us the way we may abide in our Father's love. Jesus taught that if we keep God's commandments through keeping His words, we will be loved by our heavenly Father and He will make His abode with us.

*He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him...If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, **and make our abode with him.*** (John 14:21-23)

This is Zion, i.e. God making His abode with us.<sup>138</sup> This is the essential component of the everlasting covenant, that when we keep all of God's commandments Zion will again come upon the earth, and God will abide with mankind.<sup>139</sup> Alternately stated, the Lord's Zion (His city, His *abode*<sup>140</sup>) will come again upon the earth when we embrace the truth (i.e. when we keep our Lord's words,<sup>141</sup> which are *truth*<sup>142</sup>) and look upward (for the words of wisdom which are from above, which wisdom is first of all pure then peaceable).<sup>143</sup> As it is written, "*He <God> loveth them which will have Him to be their God.*"<sup>144</sup> We have Him as our God when we do what He says.

The conditions of Zion will be fulfilled through *the conditions of repentance* when we are sanctified by His indwelling love,<sup>145</sup> i.e. by our obeying the truth through His Spirit unto loving each other with an *unfeigned* (true) love, not an unconditional love.<sup>146</sup>

*Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto **unfeigned love of the brethren**, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.* (I Peter 1:22)

Remember, when we were enemies against God, Christ died for us so He might reconcile us unto God and establish an everlasting friendship between God and mankind.<sup>147</sup> He came among us specifically to reconcile us to God while it is yet called *Today*.<sup>148</sup> He came near to us as Immanuel so that we could draw near to Him and be forgiven and reconciled unto God before the final judgment.<sup>149</sup> Thus, He invites you and me to seek Him while He is near.

***Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith 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. (Isaiah 55:6-9)***

Through His birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus Christ has sought to reconcile us unto God.<sup>150</sup> Through His ministry of restitution and redemption, He has provided the means whereby He might establish an everlasting friendship between God and all repentant mankind.<sup>151</sup> Accordingly, Jesus Christ has taught that we must abide the terms and conditions of God's covenants in order for us to be saved in the kingdom of God.<sup>152</sup> To this end then He calls us to repent and believe the gospel, to come to Him on the conditions of repentance.

---

### **End Notes**

<sup>1</sup> cf. Psalm 66:18, Proverb 28:13 ...

<sup>2</sup> To advocates of unconditional love, loving after this manner is a matter of loving others without conditions or special considerations. Stated another way, their focus is on loving others independent of and separate from any and all things by loving them just as they are. Added to this is the advocates' aim to love without any direct attempts to change or influence the lives of others except to establish and promote an environment of unconditional love.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 28:17-19, Mark 16:8-21 and Luke 24:44-48 with John 17:1-26

<sup>4</sup> Hebrews 8:6, 9:15, 12:24

<sup>5</sup> Hebrews 12:2-14

<sup>6</sup> John 1:11,12

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 11:29,30 with John 8:31-36

<sup>8</sup> Mark 1:12,13

<sup>9</sup> Romans 5:9, Colossians 3:6, I Thessalonians 1:10, 2:16, Revelation 6:17, etc. NOTE: As its states, unconditional love declares that there is not a wrath to come. Its message is that God loves us unconditionally, allowing no room to develop or express wrath toward us. This assertion on the part of the advocates of unconditional love is in direct conflict with the prophets and apostles whose writings we have recorded in the Bible. This is one of the most important themes in the Bible: God is not only capable of wrath, but God also is willing and ready to bring down His wrath on all disobedience. This is precisely why Jesus came to

atone for our sins. Without Him, we are all children of wrath because, in the words of Paul, there is nothing good in us save Christ alone (the Roman letter).

- 10 Matthew 9:41-44 [9:35-38 KJV]. Compare with all of Matthew 5 through Matthew 7.
- 11 Matthew 22:12,13 & Matthew 25:30,31
- 12 Deuteronomy 33:27, I Timothy 1:17, Hebrews 9:14, II Nephi 6:20, Mosiah 3:4, D&C 17:4a,5h, etc.
- 13 Jeremiah 31:3 & Moroni 8:18
- 14 I Corinthians 13:1-13, Moroni 7:49-53, etc.
- 15 John 15:10-14 with I John 1:1-10
- 16 Matthew 4:16 [4:17 KJV] & Mark 1:12,13 [1:15 KJV]
- 17 Matthew 21:51-56 [21:42-46 KJV]
- 18 I Peter 2:5-8 with Romans 9:33
- 19 Matthew 7:34-37 [7:24-29 KJV] with Helaman 2:74,75
- 20 I Corinthians 3:11
- 21 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_Hiley\\_Bathurst](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Hiley_Bathurst)
- 22 [http://www.hymnary.org/text/o\\_for\\_a\\_faith\\_that\\_will\\_not\\_shrink](http://www.hymnary.org/text/o_for_a_faith_that_will_not_shrink)
- 23 I Peter 1:6-9 & I Peter 4:12,13
- 24 <https://1828.mshaffer.com/d/word/ordinance>
- 25 <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/venue>
- 26 II Timothy 2:5
- 27 Ephesians 4:11-16
- 28 John 10:10 with Matthew 16:25-30 [16:24-27 KJV]
- 29 <https://1828.mshaffer.com/d/word/ordinance>
- 30 <https://1828.mshaffer.com/d/word/sacrament>
- 31 See D&C 17:10a, 17:11e, 17:18b, 26:1b, 46:2, 59:2f,h, 62:2a, 86:1b, 92:3e, & 119:5a,c
- 32 <https://1828.mshaffer.com/d/word/sacrament>
- 33 <http://webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/sacrament>
- 34 cf. Moroni 4:4 & Moroni 5:3 with D&C 52:4b-5a & D&C 59:2e-2h
- 35 Luke 22:19
- 36 D&C 59:2a-h with III Nephi 12:34,35
- 37 cf. Galatians 5:16,25, Ephesians 6:18, Philippians 3:3, Colossians 1:8, 1 Peter 4:6, I John 1:1-2:2, Revelation 1:10, etc.
- 38 I Corinthians 2:9-16
- 39 <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/venue>
- 40 cf. III Nephi 4:49,50
- 41 I Corinthians 1:29
- 42 Proverbs 13:10
- 43 II Peter 2:1-22 with Jude 1:8-11
- 44 Genesis 5:4-27 [4:1-17 KJV]
- 45 Hebrews 5:9 with Hebrews 11:8
- 46 Romans 8:5-9
- 47 I Corinthians 13:1-13 with Moroni 7:51-53
- 48 Matthew 16:25-30 [16:24-27 KJV]
- 49 Mark 1:12,13 [1:14,15]
- 50 D&C 16:3c-e, Helaman 2:74,75
- 51 John 16:7-15
- 52 Jeremiah 8:20
- 53 [http://www.hisworkmanship.net/index\\_files/StudyLetters/MoreThanThese042405hl.pdf](http://www.hisworkmanship.net/index_files/StudyLetters/MoreThanThese042405hl.pdf)
- 54 Mark 1:15 with Luke 18:28,29

- 55 Luke 22:54-62 with Luke 22:31-34
- 56 I Peter 2:25
- 57 John 21:18,19
- 58 Genesis 22:1-7
- 59 Genesis 22:13-15
- 60 Genesis 22:10,16-18
- 61 Genesis 15:22
- 62 II Peter 3:9
- 63 Ephesians 2:10
- 64 Matthew 4:13-15
- 65 Matthew 2:6 [1:23]
- 66 John 1:11,12
- 67 Isaiah 28:10
- 68 Luke 8:18 & John 17:1-3 with D&C 50 & D&C 90
- 69 I John 1:7
- 70 Matthew 26:24 [26:28 KJV], Mark 14:22,23 [23,24 KJV], Luke 22:20 with John 15:10-14
- 71 John 15:12-14
- 72 Revelation 21:2,9 with Revelation 22:17
- 73 Mark 12:34-36 [12:29-31 KJV]
- 74 Hebrews 3:7-15
- 75 NOTE TO PARENTS: Satan teaches parents to love their children unconditionally so and while he devours their children with the evils of the world. Because they think they are loving their children, they think they are providing the support necessary to sustain their children without ever taking any action to protect their children from falling prey to their enemy and then to rescue them when they do fall prey.
- 76 Hebrews 12:24 with I Timothy 2:3-6 & Hebrews 8:6 & 9:15
- 77 *The wrath to come* is clearly described and written about in the New Testament. See Matthew 3:33, Luke 3:12 & I Thessalonians 1:10 & 2:16 with John 3:36, Romans 1:18, 2:4,5 & 5:9, Ephesians 2:3 & 5:6, Colossians 3:6, Hebrews 4:3, Revelation 6:16,17, 14:9-11 & 19:15, etc.
- 78 Matthew 28:17-19
- 79 Helaman 2:74,75
- 80 John 3:3-5
- 81 Romans 8:1,2
- 82 Colossians 2:7
- 83 cf. Ephesians 2:11-18 with Alma 19:103-108 & II Nephi 1:88-99
- 84 Matthew 28:17-19 [18-20 KJV]
- 85 cf. Helaman 2:71-75 with I John 1:3-2:6
- 86 cf. Matthew 2:4 [1:21 KJV] with Helaman 2:71-75
- 87 cf. John 8:24 & Hebrews 9:27 with Mosiah 8:77,78, Alma 8:97 & Alma 9:28-32; see also John 15:13,14, Moroni 7:35-43, etc.
- 88 II Corinthians 5:15-21
- 89 See Hebrews 1:1-13:25, i.e. the entire letter to the Hebrews; e.g. vss. 7:23,24, 10:5-17, etc.
- 90 See Philippians 1:27
- 91 Romans 8
- 92 Alma 19:64-114
- 93 John 15:4,5
- 94 Philippians 4:13
- 95 Genesis 1:15 with John 1:11-16, John 17:17 & Luke 8:5-18
- 96 cf. (Luke 3:12-14 [3:7-9 KJV]) with Alma 3:87-91 & D&C 94:2e

<sup>97</sup> Isaiah 37:31

<sup>98</sup> Luke 9:44

<sup>99</sup> Luke 8:6,13

<sup>100</sup> Acts 10:34b,35

<sup>101</sup> Acts 10:1-48

<sup>102</sup> Acts 10:2

<sup>103</sup> The *like gift* is *the gift of the Holy Ghost* as described in Acts 10:44-47. It is also the gift of repentance as evidenced by the confession of the apostles and brethren in Jerusalem in Acts 11:16-18. That is, the gift of the Holy Ghost is the gift of repentance. However, the gift of repentance is not the whole gift of the Holy Ghost. It is the beginning part of the greater gift of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. Consider the instruction given to the restored church in D&C 17:7, especially verse (d) where it is written that those who truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ are to be received into His church by baptism. We must first receive *of* the Spirit of our Lord in order that our baptism is a *fruit* of His Spirit. As Jesus testified, we can do nothing without Him (John 15). Thus, it is written in the Book of Mormon, that the first-fruits of repentance is baptism (Moroni 8:29). That is, baptism is a work of the Lord's Spirit within us to prepare us to receive the fuller revelation of His Spirit within us. If baptism is not a fruit of the Spirit that comes of faith in Jesus Christ, then it is a dead work. If it is, on the other hand, a fruit of the Spirit of Christ at work within us, then it is a good work, one that will not pass away. Therefore, like Cornelius, we must first receive the word of God (Acts 10) that the Spirit of God may have place within us (Alma 16:151-172 with Romans 10:16 & John 14:26 & 16:13). Then we are to follow Jesus into the waters of baptism as a work of His Spirit. Through the gift of His Spirit, our Lord first leads into baptism to enter into His death to sin and into the newness of His life. This is evidenced through the outward manifestation of baptism (see II Nephi 13 & Romans 6). As Alma explains, we must follow our Lord through the gate of repentance and baptism on into the way of life so He might pour out His Spirit more abundantly upon us (Alma 9:38-41).

<sup>104</sup> cf. II Chronicles 7:12,13 with II Chronicles 6:19-42

<sup>105</sup> cf. Ephesians 3:14,15, John 17:12 & Revelation 22:4 with I Thessalonians 1:11,12, Acts 2:38, 4:12, 10:43,48, 15:17

<sup>106</sup> cf. James 4:10, I Peter 5:6

<sup>107</sup> Luke 21:36, Jude 1:19,20 ...

<sup>108</sup> II Chronicles 7:14 with II Corinthians 3:18, 4:6

<sup>109</sup> II Chronicles 7:14

<sup>110</sup> John 4:36, 9:4 & 17:4, Romans 5:1-21 & I Corinthians 15:51-58 with Hebrews 4:10; see also Philippians 1:6

<sup>111</sup> Isaiah 53, Revelation 5:5-12 & Hebrews 1:1-9 with Alma 16:207-225

<sup>112</sup> Hebrews 7:23-26, 10:1-17 with Isaiah 53:12, 59:16 & Romans 8:27

<sup>113</sup> Matthew 16:30 & I Peter 1:17 with I Corinthians 3:13-15, II Corinthians 5:9,10 & Revelation 14:13, 22:11,12, etc.

<sup>114</sup> Romans 5:1-21 with II Nephi 6:10-18

<sup>115</sup> I John 1:1-2:1, 3:1-24 & II Nephi 1:114-128 with Helaman 2:71-75 & Helaman 5:69-74

<sup>116</sup> Romans 6:1-16 & Revelation 22:11 with Alma 19:23-117

<sup>117</sup> Genesis 3 with Romans 5:6-11 & I Corinthians 15:20-22; see also Isaiah 53 with II Nephi 1:66,73,

<sup>118</sup> Acts 26:15-20

<sup>119</sup> Hebrews 3&4 & Matthew 25; see also Genesis 8:5

<sup>120</sup> I John 4:7-21

<sup>121</sup> See Romans 5

<sup>122</sup> Romans 5:1-11 with Acts 2

<sup>123</sup> John 14:15-18

- <sup>124</sup> II Nephi 13:5-32  
<sup>125</sup> Matthew 25:1-12  
<sup>126</sup> cf. Matthew 25  
<sup>127</sup> cf. Matthew 18 with Romans 8:1-14 & Galatians 5:18  
<sup>128</sup> Genesis 8:5 (6:3 KJV)  
<sup>129</sup> Alma 9:54-62  
<sup>130</sup> Romans 8  
<sup>131</sup> Alma 19:64-114  
<sup>132</sup> Hebrews 5:9 with Hebrews 2:1-12  
<sup>133</sup> Luke 6:46 with Matthew 5-7  
<sup>134</sup> See Mark 1:12,13 with Mark 16:14-22 & John 13:34,35  
<sup>135</sup> See Matthew 15:6-9 with James 1:26-3:12, Matthew 7, etc.  
<sup>136</sup> See Matthew 5  
<sup>137</sup> Alma 17:1  
<sup>138</sup> Genesis 7:71,72  
<sup>139</sup> Genesis 9:21 with Matthew 6:9-15 & D&C 65  
<sup>140</sup> cf. Ephesians 2:19-22  
<sup>141</sup> John 14:21-23  
<sup>142</sup> John 17:17 with II Nephi 14:4-6  
<sup>143</sup> Genesis 9:22,23  
<sup>144</sup> I Nephi 5:131  
<sup>145</sup> I John 3-5  
<sup>146</sup> John 17:17 with I John 3:1-3, 4:13-18 & Romans 5:5  
<sup>147</sup> Romans 5:6-11 & II Corinthians 5:15-21  
<sup>148</sup> Hebrews 3 & 4  
<sup>149</sup> II Corinthians 5:10 & Matthew 25 with Jacob 4:8-17, D&C 85:16  
<sup>150</sup> Colossians 1:1-29 with I Peter 1:1-25  
<sup>151</sup> II Corinthians 5:15-21  
<sup>152</sup> See Matthew 5:19-21 (5:17-19 KJV), Matthew 7:30-35 (21-27 KJV), Matthew 18:1-3 with John 12:44-50 & III Nephi 7:4-12