

# God's Invincible Love for His Children, p. 1

By Jeff Noblit

sermonaudio.com

**Preached on:** Sunday, August 19, 2018

## **Anchored in Truth Ministries**

1915 Avalon Ave.  
Muscle Shoals, AL 35661

**Website:** [www.anchoredintruth.org](http://www.anchoredintruth.org)

**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/anchoredintruth](http://www.sermonaudio.com/anchoredintruth)

Now we come to our second installment. One of the strands, the first strand that weaves around the core, and that is that strand of God's invincible love for his children and that's where we are today. God's invincible love for his children. Now, we're looking at Jeremiah and I'm convinced that this text in Jeremiah gives us something of an outline summary of the totality of God's love. Now we're going to break this down in the message today but this outline up front will sort of give us a broad overview of where we are going.

Let's look at it together, the prophet Jeremiah writes in Jeremiah 31:3,

3 The LORD appeared to him from afar [some translations say "from of old"], saying, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness.

This verse contains an amazing statement on the character of God's love. The context is that Israel in general is saying, "We know you loved us of old, we know the covenant and the promise and the love you showed us of old, but we're not so sure about right now." Maybe that's where some of you are this morning. You believe in your mind, you've been taught, "God loves me, is faithful to me in love, but I'm just not so sure about it right now." God responds back and says, in effect, "What do you mean? I have loved you with an everlasting love. That means from the councils of eternity past your love was settled in the heart and the mind of the Godhead through the duration of time, and unending into eternity future, I love you." That's a powerful truth.

Now when he says this, I think we have inclusive in this statement a lot of things. I think it includes that God has a general love for all mankind. Now if you don't see it implicit or implied in this text, then certainly the balance of Scripture makes that clear and we're going to look at that in just a moment. Then in addition to that general love for all of mankind, here we have a statement about God's special love for Israel. But then there is a third aspect, love for all mankind, special love for Israel nationally speaking, but then when he says, "I have loved you with an everlasting love," from eternity past through time and all the way to the end, it doesn't have an end but figuratively speaking to the end of eternity future. That's more than even Israel. That's the statement of God's special love for the elect out of the elect. Israel was the elect nation. God chose Israel. God chose Abraham not based on performance or works or merit, just God's choice. Then we know

the Bible teaches very clearly that within Israel there are those who aren't just outwardly the descendants of Abraham, they are spiritually the descendants of Abraham. We might call them the true believers, the really saved out of the Old Testament.

As a matter of fact, look over to Malachi, would you do that? If you go forward the very last book in the Old Testament right before Matthew is Malachi. Would you go there? Flip forward. It's about a quarter of an inch. It's about as far as you'll go, and then you'll go to the book of Malachi and we see this concept of God loving a certain group within the nation Israel that he loved. Malachi 1, look at verse 2,

2 "I have loved you," says the LORD [the same idea here; they are kind of questioning God's love]. But you say, "How have You loved us?" "Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares the LORD. "Yet I have loved Jacob; 3 but I have hated Esau, and I have made his mountains a desolation and appointed his inheritance for the jackals of the wilderness."

So God writes to the elect of the elect, to a group in Israel and says, "I have a special love for you. I especially love the descendants, Jacob and the descendants of Jacob." So here we are, God's great general love for all mankind. God's special love for Israel nationally. God's even greater love for Jacob and his spiritual descendants within Israel. And then there is one other group pictured or typified in this text and that's God's great love for his elect church. His great love for his elect church because we go over to Romans, turn there with me over to the New Testament, over to the book of Romans and we go to Romans 9 and verse 11. Romans 9:11. Now here God has through the Apostle Paul writing to the church at Rome, he's quoting Malachi, the verse we just saw and he says in Romans 9:11,

11 for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,

In other words, it's not the man who did something, all this is based on the God who calls one of them. Verse 12,

12 it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger." 13 Just as it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

So here we have this statement pulled out of the Old Testament as a truth that points to God in electing those he will save in this church age of grace, this New Testament dispensation. So I'm convinced in Jeremiah 31:3 you have implied God's great love for all of mankind, God's more special love for Israel. Why he chose Israel? It was his good pleasure to do so. Then within Israel he says, "Jacob I loved, Esau I hated." Out of Israel there is an elect group that are the truly spiritual Israel, the ones he will save, and then he takes that very expression of, "Jacob I loved, Esau I hated," he takes it to the New Testament and says that's the basis of how God saves his church, those who come to Christ. There are those who are his elect choice and they are the objects of his very special love.

Alright, that's our introduction. Now let's go to I. in our outline and I don't see any way this is going to be all done in one week, okay? So you just need to strap in and listen good. We'll watch our time and just see how it goes and if some of you start nodding off, I've never liked the service to be an adult nursery, so we'll see how we do, alright?

I. God is love. God is love. 1 John 4:7-8. Now remember the context. Please don't take a book of the Bible and run off with it like it's not written in the context of what the original author meant it to be written in. This is written specifically to believers. This is specifically addressed to those who know Christ, who are born again, who are members of a local church, and he says here, verse 7, 1 John 4,

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

Now as we look at mankind in general, we understand that mankind knows something of love and that's because man's Creator is a God of love. The love we know among us as human beings, I'm not talking about just the church now, just as human beings, it's a tainted love and it's a warped love because man is fallen in sin and everything that God created good has now been warped because of the sin curse, the pollution of sin it's sometimes called, yet any good love we know as human beings is because we are created in the image of the God who is love. To know anything of true love, one needs to know many things about the one true God who is the God of love, who in effect defines love. You see, it is God who gives love its full and true definition.

Again 1 John 4:8, "God is love," but a key phrase is in verse 7, "love is from God." In other words, love doesn't come out of us. The origin of love, that is true love, is God. You see, love is not natural to us. Did you hear that? Now lust is very natural to us but love is not natural to us. Desire and emotion is natural to us but that in the real sense of love is not love at all. Love is from God. It's just not natural to us. It's not of this lower realm where mankind dwells today. Love comes from outside of us. It must come from God and to know love, we must humble ourselves to go to God and sit at his feet. As a matter of fact, that's why the Bible says love is the fruit of the Spirit. It's produced by the Spirit. It's not produced by your spirit, it's not produced by your capacities, the Spirit of God comes into a true Christian and then it begins to bear true love. Love has to come from God. Now, when two people love each other, they sometimes, or at least the liberal persuasion of our day will say, "Well now, that's good. That's true love," but very often it's just human lust and desire and it's not true love at all.

So what we have to ask ourselves today is: what does the word "is" mean? In this verse, it really depends on what the meaning of "is" is when it says, "God is love." Now sometimes it means like the idea of "or," it can be either/or. You can just reverse it. You can say God is love or love is God, but that's not what this verse is teaching. That is not true at all. God is love but love is not God and so back to the illustration I was giving earlier when two people "love each other" and the liberal persuasion of the day would tell

us that, "Well, when people have genuine love for each other, there is something of the divine there because God is love and love is God." That is absolutely totally and completely wrong. That is false. What John is trying to point out here when he tells us in 1 John 4:8 that God is love, is that God is so loving, he's so thoroughly connected with love that you can actually say God is love.

You see, love is intrinsic to the character and nature of God. Love is an essential component to every part of his being. Any view, therefore, of God that leaves love out, loses something of the truth about who God is because God is love. Love permeates the totality of God's being and all of God's attributes give his love its true and unique character. In other words, you can't just separate the attributes of God off. God is not made in parts, he is one whole. Now we know something about the parts of God from his word but you always have to force yourself to think back and think now they work in harmony as a whole. For example, God is love but God is holy so his love is always holy. Now that rules out most of what our world calls love because most of what our world calls love is not holy. God's love is pure because God is pure. God's love is righteous or upright because God is a righteous God. God's love is faithful, man's love is not faithful. All this ridiculous sinful nonsense today about, "Well, I used to love you but I want out of our marriage because I've fallen out of love." You didn't ever fall into it. You never had any. That's not love because God is faithful and he gives love its definition. All the attributes of God are connected to his love and love is connected to all of his attributes. That's why John says you can just say God is love. You see, you do not learn of love, you learn of God and then you learn love. Did you hear me? You must not focus to learn of love, learn of God and you will really learn what is love.

Now from the fall of man in sin when Adam and Eve sinned in the garden of Eden all the way up to today, man is inherently an idolater. Our hearts are idol factories. It's just easy for us to begin to put our affections and our worship and our attention toward something other than God and this really affects us in our image of God. We always have this proneness, we're always tempted to want to make God a whole lot like us. We want God to be relevant and cool and neat and faddish and cultural, and that's the big noise of the modern church growth movement, "Let's make it cool and relevant. As a matter of fact, God is just like going to a concert. God's just like going to a honky-tonk, just a little cleaner version." So we want God to be like us, just maybe a little higher, a little cleaner version of us, but that's not God at all. God is transcendent in holiness. He's infinitely superior to us in every way he's like us, and he's radically different from us in countless ways we can't number. When you come to church to worship God, it should be something of a transcendent experience. It's beyond and above and outside and different from all the other experiences of life because our God is not like this world. So when we come to God, we are prone to want to bring God down to being much like us so we are constantly upside down on the issue of God's love because we transpose onto God our concept of God and our concept of what God's love must be like. We say, "Well, I feel love is like this so God is surely like this. I feel like this is the way to be loving in this circumstance, so this is what God would do." Well, it may not be what God would do. That's why when you study the Gospels and you begin to presuppose how Jesus will act in every situation, you find out he doesn't do it the way you think he's going to do it.

Some people came to Jesus and said, some people were worshiping and a tower fell on them and their blood was spilt, and probably expecting Jesus to say, "Oh, that's terrible and I feel so sorry for them and I have compassion," and I know he has compassion, but his response in that setting was, "Well, unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." That was the most loving thing he could have said at that moment. My point is be careful when you presuppose this is what love is so God's got to be like this. Ladies especially, you have to be careful because wonderfully God gave you an emotional nurturing nature he generally didn't give men. You need to rejoice in that difference and not fight it. It's a wonderful good gift but it means your temptations are different than men's. Men have their own that you don't have: pride and sometimes authority, and control, and issues that often ladies don't deal with so much. But nevertheless, all of us are prone to making God like we're comfortable with him being.

One may say, "Well, my God is a God of love, my God wouldn't do that." What they really are saying is, "My God is not just. I don't want a God that's just and holds me accountable for the injustice in my life so I'll just smother all that in God's love and say God doesn't deal with justice." What they really mean is God is not sovereign. He cannot act on his own and choose what is wrong and wrong, good and bad. He has to listen to my viewpoint. What they really mean is God is not holy. He's kind of like the rest of us. So we are all just natural born idolaters and we tend toward putting on God an image that we are comfortable with instead of submitting to what the word says about him and honoring him for who he has revealed himself to be.

So remember, God is a composite of the totality of all of his characteristics or attributes and all of them are touched by love. God is love. Very simplistic perhaps, hopefully not too simplistic, but his attributes are not like marbles in a bag, they are more like chunks of chocolate in a double boiler, they all connect to each other. You cannot consider one of God's attributes without the influence of the others for the Scripture requires us to think of love in a different way, that love permeates all the others in a way maybe the others do not permeate, though they do permeate. Now we're going to look again at the great attributes of God and how he loves us and how it is manifested when we talk about his special great love for his elect church, but that's in a few moments. So maybe you can think of it in terms of God's love is like the dye in a garment. You immerse a garment in dye and it permeates all the fibers. God's love is like the spice in a dish of food, it permeates to all the areas of the food and flavors it all, and God is love and it flavors everything he is and everything he does.

God is love. That's I. II. The variance in God's love. The variance. By the way, you're not going to find this outline in any systematic theology. It's mine. The variance, in other words, God doesn't love everyone in every situation the same. You know, it's interesting to me how variant man is in his love. Think about it, "I love that sunset. I love my kitty cat. I love my children. I love that food. I love my spouse. I love my fellow man." But then those who are saved have a spiritual capacity to love their brothers and sisters in Christ in a special way, "And I love my church and I love God." Think about the variance, the levels, the degrees, the differences in all of those, and it's okay to use the

word "love" for all of these because we know what you mean contextually. Sometimes preachers talk, "You shouldn't say you love...." That's okay because God loves in various ways too. It's interesting to me how when we look at mankind and we accept that we have varying degrees of love, I do not love my pet the way I love my spouse, but in a sense I love them. Well, some of you may. There are some goofy people out there today, but you are very weird and warped and your propriety is out of whack here. You know what I mean. But we accept that man has variance, complexities even, in how and who and where and when he loves. Then we come to God. Isn't it interesting, we come to God and all of a sudden we say, "But God cannot be as complex as I am. God cannot be as dynamic as I am. God can only have one simple way he loves." Here we go with our idolatry again. Here we go with imposing on God what we feel is right for God. God can only have – now listen now – one great perfectly the same love for all people of all times. Period. There's only one thing wrong with that, it's not true. There are variances to God's love.

Listen to what he says in Deuteronomy 7:6 and 7. In Deuteronomy 7:6 and 7, he's saying something to the nation of Israel about why he chose to love them in a special way. He says,

6 "For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

Why did God do that? Well, he gives us a little insight in the next verse, verse 7,

7 The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples,

In other words, there was nothing about you that made you more attractive to God, nothing that caused God to look at you, at least that came out of you for him to say, "Now those people are special. They'll be my chosen people, but I reject these people over here." He didn't say any of that. Why did God choose Israel? Because a sovereign God chose Israel. His own good pleasure. His own purpose. Here's my point in this at this point, there's more to say about that verse and we'll look at it some more later, and that is just this: God loves whom he wants, when he wants, the way he wants. So God is not subject to some external code of fairness. God is not required to express his love equally to all men and, indeed, he does not express his love equally to all men. God is God. His sovereign choice is his and his alone. When we say God is sovereign, one of the ideas is that there is nothing outside of God that impresses God or influences God. Do you understand that? Nothing outside of God impresses him or influences him. He makes his own decisions. He makes his own choices. It's his sovereign will and his sovereign will governs his love. The Scriptures bear this out clearly.

Now, let's break this down into a couple of categories, alright? First of all, God does indeed love all mankind. Let that be forever etched and settled in your heart and mind,

God has great love for all people of all times who have ever lived, even I'm convinced, who have ever been conceived while people have been living on this earth. I think the Scriptures bear this out very thoroughly that God has this immeasurable love. That is, you can't even get to the bottom of God's great love for all mankind.

A very important verse here is Matthew 5:44 and 45. In Matthew 5:44 and 45, Jesus is talking to his disciples, or those who would aspire to be his disciples, and he says, "Here is something you need to remember to do if you are going to be my follower,

44 "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you [now why do that? Well, verse 45], 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

In other words he says, "It's just proven from nature and from biblical revelation, God has constantly continually poured out love and lovingkindness on all men who live on the earth, even those who are the most against God and the most radically opposed to him. He keeps sending the rain on them. He keeps giving them sunshine. He keeps giving them air to breathe. God is a great God of unending almost love," I say "almost" because we're going to talk about there is an ending. But his great great love for mankind. So he says as a Christian, you have a general pattern of being loving to people who most other people would not love; being kind to people that most other people would not be kind to. Why? Because that's the way your Father in heaven is. He continually showers mankind with love and lovingkindness. In the Adamic, in the Noahic covenants, we have God saying, "Adam and Eve, you do these things and I'll show my love and faithfulness to you in these ways." Then God judges the earth and he brings Noah through the flood, and as Noah comes off the ark, God makes an agreement again for the good of mankind to show his love to mankind, "I'll never again send the flood. There will be seasons you will function by from here on because of my love and my goodness to mankind."

Ezekiel – well, let me just say this first of all, a sub point of God loving all mankind would be: God has sincere feelings of love for all mankind. God is not some distant impersonal force. That's just kind of like an algorithm or a computer structured program. God personally and sincerely loves all men. Ezekiel 18:32 reminds us as the prophet says,

32 "For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies," declares the Lord GOD. "Therefore, repent and live."

So we see here this abiding disposition in God of goodness and kindness to mankind. God's great love. Again, what is he saying? Matthew 5 again, "Love your enemies because then you are like your Father who is in heaven." He's constantly like that. God sincerely feels love and, secondly, God is active in his love. In Matthew 5:45 again, he says God brings the rain on the just and the unjust, or in the New American Standard, on the righteous and on the unrighteous. He just has an activity and love here is a verb, God does something. God sends the sun to shine and that's his love for all mankind. God causes the wind to blow and the pleasantness of it. That's his love for all mankind. God

gives men air to breathe and that's his love for all mankind. God provides plants for food and animals, and that's his love for all mankind. God gives us these faithful provisions in our life, a roof over our head and transportation to carry us around. That's God's love for all mankind. You say, "These are simple things. We learned these in Sunday school." Yes, but you need to think on it. These are gifts of a continually active loving God. Our friends, what a delight our friends are. That's a gift of God's love. Our families, our spouses, our children, our grandchildren, our great-grandchildren, that's a gift of the love of God. He is active in loving us and, oh my goodness, his long-suffering mercies toward us. Why are you and I not consumed and suffering eternal wrath right now? God's love gives him that long-suffering for all mankind. He gives us the witness of nature to let us know there's a God. That's a love gift. He gives us the witness of conscience that there is a God who made a right and wrong. That's a love gift. He's written the law in our hearts. That's a love gift. He's given us the word of God. That's a love gift from God. He's given us Bible teachers and preachers. That's a love gift from God. We could go on and on. God's love is active. He feels his love deeply and he is continuing in seemingly unending actions of love for all mankind.

Here's the balance, B. not only does God love all, his love for all has boundaries. This great love for all mankind clearly has boundaries. The Bible doesn't just leave us there. Now the liberals would like to leave it there and then they'd like to run off with this concept of love and put their own twisted perverse and vile definitions on love. You can't do that. God doesn't let you do that but there is a boundary to God's love. Man lives under this flow of great and unending or seemingly unending love from God, yet what happens to us as we react back toward God? I'll tell you what happens: God is ignored, God is demeaned, God is denied, and God is rejected, and God is blasphemed, his name is cursed, and God gets very little of any thankfulness and gratitude in return; and the Bible teaches that as we curse him and as we neglect him and as we demean him and as we are continually ungrateful toward him, this just builds up a guilt that is against us in the holy halls of divine justice.

Romans 2:5,

5 But because of your stubbornness [you keep on like this, he's saying] and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

Some people think, "Well, God created everything and he's off up there somewhere and someday he'll come back." Listen friend, God is active loving everybody right now but God is actively storing up wrath against those who will not repent and believe on his Son. Trust me, God's active. You may not see it, but God is active.

Psalm 5:4 through 6,

4 For thou art not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness, No evil dwells with thee. 5 The boastful shall not stand before thine eyes; Thou dost hate

all who do iniquity. 6 Thou dost destroy those who speak falsehood; The LORD abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit.

Notice these words: God hates; God abhors. You've heard the phrase God hates the sin but loves the sinner? It's not biblical. He didn't say, "I abhor the sin you commit," he says, "I abhor the person." He doesn't say, "You know, I hate that person or I hate the iniquity he does," he says, "I hate the one who does the iniquity." My friend, your sin is not going to hell, you the sinner are going to hell. That's the balance. Why? Now listen: because God is love but his love does not violate holy justice. Justice must be served. Some people sometimes talk about the unconditional love of God and when we talk about the unconditional love of God in some contexts, but mostly that's a false statement. God's love is conditional. His love for you in Christ Jesus is conditioned upon his Son being your vicarious atoning sacrifice. There was a condition or his justice would not allow you to go free, but Jesus served the justice of God for us.

A thought or two about this love and wrath thing. The love of God and the wrath of God, you understand, coexist in perfect harmony and balance. Sometimes we preachers can get in a weaving way and we picture like love is over here and wrath is over there and they are somehow against each other. They are never against each other. They are components of the same God. They are in a harmonious perfection and balance that perhaps we do not comprehend, but the end of both, the love of God and the wrath of God, is the glory of God, and God is glorified in the just condemnation of the wicked, and God is glorified in his continual abundant love that he shows to all mankind, and then God is glorified in his unique and particular love for the elect which he will save and keep for all eternity. You see, to magnify and glorify God as he deserves requires the full expression of his wrath against the wicked and the full expression of his redeeming love toward the elect. Did you hear that? To magnify God's glory as he deserves requires the full expression of his wrath against the wicked and the full expression of redeeming love toward the elect.

Now the balance here is critical. We must never magnify one without the other. They go together. We must never magnify one or minimize the other. If we do, we lose the biblical balance and distort the true nature of God and diminish his true glory. God's love differs in the manner of its depth, its breadth and its expression. There are various ways and various degrees he exhibits his love. Now we'll not cover all of them this morning. You've got to be here next Sunday so we can give you the full-orbed picture of the varieties of ways God has extended and does extend his love, but what we do in all the ways God has chosen to love, all the boundaries he has put on some of his love, the great great glories of his love for his elect that are beyond comprehension, we glorify him for every one of those because all of them are in accordance to his will and his divine perfections and his infinite wisdom. They are all perfect and right and good.

As a matter of fact, let's close by looking at Isaiah. Could we do that? Go to the prophet Isaiah in the Old Testament. Isaiah, let's go to Isaiah 1 as we end this morning in this section of this installment of this message and talk about God's boundaries of his love. On one hand, God's love is so great and so wondrous and so beyond comprehension, but

on the other hand God says, "I have a line that you don't need to cross. I have a limit to my compassions." Verse 2, Isaiah 1,

2 Listen, O heavens, and hear, O earth; For the LORD speaks, "Sons I have reared and brought up, But they have revolted against Me. 3 An ox knows its owner, And a donkey its master's manger, But Israel does not know, My people do not understand." 4 Alas, sinful nation, People weighed down with iniquity, Offspring of evildoers, Sons who act corruptly! They have abandoned the LORD, They have despised the Holy One of Israel, They have turned away from Him. 5 Where will you be stricken again, As you continue in your rebellion? The whole head is sick And the whole heart is faint. 6 From the sole of the foot even to the head There is nothing sound in it, Only bruises, welts and raw wounds, Not pressed out or bandaged, Nor softened with oil. 7 Your land is desolate, Your cities are burned with fire, Your fields--strangers are devouring them in your presence; It is desolation, as overthrown by strangers. 8 The daughter of Zion is left like a shelter in a vineyard, Like a watchman's hut in a cucumber field, like a besieged city. 9 Unless the LORD of hosts Had left us a few survivors, We would be like Sodom, We would be like Gomorrah.

Then go down to verse 11,

11 "What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?" Says the LORD.

Now here's the key punch here, "You're still religious, though. You still go to church. You still bring your sacrifices." In today's vernacular, "You walk down the aisle. You repeated the prayer of the evangelist. You went through the motions of baptism. But that didn't mean anything to me, " God says.

11 "What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?" Says the LORD. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle; And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs or goats.

"Wait a minute, God, you told us to bring those sacrifices." Yes, but what God is saying is, "I told you to bring them representative of a broken, contrite, repentant heart. Not just the tacking on of religious observance or ritual at the end of the week like it's the sponge that soaks up the sin of the week." Listen to me, you can go through all the motions of modern evangelicalism and be clearly under the wrath of God and have gone across the boundaries of his love because it's not in the stuff, it's in the heart. We do the ordinance of baptism, God gave that. We do the ordinance of the Lord's supper, God gave that. We are faithful in small groups and to meet together under the preaching of the word, God gave that because our hearts are broken and repentant and look to Jesus Christ. Not that we can do our own thing and live our own way and be our own god and make our own rules and define God the way we want to define God, but then tack on a few rituals on Sunday. God says, "I hate that. I hate that."

Verse 12,

12 "When you come to appear before Me, Who requires of you this trampling of My courts?"

He says, "Your heart attitude makes it a trampling of sacred things as you come."

13 "Bring your worthless offerings no longer, Incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies-- I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly.

Now God ordered all these things for them to do but only as an expression of genuine, repentant, humbled hearts.

15 "So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you; Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood.

God's love is beyond your comprehension but there is a boundary line to that love. This day, repent of trusting in anything and everything other than Christ. From your heart place your faith in Jesus Christ. From your heart throw your reliance, your trust on Jesus Christ. Tell God today, "I'm not trusting in the motions of my baptism. I'm not trusting in the movements at the end of evangelistic service. Christ, today I cast myself wholly on you. Jesus Christ, your death and your death alone is where I place my faith today, and because of that, God, now I want to come and bring my tithes and offerings; because of that, God, now I want to come and be baptized to profess my faith in Jesus Christ; because of that change of heart, now I want to be in small groups and do the observances you have given me," but only as a result of the changed heart.

Have you been to Jesus? Have you fallen at his feet? Is your trust and reliance in him and him alone? Now if you're saved, there is at least a germ of that hope in your heart right now. There is something in your heart that says, "I'm not strong there but, Lord, that's where I want to be. That's where I want my trust to be, in Jesus."

Now we're just scratching the surface of the love of God, just getting going, because we've got to talk about God's great love for Israel and then God's great love for the elect.