



On Love and Being Prepared for the Judgment Seat of Christ 1 John 4:17-21

A. The relationship between love and the
judgment seat of Christ

3 God makes a promise for us to
love (4:19)

C. The correlation between loving
God and one's brother (4:20-21)

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1. (vs. 17) “By this” points to the **previous** section in confessing Jesus as the Son (vs. 15) and abiding in love (vs. 16), “love is perfected with us” –
 - a. For the ***purpose*** “that we may have confidence in the day of judgment”
 - b. The ***reason*** this is possible is “because as He is, so also are we in this world.”

2. (vs. 18) The thought of judgment often brings fear, not confidence. But John said, “There is no fear in love.” Fear and love are mutually exclusive, like oil and water, like grace and works.
- a. “but (ἀλλ’)” in *strong* contrast to mixing, “perfect love,” that is, a mature love that has come to completion, “casts out fear”
 - b. The immiscibility is “because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.”

3 Codex makes a gloss of οὐκ ἔστιν ἡμῶν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ (1:9)

- (vs. 19) The fact that “we (ἡμεῖς)” ourselves have the capacity “to love” *God*, as the Majority Text has it, or indeed to love at all (NASB), is only “because He (αὐτὸς)” Himself, that is, *God*, “first loved us.” What kind of a world would it be if God had not first loved us?

C. The correlation between loving God and one's brother (4:20-21)

1. (vs. 20) Notice the inconsistency between *saying* and *doing* here (2:4, 9):
 - a. *Saying*: “If someone says, ‘I love God,’”
 - b. *Doing*: “and hates his brother”
 - *Conclusion*: “he is a liar”
 - c. The *reason* is stated in the form of an impossibility: “for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.”

2. (vs. 21) Observe the *single* nature of “this commandment,” which we “have from God.” It is a single commandment, but with two facets. They are
- a. “that the one who loves God”
 - b. “should love his brother also.”

Conclusion:

If we as believers are abiding in love, by this, love will be perfected in us, in order that we will have confidence in the day of judgment because we will have become like God. This naturally eliminates fear because we can expect a good outcome at the judgment without loss of reward. The fact that God loved us first makes all this possible, that is, we can love Him and fellow believers as we should, though, of course, perfection will not be achieved on earth. Finally, all this matches the commandment He gave us that the one loving God, should also love believers.

