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The Unknown Side of God's Love – Part 1

"THE UNKNOWN GOD"

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INTRODUCTION

This is a strange and, for many people, unfamiliar message. When we hear it, we can easily say, *"I already know that."* But when we assume too quickly that we already understand, we can overlook the most important part.

This subject is a great mystery that has remained hidden from the world. It is something the Father must reveal to us. The subject is God's love—specifically, the unknown side of God's love.

LOVE IS A COMPLETE UNITY

The unknown side of God and the unknown side of God's love are essentially the same subject, because God is love. When I say that there is an unknown side to God's love, I am implying that there is something about Him that we do not know.

What do we think is the definition of love? We think of forbearance, care, long-suffering, forgiveness, self-sacrifice and warm-heartedness. These are indeed attributes of love, and they are truly attributes of God.

The problem is that these gentle and comforting qualities often shape our entire understanding of love. We forget that there is another side as well.

The essence of this message is that love is a unity. Love is a complete whole that cannot be broken apart. You cannot simply choose the parts you like and discard the rest. When you take only one part of love, you no longer have love in its fullness.

Likewise, you cannot choose only one part of God and claim to know Him. He is what He is, and love is what it is. If we do not know or acknowledge a significant part of His being, we do not know Him as He has revealed Himself.

That should shake us. Is there anything about God of which we know nothing? Is our understanding of love incomplete? If so, we have a serious problem.

LUKE 6: THE SIDE OF LOVE WE KNOW

In **Luke 6:29–36**, Yahshua teaches His disciples not to return evil for evil. He says that if someone strikes you on one cheek, you should offer the other also; that we must do good without expecting something in return; that we should love our enemies; and that we should be merciful as our Father is merciful.

He explains that even sinners love those who love them, do good to those who do good to them, and lend to those from whom they expect repayment. His followers must live differently: they must do good and lend without putting their own benefit first.

Why? Because the Most High is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Therefore, we must be merciful, just as our Father is merciful.

This is the side of love that we know, and we readily agree with it. We have been taught that God is kind, merciful, patient and forgiving. We hear that we should turn the other cheek, be generous and even love our enemies.

All of that is true. But my question is: Is that all God is? Are these qualities the complete definition of love?

GOD IS THE DEFINITION OF LOVE

We cannot devise a complete definition of love that is separate from God. God is love. Therefore, God Himself is the definition of love.

God is far more than only the qualities we like to emphasise. We usually call something *"love"* when it is pleasant, beneficial and easy for us. We appreciate the gentle qualities of God that comfort and help us, while avoiding or denying the qualities that make us uncomfortable.

When we choose only the pleasant side, we think that we understand love, but in reality, we are dealing with only a portion of it.

Here is the shocking statement: God also hates.

This creates a crisis for us because we have been taught that hatred is always sinful. If every form of hatred were sinful without distinction, we would necessarily have to say that God sins. That cannot be true, because God is perfectly righteous.

So, what do people do? They avoid the subject. They speak only about the parts with which they are comfortable and then conclude that every form of hatred must be wrong.

God is also a God of vengeance and retribution. This, too, creates a crisis for us. Our understanding says, *"Because He is a God of love, He cannot be a God of vengeance."* Yet Scripture reveals that His vengeance is not opposed to His love. His righteous vengeance flows precisely from who He is as the God of love and justice.

If there were no love to be rejected, trampled upon or wounded, there would be no jealousy or vengeance in response to unfaithfulness. We therefore need to examine whether hatred of evil, holy jealousy and righteous retribution form part of the full reality of love.

Do not accept this statement simply because I say so. Examine it. Test it against Scripture. Be sceptical, but be willing to follow the matter through to its conclusion.

My statement is this: when we completely remove holy hatred of evil, covenant jealousy and righteous vengeance from God's love, we are left with a man-made image of love. It is no longer love in its full, divine reality.

If I say, *"I love someone,"* there must at least be the possibility that I will hate that which deliberately harms or destroys the one I love. I am not saying that hatred and vengeance must be active at every moment. I am saying that love cannot remain completely indifferent when the beloved is trampled underfoot.

If God loves but never acts against that which destroys what He loves, His love would be no more than passive sentiment. If someone claims that God loves but can never display holy wrath, jealousy or retribution, that person is describing a different kind of love from the love Scripture attributes to God.

This is why the message sounds strange to us. We are not accustomed to placing these concepts together. We have put love on one side and hatred, wrath, jealousy and vengeance on the other, as though they could never exist within the same holy Being. Scripture, however, compels us to distinguish between sinful human hatred and God's holy aversion to evil.

LOVE OF GOD AND HATRED OF THE WORLD

When I say that love can include hatred, I do not mean that we may hate people out of selfishness, bitterness or personal hostility. I am speaking about the contrast that arises when someone loves God and therefore hates what stands in rebellion against Him.

If I truly love God, I cannot at the same time love the world system that rejects Him. If I love the world, I will ultimately hate God's rule. Love chooses a side.

We can easily agree with the statement, *"If I love God, I will hate the world."* But we must understand that *"hate"* here does not merely mean a mild dislike. It means separating myself from the world's rebellion, values and desires. I do not want to be united with them.

If I confess that I love God while also loving everything that stands against Him, my confession is empty. I cannot say that I love His holiness while harbouring unholiness. I cannot say that I love His truth while protecting lies simply because they suit me.

Nor does this give me the right to mistreat people out of personal pride. The command to love our enemies remains. The point is that love for God creates a moral division: I cannot become one with a world system that is hostile to Him while also claiming to belong wholly to Him.

We have been taught that love consists only of caring, forgiving and showing mercy. The message challenges that incomplete definition.

JEALOUSY WITHIN LOVE

Because God loves His people, He is jealous for them. If there were no covenant jealousy, we would have to ask whether covenant love truly exists.

Here, too, we must distinguish carefully. Scripture teaches that love is not envious. I must not envy my neighbour's achievements, gifts, possessions or life. When I desire what belongs to my neighbour and resent him for his blessing, I am acting unrighteously.

That is not the same as the jealousy of a husband or wife who protects the exclusive faithfulness of the marriage covenant. When another person tries to intrude upon your marriage, something stirs within you because you love your spouse. If infidelity does not affect you at all, one would have to ask how deep the love and bond truly are.

God reveals Himself as jealous because He loves. In essence, He says, *"You are Mine. Do not run after other gods."* His jealousy flows from His covenant love.

Consider the difference between envy and covenant jealousy. Envy says, *"I want what belongs to you, and I resent you for having it."* Covenant jealousy says, *"We have committed ourselves exclusively to one another; do not betray the covenant."* The first comes from selfishness. The second protects a relationship established through a rightful promise.

The word *"jealousy"* can therefore refer to two very different moral realities. We should not use the sinful form to deny the holy form. When Scripture says that God is jealous, it does not mean that He is envious or insecure. It means that He takes the faithfulness of His covenant seriously.

Love is therefore not a loose collection of pleasant feelings. It is a complete unity that includes faithfulness, justice and an aversion to unfaithfulness.

EPHESIANS 2:4–5 — HIS GREAT LOVE GIVES LIFE

Ephesians 2:4–5 says that God is rich in mercy and, because of His great love, made us alive even when we were dead in our trespasses. We have been saved by grace.

What did His love do? His love made us alive. This is the wonderful side of love in which we rejoice.

But whenever we read about God's love, we must remember that His love is not made up of loose, conflicting parts. His great love includes His mercy, grace, justice, jealousy and judgement.

We rejoice that His love gives life. Yet we must also understand that the same holy love judges' sin. God's love is not an excuse to disregard His righteousness.

When someone hears only, *"God is love; He makes me alive; He cares for me; He is patient,"* but never hears that He repays sin, that person loses the fear of God and begins to abuse His grace.

He then approaches God expecting grace without repentance. He asks for help while deliberately continuing in unrighteousness. He assumes that God's lovingkindness obliges Him to overlook his sin. That expectation is built upon only half an image of God.

God's mercy is real, but it does not cancel His righteousness. His patience makes room for repentance; it does not declare sin innocent. The fact that He is long-suffering does not mean that there will never be a reckoning.

What blinds us? A watered-down gospel of a gentle, tame *"little Jesus, meek and mild"* who never judges. That image is not the full revelation of Yahshua.

He is love, and His love is a complete whole. He cannot love without requiring faithfulness. He cannot love without hating that which destroys what He loves. He cannot endure unrepented sin indefinitely without justice finally being done.

WHY REVENGE ARISES IN US

When someone seriously harms a person I love, a desire for justice arises within me. Why? Because I love that person.

We see the same response when we hear about families or farmers who have been brutally attacked. We may never have met them, yet we feel grief and a desire for the perpetrators to be found and punished fairly. That response shows that we are not entirely indifferent to our neighbour.

If we truly did not care about the victims, we would simply shrug and move on. Love makes evil matter. Love says that what happens to the beloved is important.

The same thing happens when we hear about innocent people who have been cruelly treated or killed, even though we have never met them. Something stirs within us. We want those responsible to be held accountable. This reveals human love and compassion for our neighbour.

Vengeance and love can therefore be connected. Yet we all wrestle with the desire for vengeance because we want to carry it out ourselves. The desire for justice can easily turn into personal bitterness, excess and further injustice.

Vengeance also forms part of God's response to evil. When evil is committed, He responds to it. Why does vengeance exist within the reality of love? Because of justice.

God is love. God is justice. God repays evil. These realities are intertwined in His being. The worldly gospel has separated them and declared that vengeance itself is sinful.

But righteous retribution cannot itself be sinful, or God would be a sinner. God cannot sin, because He is perfectly righteous. Whatever He does in righteousness is right.

MAY I TAKE REVENGE MYSELF?

The fact that just retribution exists does not mean that I have the right to take revenge myself. I may not become my own judge and executioner.

Why not? Because I, too, am guilty and imperfect. My judgement is limited. My anger can easily be corrupted by pride, bitterness and selfishness. If I want the same absolute standard applied to others, I must be prepared for it to be applied to me as well.

Therefore, final vengeance belongs to God. He alone is perfectly righteous, knows the heart and has the right to judge without error.

Love can exist only within justice. My love towards God, my spouse, my children and my neighbour must operate within righteousness. When injustice occurs within a loving relationship, it must be set right. Otherwise, the meaning of faithfulness and righteousness is destroyed.

AN EXAMPLE OF INJUSTICE AND JUSTICE

Consider a parent whose daughter has been assaulted and murdered by a group of criminals. Imagine that the perpetrators bribe the judge and walk away unpunished.

The parent cries, *"I want justice. Those responsible must be held accountable."* Why does that cry exist? Because the parent loved the daughter.

A false gospel might tell the parent, *"You must not feel anything. You must simply pretend that nothing happened."* But that is not justice. Forgiveness does not mean that evil suddenly becomes good or that righteous judgement is unnecessary.

The parent must not go out and kill the perpetrators personally. That is not the message. The point is that the inner cry for justice is not necessarily evidence of lovelessness; it can arise precisely from love.

When the judge is bribed, two things are trampled underfoot: the loved one has already been wronged, and now the law itself is being perverted. The family's cry for justice grows even stronger. They do not necessarily want to shed blood themselves; they want a lawful authority to acknowledge the truth and deal with evil according to a just standard.

The world may dismiss this desire as primitive or unloving. Yet that same world expects courts to hold murderers, rapists, fraudsters and other offenders accountable. This acknowledges that love for the innocent and justice for the guilty are not simply opposed to one another.

When a lawful court sentences the criminals fairly, it does not bring the daughter back or remove all the grief. It does, however, confirm that evil is not being treated as unimportant. Justice has been done.

If we remove every form of righteous retribution from love, we are left with a humanistic or liberal version of love, not the full love that Scripture connects with God.

PROVERBS 6: JEALOUSY AND THE MARRIAGE COVENANT

Proverbs 6:32–35 warns that a person who commits adultery lacks understanding and destroys his own life. He brings shame upon himself. The passage describes the jealousy of a wronged husband as a blaze of wrath and says that, on the day of vengeance, he will not be appeased by a ransom or even a great gift.

Why is the man so deeply affected? Because he loves his wife and takes the marriage covenant seriously.

Love does not consist only of the words, *"I love you."* It is beautiful and important to declare love, but love also becomes visible through faithfulness, protection and the seriousness with which a covenant is treated.

When another man commits adultery with his wife, jealousy and anger arise. The modern world simply says, *"Jealousy, wrath and vengeance are always sinful. You may not feel any of them."* Scripture presents a more complex picture. There are sinful envy and uncontrolled anger, but there is also a legitimate jealousy for covenant faithfulness.

This image helps us understand God's jealousy. He says that He demonstrated His love by dying for His people. Because His love is real and serious, it is dangerous to disregard His covenant.

The danger is not limited to the person who harms those God loves; it also applies to me in my relationship with Him. I cannot receive His love while treating His covenant as though it means nothing.

JEREMIAH 20: THE LEGAL CASE IS ENTRUSTED TO GOD

Jeremiah 20:11–12 describes Yahweh as a mighty warrior. The prophet says that his persecutors will stumble and will not prevail. He then asks to see God's vengeance upon them, because he has entrusted his cause to God.

The important point is that **Jeremiah** does not take final judgement into his own hands. He entrusts his legal case to God.

Will retribution and the deserved consequence simply disappear because we prefer not to speak about them? No. We live in a religious world that easily says, *"God forgives everything. There is no accountability. I may live however I please."*

But grace does not mean that responsibility ceases to exist. A person cannot say, *"God must forgive me, so it does not matter what I do."* That turns grace into a licence for sin.

When someone fraudulently destroys your business, takes your property or causes great harm to your family, you may entrust your legal case to God. He is the God who judges righteously.

Why would He act on behalf of His children? Because He loves them. His love is not indifferent when those He loves are oppressed.

ROMANS 12: "VENGEANCE IS MINE"

Romans 12 begins this passage with the command that love must be sincere. We must abhor what is evil and cling to what is good. We are to love one another with brotherly affection, honour one another, be diligent, serve the Lord, rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation and persevere in prayer.

We must contribute to the needs of the saints, practise hospitality and bless those who persecute us. We must rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. We must live in harmony with one another and remain humble.

Then comes the command: repay no one evil for evil. Take thought for what is honourable in the sight of all people. As far as it depends upon you, live at peace with everyone.

The desire for vengeance within me wants to retaliate. Yet God says that I must not repay evil with evil myself.

Why? Not because every form of retribution is wrong in principle, but because final vengeance does not belong to me. **Romans 12** says that we must not avenge ourselves, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: *"Vengeance is Mine; I will repay."*

Notice what the text does not say. It does not say, *"There is no vengeance."* It says, *"Vengeance belongs to God."* The believer is therefore not commanded to deny that evil deserves retribution, but to leave its execution in the hands of the righteous Judge.

I must leave room for God's wrath. I should not try to take God's place through impatience. I must be able to say, *"Father, You know the facts, the motives and the heart. I entrust this matter to You."*

That requires faith. It is often easier to strike back than to wait. Yet this command also protects me from doing more evil than justice requires. God's judgement is pure; mine is easily distorted by personal anger.

God is therefore saying, *"Hold back. Allow time and space. Entrust the matter to Me. I will repay justly."*

This gives us a different image of God from the one many of us grew up with. We thought that love meant that judgement never took place. But God says that vengeance belongs to Him.

Romans 12 continues: if your enemy is hungry, give him something to eat; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. By doing this, you will heap burning coals upon his head. You may not repay evil with evil. You do what is good and leave judgement to God.

When you do good to someone who has wronged you, the contrast between his actions and yours becomes even clearer. You keep your hands clean and trust God to judge righteously.

This is not the message of a powerless God who never acts. It is the message of a holy God who says, *"The judgement is Mine, not yours."*

DO NOT ABUSE GRACE

I need to know God's love without bargaining with Him or assuming that His love exists only for my personal benefit.

God's vengeance is also directed towards me when I despise His love. If I commit adultery with another man's wife, I disregard the husband's love for his wife. I also disregard God's love for both the man and the woman, because God has commanded me to stay away.

What should I expect? I cannot say, *"This is a time of grace; God died for sin; therefore, I may do whatever I please."* A person who reasons in this way does not understand love.

We treasure the love that brings salvation, but we forget that the same love also repays sin. It is the same God.

When I fear God, I stay away from what He forbids. I stop making excuses. I may say, *"Yes, but..."* and offer another reason, but the simple command remains: stay away.

We must continue hearing, reading and seeing until the fear of God awakens within us. We must realise that He is not a toy to be abused. He abounds in lovingkindness, but He is also holy and righteous. He repays sin committed against Him.

Taking refuge in Him does not mean that I merely repeat a few religious words. I must deny myself, take up my cross and submit completely to Him. I must confess my sin and approach Him in humility.

We should walk carefully before Him, seek to remain in right relationship with Him and pursue peace with Him. We thought that He was there merely to give us a pleasant life, but the true God is holy and awe-inspiring.

This fear is not merely panic before an arbitrary tyrant. It is the realisation that I stand before the almighty, righteous Creator. I cannot bribe, manipulate or deceive Him with religious excuses. I cannot rewrite the terms of His covenant.

The right response is humility: *"Father, You are God and I am the creature. Teach me to keep Your word. Save me from my waywardness and from the assumption that You must conform to my preferences."*

JUST AND UNJUST REVENGE

There is also vengeance that is born entirely from unrighteousness.

Imagine that another person and I steal money together, but he walks away with all of it. I now want to punish him for taking my share. The entire situation is already unjust; it began without love or righteousness. My desire to repay him out of selfishness merely adds further injustice.

We therefore cannot describe every desire for vengeance as righteous. Vengeance that arises from greed, pride, envy or criminal activity is itself unjust.

The vengeance of which we speak in connection with God exists within perfect love and justice. God's judgement is not an uncontrolled human outburst or an attempt to protect His ego. He judges because He is righteous and cannot call evil good.

LOVE IS LIKE A COMPLETE SPHERE

Love is like a sphere of which we have seen only one side. When we look at God and His love, we must understand that there is more than the gentle side of care, nurture and forgiveness.

There is also severe and destructive judgement upon that which tramples love and destroys the beloved. We cannot detach this from love if Scripture connects it with God's being.

We say, *"Love is merciful and gracious."* That is true. But we cannot say, *"Love is only merciful and gracious."* Then we are looking at only one side of the sphere.

Someone else might look only at the other side and say, *"Love is vengeance, wrath and retribution."* That, too, is incomplete. Love also includes patience, long-suffering, care and grace.

The two sides are not separate realities that we may choose according to taste. The full reality of God's love includes all His holy attributes. When we remove certain characteristics, we create another god according to our own preferences.

The message is therefore this: write it upon your heart and mind. When God speaks of love, do not think only, *"It means care and provision."* God Himself is love, and He is greater than the narrow definition we prefer to give Him.

THE COVENANT OF LOVE ALSO INCLUDES SERIOUSNESS AND RETRIBUTION

I embrace God's love and say, *"Thank You for loving me. Thank You for saving me because of Your love. Thank You for bearing the price of my sin."*

But I must also understand that the covenant of love is serious. We are speaking about the new covenant. A covenant does not contain only promises and privileges; it also demands allegiance.

When the Father opens His heart of love to me, I must recognise that His covenant includes jealousy and justice.

Think again about marriage. A bride and groom stand before one another in beautiful clothing. They look into each other's eyes and commit themselves to one another out of love. That love is wonderful, but the covenant also means that unfaithfulness is serious.

When I bow before God, surrender myself to Him, confess my sin and receive His love, I cannot later pretend that the covenant means nothing. Jealousy, justice and retribution are part of the full reality of covenant love.

A wedding ceremony is not merely a beautiful moment filled with fine clothing and emotional words. The promises create a genuine obligation. The love that establishes the covenant gives meaning to the seriousness of unfaithfulness. If no exclusive allegiance is expected, the promise is empty.

Likewise, we cannot claim the comfort of the new covenant while rejecting the allegiance it requires. I cannot say, *"I want forgiveness, protection and life, but I also want to remain free to serve other gods and follow my own will."* That would be to use the covenant without honouring the God of the covenant.

We cannot change it to suit our preferences. God is love. His love is neither cheap nor trivial. It is holy and therefore dangerous to reject.

If He gives His life for me out of love and I reject His outstretched hand, what should I expect? If He gives Himself and I reject Him, I cannot demand that my rejection have no consequence.

People ask why judgement exists. The answer presented in this message is that God is not merely a God of gentle comfort; He is also the God of righteous vengeance. Because religion has often shown us only one side of love, we do not know the other side.

One of love's most dangerous qualities is the vengeance that follows when love is deliberately rejected and trampled upon. God's judgement is neither hasty nor uninformed. He sees, follows the matter to its end and repays with perfect justice.

We yearn for God's love, but we often seek only the part that soothes us and makes us comfortable. That is the worldly image of God's love.

The true God of love is also the God of holy jealousy, justice and retribution.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this message is not to present God as cruel or uncontrollable. Its purpose is to break down the man-made image in which love means that God must tolerate everything, may never judge and must adapt Himself to human conditions.

God is merciful. He is gracious. He abounds in lovingkindness. He is long-suffering. He forgives and gives life.

But He is also holy. He hates evil. He is jealous for His covenant. He judges sin and declares that vengeance belongs to Him.

We must not choose one side and deny the other. He is what He is.

When we receive His love, we must receive it with gratitude, reverence and faithfulness. We must not avenge ourselves but must entrust our affairs to Him. We must do good, even to our enemies, while also knowing that God is the righteous Judge.

This is the unknown side of God's love.

Scriptures

- **Luke 6:29–36** — Love for enemies, doing good and showing mercy.
- **Ephesians 2:4–5** — God's great love and mercy through which He gives life.
- **Proverbs 6:32–35** — Jealousy, wrath and the day of vengeance.
- **Jeremiah 20:11–12** — The request that God judge and repay righteously.
- **Romans 12:9–21** — Do not avenge yourselves; vengeance belongs to God.
- **Leviticus 26:23–25** — The vengeance of the covenant against disobedience.
- **Deuteronomy 4:19–24** — Israel may not serve other gods, because God is a jealous God.
- **Hebrews 10:26–31** — God will judge His people; it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Romans 11:33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!
how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!
Romans 11:34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?
Romans 11:35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?
Romans 11:36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever.
Amen.