

John 15: Jesus' "Viability" Theology

The "Love-Obedience" Paradigm

John 15.9-14

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.

Now remain in my love. 

If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love,
just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.

I have told you this so that my joy may be in you
and that your joy may be complete.

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

Greater love has no one than this, that
he lay down his life for his friends.

You are my friends if you do what I command.

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.

Now remain in my love.

If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love,
just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.

I have told you this so that my joy may be in you
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Greater love has no one than this, that
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The Infinite Benchmark

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.”

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love.” (15.9-10)

- ❖ Jesus was not only the Son of God, he was also the Son of Man. He was the Sovereign Lord with authority over nature, disease, and death, and he was also the Substitute Lord who was obedient to the Law and who sacrificed himself for our sin. As the Son, he was equal with the Father, but as the Father’s *Only-True-Authorized Representative*, the Father was his exacting standard for everything he said and did. Now Jesus tells his disciples: “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.” He goes on to tell them that if they obey him they will remain in his love, “*just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love.*”

❖ These verses (9-10) raise a number of questions for us, such as:

- ▶ How does the Father love Jesus?
- ▶ What does it mean to “remain in his love”?
- ▶ Since “if” is a conditional word, is obedience the basis for being loved by Jesus? Furthermore, was it the basis for the Father loving Jesus and Jesus himself remaining in the Father’s love?
- ▶ Is my salvation and spiritual security dependent on my obedience?
- ▶ Am I in a position of “*he loves me, he loves me not*” according to the state of impeccability (or loss thereof) of my obedience?
- ▶ In presenting himself as the *True Shepherd-Who-Lays-Down-His-Life*, Jesus said: “The reason the Father loves me is that I lay down my life.” Would Jesus have no longer been loved by the Father if, in the Garden of Gethsemane, he had been unable to continue with the divine plan of his sacrificial death?

How does the Father love Jesus?

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.”

- ❖ This is a unique statement; we find few like it among the words of Jesus. Most commentators mention it, but do not expand on it. Yet, it is obviously very significant, for Jesus wants his disciples to understand the nature of his love before he continues with his *“love-obedience”* paradigm.
- ❖ In his apostolic letter, the Apostle John wrote: *Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.* (1 JOHN 4.8) We must understand God, not merely by His actions, but by His nature. “God is”—meaning that God’s very nature is love, just as in His nature He is fundamentally and absolutely holy, faithful, righteous, and good. “I AM WHO I AM” was God’s declaration to Moses regarding His identity. (EXODUS 3.14) As the everlasting God, He is infinite and unchanging in His nature; He *is* love.

❖ In his prayer for his disciples, both the apostles and us, Jesus prayed:

“Father, I want those You have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory You have given me because You loved me before the creation of the world.” (JOHN 17.24)

❖ Just as His nature is eternal, His love is eternal; and the same love shared by the Father and the Son, is the love that THEY have extended to us—

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will — to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. (EPHESIANS 1.4-6)

❖ The qualities of God’s nature which determine the character of his love and its manifestation are consistent; and as the Father loves the Son, so the Son has loved us and this we experience the outcome of that love (cf. Romans 5.8)—not because of what we have done, but because of who THEY are: love.