

# **Love**

*1 John 4:7-21*

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# Love

*Reading: 1 John 4:7–21*

The great trinity of virtues, faith, hope and love, find their place in the Epistles of John no less than in the letters written by his fellow apostles. In his first letter, he reminds us that ‘this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith’ (5:4), and ‘everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure’ (3:3). In the passage we have read, it tells us that when love has been perfected with us, it gives us confidence in the day of judgment and casts out all fear (4:17–18). So then, these glorious activities—faith, hope and love—between them cover our Christian experience.

*Faith* looks back to the past. The battle has been won: we have overcome the world. ‘This is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.’ And as we have begun, so we continue. ‘Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?’ (5:5).

*Hope* plays its mighty part in our present conduct. ‘And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure’ (3:3). Anyone who has this hope of one day being like the Saviour will be motivated here and now to purify his life. True faith is not an intellectual exercise merely; but a faith that believes that Jesus is the Son of God brings with it the tremendous power to overcome the world. Hope is not merely a facility for doing prophetic crossword puzzles, sorting out the timetables that relate to the latter days, but hope too is a mighty practical power that motivates the believer to purify his life here and now.

*Love* gives us confidence. ‘There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love’ (4:18). In view of the day of judgment it casts out fear and leaves us without any dread or torment. The battle is behind us, the training done. In the future that is before us and the great judgment that awaits us there, says John, love plays its part pre-eminently. It casts out all fear and gives us confidence.

But somebody will say, ‘Mr Preacher, that is a very nice and neat arrangement—faith, hope and love—but you have overlooked one thing. The faith that overcomes the world is *our* faith, and the hope that leads us to purify our lives is *our* hope; but surely the love that gives us confidence in the day of judgment is not *our* love, but *God’s* love.’

Just to be a little bit provocative, I would reply: ‘But there isn’t any love except God’s love.’

In fact, this is going to be the burden of the paragraph that we have read and will study this evening, that love really is of God—‘for love is from God’ (4:7). And whether it be God’s love, in first loving us; or whether it is the love that we subsequently show to others because he first loved us; all love is of God. And so much is it true that all love is of God that the Apostle John can say that everybody who loves has been born of God and has the very nature of God. The love that you see going from any believer’s heart is in fact the love of God himself that has been channelled through that person’s heart because he or she has been born of God

and has received his Spirit. And so we shall find that our love for one another, God's love for us, and our love back to God all find their source in God.

All of them put together are included in that phrase, 'By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgement' (v. 17). This paragraph is going to argue that if we would lay hold upon the love of God and let it so grip our souls that it excludes all fear and torment, so that it is at last perfected and allowed its free course through all our being—the way to that experience is by our being willing to practise that love and show it to other people. For, in the end, the mighty love of God to us will never fully dawn on our souls until we are prepared to show it to others and come to know by practical experience what it means to love.

So John is urging us to a practical love one for the other. 'Let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God' (v. 7). And the converse is true: 'Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love' (v. 8).

But then, at the beginning of our lesson, perhaps we had better enquire, 'John, we understand then that our task is to love one another; but what exactly do you mean by love? We may try to love everybody, but this is a sinful world and sometimes people are difficult. What will it mean to love one another? Do I have to be nice and pleasant and agreeable whatever people do or say? Surely, sometimes I shall have to be severe and disagree with someone when he sins? What exactly do you mean, John, by saying we have to love one another?'

And John will say, 'Well, before we go further with the lesson of loving one another, let us think what love really means and what love really is.'

### God's love for us

There are two descriptions of love: 'In this the love of God was made manifest among us . . . ' (v. 9); and 'In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us . . . ' (v. 10). If we were to read those verses very quickly and superficially, we might get the impression that they are just repeating one another. The first one says, 'In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.' And the second one seems to say something very similar, for it says 'In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.'

I'm going to ask you to note these verses in great detail, for they are not mere repetitions. They are in fact saying two quite different things. First of all, John wants us to see the *working and manifestation* of God's love—his love in action. When we think of love, the easiest way to begin is not to think about the theory but to see it in actual practice.

And then, when we've spent some time looking at the actual working and manifestation of God's love, we can go behind the scenes and think about *the principles and the cost* involved in that love. In both of these, the manifestation and the very essence of love, we shall be learning what real love is and what it will mean for us to love one another.

### **First, the working and manifestation of God's love**

I like it that way. I'm glad John didn't say first 'in this is love', and only secondly 'in this was the love of God made manifest', because it is easier to grasp what love is if we can first see it by an actual example.

Here is, for instance, a nine-year-old little fellow, and he's been pleading and plaguing his father to buy him a bicycle for Christmas. But work has been short and money is a bit scarce, and what that nine-year-old doesn't know is that there's a bill for the gas unpaid and another for the coal unpaid. The money that's required for the bicycle is a bit short, but that's difficult to get across to a nine-year-old, isn't it? So father and mother put their heads together and by going without a new suit or something or other, and scraping here and gathering there, when Larry comes down on Christmas morning there is a brand new bicycle awaiting the lad. When the boy sees it he gives his mother a big hug and his father a big hug. He's got the point that they love him because he can actually see something in it.

Give that boy another twenty or thirty years and he's got a child or two of his own. When it comes round to Christmas time and the money is a bit short with him, he'll look back and say, 'Ah, old dad wasn't so bad after all, you know, and mum. Now I look back, they couldn't have had much through their fingers in those early days, and yet when they were short they bought me a bike.' Now he will begin to see something behind the scenes. The deliberations that went on, the problems that were involved in loving. But you see, it had to be first in the manifestation, and then behind the scenes to the principle.

And so it is here in the word of God. 'In this the love of God was made manifest'. How so? Well, 'that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world' (4:9 NASB). God *has sent* him into the world. I like that phrase, 'has sent'. Perhaps you think I'm cutting the proverbial straw when I point out to you that it's slightly different from what it says in verse 10, where it just says that he sent him. But accurately translated in verse 9 it is *has sent* him.

We may perhaps gather the force of that particular tense of the verb that John uses from what Pilate said. He used this same tense of a verb when he said to the Jews, 'What I have written I have written' (John 19:22). He meant that what he had done was done and wasn't going to be altered. What he had written was written and wasn't going to be changed.

And so John says, 'In this the love of God was made manifest'. Not in a passing incident; not in something that happened once but that was a long time ago and since then God has been acting somewhat differently; but it's been manifested in an act the significance of which is permanent. He has sent his Son into the world: it is a gift that God deliberately gave and will never withdraw.

Yes, he didn't merely sit in heaven and talk to us about love. He didn't merely sit upon his throne and tell us he loves us, but he put that love into action and has sent his Son. And we notice those extra three words, 'He has sent his Son *into the world*'. Into the world—love that keeps at a distance isn't love, is it? Love wants always to come as near as possible. Love cannot survive, so to speak, without fellowship. Herein, then, was love shown and God has sent his Son into the world; as far into the world as he could possibly send him.

I think this is a marvellous thing. It doesn't say, 'In this is love, that Christ came and preached some wonderful sermons.' It says, 'In this the love of God was made manifest . . . he has sent him into the world.' He'd come a long way by the time he was born flesh and blood.

Who shall measure the distance when he, who was God absolute, became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14)?

But then he went further into the world than that. Not only was he made like his brothers in every respect (Heb 2:17), but he went right into the world until the Pharisees and the scribes thought he'd gone too far. They said, 'Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?' (Mark 2:16). 'This man receives sinners and eats with them' (Luke 15:2). 'It's all right, you know, to stand in a pulpit and preach to sinners, but do you think it's quite the right thing to do to go into the homes of tax collectors and publicly attend a meal with them? And do you think it's the right thing to do to have sinners crowding around him at the table?'

Oh, how little those Pharisees understood of the heart of God. This was the love of God manifested in actual living. He sent his Son as near to men and women—as near to *all* men and women as he could possibly get. He sent him into the world, not into the church. *Into the world.*

But then we notice he says, not merely that he has sent his Son into the world, but, he has sent *his only begotten Son* into the world (KJV, NASB). There is point in the word, because if you notice in verse 10 John says, he sent his Son; but here in verse 9 he says, he has sent *his only begotten Son*. And of course there isn't one word that's wasted in holy Scripture.

Why say, 'only begotten Son'? Well, we must put two things together to understand it. 'He has sent his only begotten Son.' What for? '*That we might live through him*', that's why. In verse 10 John is going to say that he sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins; but in verse 9 John says he sent his only begotten Son that we might live through him.

The relations that subsist through the persons of a Godhead are mysterious indeed and go beyond our understanding. Many a heresy has grown up from minds that know not where to stop their critical thinking and learn to worship. Men have tried to explain the Godhead and have not realized that it is so far beyond our understanding and description that we cannot possibly reduce it to our formulae, but must learn to believe what we are told and worship.

And yet what we have been told is for our reverent study. The Son of God is described as 'the only begotten of the Father' (John 1:14 KJV). You may choose to believe that those words, 'only begotten', mean nothing more than 'only'. For my part, I think there is something deeper involved; that the ties that bind the members of the Godhead together are ties of life. One life with the Father: God has sent us someone that was his very vitals, his only begotten Son. How wonderful this is. How should we measure, then, the love of God to us?

'Ah,' says somebody, 'if God gave me a little bit more cash, if life were easier, then I could think that God loves me.'

So would you be mightily pleased if one of these days God gave you a whole planet? Mars, for instance: how would you like to have Mars? Or perhaps Pluto? Or a constellation or two? Would that be a bit too much? Or a whole spiral nebula maybe, for God's got millions of those, apparently, knocking around the place. Those we can see and those we can't. Their metallic wealth goes into billions compared with our gold in this tiny little smudge of a world. Would you be impressed by the love of God if he gave you a whole planet to yourself?

Think again. God could give you a whole spiral nebula and not miss it, so to speak. He's got plenty of them. When he thought to give you an expression of his love, he gave you nothing so cheap as a spiral nebula with all its millions of stars. He gave you something that

was unique: he gave his only Son. And I say again, 'his only begotten Son'. It was his very vitals being given to you. What for? 'That we might live through him.' Don't you see the point? It was God giving us the very vitals of *his* life so that we might have that life and share it with God.

I remember once taking a journey from Birmingham to Warrington in England. I was driving my sister-in-law and two of her children to see her sister and little nephews and nieces in Warrington. As we started out, the four-year-old in the car had been equipped with a box of sweets to give to her opposite number when she arrived the other end. Well, for the first mile or two the box of sweets was quite all right. After about the third mile, the box of sweets began to be a temptation. Get us ten miles on the road and the temptation was irresistible and one sweet had disappeared. By the time we got to Warrington, the whole lot had disappeared. You see, asking a four-year-old to part with a box of sweets! I mean, the whole world almost revolves around sweets at that age, doesn't it?

And God had one Son. It wasn't merely that he was unique; but when God gave him so that we might live, it was like tearing himself asunder. It was the highest and biggest thing that God could do by way of being a demonstration that he loved us. We have seen the demonstration, and happy are we if we can say in the words that John presently uses, 'And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world' (4:14). And though it seemed far too good to be true, 'we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us' (v. 16). We have dared believe it and all its implications.

## **Second, the principles and the cost involved in that love**

'But now,' says John, 'if you have seen the object lesson and the demonstration, come a bit further. There's more to it than this. Come behind the scenes for a moment and see what it cost. Come and see all the thoughts and the planning and the problems that were in the way of God's love. For though the demonstration is magnificent, the cost was terrible.'

'In this *is* love,'—here you will find the abiding feature and principle of love that is behind every expression of God's love—'not that we have loved God . . .'. We did not love God; you mistake it if you think that God gave his Son because there was something in us that drew out God's love. It is not because we were holy and it never will be because we are holy. But God loves us as he always loves, in this absolute sense that he loves. His love is utterly causeless, and therefore utterly permanent and eternal.

### *The place of propitiation*

There was nothing in me by way of love to God to bring out God's love to me, but there were obstacles to stop it. For John says that when his Son came, he came to be *the propitiation for our sins*. And the word he uses is carefully chosen and full of significance.

*Propitiation* is perhaps one of the hardest New Testament words to get a hold of. We would best think of it, perhaps, and illustrate it to our minds by going back to the Old Testament and to the wonderful ceremonies that clustered around the Day of Atonement. Every day during the year when people sinned they could bring their sacrifices for sins, their sin offerings. The Day of Atonement was a bit different.

*The mercy seat*

Says God, 'I'm holding the Day of Atonement because all through the year the sins of my people have been defiling my tabernacle. By rights of the law, when I look at their sins I oughtn't to stay among them. I am a holy God who cannot tolerate the presence of sin, and the idea of remaining among and being in contact with people who are constantly sinful is abhorrent to me.' It was something about which his own holy character rebelled.

It isn't, my brother and sister, that God has a lot of laws nailed up on the wall of heaven, so that when the day begins he has a look at us and says, 'There's a sister there, she's been a little bit proud and envious. According to the law, ought I have anything to do with her?' Of course not! There aren't any laws written up on the walls of heaven.

The laws of the Bible merely reveal what God is and what God feels. When I'm proud and when I'm envious and when I want to appear better than somebody else, the very heart of God boils in anger against it. He doesn't have to try to be angry; sin is absolutely abhorrent to him.

Then how could he stay among those Israelites? The answer is that year by year blood was shed and brought into the very throne of God and sprinkled on the mercy seat, that place of propitiation. 'And there,' says God, 'from above the mercy seat, between the cherubim where the blood is shed, I will meet with you. That blood will cleanse the tabernacle that remains among you in all your defilement' (see Exod 25:22).

Day in and day out, night in and night out, the presence of blood on that mercy seat made it possible for God to stay there. And when anyone sinned and hadn't the slightest notion that the thing he'd done was sin, and certainly hadn't repented, God could remain among those people because of the blood on their propitiatory seat.

*The cross of Christ*

Says John, 'In this is love'. Not only that we didn't love God, but that God loved us, and then contemplated our sin. His heart boiled out in anger against sin, and yet he found a way round it. He found a way, shall I say, of *overcoming* the obstacle: he sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins. To allow us, the sinners, and God to meet. To allow God to continue with us, his erring saints. I think that's marvellous about God.

We have a habit, which our Lord Jesus said was typical of the Gentiles, of loving those that love us. Two invitations arrive in our morning post to go to coffee. One is from Mrs Smith, whom we like ever so much because Mrs Smith is a charming person. She holds more or less the same views as we do and has the same tastes as we do, so morning coffee with Mrs Smith will be a very pleasurable occasion. The other invitation is from Mrs Jones, and we don't really like Mrs Jones because, do you know, she holds different views from what we hold, and is always saying them and treading on our corns. She likes a different kind of music, and she will serve up buns we don't like, and do a lot of other things we don't like. Given two invitations we find it easier to go to Mrs Smith, the one we like, don't we?

But when our sins made it terribly difficult for God to come anywhere near us, his love found a way: 'He sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.'

Ah now I begin to see. When it says that he sent his Son into the world, it turns our minds to our Lord going amongst the sinners and publicans and the prostitutes and sitting with them



at coffee. And I hear the Pharisees say, 'Look how ungodly he's being, mixing with those wicked people; that's putting a premium on sin that will encourage them to sin.'

Now I begin to see how God's heart was feeling behind the scenes. I know what it cost him to sit side-by-side with sinners, when every fibre in his being raged at the thought of sinning. Through what happened on the cross, God determined to come near to sinners. Though they beat his Son in the face and clawed the hair from his cheeks and stripped and scourged him, God said, 'I want to come near the sinner'. And the blood that stains the mercy seat today was cudgelled out of God's Son and speared by the hands of sinful men. In this is love, that God so loves sinners that he found a way of being near them, cost what it might.

But that, says John, was just by way of explanation; for the lesson of this paragraph is this, brothers and sisters, 'if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another' (v. 11).

### **Our love for one another**

Now we begin to see what love means. It's not some sugary sentiment. It certainly isn't winking at sin or condoning sin, but it is a willingness to accept the other person when his sinfulness and awkwardness and difficulty and twisted character cuts and bruises and hurts. Says God, 'Do you not remember how it hurt and how it cut me, and how it wounded me to hold you and to keep you and to guarantee that you will never be cast out?'

This is what it means to love. Accepting the other person as he or she is.

This love of God is such a wonderful thing. Whereas right from the start of our Christian experience we gained some glimmerings of it, yet it is a matter that we shall constantly be pursuing and only gradually getting to know. And there will be many processes which God will use so that 'his love is perfected in us' (v. 12).

It doesn't mean, of course, that God doesn't love us perfectly already. But it does mean that, whereas God loves us limitlessly, we don't always appreciate God's love, or understand it, or see it. There are times when we still doubt God's love; when we find it hard to reconcile God's love with our circumstances. There come times with believers when they doubt whether God has really accepted them. When we've blotted our copy books more than we had ever expected to blot them, sometimes we wonder whether at last this has taken God by surprise and diminished some of his love for us.

'Then,' says the apostle, 'let us learn to give ourselves to those exercises which day by day will make it easier for us to comprehend God's love.'

How shall we do it?

The simple answer is by learning and trying to love one another.

You say, 'What's that got to do with it?'

Well, you see, in the first place, *all* love is of God. But love is an activity. Love isn't merely a state, a nice sort of a feeling. The best way to find out what electricity is and what it does is for the wire to let the electricity come through and make a light at the other end, isn't it? And because all love is of God, if you will know God's love in its fullest, then be a sort of a wire, says John, and let the current of God's love come through you.

## The work of the Holy Spirit

'For love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God' (v. 7). 'By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit' (v. 13).

Someone says, 'How am I going to know that his Spirit is in me?'

Well, we shall know it first of all because God says so: 'When you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, [you] were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit' (Eph 1:13). We take it not as a matter of feeling but as a fact of history that God gave us his Holy Spirit when we believed.

There's another way of knowing, and that is by experiencing the power and impulse of that holy personality who resides within us, as he activates us to love other folks. The Holy Spirit inside of me will always be activating me to love people. If I clinch tight to my little neuroses and the hardness of my heart, and relish the spite of my tongue and the sarcasm of my own spirit, how shall I know God and how shall I really come to enjoy and understand what loving is?

There are some people that have the misfortune of being what is technically called *tone deaf*. You could set old Tchaikovsky himself down at a piano and Yehudi Menuhin with a violin, get them to play the most heavenly music, and that wouldn't mean a thing, for the person concerned is tone deaf. And if he happens to stand beside you when you're singing a hymn, it'll be a great struggle for you too to keep the note, because he can't. The poor fellow can't help that; he'll never understand all those raptures that other people go into when they listen to Tchaikovsky because, well, he just can't understand. The music doesn't sort of filter through him.

And if we're going to understand God's love we shall see it in action. We shall read about it in the Scriptures, of course. 'But there's another way,' says John, 'and that's by letting the love of that Holy Spirit come through you to somebody else, so that God will be able to perfect his love in us.'

Sometimes, when people have been a little thoughtless, and you've done your best and they haven't acknowledged it, and others have stamped on your toes a little bit and you feel like giving up, or at least giving them a piece of your mind, you don't; and you keep on going to the meetings of the church. It's then that you will learn what it meant for Christ to keep on living in our world, and you will know what it meant for God to give his Son to the cross. Then you'll say, 'Now I see what it meant for God to love me; and the fact that he loved me in spite of my unloveliness makes me understand more of what that love means.'

### *Freedom from fear*

When John says that God wants to make our love perfect, what is it for? 'That we may have confidence for the day of judgement', that's what for (v. 17). God wants to have every single believer completely devoid of fear. Calm, utterly sure, not afraid to abandon himself completely to God. Happy to say, 'I commit myself to God, let God do what he wills,' in the certain knowledge that, abandoned to God like that, God will be nothing but love towards us. What a lovely thing.

Maybe we got a certainty and assurance of our salvation when we first came; maybe we got more assurance as the weeks went on; but perhaps any one of us hasn't got the full

assurance we might have, perfect love having cast out every fear. On what ground? 'On this', continues John, "'because as he is so also are we in this world".'

The hour is late and my time is done, so that I mustn't trouble you with the devious discussions of the theologians over this verse. Suffice it to say that there are two interpretations held.

The one wishes to guard the very foundation of our faith, and says: 'As he is, so are we'—this is the basis of our sureness in the day of judgment. It must mean that, as Christ has died for us and risen and gone back to heaven and has been accepted by God—just as he is there now accepted by God and there is not a thought of his ever being cast out—so are we accepted of God even though we're still in this world.'

I've no quarrel with those who say like that, because what they say is absolutely true. Christ has been accepted, and God would never cast Christ out. But then he shall not cast out any believer because we are 'accepted in the beloved' (Eph 1:6 KJV). So, in that sense, 'as he is, so also are we'.

But, to be honest with you, I don't think that's what John meant here. John has already secured it that our title to heaven is found solely in the death of Christ. He is about to emphasize once more that the security rests in the fact that God loves us. Not that we love God, God loves us. Even were we never to love, our salvation rests there: God loves us.

'And yet,' says John, 'there is an added ground for hope and confidence.'

What's that, John?

'If you will let God's love flow through you to that other person, and you find that God's Holy Spirit is really in you—moving you to love people that otherwise you wouldn't love; moving you to go out and preach and bear witness that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world; moving you to express God's love in speech and in action—you will constantly come in your heart ever increasingly to understand God. The more you speak of him and the more you act like him, the more certain you'll be in your heart that God is love. It will so permeate your being that presently you'll say, 'Well fancy that! This is not my goodness; I heartily admit that. If I love at all, it's only because God started it, and it's really God's love loving through me.'

While I'm in this world, if God is pouring out his love to other folk, with what other assurance can I leave this world and face God? I know already how great his love is, though I do not see it fully. And when I get home at last and see it fully displayed, do you think it will be any less than I see it now to be? No! His own heart of love is beginning to impress itself on mine and show itself through me. 'I am as he is': I have no need to fear that coming day of judgment.

#### *A contradiction of love*

Let us leave our lesson for the moment and come down to the actualities of life. Let those of us who are beloved of God seek his grace to love. For, if anyone does not show love, 'how does God's love abide in him?' (3:17). Where a man positively hates his brother, says John, that man surely is a liar: 'he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen' (4:20). To say 'I love God', and yet to hate my brother, that is to show that I do not really love God at all. To say that God has loved me, though I am a sinner,

and yet I refuse to love anyone because he or she is a sinner, I am denying the very gospel I preach and showing that the love of God doesn't really abide in me.

'Oh,' says somebody, 'I was beginning to enjoy that address about God's love. Now you've unsettled me as I go home because sometimes I do feel a little spiteful towards Mrs So-and-so and sometimes I wish I could knock her head off—not literally, you know, but that's how I feel. And you say that if I feel like that, then I can't be a Christian.'

No! That old evil nature is within us, and when Mrs So-and-so, or Mr So-and-so for that matter, sins against me and stamps on my toes pretty hard, my old nature will rise up—or perhaps my just nature will rise up—and I shall say, 'That was perfectly unjust and wicked'. But then I shall remember that there is a source of love that will flow out and control my feelings, if I am prepared to accept it.

The true believer will say, 'Yes, Lord, I feel like knocking his block off, but what if you'd treated me like that? Lord, be in me, so that by your help I will treat Mr So-and-so as you have treated me.'

But the man who says, 'I don't care what you say; I hate the man and I will do my very best to damage him', is denying God. He is repudiating God, because in repudiating love you repudiate God, for God is love.

## About the Author

**DAVID W. GOODING** is Professor Emeritus of Old Testament Greek at Queen's University, Belfast and a member of the Royal Irish Academy. He has taught the Bible internationally and lectured on both its authenticity and its relevance to philosophy, world religions and daily life. He has published scholarly articles on the Septuagint and Old Testament narratives, as well as expositions of Luke, John, Acts, Hebrews, the New Testament's Use of the Old Testament, and several books addressing arguments against the Bible and the Christian faith. His analysis of the Bible and our world continues to shape the thinking of scholars, teachers and students alike.