

June 2015

Frank W. Nelte

### **GOD DOES NOT LOVE ALL SINNERS!**

Every now and then you hear someone say something like "**God loves all sinners, but God hates their sins**". For example, I came across one website where it is claimed that God loves thieves and adulterers and murderers and homosexuals, but that God "is not fond of them". That claim is patently false. People also speak about "**God's unconditional love for sinners**". That statement is likewise patently false.

These claims, and others along these same lines, are preposterous! They are not based on the Bible. They are nothing more than a lack of understanding of God's mind, God's character and God's plan and purposes ... and relying on a few mistranslations in the New Testament.

### **DOES GOD LOVE SATAN?**

If it really were true that God loves all sinners, then the logical conclusion would also have to be that God must love Satan, because without doubt Satan is the greatest sinner of all. Or **is God selective** in which unrepentant sinners He loves and which sinners He does not love?

It is surely absurd to claim that "God loves Satan but God is not fond of Satan's sinful conduct". There is nothing whatsoever about Satan that God loves, not the individual who is Satan, not Satan's way of thinking, and not any part of Satan's conduct and actions. **There simply is nothing at all about Satan that God loves.** All of us surely understand this quite clearly.

**The same is true for all other unrepentant sinners as well**, that there is nothing about them that God loves. This applies to spirit beings who have sinned (i.e. demons) and also to human beings who are unrepentant sinners.

The key to understanding why God does not love sinners is to understand **why** God does not love Satan.

When God first created the spirit being whom we know as "Satan", meaning "Adversary", that spirit being was "perfect in his ways" (Ezekiel 28:15). And at that time God assuredly did love that spirit being. But then something changed. And what changed was **the way Satan started to use his mind!** Instead of using his mind to think from the same outgoing foundation as God thinks, Satan started to think from a selfish premise and a selfish foundation.

And once selfishness became the foundation of Satan's way of using his mind, at that point "**iniquity was found in him**" (still Ezekiel 28:15). Satan had voluntarily and without any provocation or outside temptation adopted a way of using his mind that is in total conflict with the way God uses His mind. Satan had in fact accepted **a way of thinking that God hates.**

Here is something that we need to grasp.

Every individual in existence, both created spirit beings and also human beings, is defined first and foremost by the way he uses his mind. No individual can be separated from the way his mind works. **It is the mind we have that defines us as to who we are**, not our looks or appearance.

Now all our actions, conduct and behavior are an expression of our minds, how our minds function and reason. Actions, conduct and behavior are an outward manifestation of our minds. **Our thoughts define us.**

As Jesus Christ said:

O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for **out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.** (Matthew 12:34)

And as Solomon wrote:

For **as he thinks in his heart, so is he:** Eat and drink, saith he to you; but his heart *is* not with you. (Proverbs 23:7)

Before God we cannot separate the man from his actions. The actions, which are an outward expression of the man's mind, define the man. And so **we cannot separate the sinner from his sins.**

[Later we'll talk about forgiveness.]

Applied to Satan this means that before God there is no distinction between Satan as an individual and Satan's sins. Satan's sins are an expression of who Satan is.

Simply put, the expression "God loves the sinner but hates (or is not fond of) the sinner's sins" is oxymoronic. If God hates a person's sins, then there is no way that at the same time God can somehow love that sinner. Those contradictory states of mind of loving and hating are simply not compatible. And an individual cannot be separated from his conduct and behavior.

This is certainly also true for Satan.

The reason why God does not love Satan is the way Satan chose to use his mind. Satan started to think selfishly. And those selfish thoughts led to selfish conduct, which manifested as "iniquity".

**The primary reason** why God does not love unrepentant sinners is because of the way sinners use their minds.

## **SINS ARE NOT THE PRIMARY PROBLEM**

Sins are not really the primary problem between God and us human beings. Yes, I am aware of Isaiah 59:2.

But **your iniquities** have separated between you and your God, and **your sins** have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear. (Isaiah 59:2)

Our sins and our iniquities didn't originate on their own. As Jesus Christ pointed out at another occasion:

For **out of the heart proceed** evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: (Matthew 15:19)

"The heart" stands for "the mind". Christ was pointing out that **the mind is the source of all sins.**

So the real problem between God and us human beings is that our human minds cause us to commit sins because of the way our minds function, i.e. selfishly. The mind is the real cause of all problems, and sins are nothing more than a manifestation of the mind thinking in selfish ways, ways that put self ahead of God.

It is not so much the sins that God hates, though God does certainly hate them (e.g. Revelation 2:6; Revelation 2:15; etc.), as it is the way of thinking that underlies those sins. Relatively speaking, the sins are the little problem, and the way of thinking that produced the sins is the big problem. The way of thinking is always a far greater problem than the sins which that way of thinking produces. That is why sins that did not involve a wrong way of thinking (e.g. sins committed ignorantly or unintentionally) will always incur a lesser penalty than sins that did involve a wrong selfish way of thinking (i.e. the majority of all sins).

Sinful actions expose selfish thinking (except when those sins are committed ignorantly); but the reverse is not always the case. Selfish thinking is not always outwardly apparent. This is so because even in the absence of sinful actions people may still be guided by a selfish way of thinking. Sometimes it takes a long time before a selfish way of using our minds actually becomes outwardly apparent to other people.

Many people are quite adept at hiding their real motives behind perfectly acceptable conduct. This is especially the case when they themselves know that other people would be highly critical of them, were those other people to be aware of their real selfish motives.

As long as people have selfish motivations for the way they conduct themselves, so long even their right conduct will be unacceptable before God. In other words, **even people who do what is right**, but from a wrong motivation in God's sight, **will have to repent**; i.e. they will have to change the way they use their minds, without having to necessarily also change any of their outwardly discernible conduct and actions.

Now let's apply this to the statements with which we started out.

God hates the sins that we human beings commit. But God hates even more the way of thinking that led to us committing sins. And that way of thinking cannot possibly be separated from the person of the sinner. That is why **it is not possible for God to love the unrepentant sinner while at the same time hating the way the mind of the sinner works!** The mind of the sinner cannot be separated from the sinner. The mind of the sinner is the primary way of defining the person of the sinner.

So the statement "God loves the sinner but hates the sins" is an oxymoron. And since God very clearly hates sins and hates the way of thinking that produces sins, therefore God cannot at the same time somehow love the sinner.

So let's look at how God relates to and deals with sinners.

## **GOD WORKS WITH SINNERS**

God does not love unrepentant sinners at all! But **God is extremely willing to work with human sinners**, to resolve their (i.e. our) problems. We should never mistake God's willingness to work with sinners for God's acceptance of sinners. There is in fact a huge difference between God working with sinners and God loving people.

Let's consider some Scriptures.

**Genesis 6:5-7** = God's decision to "destroy man" by means of a worldwide flood was an expression of God's feelings about sinners. But prior to the flood God had for a long time been willing to work with those people.

**Genesis 18:23** = In reference to Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham asked God "will You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?". Abraham's question is clearly based on the premise that God will destroy the wicked, again revealing God's feelings for sinners.

**Revelation 20:15** = The second death in the lake of fire is also an expression of God's feelings about sinners. But before condemning people to the lake of fire God will try to work with all those people, if only they will show themselves willing and obedient (Isaiah 1:19). Note that the mind must be "willing" even before we get to the outward actions being "obedient".

The flood, fire from heaven, the ultimate lake of fire; these are all expressions of **how God feels about unrepentant sinners**. These all show that God does not love sinners, or else He would not destroy them. In fact, "the wrath of God" is an expression of how God views sinners. That wrath of God is not directed against sins; it is directed against sinners, against the individuals who commit sins.

So how about **John 3:16**?

For **God so loved the world**, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

In this verse the words "the world" are a translation of the Greek expression "ton kosmon". The Greek word "kosmos" does not refer to the planet Earth or to any territory. It refers to "humanity". So note very carefully the focus of this often-quoted verse.

This verse does not focus on sinners. It focuses on **humanity as a whole**. God gave "His only begotten Son" for all of humanity, without a focus on whether or not those human beings actually respond to God by coming to repentance, i.e. by changing their way of thinking. This verse is an expression of God's positive approach, anticipating the best.

This verse does not say "God so loved sinners ..."! God's focus is on extending an opportunity for people to change their way of thinking and to receive access to immortal life by meeting God's conditions and accepting Christ's sacrifice to pay for their past sins.

Yes, God loves humanity as a whole, because He created us for a very profound purpose, to become members of His Family. But God does not love those who reject His offer for immortal life (i.e. unrepentant sinners) by refusing to change their hostile way of thinking (see Romans 8:7).

So note!

John 3:16 reveals God's initial perspective and intentions, even before most people were born and had done either good or bad in their lives. **John 3:16 reveals God's starting point**. But this verse does not talk about how God responds once people live their lives and turn out to be sinful.

John 3:16 is like **the opening move** in a game of chess, indicating the intentions. But John 3:16 does not tell us anything about the next moves God makes in response to whatever moves we human beings have made. God's moves subsequent to John 3:16 are responses to how we responded to God's opening move. And God's subsequent moves can change the initial picture in very dramatic ways, like introducing into the picture the lake of fire for the incorrigible wicked.

John 3:16 is also quite clearly a **conditional statement**, applying only to "whosoever believes in Christ". Christ's sacrifice does not apply to anyone else. Christ made this statement about Himself in John 3:16 to Nicodemus, who was a scholar amongst the Pharisees. The Pharisees accepted that we must keep God's laws; so **there was no need to emphasize obedience to this Pharisee**. The real issue the Pharisees as a whole had with Jesus Christ is that they did not accept that Christ was the Son of God. And so **that is the point Christ emphasized here to this Pharisee**, that the Pharisees had to recognize Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and not merely as just "a good Teacher" come from God.

In speaking to other people Jesus Christ emphasized other things, as for example emphasizing **obedience to all the commandments** to the rich young ruler in Matthew 19:17. In Luke 6:46 Jesus Christ said to another group of people "why do you call Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" In other words, Jesus Christ was saying: what's the point in you calling Me 'Lord' if you are not going to obey Me? So Christ emphasized different things to different people, and we have to put all those things together.

The point is: after God's opening move of making access to salvation for human beings possible through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (i.e. John 3:16, etc.), **the next move** is then to show us **the way to achieve that salvation**, and that way is by obeying all of God's commandments (i.e. Matthew 19:17, etc.). We should never mistake God's opening move with God's subsequent moves.

### **JOHN 3:36**

Let's also look at the concluding verse of chapter 3.

He that **believes** on the Son has everlasting life: and he that **believes not** the Son shall not see life; but **the wrath of God abides on him**. (John 3:36)

These words in John 3:36 were spoken by John the Baptist. But there is a significant mistranslation in the text of the KJV, which has been corrected in a number of other translations.

In the KJV we have the word "believes" twice. But in the Greek text there are in fact **two different Greek verbs** used. The Greek verb in the KJV expression "he that believes on ..." is "pisteuon", a form of the verb "pisteuo". This verb is correctly translated into English as "**to believe**".

But the verb in the KJV expression "he that believes not ..." is "apeithon", a form of the verb "apeitheo". And this Greek verb means "**to disobey**".

This mistranslation in the KJV has been corrected in a number of subsequent translations, including the ASV, which reads as follows:

He that believes on the Son has eternal life; but **he that obeys not the Son** shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. (John 3:36 ASV)

So in John 3:36 John the Baptist made a very revealing statement by using two different Greek verbs, the significance of which statement is frequently overlooked. John said (paraphrased):

- 1) He who **believes** on Jesus Christ will have eternal life.
- 2) He who **disobeys** Jesus Christ will not have eternal life.

You realize what this means, don't you? It means that it is impossible for someone who "disobeys Jesus Christ" to at the same time also "believe on Jesus Christ". This verse proves that "believing on Jesus Christ" absolutely demands "obeying Jesus Christ". The terms "to believe on Jesus Christ" and "to disobey Jesus Christ" are mutually exclusive; only one of these two terms can apply to any human being.

**John 3:36, correctly translated, is a very powerful statement that belief is simply not possible without simultaneous obedience.**

John 3:36 clarifies John 3:16, by showing that the expression "whosoever believes in Him" in verse 16 in fact demands that those believers absolutely must also obey Jesus Christ. In John 3:16 obedience to all of God's laws is in fact assumed for those who believe on Jesus Christ.

The one condition in John 3:36 leads to **eternal life**, and the other condition leads to the wrath of God and **eternal death**. These two conditions are the ultimate extremes in opposites. This verse makes absolutely clear that **faith without obedience** is meaningless, worthless and dead. The same point is also made in James 2:17, that faith without works is dead.

By using the verb "to disobey" as a contrast to the verb "to believe" in John 3:36, John the Baptist showed that without obedience belief is simply not possible. A correct translation of John 3:36 exposes the flaw in the "just give your heart to the Lord, brother, and you'll be saved" type of reasoning.

The reference to "the wrath of God" in John 3:36 also shows vividly that God does not love sinners. God wants sinners to change and to start obeying all of God's laws. And if they refuse to change, then God's wrath will come upon them. In this life God's love is never unconditional.

This point was also clearly spelled out by David in one of his psalms.

God judges the righteous, and **God is angry with the wicked every day**. (Psalm 7:11)

King David clearly did not believe that God loves sinners. God does not love individuals with whom God is angry. Now let's look at the pivotal verse on this question, Romans 5:8.

### **ROMANS 5:8**

Here is this verse.

But God commends his love toward **us**, in that, **while we were yet sinners**, Christ died for **us**. (Romans 5:8)

This verse is the main justification presented by those who claim that God loves murderers and adulterers. But there are two mistranslations in this verse, which mistranslations have absolutely **staggering consequences**. Most people have never understood this verse correctly. So let's look at this verse very closely.

By way of background:

We understand that all human beings have sinned (see Romans 3:23 and Romans 5:12). So all human beings are sinners. **Now all sinners can be divided into two distinct groups.**

1) **The vast majority of sinners are unrepentant.** They have never at any time submitted their lives to

God and tried to live by all of God's laws. These are the people in the world. You may have noticed that thus far in this article I have repeatedly used the expression "unrepentant sinners".

2) **A very small minority of sinners have truly repented.** They have changed their way of thinking towards God. They strive sincerely to live by all of God's laws. These are the people who are members of God's true Church. We are all still sinners, even though we have repented.

Never make the mistake of thinking that just because we have repented, that therefore we are somehow no longer sinners. Paul explained this quite clearly in the last part of Romans chapter 7, you know, the whole section where Paul speaks about seeing "another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind" (Romans 7:23, etc.).

So in simple terms the whole world can be divided into **repentant sinners** and **unrepentant sinners**. Can you see that, because this is the perspective we find in the New Testament? This is extremely important to grasp.

We in God's Church are still sinners as long as we are mortal. That is also illustrated by the two wave loaves that were baked **with leaven** for the Feast of Pentecost (see Leviticus 23:17), which wave loaves represented "**the firstfruits** unto the Eternal". In this instruction for Pentecost the leaven represents sins.

Now a key to understanding this subject correctly is to recognize that **these two groups of sinners are treated very differently by God.**

Let's now look at the first small mistranslation with the staggering consequences.

The expression "while we **were** yet sinners" should really read "while we **are** yet sinners"! Not "were" but "are".

In this expression the Greek verb "onton" is **the present tense** active voice participle in the genitive masculine plural form of the Greek verb "eimi", the equivalent of the English verb "to be". And because this Greek verb is in the present tense in this verse, therefore it should be translated as "are" and not as "were".

All the translators of the Greek New Testament know that in Romans 5:8 the Greek verb "to be" is in the present tense. It is their own religious bias and lack of understanding that has caused most of them to render this verb into the past tense in English (i.e. "were").

On the other hand, those translations that strive to translate the Greek text literally have avoided using the past tense "were" in their translations. Thus we have the following attempts at a literal translation of the Greek text.

1889 Darby Translation = "... **we being still sinners** ..."

1898 Young's Literal Translation = "... **in our being still sinners** ..."

Interlinear Bible by Jay P Green Sr = "... in that **we yet being sinners** ..."

Apostolic Bible Polyglot = "... that **yet being sinners we** ..."

The point is that Paul was not talking about our past; **Paul was referring to our present state in God's Church.** Paul is saying that we members of God's Church "are yet sinners", right now, because all of us will surely still sin in some way or other between today and the time of our death. We are still sinners

who regularly still need to repent before God.

Do you grasp what this correct translation of Romans 5:8 means?

First of all, Paul is not speaking about "all sinners" in this verse, not at all! This verse is addressed to a **very specific group of sinners!** Twice this verse uses the pronoun "**us**" and once it uses the pronoun "**we**". So it is speaking about a very select group of people who are identified by the words "we" and "us".

Let me say that again:

This specific verse is not speaking about all of humanity! Rather, in this verse **Paul is speaking about people who have submitted their lives to God and come into God's Church!** This verse is speaking about **God's people**. Yes, even though we have submitted our lives to God, we should recognize that **we are still sinners**; we have not yet overcome sin perfectly, and we do still fall short.

Next, here is the distinction:

1) **The mistranslation** "while we **were** yet sinners" implies that Paul is speaking about the time when we were still in the world, before we repented and came into God's Church. The ramification of that situation is this: if Christ died for "us" before we came to repentance, then Christ also surely died for everyone else **before they come to repentance**. This would mean that **Christ died for all sinners**, i.e. both of the groups of sinners I referred to above.

**THAT IS THE DIABOLICAL IMPLICATION OF THIS MISTRANSLATION!**

**It is simply not true that Christ died for all sinners! That is what Satan, the greatest sinner of all, wants you to believe!**

2) **The correct translation** "while we **are** yet sinners" means that Paul is **only** speaking about the group comprised of **repentant sinners**, the "we" and the "us" in Paul's statement. All the rest of humanity, making up the vastly greater group of unrepentant sinners, is not at all addressed by Paul in this verse. Nothing in Romans 5:8, **not a single word, applies to the world**, i.e. to the unrepentant murderers and adulterers and liars, etc.

**This verse**, and this whole Book of Romans for that matter, **is not addressed to all human beings**. It is addressed to only those people who have already taken the step of submitting their lives to God, and to start to change their way of thinking (i.e. to repent). Those are the people towards whom God "commends" His love, those who are a part of His Church.

**In no way did the Apostle Paul mean to imply that God loves murderers and adulterers! This verse is not speaking about the world! Its application is restricted to the converted people in God's Church, the "we" and the "us" that Paul is addressing!**

### **CLARIFYING OUR EARLIER STATEMENT**

Earlier I said: "The same is true for all other unrepentant sinners as well, that there is nothing about them that God loves." I deliberately used the expression "unrepentant sinners" because I wanted to later point out that there are also "repentant sinners", who make up a completely different group.

So with these two different groups of "sinners" in mind, my statement that "there is nothing about sinners



that God loves" refers only to that first group, those who have never at any time repented and changed their way of thinking.

But **that statement does not apply to the second group of sinners**, those who have come to a real repentance and who have submitted their lives to God. **That group of sinners is indeed loved by God**, as illustrated by the joy in heaven over every sinner **who comes to repentance** (see Luke 15:7). So yes, we are still sinners and we may fall short at times, but we have made a firm commitment to God, and for that commitment God extends His love towards us.

Let's look at the second mistranslation in Romans 5:8.

Let's examine the expression "but God commends His love". The Greek text here reads "sunistesin de ten eautou agapen". The verb "sunistao" (i.e. "sunistesin" in the text) is translated as "commends". But that's not really what this verb means in this context. This Greek verb means **"to introduce"** and "to exhibit", depending on the context. (In modern Greek the shortened word "sunisto" also means "to introduce" when applied to a person.)

So here is the point that all of the translators have missed:

In speaking to sinners who have submitted their lives to God, Paul said that **"God introduces His love towards us**, in that, while we **are** yet sinners, Christ died **for us"**.

And that is exactly right!

As long as we were unrepentant, we were cut off from God (Isaiah 59:2). And at that time Jesus Christ's sacrifice did not in any way whatsoever apply to us. We were cut off from any access to forgiveness of our sins, and we were cut off from God's love.

Then God opened our minds by calling us, along with also calling millions of other people who did not respond to that calling (i.e. see the parable of the sower). **When we responded to that calling**, then access to forgiveness of our past guilt was opened unto us. When we repented, **then God "introduced us to His love"** by applying the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to our sins. And at that point, and not before, Christ had also died "for us".

However, should we ever go back on our commitment to God, and commit the unpardonable sin, and reject God's truth and God's way of life, then the sacrifice Jesus Christ brought will no longer apply to us. Christ has not died for the people who will end up in that situation of neglecting "so great salvation" (see Hebrews 2:3). And **Christ has not died for unrepentant sinners**.

That may be hard for you to grasp because of the way we have always understood these mistranslated Scriptures. Satan really has deceived the whole world (see Revelation 12:9), and that includes every single one of us in God's Church; we have all been deceived on some issues. And Romans 5:8 is one of those instances.

So in simple terms:

**Jesus Christ has not died for all sinners!** Jesus Christ has only died for all those sinners who repent and change and obey God and submit their lives to God. That is what is meant by "Christ died **for us**" in Romans 5:8. At repentance we are **"introduced"** to the love of God; we become "heirs" of that love, though not yet "inheritors" of it. It is only at the resurrection that we will inherit God's love, which will then be unconditional.

Now can you understand the significance of the verb "to introduce" in this context? **Before being "introduced" to God's love people clearly cannot possibly have had access to God's love.** All those who have (theoretically, for argument's sake) had access to God's love before repentance very obviously would not need to be "introduced" to God's love at that point in time.

Before any interaction can take place between two parties, they must be introduced to one another. So if at repentance "we" in God's Church were introduced to God's love, then this has to mean that people cannot possibly have had access to God's love while they were/are still unrepentant.

Paul used the verb "to introduce" in this verse to show us that our access to God's love had a very specific starting point. An introduction initiates a relationship. Can you see how correcting the two mistranslations in Romans 5:8 changes the whole meaning of this verse? The two mistranslations are:

1) God "**introduces**" His love towards us, rather than "commending" His love.

2) While we "**are**" yet sinners at this point in time, rather than while we "were" yet sinners in the past before coming into God's Church.

Now let's look at the next point.

## **FORGIVENESS OF PAST SINS**

Earlier I said:

"Before God we cannot separate the man from his actions. The actions, which are an outward expression of the man's mind, define the man. And so **we cannot separate the sinner from his sins.**"

Now while we human beings cannot separate the sinner from his sins, there is a way that God can separate the sinner from his sins. But we should always keep in mind that **even for God there was no easy way to separate the sinner from his sins.** That is because the sins are an expression of the mind of the sinner; and minds don't change easily.

Even for God it took **an extremely drastic measure** to establish the potential, but not the certainty (!), of separating the sinner from his sins. Think about that! The only way that even God could establish the potential to separate our sins from us sinners was the drastic measure of Jesus Christ laying down His own very existence for us human beings (which existence God the Father restored to Jesus Christ when He resurrected Jesus Christ).

This is another perspective on the sacrifice which Jesus Christ brought for us human beings. The magnitude of the sacrifice that was needed to create the potential of having our sins removed (i.e. separating our sins from us) illustrates very profoundly the extreme difficulty even for God to separate the sinner from his sins. **It is not an easy thing to remove sins.** To make that removal possible required a commitment by God that defies human comprehension.

We need to think about **why it is so difficult to remove sins from the sinner.**

Sins, except those committed ignorantly or unintentionally, are an expression of the sinner's mind. **Sins shape and mold the mind's identity.** It is totally worthless and meaningless to (theoretically) remove the sins if at the same time the mind's identity is not also changed in some way. Unless the mind also at the same time changes in some way, removal of sins (i.e. forgiveness) achieves nothing at all. And **by**

**itself the removal of sins cannot achieve a change in the sinner's mind.**

Please take a moment to think about what I have just said. When the mind's identity is not altered in some way, then forgiveness of sins (one of God's prerogatives) is useless!

Under the right circumstances God has the power to remove sins, because God was willing to take that drastic measure of having Jesus Christ lay down His life for mankind. But **changing the human mind** to a different way of thinking **is under the exclusive control of us human beings ourselves**. That is something that God will never do for us, change a human being's selfish way of thinking.

**The real purpose of forgiveness (i.e. the removal of sins) is to facilitate the possibility for the human mind to change its selfish way of thinking.**

Think about that statement. Everything else about the matter of forgiveness is secondary to this main purpose. And if forgiveness of sins does not lead to a change in the mind's selfish way of thinking, then that forgiveness was wasted **and it will be revoked by God!** Yes, God will in certain circumstances revoke forgiveness He had already extended. That's the whole point of the parable in Matthew 18:23-35. And that is also the message in Ezekiel 33:13, that as long as we are still mortal human beings forgiveness can be revoked under certain circumstances.

So when we request God to forgive our sins, then our petitions for forgiveness must be accompanied by a change in our thinking. **When there is no change in our way of thinking, then God will not answer our requests for forgiveness.**

Had you understood this before?

Considering the drastic measure that God was willing to take (i.e. the sacrifice of Jesus Christ) in order to make it possible for us to be separated from our sins, God's insistence on us first changing our selfish way of thinking is a small request indeed. The biblical term for changing our selfish way of thinking is "to repent". Repentance is always a prerequisite for God's forgiveness. And **God does not and never will love those who refuse to change their selfish way of thinking.**

So yes, there is a way by which God has made it possible for the sinner to be separated from his sins (i.e. for us, you and me, to be separated from our sins), but it is not an easy way. And it required an enormous sacrifice from God to even establish this way. The reason why God went to the enormous length of establishing this way of removing our sins from us is so that we would then be free to have the opportunity to change **our way of thinking** (which way of thinking **defines us as individuals**) away from our naturally God-resenting selfish way of thinking (see Romans 8:7 again) towards God's way of using our minds.

Understand this!

**As long as we do not have our past sins forgiven it is simply not possible for us to change the way our minds work.** The baggage of our past sins prevents our minds from changing; that baggage enslaves us to Satan's way of thinking.

God's love is demonstrated in God making possible, at a great price to God and to Jesus Christ, a way for us to reject Satan's selfish way of thinking and to adopt God's way of thinking. Without the forgiveness of our past sins it would simply not be possible for us to ever change our thinking ... in the same way that it is impossible for Satan to ever change his way of thinking. Removing our past sins is the key to making a changed way of thinking even possible.

Can you grasp that in Romans 5:8 the expression "while we **are** yet sinners" is not talking about the murderers and adulterers and whoremongers of this world? Those are not the people towards whom God "introduces" His love! **That is simply not what the Apostle Paul was trying to say.** Paul was speaking to the Church, to people who had already submitted their lives to God.

So a correct translation and a correct understanding of Romans 5:8 utterly demolishes any claim that God "loves murderers and adulterers". For most of us it will be hard to fully grasp that Jesus Christ did not die for all sinners, because all our lives our minds have been conditioned by Satan's deceptions in this regard. But God is not mocked, and Jesus Christ's monumental sacrifice is not available to unrepentant sinners. It is only when we start to change our selfish way of thinking and make a commitment to God, that God then "introduces" us to His love.

Let's also consider one more point.

### **WE NEVER LOVE THOSE WHO DISOBEY US**

At the start of His relationship with human beings God gave Adam and Eve an instruction, to not eat the fruit from one specific tree. The purpose of the instruction was to find out whether or not these two human beings would actually obey God faithfully. We know that they didn't.

When they disobeyed God, then God imposed penalties on them. God always imposes penalties for disobedience. The penalties God imposes for disobedience make quite clear that God does not love those who disobey Him. **God never loves those who disobey Him.**

If you in your own life have legitimate authority over some other people (at work or in your community or in your family or within the Church, etc.), then you don't love those people who disregard your legitimate instructions. You never like it when people who are supposed to obey you actually challenge your authority and disobey you. You don't ever like that.

And God doesn't like that type of situation either.

It is ridiculous to assert that God loves those who disobey Him. The only sinners that God loves are those sinners who have made a serious commitment to do their utmost to stop sinning, to stop breaking God's laws based on a commitment to try to please God in every way possible. That is a description of those who are members of God's true Church, those who are repentant sinners.

The main feature of any test of obedience to instructions is whether or not those who are under authority will submit their minds and their way of thinking to the one who has authority over them. The test of obedience to God is whether or not we will submit our minds and our way of thinking to God and to God's wishes and God's leadership.

Now sometimes people will obey God's instructions without actually submitting their minds to God. But when people openly disobey God's laws and instructions, then they obviously have not submitted their minds to God. And God most certainly does not love those who rebelliously disobey His laws. God does not love the unrepentant sinner.

Frank W Nelte