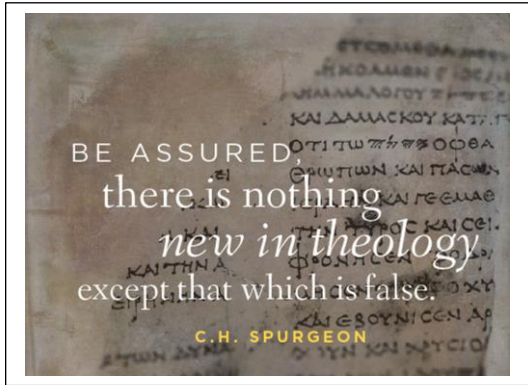


# The apple



We hear and read much about an idol today which is solely the invention of men (as all idols are). This idol is called 'the god of love'.

This idol loves everyone. He is kind, meek and gracious and quick to overlook all our wrongs. This is the idol of the prosperity gospel. It is a god who exists entirely for our benefit. This is the god who is more like a servant than the true almighty God. This god of love is not too concerned about sin and he does not require sincere repentance.

It is the god of the hyper- grace movement (as promoted by man like Joseph Prince who has gained so much popularity with his false teaching) as well as the god of many dead and 'liberal' churches (unfortunately most Anglican and Lutheran churches fit into that category today). We all like the idea of a god who is love. Such a god is no threat to anyone. Such a god is totally harmless. He would certainly not send anyone to hell (unless of course you have been Adolf Hitler or Stalin, Pol Pot or some other extremely evil monster).

Much of the 'post-Christian' western world today believes in this idol that we have created. The hyper-grace movement is put one such movement which promotes this image of a false god. This idol has been created on the basis of a few select verses of scripture. But as Christians we should know that any verse taken out of context will lead us into error.

Yes God is a God of love but God is also a God of justice. He is a God of righteousness as well as a God of anger and He even is a God who hates, who punishes and who destroys. He is a God who judges and who will one day send multitudes of people to hell.

To focus on one of God's character traits at the expense of all others will lead to a completely false and misleading image of God.

This false image will eventually turn into an idol. And this is precisely what has happened today.

But there is 1 obstacle about this false image of God, about this idol that we have created. This obstacle comes in the form of an apple!

What was the original sin as recorded in the book of Genesis?  
It was Eve getting hold of an apple (or whatever this forbidden fruit may have been, we don't know what fruit it was but for simplicities sake let's call it an apple).  
Both Adam and Eve took a bite of that forbidden fruit and died as a result of it.

It was a bite of an apple, so what? What's the big deal about biting off a piece of an apple?  
After all was it not an apple that looked fresh and inviting?  
It was only 1 little bite of a piece of fresh fruit and thats all! That's all that was to it and look what it did to the rest of creation!  
Surely a loving and kind, a gracious and merciful God could have overlooked such a minor offence. It was a bite of an apple! What's the big deal about that???

Adam and Eve had never killed anybody. They had never committed a serious crime!  
They had never even told one single lie before that or done anything which could have been considered an offence to God. All they did was bite a piece off an apple.  
And for the sake of 1 bite life on earth was never to be the same again?  
How could a loving God be so narrow minded? How could he be so terribly cruel?

What was the result of that bite?

Death came into the world as a result of this bite of the apple and God cursed the soil that we walk on. Woman ended up having to give birth in great pain and there would be countless wars in the future. There would be famines and all kinds of painful diseases. There would even be human genocides leaving millions dead in the future. Terrorism would send fear into the hearts of entire nations and there would be terrible corruption and injustice which would plague large parts of our world.

Right up to this day we have never recovered from this bite of the apple. We are still affected by it today. The world around us is still in a terrible mess. The Syrian war, the current genocide of Christians in the Middle East, Floods and draughts all at the same time in different parts of the world and so on.

Wherever we look we find disaster and war, we witness strife and disharmony.  
The effects of that bite have never left us.

Just how could a loving God allow such a thing?

The reason why we even ask this question is because we have created an idol, we have a completely false image of God.

We have created an idol in our minds and in our hearts which does not exist and this idol will never be able to provide us with satisfying answers to life.

It will only ever open the door to more questions.

An idol will drag us deeper into deception and it will fill our hearts and minds with more lies. So many who call themselves 'Christians' today believe in a god that does not even exist. The god they believe in is an invention of their own mind or the creation of a false teacher (as is the case with the prosperity preachers who preach a false gospel, men like Kenneth Copeland, Benny Hinn, Joseph Prince and others who have used their followers to become fabulously wealthy, something which is the ultimate insult to Christ. Such men are exactly like the money lenders which Jesus kicked out of the temple. One day their fate will be exactly the same)

If God is really a God of love, how could He have been so offended by that bite of an apple?

We can only answer this question if we understand who God really is.

The image of a false god of love will crumble and falter when we consider this question.

The original sin was the result of disobedience and pride.

It was much more than simply a harmless bite of an apple.

It was all about hidden attitude and motive, about the spirit of rebellion rather than the taste of a nice piece of fruit.

Once Adam and Eve had tasted from that apple they suddenly discovered a God whom they had never known before. From then on everything changed!

Was it God's love which drove them out of the Garden of Eden? Was it God's mercy which closed that door behind them for good? Was it God's grace which cursed the ground they had walked on?

Anyone who believes in the idol of love has a major problem with the first chapters of the Bible. What we see in Genesis so clearly is that God is both righteous and holy. Whenever we fall for the image of an idol we will eventually be left without answers (lies will only take us a certain distance but they can never take us to the final destination of truth). In the end this idol of love will slowly subdue us and put our spirit to sleep.

I knew an old lady who was about to die. She was very afraid of death. But having been a good Roman Catholic herself she believed that her church would be able to take her to heaven but even this could not calm her fears of dying. In the end the local Roman Catholic Priest had to visit her daily so that she could receive 'holy communion'. But even the daily visits from the Priest and the daily 'holy communion' could not settle her fears. She did not believe in a hell and yet she was still scared of dying. She believed that she had always been a very good person and that her god was a god of love. But despite this she was still scared of her future.

She was plagued by fears of uncertainty and as much as she was assured by her Priest she passed away with those fears. She left this world without any assurance of what was to come.

An idol may make us feel good for the moment but it will never pass the final test.

No idol can do what only God is able to do.

In the hour when it really counts every idol will fail us. Every idol will leave us stranded with many uncertainties. It will even make us doubt our salvation. It will so confuse our mind that we can no longer discern between deception and truth.

Yes God is love!

God is a God of love but the moment we separate His love from His justice, the moment that we separate God's love from His holiness and exclude His righteousness we are left with an idol which does not exist. This is exactly what so many churches have done!

Where do you still hear a message preached about hell?

Hyper-Grace preachers only talk about goodness and love, about kindness and mercy and many 'liberal' Pastors deny that hell even exists.

But when we look at the life and ministry of Jesus we notice that it was Jesus who preached far more about hell than he spoke about heaven. He often warned everyone who listened to him about this terrible place.

Jesus preached more about God's judgment than he did about His rewards.

He told people that the road that leads to heaven was narrow and that only few will find it while the road that leads to eternal destruction was like a wide open highway and most of

mankind was already walking on it. If Jesus would preach in many of our churches today he would be asked to leave and he would never be invited back again. We would shut the door behind him. His message would be far too direct and too threatening. Many who call themselves Christians would not be able to cope with his challenge.

It is time that we smash our idols and find out who the God of the Bible really is. It is time that we turn away from preachers, from pastors who have tried to mislead us and who have corrupted the word of God for their own glory and for their own personal gain.

We need to allow scripture to speak to us in a new way. We need to allow the Holy Spirit to teach us afresh, enlighten us and show us the depth of God's wonderful word.

Idols are always the result of false teaching, of misguided ideas and of a confused mind. But they usually start with somebody else. It is often someone else who has first put that lie into our minds.

The only way to discern false teaching is to so familiarize ourselves with scripture that no deception and no lie can grow in our mind.

The word of God is like a solid rock which is able to stand against any lie of the devil. No lie, no deception will ever be able to crush it!



A god who is all love, all grace, all mercy, no sovereignty, no justice, no holiness, and no wrath is an idol.

— R. C. Sproul —

If you love anything better than God you are idolaters: if there is anything you would not give up for God it is your idol: if there is anything that you seek with greater fervor than you seek the glory of God, that is your idol, and conversion means a turning from every idol.

Charles Spurgeon

QuoteAddicts



The cliché, God hates the sin but love the sinner, is false on the face of it and should be abandoned. Fourteen times in the first fifty Psalms alone, we are told that God hates the sinner, His wrath is on the liar, and so forth. In the Bible, the wrath of God rests both on the sin (Romans 1:18ff) and on the sinner (John 3:36).

— D. A. Carson —

AZ QUOTES

If 1 bite of the apple had such consequences, such disastrous effects then how much more would our sins offend a holy and righteous God? The greatest lie of all times (a lie which is promoted by hyper-grace preachers like Joseph Prince) is that sin is not a big deal to God. The moment we make our sin harmless before God we have surrendered our ability to genuinely repent of it as well.

True repentance can only occur when we understand the true depth of the sins we committed, when we realize how much our sins have offended the presence of a pure, holy God. Once you see God in the light of His holiness, in His true purity even the tiniest speck of sin will become a gigantic mountain that only God himself can remove.

We are all guilty of far worse offences than a rebellious bite into an apple.

We have lied. We are all liars (that is what someone is called who has told 1 single lie). We have all stolen (even downloading a copyrighted music video from the Internet is theft). Someone who has stolen something is called a thief! We are all thieves!

If we look at the 10 commandments we will soon realize that we have broken almost every

## The Ten Commandments

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.</b>         | <b>5. Honor thy Father and thy Mother</b>                                  |
| <b>2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven images.</b> | <b>6. Thou shalt not kill.</b>   |
| <b>3. Thou shalt not take the Lord's name in vain.</b>     | <b>7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.</b>                                  |
| <b>4. Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.</b>        | <b>8. Thou shalt not steal.</b>  |
|  | <b>9. Thou shalt not bear false witness.</b>                               |
|  | <b>10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, wife or possessions.</b> |

single one of those

commandments. We are all guilty on many accounts.

If God judged Adam and Eve that harshly for the forbidden taste of an apple how much more will he judge us for committing far worse sins than they ever did!

God did not give us the 10.

Commandments so we can put a nice poster on our bedroom walls.

Those commandments are God's universal standards. And they are still valid today! The moment you have broken even 1 of those

commandments you have broken

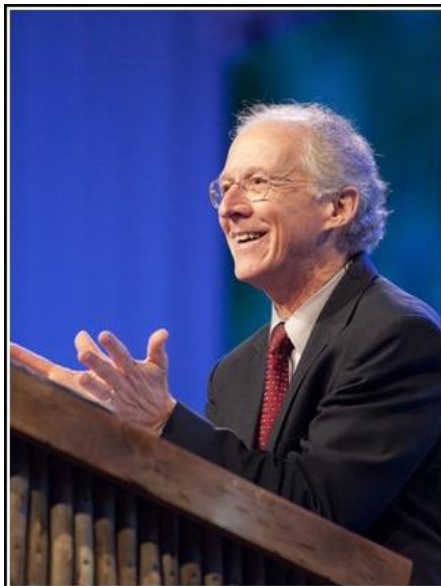
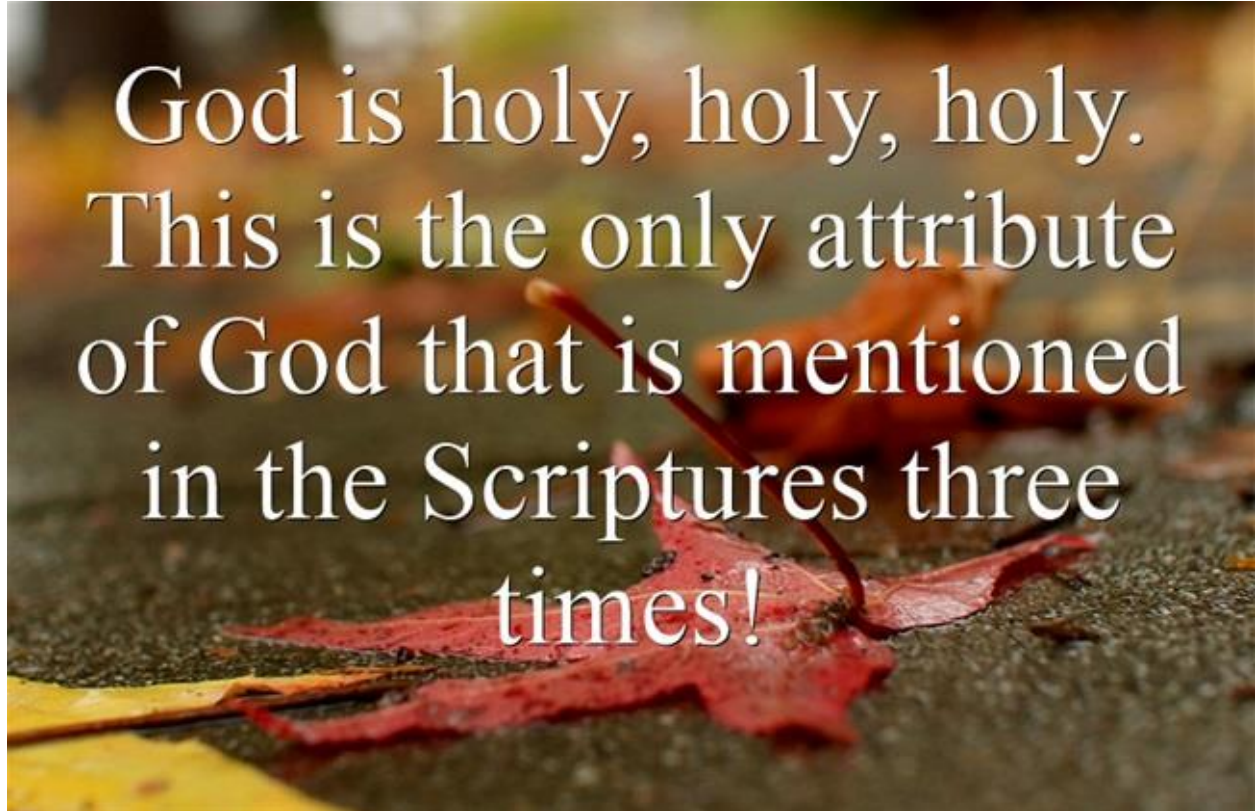
them all. You are guilty before God your creator. The idol that you have created, the false god of love you believe in will not be able to save you from the wrath which is yet to come upon everyone who has broken even 1 of God's holy commandments! (**Revelation 6:16** And they said to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of the One seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. 17For the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to withstand it?")

The belief in an idol will never save you from His wrath to come.

Only the God who is not an idol can do that. And He has devised the greatest plan of all times. He gave the life of His only son so that everyone who believes in Him (who completely surrenders his life to him) shall not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:15-16).

Jesus came to save us from the future judgment to come. There was no other way to escape the terror of the Lord, the future wrath of God! Sin is such a serious offence to God that it took

the life, the blood of His son to save and to redeem us from it. He is the only one who is able to save us from our sin. There is no other cure for it and there is no other salvation. How serious do we take our sin in the light of such great salvation when we consider that someone had laid down his life for us and died for the sake of our salvation!



The way of the cross is the way of suffering. Christians are called to die, not kill, in order to show the world how they are loved by Christ.

— *John Piper* —

AZ QUOTES