

### *Does Proverbs 8:17 contradict Matthew 5:46?*

The scriptures are internally consistent (Prov. 30:5); so, one passage of scripture will not disagree with another (Ps. 19:7).

In Matthew 5:46 Jesus is speaking about personal relationships: For if you love those who love you, what reward will you have? Don't even the tax collectors do the same? Mt 5:45. The Christian is commanded to love *all* believers. He loves his enemy by giving him the gospel (Ac 20:20).

In the parable of The Good Samaritan Jesus challenges the believer who loves God (Lk 10:27) to also love his neighbor (Lk 10:25-37). If one does this, he will live (Lk 10:28). The Christian should: feed (Ro 12:20), love (Lk 6:27, 35), forgive (Mt 6:12–15) and pray for his enemies (Lk 23:34).<sup>1</sup>

The Book of Proverbs reveals the excellence of wisdom. Wisdom, spoken of as a woman, says that she comes with blessings: I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me (Pr 8:17). Wisdom keeps one from evil (Pr 5:1–6). Acting on God's wisdom insures stability (Is 33:6).

God has loved the unlovable. The apostle Paul wrote: God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Ro 5:8). It is not God's will that any should perish (2 Pe 3:9).

Although believers, referred to as Christ's bride (Re 21:2, 9), will go through difficult times (Mt 24:9, Ro 8:18); they will be spared from greater difficulties to come on the earth for the unbelieving world (Mt 24:21, 1 Thess 5:9, Re 3:10). Christ, pictured as the bridegroom, spares his bride from The Great Tribulation period (Ezek. 16:8–14<sup>2</sup>). As Joseph dismissed his wife before revealing himself to his brethren (Ge 45:1), Christ will dismiss his church from this world prior to revealing himself to Israel (Zech 13:6).<sup>3</sup>

When the Lord rises from his mercy seat, The Church Age<sup>4</sup> will come to an end (Re 8:1). God has done all that he can to save men (2 Pe 3:9, Tit 3:4). His Holy Spirit tries to woo and win souls to himself (Gen. 6:3, Ac 7:51). Some unfortunately will require even greater brokenness if they are ever to humble themselves before God (Re 7:9,14). Others in the Great Tribulation will continue to harden their hearts against the Lord (Re 9:21). All hell will literally break loose on earth after his church is raptured (Re 13:7<sup>5</sup>). It is wise to accept God's love and mercy sooner rather than later (2 Co 6:2, Re 20:6). It is available to all (Jn 3:16).

---

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Nelson Publishers. (1996). Nelson's quick reference topical Bible index (p. 202). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

<sup>2</sup> Israel, his bride, will be hidden and protected in the wilderness during the Great Tribulation (Re 12:14).

<sup>3</sup> A bride is figurative for both Israel (Ezek. 16:8–14) and the church (Rev. 21:2, 9) [e.g. In The Book of Esther Vashti is a type of Israel and Esther is a type of Christian (Esth 1:9–22)].

<sup>4</sup> Also called the Age of Grace.

<sup>5</sup> The church will not be overcome: I will build My church, and the forces of Hades will not overpower it (Mt 16:18); but, tribulation saints will be overcome: he was permitted to wage war against the saints *and to conquer them* (Re 13:7, emphasis mine).