

The Meaning of the Sentence “Love Covers a Multitude of Sins” According to 1 Peter 4:8

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ABSTRACT

As a redeemed people, love should be the primary character of believers. However, one of the challenges in the end times is that the love of many will grow cold. This is evident in the rapidly developing digital era, which has transformed nearly every aspect of human life. The social world has become more open, and news or information is quickly accessible to many. One phenomenon that often occurs is the tendency for people to disclose many things publicly, both good and bad, including the sins of others. Acts of shaming, bullying, and exposing others' faults have become commonplace, even among Christians. Issues concerning love are frequently discussed in the Bible and often lead to varying interpretations. One verse that often draws attention is 1 Peter 4:8, which contains the phrase “love covers a multitude of sins.” This study aims to understand the meaning of the phrase “love covers a multitude of sins” according to 1 Peter 4:8 and provide guidance for believers in applying love within the context of this challenging digital era. The author uses an exegetical method to analyze this text in order to provide a biblical response for believers in facing current phenomena. The results of this study show the importance of love as a top priority for believers, as true love does not focus on exposing others' faults but rather on covering and forgiving them. Believers are taught not only to prioritize sincere love within themselves but also to reflect God's love, which was revealed through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, to others through concrete actions, specifically by not exposing the faults or sins of others and by not repaying evil with evil.

Keywords: *Love, Covering, Sin, Forgiveness, Compassion*

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INTRODUCTION

Love is a fundamental principle in Christianity and is an intrinsic characteristic of God Himself, as the Bible states that “God is love” (1 John 4:8). God's love was demonstrated supremely in His sacrificial act of sending His only Son, Jesus Christ, as an atonement for sinners on the cross (Bilo, 2018). As a redeemed community, believers are called to embody love as a defining character, adhering to Jesus' teachings, which emphasize love for God and love for others as the foremost commandments (Matthew 22:37-39). Love, therefore, serves as a hallmark of followers of Christ, and it is a quality that Christians are urged to actively cultivate (Marbun, 2019).

The urgency to explore the concept of love becomes even greater considering the prophecy in the Scriptures that in the end times, lawlessness will increase, and the love of many will grow cold (Matthew 24:12). This reality is further intensified by recent global challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the accelerated development of digital technologies, both of which have drastically transformed various aspects of human life, including social norms, behavioral patterns, and interpersonal relations (Harahap, Firman, & Riska, 2021). In this increasingly transparent digital era, information whether beneficial or harmful is disseminated rapidly, often exposing the personal affairs and transgressions of individuals (Aser, Sinta, & Sudarto, 2022). Acts of hate speech, shaming, and openly publicizing others' mistakes have become prevalent, even among Christians (Ningrum, Suryadi, & Dian, 2019). Such phenomena highlight the need for believers to possess a biblically sound understanding of love, especially regarding how it should be demonstrated toward those in sin or who have fallen away.

The biblical theme of love is frequently addressed in Scripture and is often subject to diverse interpretations. A verse that has garnered significant attention is 1 Peter 4:8, which asserts, "love covers a multitude of sins." This verse raises questions about the specific nature of the love being described, as well as its implications for interpersonal relationships among Christians. Three main interpretations of the phrase "love covers a multitude of sins" have emerged in previous studies: Love Conceals Sins from Human View Constable (2003) interprets this phrase to mean that love hides sins from human view, while cautioning that this does not imply sin is hidden from God's sight. Instead, he explains, love refrains from broadcasting others' sins, contrasting with hatred, which seeks to expose and exaggerate faults. Bernes (2014) suggests that love acts as a buffer, concealing imperfections in others from the perspective of the observer, prompting tolerance for the faults and mistakes of others. Love Overlooks Sin: Another perspective, posited by Barclay (2020), suggests that love is characterized by an ability to overlook transgressions. Genuine love, he argues, enables individuals to accept others' shortcomings and to bear with their faults. Keating (2011) echoes this view, positing that Peter's wording reflects Proverbs 10:12 and indicates a capacity within love to overlook the minor offenses encountered daily in relationships. Love Forgives Sins: A third interpretation frames love as an active force of forgiveness. Henry (2011) emphasizes that true love does not seek to expose or exacerbate the faults of others, but rather to forgive and to forget them. Arichea and Nida (2013) support this, noting that "cover" in this context aligns with the concept of not condemning or exposing faults, highlighting love's role in mercy and readiness to forgive rather than retaliate.

This study builds upon these prior interpretations by conducting an exegetical analysis of 1 Peter 4:8 to clarify its meaning within the context of contemporary digital dynamics. By examining the phrase "love covers a multitude of sins," this research aims to provide believers with a framework for understanding and applying love that aligns with biblical teachings, particularly in light of present-day challenges, such as public shaming and the rapid spread of information online. Through this approach, the study not only expands upon the existing discourse on love and forgiveness in Christian ethics but also addresses a practical need for believers to navigate complex social interactions in a digital era. The findings underscore the priority of genuine love as a guiding principle for believers, encouraging them to embody God's love, as demonstrated through Christ, in their treatment of others, fostering forgiveness, grace, and discretion in handling the faults of others.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted using a qualitative approach using the exegesis method. Exegesis refers to the process of 'pulling out' the meaning of a text, which is different from eisegesis which refers to 'putting into' the text the meaning desired by the interpreter (Osborne, 2006). In this context, exegesis is an attempt to interpret a text by

understanding the original intent of the author in the text. The purpose of this approach is to articulate the meaning of the text as intended by the original author so that it can be understood by the interpreter (Porter, 2002).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Text excavation requires an accurate and structured approach to achieve a proper and responsible interpretation. This study uses the following steps: contextual analysis, lexical analysis, structural analysis, grammatical analysis, and exegetical analysis.

Contextual Analysis

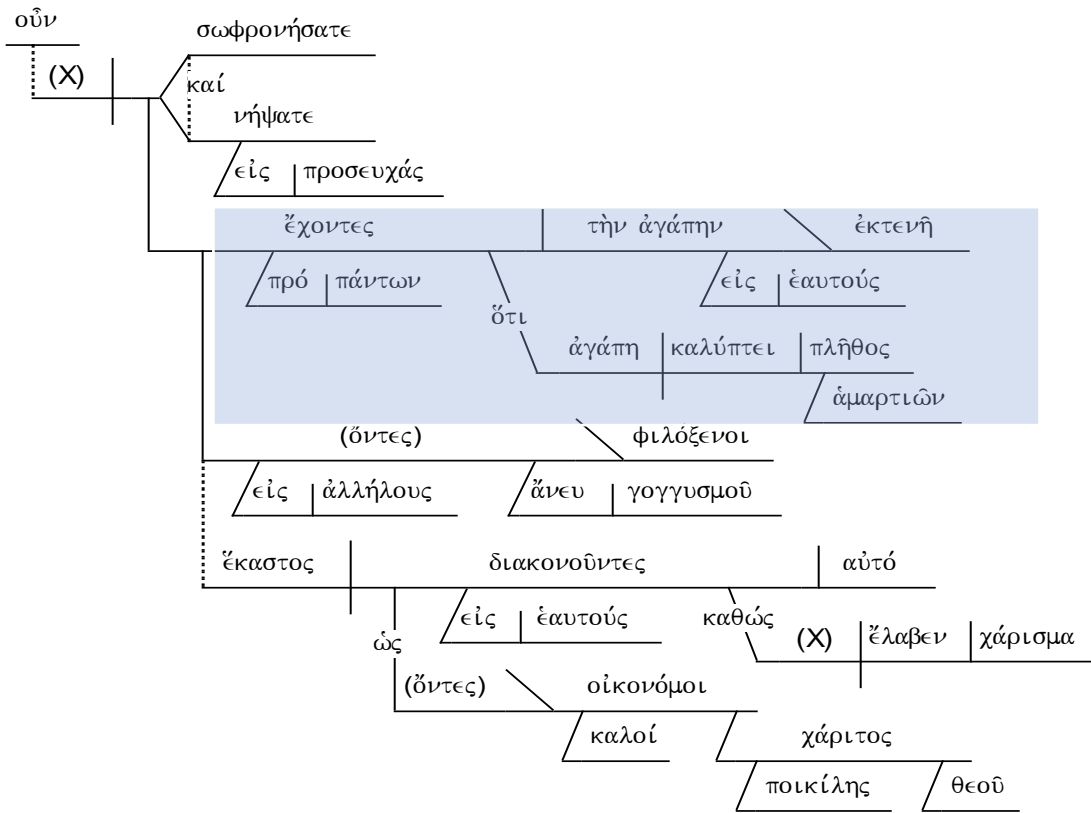
Based on the close context it can be observed that the old life of the congregation at that time spent much of its time living in the desires of the world and doing things that were contrary to the will of God. However, they realized that now they had been redeemed and had to leave their old lives so that it shocked the non-Jews because the believers no longer joined in the things of the world so that they were persecuted in this case slandered and slandered.

Believers must suffer for righteousness, suffer for doing good and suffer for the will of God. Even though they are facing suffering, the apostle Peter advises believers to prioritize love and practice true love so that they can control themselves and be calm and pray so that they do not expose the mistakes of those who persecute them, but forget and forgive those mistakes. As God has shown His love for believers by redeeming them by the blood of Christ. So, Peter wants that love to reflect it to others, namely by giving hospitality to, serving one another and shepherding the flock without coercion.

In a distant context it can be observed that there are sins that occur that believers have committed before they leave the old life. Here are the sins that the Apostle Peter recorded in the letter of 1 Peter: lust, evil, deceit, hypocrisy, malice, slander, and lust of the flesh. Apostle Peter advised them to stay away from those things, because the people who still do not know God, namely the non-Jews, still live in the form of lust and the desires of the flesh. Peter also advises believers to follow Jesus' example by bearing suffering that should not be borne, not committing sin, and not repaying evil for evil.

Based on the contextual analysis observed, several things can be concluded as follows: First, the condition of the early congregation previously lived in non-Jewish practices that were contrary to God's will. But in the end they repented and did not follow these practices so that they experienced verbal suffering, namely being slandered and insulted. Second, despite experiencing suffering, the apostle Peter emphasized believers to show true love because of the suffering they experience because of the truth, suffering because of doing good and suffering because of God's will. Third, the apostle Peter gave advice to make love truly and a priority in the life of Christians. Fourth, believers must have true love so that they can control themselves, be calm and pray so that they can cover their sins, in this case not exposing other people's mistakes. Fifth, God has shown His love for believers through Jesus where Jesus endured suffering that did not have to be endured, suffering for the unrighteous. Sixth, as believers receive God's love within themselves, that love should also be expressed to others.

Structural Analysis



The word ἔχοντες is a complementary verb for the two main verbs, namely σωφρονήσατε and νήψατε in verse 7. The word πρὸ is a preposition that supports the complementary verb and explains the two previous verbs, namely σωφρονήσατε and νήψατε.

The word τὴν ἀγάπην is explained by two words, namely εἰς and ἑαυτοῦς. This shows that τὴν ἀγάπην has a goal or target εἰς which is directed at ἑαυτοῦς.

The word ἐκτενῆ as a nominative predicate explains the more actual position of the words ἔχοντες and τὴν ἀγάπην, namely as the nature of τὴν ἀγάπην.

The word ὅτι as a clause explanatory that connects the word ἔχοντες which is a complementary verb to the main verb and a causal particle for the causal ἀγάπη καλύπτει πλῆθος ἁμαρτιῶν.

The word ἁμαρτιῶν explains the word πλῆθος, meaning that it emphasizes the many sins committed.

In structural analysis, several things can be concluded: First, the word πρὸ πάντων shows that before anything is possessed in this case referring to the two main verbs, namely σωφρονήσατε and νήψατε in verse 7, then it must first have τὴν ἀγάπην ἐκτενῆ. Second, the conjunction ὅτι connects the clause ἔχοντες τὴν ἀγάπην ἐκτενῆ with ἀγάπη καλύπτει πλῆθος ἁμαρτιῶν which shows that true love covers many sins. Third, the main object in the sentence ἀγάπη καλύπτει πλῆθος ἁμαρτιῶν is the word πλῆθος which is meant by the number of sins. And the emphasis is on the word πλῆθος not the word ἁμαρτιῶν.

Grammatical Analysis

In the grammatical analysis, the author uses BibleWorks 10 software to identify the form, function, and translation of each word in the text of 1 Peter 4:8. The determination of word function refers to the source from Daniel B. Wallace (1996), and the author observes important points in terms of grammar.

The word *πρὸ* is a genitive preposition from the basic form *πρὸ*. The function of this word is rank/priority, based on the function of the word *πρὸ*, the word indicates priority or primacy. So the word *πρὸ* is translated: before.

The word *πάντων* is an indefinite adjective genitive neuter plural unequal from the basic form *πᾶς*. The function of this word is Denoting Highest Degree. In general this word is translated: all, every, everything. However, based on the function of this word to indicate the highest degree/level, then this word is translated: “everything”.

The word *τὴν* is a singular feminine accusative definite article from the basic form *ὁ*. The function of the word *τὴν* is an Individualizing Article that functions to clarify the quality of the noun *ἀγάπην* and the quality is tightened and distinguished from other meanings. The word *ἀγάπην* is a common singular feminine accusative noun from the basic form *ἀγάπη*. The accusative indicates the position of the direct object. The word *ἀγάπη* is translated: love. The word *τὴν* in this section shows a clear specification or identification of the noun that follows it, namely *ἀγάπην*. The word *τὴν* is translated: “that”, so that *τὴν ἀγάπην* is translated “that love”.

The word *εἰς* is an accusative preposition from the basic form *εἰς*. The function of this word is Spatial. Which indicates location, and has the meaning: inside. And aims to explain the position of *τὴν ἀγάπην ἐκτενῆ*.

The word *ἑαυτοῦς* is a masculine plural accusative reflexive pronoun from *ἑαυτοῦ*. The function of this word Reflects Back, namely that the subject is the object. The accusative indicates the position of the direct object. The word *ἑαυτοῦς* indicates a plural number that does not refer to one person but to many people, so it is translated: “yourselves one to another”.

The word *ἐκτενῆ* is a feminine singular accusative normal adjective without degrees from *ἐκτενής*. The function of this word is an Attributive Adjective that characterizes the nature of the noun *τὴν ἀγάπην*. The word *ἐκτενῆ* is usually translated: fervently, earnestly. This word as an attributive adjective, then translated: “really”.

The word *ἔχοντες*, is a masculine plural nominative active participle verb from the base form *ἔχω*. The nominative indicates the subject who performs the action. The word *ἔχω* is translated: to have. This word is plural. So, *ἔχοντες* means: “you have”. The function of this word is a Participial Phrase, namely *ἔχοντες* describes the subject who has *τὴν ἀγάπην* with the nature of *ἐκτενῆ* in themselves or each other.

The word *ὅτι* is a conjunction from the basic form *ὅτι*. The function of this word is Causal Adverbial which gives reasons for the statement that precedes it or a cause and effect conjunction. This word is translated: “because”.

The word *ἀγάπη* is a common feminine singular nominative noun from the base form *ἀγάπη*. The nominative indicates the subject or the one who occupies the main part of the sentence. The word *ἀγάπη* is translated: “love”.

The word *καλύπτει* is the third person singular present indicative verb of *καλύπτω*. The present indicative verb indicates that the action is being carried out. The function of this word is Declarative Indicative which shows that the word *καλύπτω* states something that is considered a fact in the context of the sentence. The word *καλύπτω* is translated: “he is really covering up”.

The word *πληθος* is a common neuter singular accusative noun from the base form *πληθος*. The function of this word is a Direct Object concerning action. The word *πληθος* is translated: “many”.

The word *ἁμαρτιῶν* is a common feminine plural genitive noun from the basic form *ἁμαρτία*. The function of this word is Partitive Genitive which shows the word *ἁμαρτιῶν* describes the whole represented by the main noun

πληθός. The genitive shows possession. The word ἁμαρτία is usually translated: “sins”. However, the word ἁμαρτιῶν is plural, so it is translated: “sins”.

Lexical Analysis

The author uses lexical analysis to find the meaning of language and important terms that will be discussed.

Meaning of the Word ἀγάπη

In the New Testament, this word appears 320 times (Eerdmans, 1990). The word ἀγάπη according to Preuschen (2005) means love which in this case is about moral and not sensual, namely the love of God for Christ and Christ for humans. According to Newman (1971), the word ἀγάπη means love which is primarily Christian love shown through attention and interest. According to Taylers (1889), the word ἀγάπη means affection, goodwill, love, virtue, between humans and humans and especially among Christians who are commanded and encouraged by religion, both love seen through the soul and its expression. Danker (2009) also defines the word ἀγάπη which is interpreted as a relatively high level of interest in the welfare of others. So, the word ἀγάπη means an act of love done by God to Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ to humans, and humans to each other. According to Gingrich (1965), the word ἀγάπην is also interpreted as love, the highest affection in the life of Christians which is the essence of God, namely from God and Christ to each other and to humans or from humans to God or Christ and from humans to others which is an abstract nature. According to Friberg (2000), the word ἀγάπη means love, and especially as an attitude of appreciation resulting from a conscious evaluation and choice and used to show divine love, human love, and devotion. Louw Nida (1987) interprets the word ἀγάπη as having love for someone based on sincere appreciation and high appreciation.

Meaning of the Word καλύπτω

In the New Testament, this word is used 8 times and is used twice each in Matthew and Luke, 2 Corinthians 4:3, James 5:20, and 1 Peter 4:8. According to the Exegetical Dictionary, this word is used literally to refer to a concrete subject or object that performs an action or is subject to an action. The word καλύπτω means to cover, hide, or be hidden (Eerdmans, 1990). The word καλύπτω according to Vine's Expository Dictionary (1985) means to cover, to conceal. According to Bromaley (1985), the word καλύπτω in its basic meaning is to bury, and produces the meaning of hiding or covering. And the figurative use of covering sin is found in Psalm 32:5. According to Gingrich (1965), the word καλύπτω means to cover, to conceal. According to Friberg (2000), the word καλύπτω means to remove from view, cover, bury; to keep secret, to hide, to show a kind attitude towards the failures of others, to keep secrets.

Lust (1996) defines the word καλύπτω as the act of covering, hiding, keeping secret, or removing from view. Louw Nida (1987) defines the word καλύπτω as covering or hiding in this case making something and therefore invisible. According to BDAG (2000), the word καλύπτω means causing something not to be known, hidden, hiding something, keeping a secret. Specifically, the meaning of the word καλύπτω in 1 Peter 4:8 is to cover (cover), remove from view. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown (1877) argue that the word καλύπτω means to cover, so as not to harshly condemn or expose. But bear each other's burdens, forgive and forget transgressions.

The meaning of the word πλήθος

The term πλήθος is used 31 times in the New Testament. Etymologically as a noun with the meaning of fullness used in the NT to indicate the number (Balz and Schneider, 1990). According to Vine's Expository Dictionary (1985), the word πλήθος means a fullness, a large gathering, a large gathering. This word is usually used for nouns such as; fish, sticks, stars and sand, and sins. Newman (1971) interprets the word πλήθος as a crowd, number, number; people, population, congregation, assembly. According to BDAG (2000), the word πλήθος means a large number, a large number, in a concrete sense such as a number of sins. Danker (2009), the word πλήθος means to be full, a relatively large number of various forms such as a crowd of people, a gathering, people in a certain area, many sins. According to Friberg (2000), the word πλήθος means with an emphasis on the large number such as many people, crowds, many objects as an indicator of a large number. Gingrich (1965) also interprets the word πλήθος as the number or number, a lot, a crowd, a collection. The word πλήθος according to Louw Nida (1989) is a large number of objects or events that can be counted with the possible implication of some kind of grouping or a large number, a lot.

Meaning of the word ἀμαρτία

The most frequently used term for sin in the New Testament is the same as the LXX, and this word appears 173 times (Eerdmas, 1990). According to Louw and Nida (1987), the word ἀμαρτία means to act contrary to the will and law of God, to sin, to do wrong. According to Vine's Expository Dictionary (1985), the word ἀμαρτία literally means to miss the target. In this case, Vine's divides the term ἀμαρτία into three parts, namely; first, the word ἀμαρτία means a principle or source of action that causes sin and is vile, second, a principle that is an organized power that works through the body parts so that it causes sin, third, a concrete act that is wrong. According to Thayer's Greek Lexicon (1862), the word ἀμαρτία means failure to achieve a goal, a bad act, an evil deed, an act that occurs due to negligence or command in thoughts, feelings, words, and actions. According to Danker (1957), the word ἀμαρτία means a mistake or error that is done intentionally or unintentionally as a serious violation. According to Scott and Liddel (2015), the word ἀμαρτία means failure, mistake, sin committed by someone. According to Friberg (2000), the word ἀμαρτία means sin which explains that this word indicates an act that deviates from doing what is right, equivalent to the word ἀμάρτημα which is sin, mistake, also as a moral consequence for having done something wrong, or guilt. And as the nature of wrongdoing which is seen as a rejection of God by humans who are selfish and sinful (Friberg, 2000).

Theological Analysis

In the theological analysis, the author will observe the entire contents of the Old Testament and New Testament of the Bible to see the theological meaning of the sentence "love covers a multitude of sins" in 1 Peter 4:8.

The Concept of Love Covering Sin in the OT

In Numbers 14:18, Moses said that the Lord is long-suffering and His love is great, He forgives sins and transgressions, and does not free the guilty from punishment, but repays the sins of the father to his children, to the third and fourth generation (Clarke, 1997). The nation of Israel was saved from destruction because of Moses' prayer, he knew that God's promise was to be patient with his people and show his faithful love to the nation. However, God is just and He will not release the guilty (Henry, 1961).

David describes divine forgiveness in Psalm 32:1 as a blessed experience, where one's transgressions are forgiven by God. David considered forgiveness as the source of true happiness, more than beauty, honor, or wealth (Watson, 1668). For David, the meaning of "his sins are covered" is about redemption and forgiveness of sins through sacrifice (Edersheim, 1972). In Psalm 85:1-3, David showed his great love that freed the nation of Israel. David was also grateful that during Israel's slavery as a result of his sin, but God covered and forgave him (Delitzsch, 1871). This is also emphasized by Smith (2014) that God's participation for the nation of Israel brought them back from exile and because of His goodness, He forgave the sins of His people.

Solomon taught in Proverbs 10:12 that love can cover the transgressions and sins committed by a person (Delitzsch, 1874). The act of covering a sin does not only mean forgiving, but also refraining from spreading other people's mistakes (Hubbard, 1989). Solomon also continued in Proverbs 14:21 that "he who insults his neighbor commits a sin, but happy is he who shows mercy to the afflicted." This means that one should consider every human being whom God places close to him as a creature of the same creation and should consider himself as having an obligation to love each other (Delitzsch, 1874). Solomon emphasized again in Proverbs 17:9 that "he who covers transgressions pursues love, but he who stirs things up separates close friends." In this case, hiding mistakes means refraining from broadcasting other people's mistakes and he prefers to be silent in this case there is nothing better than being silent and not talking about other people's mistakes, failures (Hubbard, 1989).

Hezekiah learned that God had shown His faithfulness (Isaiah 38:17). He rejoiced because he did not go down into the grave because he had received a guarantee from God who had cast away his sins. There was something that made Hezekiah realize that premature death is a punishment for the sins committed by everyone (Constable, 2024).

In Micah 7:18-19 it is noted that no one like God is able to forgive the great sins committed by the Israelites, God restrained His wrath against the Israelites because God was pleased to remain faithful to His mercy. This shows that God's grace to humans is unmatched (Feinberg, 1951). Micah also emphasized in verse 19 that God will return to be merciful to His people, He will subdue all the wrongs committed and wipe out all their sins just like removing everything to the bottom of the sea. This means that God forgives all kinds of sins committed by the Israelites (McGee, 1983).

The Concept of Love Covering Sin in the NT

Jesus taught his disciples to love their enemies and pray for those who persecute them (Mat. 5:44). Praying for the well-being of the enemy is an act of loving one's neighbor even if they do evil to believers. The most accurate way to kill bitterness towards others is to pray so that they are not lured into hating them (Jones, 2008).

Matthew 5:46, "If you love those who love you, what is your reward? Don't tax collectors do that too? Matthew emphasizes that loving the enemy is something that will be rewarded by God and this is something intense. In this case, the tax collectors were local Jews who collected taxes from their countrymen for the Romans. Even the other Jews looked at the tax collector as the most impure and hated person in the land. However, Jesus said that a person will love others who love him, just as the tax collector will love those who love him and not hate him. This shows that Jesus loved everyone, so believers should also love others (Constable, 2024).

Matthew 9:13 states that what the Lord Jesus wants is mercy and not sacrifice, because He did not come to call the righteous, but sinners. Jesus gave an order to the Pharisees to go learn the meaning of God's Word, because

what God wants is mercy (Carson, 2005). This defines Jesus' ministry and is a characteristic of his mission, because he came to call sinners to repentance and salvation. This shows evidence of Jesus' love for people (Constable, 2024).

The Lord Jesus also taught his disciples to love their enemies and do good to those who hate them (Luke 6:27). The intended love is showing a sincere concern for the well-being of others, and the enemies Jesus intended were those who opposed His disciples because of their commitment to follow Jesus. In verse 32 it is also said that; "If you love those who love you, what is your merit? Because even sinners love those who love them." Luke gives an explanation of how Jesus conveyed this to His disciples, as sinners love those who love them. The meaning of all this is in verse 34, which is so that His disciples not only love their enemies but show the action so that their enemies can show it to others (Constable, 2024).

Luke 7:47 also gives an account of a sinful woman who was anointing Jesus. He saw great love in the woman, but Jesus did not mean that great love could give forgiveness, but she had received forgiveness so that it had an impact on her and she did that love (Robertson, 1922).

In John 13:34, John wrote about a new commandment given by Jesus to His disciples that as He had loved them by the grace of God, so they also should love one another. In John 15:17, Jesus reiterated His command to His disciples to love one another, not just as a repetition but as a command that emphasized to be done (Constable, 2024).

Romans 3:24, "and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus". Paul means that by the grace of God through Jesus Christ believers are justified because justification is an act and not a process. It is done by God and not man, this word also does not mean making someone righteous but is a change in man's relationship with God (Newell, 1970). Justification also means that God treats sinful humans as if they were spotless, this means that when a sinner believes in Christ then God declares him righteous and that statement will never change because God sees believers as completely sinless and all is God's grace (Wiersbe, 1989). Paul emphasizes in Romans 5:8 that God's willingness in Christ's sacrifice shows the depth of His love for humans (Constable, 2024). Paul closes his argument in chapter 6:14 by saying that sin will no longer have dominion over believers because they are in the grace of God through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross which makes believers holy (Sanday and Headlam, 1902).

1 Corinthians 13:7, "It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." Paul also emphasizes the importance of love, where love covers all things and endures things that are not worthy of being revealed to many people. This is in line with the teaching in 1 Peter 4:8, that true love is able to cover sins and restore unity in the community. Love is generous and does not suspect others unjustly (Robertson and Plummer, 1963). Love does not allow itself to be burdened, but perseveres in difficult trials in this case bearing all things (Constable, 2024). In Galatians 5:13, Paul conveys to the congregation of God in Galatia that every believer has been called to be free but should not use that freedom to sin. However, it is used to serve one another with love because a true Christian is one who shows unlimited service to God and others, namely subduing and destroying selfish desires but holding on to perfect love (Rendall, 1900).

In Ephesians 1:4, God chose everyone who was saved before the foundation of the world as an act of God and not of man. Salvation comes to the chosen people and he believes in Jesus Christ who saves him (Constable, 2024). In Verse 7, Paul emphasizes that because in Him and through His blood every believer has redemption, namely the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace. For sinners are dead because of their iniquities and sins, but God gives new life to believers (Eph. 2:7). Therefore, in Ephesians 5:2, Paul appeals to believers to live in love, as Christ Jesus also loved believers and gave Himself for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. This also

means not only that Jesus sacrificed Himself for believers but He took the place of believers and received divine wrath against sin (Wuest, 1966). Ephesians 4:32, "And forgive one another, as God in Christ forgave you." Paul explains why believers should forgive because God has freely forgiven us in Jesus Christ. God has sacrificed the death of His Son, as a human, to forgive us (Constable, 2024).

In Colossians 3:13, Paul told the faithful Christians in the city of Colossae to forgive one another and if anyone has a complaint against another; just as Christ forgave him, so should he forgive his neighbor. Paul emphasized again in verse 14, that "above all, put on love." Paul's meaning is that Christians should make love a life guide that unites because in this way believers will live united in a harmonious and united life that is perfect by the perfecting grace of God (Eadie, 1957). Therefore, this means that love has the power to unite believers to forgive one another (Hendriksen, 1979).

In 1 Timothy 1:16, Paul tells about God's great mercy to him, Paul's intention is for this to be an example for every believer. Because Paul used to be a person who opposed God, but he finally repented and he realized that God had forgiven his sin that was too great (Constable, 2024).

Hebrews 7:27, "who is not like the other high priests, who every day had to offer sacrifices for his own sins and after that for the sins of his people, because he did that once for all, when he offered himself -Himself as a sacrifice." This shows that Jesus Christ did not offer sacrifices every day to make up for His prayers and His people. But the sacrifice made is once and for all, the redemption on the cross that has completely satisfied God (Gerstner, 1960). Hebrews 8:12 also says that God has mercy on the sins of His people and He does not remember those sins anymore. This means that God shows His love to His people and writes it in his heart so that he will enjoy a good relationship with God and obtain forgiveness for the sins he has committed. It is emphasized again that God will never remember the mistakes of His people (Constable, 2024). Hebrews 13:1, "Keep brotherly love!" This is as a guide and also advice to the believers in Hebrew who seem to be very enthusiastic in the race to diligently leave burdens and sins (Heb. 12:1), they are also reminded to remain enthusiastic in loving one another (Hughes, 1993).

James 5:19, "My brethren, if any of you wanders from the truth and someone turns him back." Verse 20, let him know that whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins. James 5:20, "Let him know that whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins." James explains that saving the soul of a sinner and encouraging him to repent will result in God's forgiveness (Wilkin, 1991). The death mentioned here is not eternal punishment, but temporary destruction for the apostate. James emphasizes the importance of loving others and helping them return to God.

1 John 3:11, "For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another." This message had been heard by John and his followers from the beginning regarding the command given by Jesus to His disciples to love one another. This is the essence of what Jesus said. 1 John 3:23 "And this is His commandment: that we believe in the name of Jesus Christ, His Son, and that we love one another according to the commandment that Christ gave us." Thus, Christians will believe in Jesus and follow His example of loving each other which is shown in real actions according to the truth (Hodges, 1983).

In 1 John 4:10, the apostle emphasizes that God's love for humans is not a response to humans' love for God, but this is God's initiative to reach humans through the sacrifice of peace by Jesus Christ and in Revelation 1:5, emphasizes that Jesus Christ is the faithful witness, the first to rise from the dead, who has power, who loves believers and who has delivered believers from sin by His blood (Constable, 2024).

Based on the theological analysis observed in the entire content of the Bible, the Author concludes the concept of "love covers sin" as follows: First, in the OT, God shows His faithful love to humans, but He still upholds justice. God's mercy is shown by forgiving the sins of His people, freeing them from punishment and covering all their transgressions. Love and justice in God's character also teaches people to live in love, forgiveness and follow His example. Second, in the New Testament, Jesus taught believers to love their enemies and pray for those who persecute them and not return evil for evil. Paul and James also emphasized the same thing. Thus, believers are taught to love one another according to Christ's command and to follow the example of Christ who gave His life as a sacrifice of reconciliation for the salvation of mankind.

Analysis Exegetical

Exegetical analysis as the final step in exegesis of Bible verse texts that requires prior analysis to find the exegetical idea or meaning of the phrase, sentence being studied. After being studied, the Author found several points or main meanings of the sentence "love covers a multitude of sins" in 1 Peter 4:8, namely:

Love as the Top Priority

The book of 1 Peter is included in the epistle genre, where the apostle Peter when writing this letter aims to teach and strengthen the faith of the congregation. In context, it is seen that the congregation is experiencing suffering, because of the truth, because of doing good, and because of God's will. In this situation, the apostle Peter emphasizes love as the most important aspect in Christian teachings. Peter teaches believers to prioritize sincere and sacrificial love, especially in the face of suffering.

The primacy of love is seen in the structure of the word *πρὸ πάντων* which explains the word *ἔχοντες* which shows that before everything is owned referring to the two main verbs, namely *σωφρονήσατε* and *νήψατε* in verse 7, then what is first owned is *τὴν ἀγάπην ἐκτενῆ*. This means that Peter wants to emphasize to believers to first have true love so that they can control themselves and be calm.

Grammatically, the function of the word *πρὸ* is rank/priority, which emphasizes priority and is followed by the word *πάντων* which shows the highest degree of *τὴν ἀγάπην*. It can also be seen in lexical analysis, the word *ἀγάπη* has the meaning of love which has the highest value in the life of a believer. This is also seen theologically where believers are taught to prioritize and always live in love, as Christ Jesus also loved believers.

Love Does Not Expose Other People's Faults

Grammatically, it can be seen in the word *ἑαυτοῦς* with the function of Reflect Back which shows a reciprocal relationship, which is true love that is not only done to oneself but to others. The early church at that time was suffering because of their faith. This is seen in a close context, because people who do not believe commit sin in this case persecute believers verbally, ie they are slandered and slandered because believers do not join in the forms of lust, desire, drunkenness, debauchery, banquets drinking, forbidden idolatry. Therefore, the apostle Peter gave advice to believers to prioritize and have sincere love for others. Because true love will make a person be able to control himself and be calm so that he can cover many sins.

In this case, what is meant is not exposing the mistakes and taking revenge on the person who did wrong to him, but he can forgive the person's mistakes. And the lexical word *καλύπτω* means covering up, not exposing or revealing the mistakes of others, but forgiving and forgetting the mistakes. Theologically in the OT it shows that God's

love for humans who make mistakes is expressed by covering up their transgressions and hiding their mistakes. It is also seen in the theological meaning, where Jesus gave the command to love enemies and pray for those who persecute. The Apostle Paul also taught that love covers all things and endures all things. This shows that someone who has love will make him kind to those who make mistakes, so that he can forgive and not reveal the mistakes of others.

Covering Sins as Proof of God's Love

In a close context, Peter gave advice to the early church to live in accordance with God's will and leave the old life, because God has proven His love for them by redeeming them with the blood of Christ (1 Pet. 3:18). In lexical terms, the word ἀγάπη is love that comes from God and is expressed through Jesus Christ to man, and man to his neighbor. It means that the believer has received God's love within himself, then he must also show that love to his neighbor.

This is also seen in the structure of the word τὴν ἀγάπην explained by two words, namely εἰς and ἑαυτοῦς which show that τὴν ἀγάπην has a goal or target that is directed at ἑαυτοῦς. In grammar, the word ἑαυτοῦς explains that the goal of τὴν ἀγάπην ἐκτενῆ is not only within oneself, but is expressed to others. Theologically, Jesus taught believers to follow His example to love one another which is shown in real actions according to the truth as evidence of God's love. These real actions, as explained in the context, are not repaying evil with evil, but providing hospitality, serving one another, and shepherding sheep without coercion.

CONCLUSION

The Bible shows that God has first shown His love to His people through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The book of 1 Peter was written by the apostle Peter in the genre of a letter that aims to provide teaching to believers. Peter advises the early church to live according to God's will and leave their old lives because God has shown His love by redeeming them through the blood of Christ. God's love shown by Jesus must be passed on to others sincerely and willingly, especially in suffering. Peter emphasizes that love must be the main priority and shows that this love is directed to others, not just to oneself.

In addition, true love does not expose the faults of others but covers and forgives them, just as God's love hides human transgressions. In the context of suffering for faith, Peter teaches not to repay evil but to forgive, following the example of Jesus who taught to love enemies and pray for those who persecute. Theologically, God's love is expressed through Christ to humans and must be proven by believers in real actions such as providing hospitality, serving one another, shepherding willingly, and not repaying evil for evil. God's love that has been received by believers must be manifested in relationships with others, and showing sincere and sacrificial love as evidence of God's love.

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