

- I. Session 59: The Love of God Part 1: God’s Love for others in the Old Testament
- a. Establish the need: Sometimes you hear people say that the God of the New Testament is a God of love but the God of the Old Testament is not a God of love; but is that true?
 - b. Purpose: In this session we shall explore the attribute of the love of God as taught in the Old Testament and also draw implication for the Christian life as a result of our study.
 - c. What is the love of God? The words in the Old Testament:
 - i. *Aheb*
 1. Most common verb to describe love.
 2. Verb that is most frequently used to describe the love between humans but also in relations to God and humans.¹
 - ii. *Ahabah*=A noun that has the same sense of meaning as the verb form *Aheb*.²
 - iii. *Habab*
 1. This verb has the connotation of “having in the bosom.”³
 2. It has the idea of tenderness and closeness of feeling towards the object of love.⁴
 - iv. *Hasaq*
 1. This verb is used more frequently to talk about divine love than *Habab*.⁵
 2. “This word emphasizes that which attaches to something or someone...this is the love that won’t let go of the object of love.”⁶
 - d. Summarizing definition:
 - i. Love is one of those things that we know but can be hard to define.
 - ii. From John Frame: “Jack Cottrell offers an excellent definition of God’s love: “his self-giving affection for his image-bearing creatures and his unselfish concern for their well-being, that leads him to act on their behalf and for their happiness and welfare.”⁷
 - iii. Love of course is described in **1 Corinthians 13**.
 - iv. My definition: Strong emotions and will that results in action for the good of others which also produces the effect of joy in seeing others being better off.
 - e. What does the Bible teaches about the love of God in the Old Testament?
 - i. God’s love of inanimate object:
 1. “*Judah has dealt treacherously, and an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the Lord which He loves and has married the daughter of a foreign god.*” (**Malachi 2:11**)

¹ John Feinberg, *No One Like Him* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), 349.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ John Frame, *The Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 2002), 414.

- a. Here in this verse it describes the sins of Judah which includes Judah having “*profaned the sanctuary of the Lord*”
 - b. It turns out that the sanctuary of the Lord is what the Lord loves.
 2. God loves the gates of Zion: “*The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the other dwelling places of Jacob.*” (Psalm 87:2)
 3. God loves righteousness and justice: “*He loves righteousness and justice; The earth is full of the lovingkindness of the Lord.*” (Psalm 33:5)
- ii. God’s love for Israel:
- (This is by far the biggest emphasis of God’s love in the Old Testament)
1. “*but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.*” (Exodus 20:6)
 - a. This is the first reference of God’s love. Previous reference to love in the book of Genesis describes the love of humans to humans.
 - b. The context of Exodus 20 is God presenting the ten commandments with verse 6 following the prohibition in verses 4-5 of not worshipping idols.
 - c. Here in verse 6 we see the description of “*those who love Me*”
 - d. To those, God Himself says He will be “*showing lovingkindness to thousands*”
 2. “*Because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them. And He personally brought you from Egypt by His great power,*” (Deuteronomy 4:37)
 - a. Deuteronomy is Moses’s sermon to the second generation of the Exodus who would be entering into the promise land.
 - b. Here in this verse Moses is referring to the previous generations when he said “*your fathers*”
 - c. Moses notes that God “*loved your fathers*”
 - d. The result of God’s love?
 - i. Israel being chosen: “*therefore He chose their descendants after them.*”
 - ii. Israel free from Egypt: “*And He personally brought you from Egypt by His great power,*”
 3. “*Nevertheless, the Lord your God was not willing to listen to Balaam, but the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you because the Lord your God loves you.*” (Deuteronomy 23:5)
 - a. Notice “*the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you.*”
 - b. The reason? It is “*because the Lord your God loves you.*”
 4. See also Deuteronomy 7:13, Deuteronomy 10:15 and Deuteronomy 33:3.
 - a. All these are from Deuteronomy.

2. *“The Lord appeared to him from afar, saying, ‘I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness.’ (Jeremiah 31:3)*
 - a. The context of this verse is the description of Israel’s restoration after their exile which is brought about by the work of God.
 - b. Here we see the Lord Himself says *“I have loved you”* which is incredible because it is despite their sins.
 - c. This love is *“n everlasting love.”*
- v. God’s love extends beyond Israel
 1. *“He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing.” (Deuteronomy 10:18)*
 - a. Here we see that God *“shows His love for the alien”*
 - b. How? *“by giving him food and clothing.”*
 2. God’s love beyond Israel is hinted in the Old Testament but will further be developed in the New Testament.
- f. Implications
 - i. His people are commanded to love God: *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” (Deuteronomy 6:5)*
 - ii. Since God loves aliens/strangers, God’s people are too as well: *“So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.” (Deuteronomy 10:19)*
 - iii. Love even strangers even like yourself! *“The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God.” (Leviticus 19:34)*
 - iv. Let the motivation for why you love God be the love of God towards you.
 - v. Let the motivation for why you love others be the love of God towards you.