

The Love of God

“And we know and have believed the love which God hath in us. God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him.”

I John 4:16

“Could we with ink the ocean fill, and were the skies of parch-ment made; were every stalk on earth a quill, and every man a scribe by trade; to write the love of God above would drain the ocean dry; nor could the scroll contain the whole, tho stretched from sky to sky” (The Love of God; pg. 608).

The Love of God is a favored subject for religious minded people to write about. One who examines the religious section in bookstores will find a host of books written on the subject of God’s love. Songs of God’s love dominates songbooks. Why is there so much writing on God’s love?

No such knowledge of God’s love would exist apart from revelation. Revelation has plenty to say regarding the love of God. The Bible tells us that God is love (Jn. 4:16). That He so loved us that He gave us His Son (Jn. 3:16). God so loves that He is not willing that even the basest sinner would perish (II Pet. 3:9). God is one who truly cares (I Pet. 5:7; Ps. 103:11-14). The Bible tells the historical account of the love of God for man; that is why there is so much writing on the subject!

Why is God “mindful of us?” (Ps. 115:12)

As humans, we really ‘stink’ at times! We are a sinful lot (Rom. 3:23). Israel was known as the bride of Jehovah (Isa. 54:6). Jehovah’s bride was painfully unfaithful (Isa. 57:3, 8). Why would a God of holiness, righteousness and justice want anything to do with such an ungodly lot as mankind? Why should the Lord “*with everlasting lovingkindness have mercy on thee (us), saith Jehovah thy Redeemer*” (Isa. 54:8)? The answer to this question is found in Isa. 54:5, “*for thy Maker is thy husband; Jehovah of hosts is His name: and the Holy one of Israel is thy Redeemer; the God of the whole earth shall He be called.*” God has created us and therefore loves us! We belong to Him (43:1).

How can I know that God loves me?

I can personally know that God loves me and will forgive me of my sins as I repent and asks of His forgiveness because He said this is so (Isa. 54:9ff; 55:7; Acts 2:38; 8:22; 17:30; I Jn. 1:9). God continued to love those who committed spiritual adultery through idolatry during the OT days (Isa. 57:3), those who debased themselves with the council of other kings (II Kg. 16:7; Isa. 30:1-6; 57:9) and those who were an overall covetous people (Isa. 57:17). Since God continued to love the sinners of the OT, I can be assured that He will certainly love a sinner such as me (Jn. 3:16; I Jn. 4:4ff).

God’s instruction to His people in the OT was to forget the sins of their youth and press on in repentance with a contrite heart (Isa. 54:4; 57:15; Ps. 51:17; Ezek. 20:6-8; 23:2-4, 19). The apostle Paul overcame past sin through great sorrow and learned to press forward, and

so must we (I Cor. 15:9; II Cor. 7:9-10; Phil. 3:7, 13). I can certainly know that God loves me because he said the matter was “*as the waters of Noah*” (Isa. 54:9)! His promises are sure and His lovingkindness will not depart from man.

God’s love is conditional!

Certainly God is not willing that any man should perish (II Pet. 3:9). God’s love is equated with His gift of eternal life which is culminated in his grace (Eph. 2:1ff). God is the essence of love (I Jn. 4:16). Even though this is God’s true nature, He will not force His love upon any man. The Lord said, “*I will dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit*” (Isa. 57:15). If then God is love (I Jn. 4:16) and love is reciprocated by men to God by “*walking after His commandments*” (II Jn. 6) it stands to reason that God’s love is conditional! As a sinful man I must, with a contrite heart, seek the favor of God through repentance asking forgiveness that I may partake of all that God’s love offers!