



Pastor Doug Wilson • BETHANY - A PLACE OF NEW BEGINNINGS
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EVERYWHERE we look in Scripture, we see **God's transformative love.**

adapted from NIJAY GUPTA, *The Affections of Christ Jesus: Love at the Heart of Paul's Theology*, p. 4

The Bible is packed with references to love.

- a. **692 times in all.**
- b. **419 times in the Hebrew Scriptures alone.**
Gen. (21), Deuteronomy (29), Psalms (161), Prov. (31), S. of Songs (26), Isaiah (15), Jer. (14), Hosea (26)
- c. **163 times in the New Testament.**
Matthew (15), Luke (14), John (39), Romans (18), 1 & 2 Corinthians (29), Ephesians (17), 1 John (27)

"We usually call the first three-quarters of the Bible the 'Old Testament', but that name wasn't introduced until a century or more after Jesus's day. For him, it was simply the 'Scriptures' or the 'Torah', the 'Prophets', and the 'Other Writings'. Calling it the 'Old Testament' can make it sound *something antiquated and out-of-date* that *has nothing much to do with Christian faith*. Actually it's utterly up-to-date and hugely significant for Christian faith, a really important 'FIRST TESTAMENT'."

—JOHN GOLDINGAY, *The First Testament: A New Translation* (2018, IVP Academic) vii

"...it has been recognized that "Old Testament" is a Christian term with significant theological overtones, some of which denigrate Judaism. Jews refer to their sacred scripture as **Tanakh** (a Hebrew acronym for **To-rah** [Pentateuch], **Nevi'im** [Prophets] and **Ketuvim** [Writings]). More recently, scholars have attempted to find a term, such as **HEBREW BIBLE**, which, though not entirely satisfactory, is more theologically neutral."

—RABBI DAVID SANDMEL, Preface to the Third Edition of RABBI SAMUEL SANDMEL, *A Jewish Understanding of the New Testament* (1956, 1974, 2005, Jewish Lights Publishing)

• **LOVE IN THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES (Leviticus & Deuteronomy)** •

1. How does God call us to _____ to His love? By loving _____.

LEVITICUS 19:18 (NIV)

¹⁸ "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but **LOVE your neighbor as yourself**. I am the Lord.

LEVITICUS 19:33-34 (NIV)

³³ "When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. ³⁴ **The foreigner residing among you** must be treated as your native-born. **LOVE them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord YOUR GOD.**

[NOTE: "the Lord YOUR GOD" 17 x's in these selections from Leviticus (1 x) & Deuteronomy (16 x's)!]

2. How has God _____ His love to His people?

DEUTERONOMY 4:32-40 (TNIV)

³² **ASK** now about the former days, long before your time, from the day God created human beings on the earth; **ASK** from one end of the heavens to the other. **HAS ANYTHING SO GREAT AS THIS EVER HAPPENED**, or has anything like it ever been **HEARD** of? ³³ **HAS ANY OTHER PEOPLE**

HEARD the voice of God speaking out of fire, **AS YOU HAVE**, and lived? ³⁴ **Has any god ever tried to take FOR HIMSELF one nation out of another nation, by testings, by signs and wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, or by great and awesome deeds, LIKE ALL THE THINGS the LORD YOUR GOD did FOR YOU in Egypt BEFORE YOUR VERY EYES?**

³⁵ **YOU** were shown these things so that you might **KNOW** that **THE LORD IS GOD; BESIDES HIM THERE IS NO OTHER.** ³⁶ From heaven he made **YOU HEAR** his voice to discipline you. On earth **he showed YOU** his great fire, and **YOU HEARD** his words from out of the fire. ³⁷ **Because he LOVED YOUR ancestors and CHOSE their descendants after them, he brought YOU out of Egypt by his Presence & his great strength,** ³⁸ to drive out before you nations greater & stronger than **YOU** and to bring **YOU** into their land to give it to **YOU** for your inheritance, as it is today

³⁹ **ACKNOWLEDGE** and **TAKE TO HEART** this day that **THE LORD IS GOD** in heaven above and on the earth below. **THERE IS NO OTHER.** ⁴⁰ **Keep his decrees and commands**, which I am giving you today, so that it may go well with you and your children after you and that you may live long in the land **the LORD YOUR GOD gives YOU** for all time.

How can we _____ in His love?

—DANIEL I. BLOCK, *Hearing the Gospel of Moses: A Commentary on Deuteronomy* (2023, Inspirata) 1:161-162

- _____, **what He has done for us?** vv. 32-34
- _____ on — and _____ to — **what He has done for us!** vv. 35-38
- **Acknowledge Him — _____ Him — He is the Only God!** v. 39, see also v. 35
- _____ **Him...and remember that He is "_____ God"!** v. 40

3. How has God _____ us to respond to His love?

DEUTERONOMY 6:1-25 (TNIV)

¹ These are the commands, decrees and laws **the LORD YOUR GOD** directed me to teach you to **OBSERVE** in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, ² so that **you, your children and their children after them may FEAR the LORD YOUR GOD** as long as you live by **keeping** all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. ³ **HEAR**, Israel, and be careful to **OBEY** so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised you.

⁴ **HEAR**, O Israel: The LORD **OUR GOD**, the LORD is one. ⁵ **LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART** & with all your soul & with all your strength. ⁶ *These commandments that I give you today are to be ON YOUR HEARTS.* ⁷ *Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you SIT at home & when you WALK along the road, when you LIE down and when you GET up.* ⁸ *Tie them as symbols on your HANDS and bind them on your FOREHEADS.* ⁹ *Write them on the DOORFRAMES of your houses and on your GATES.*

¹⁰ When **the LORD YOUR GOD** brings you into the land he swore to **your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob**, to give you — a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, ¹¹ houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant — then when you eat and are satisfied, ¹² **be careful that you DO NOT FORGET THE LORD**, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

¹³ **FEAR** the LORD YOUR GOD, serve him only and take your oaths in his name. ¹⁴ **DO NOT FOLLOW** other gods, the gods of the peoples around you; ¹⁵ for **the LORD YOUR GOD**, who is among you, is a jealous God and his anger will burn against you, and he will destroy you from the face of the land. ¹⁶ Do not put **the LORD YOUR GOD** to the test as you did at Mas-sah. ¹⁷ Be sure to **keep** the commands of **the LORD YOUR GOD** and the stipulations and decrees he has given you. ¹⁸ **Do what is right and good in the LORD's sight**, so that it may go well with you and you may go in and take over the good land that the LORD promised on oath to **your ancestors**, ¹⁹ thrusting out all your enemies before you, as the LORD said.

²⁰ In the future, when your children ask you, **“What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the LORD our God has commanded you?”** ²¹ tell them: **“We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand.** ²² **Before our eyes** the LORD sent signs and wonders — great and terrible — on Egypt and Pharaoh and his whole household. ²³ But he **brought us out** from there to **bring us in** and **give us** the land that he promised on oath to our ancestors. ²⁴ The LORD com-manded us to **obey** all these decrees and to **FEAR** the LORD our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today. ²⁵ And if we are careful to obey all this law before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us, that will be our righteousness.”

DEUTERONOMY 7:1-14 (TNIV)

¹ When **the LORD YOUR GOD** brings you into the land you are entering to possess and **drives out before you** many nations—the Hittites, Girgash-ites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you — ² and when **the LORD YOUR GOD** has del-ivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must de-stroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy. ³

Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, ⁴ for **they will turn your children away from FOLLOWING ME** to serve other gods, and the LORD's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you. ⁵ This is what you are to do to them: Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones, cut down their Asherah poles and burn their idols in the fire. ⁶ For you are a people holy to **the LORD YOUR GOD**. **The LORD YOUR GOD has CHOSEN you** out of all the peoples on the face of the earth **to be HIS PEOPLE, HIS TREASURED POSSESSION.**

⁷ **The LORD** did not **SET HIS AFFECTION ON YOU** and **CHOOSE you** because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. ⁸ But **it was because the LORD LOVED you** and **kept** the oath he swore to **your ancestors** that he **brought you out** with a mighty hand and **redeemed** you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. ⁹ **KNOW** therefore that **the LORD YOUR GOD** is God; **he is the faithful God, keeping HIS COVENANT OF LOVE to a thousand generations** of those who **LOVE** him and **keep** his command-ments. ¹⁰ But

those who hate him he will repay to their face by destruction;
he will not be slow to repay to their face those who hate him.

¹¹ Therefore, take care to **follow** the commands, decrees and laws I give you today.

¹² If you **pay attention** to these laws and are careful to **follow** them, then **the LORD YOUR GOD** will keep **HIS COVENANT OF LOVE with you**, as he swore to **your ancestors**. ¹³ He will **LOVE** you and **BLESS** you and in-crease your numbers. He will **BLESS** the fruit of your womb, the crops of your land — your grain, new wine and olive oil — the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks in the land that he swore to **your ancestors** to give you. ¹⁴ You will be **BLESSED** more than any other people...

How can we _____ to His love?

With LOVE (“___ love...because HE _____ loved us”!) 7:6, 7, 8, 9, 12

- **we _____ Him (with all our “HEART”)** 6:5; 7:9
- **we _____ Him & _____ Him (“revere”)** 6:2-3, 13, 24; Prov. 1:7; 9:10; 14:26; 15:33
- **we FOLLOW & KEEP, OBSERVE & OBEY His commands, and have them “ON OUR HEARTS” — in our _____ lives** 6:6-9
- **we _____ Him and _____ Him alone** 6:13-14; 7:4
- **we _____ Him** 4:35, 39; 7:4
- **DON'T _____ HIM, but “TAKE TO _____” He is “our God”** 4:39; 6:12