

The Heart of God

Part two-dated 03/03/2019

Last month we looked at two aspects of God's heart—His Joy and His Compassion.

Today, we will look at the other three aspects.

3. HIS AFFECTION.

God's choice of Israel was motivated by His love for them. In Scriptures we read, Moses telling Israelites that because He loved your ancestors, He chose to bless their descendants and He personally brought you out of Egypt with a great display of power(Dt4:37). He drove out nations far-greater than you, so He could bring you in and give their land as your special possession (as it is to date).

In Dt7:7-8, we read *“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. But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath He swore to your forefathers 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”*.

God promised to faithfully keep His covenant of love and show mercy generation after generation. Off-course, it was conditional/restricted and attached to the response of love & obedience in return (compare Dt 4:4-9).

In verses 13-16 of chapter 7, God reinforces His promises to love them, bless them, increase them, prosper them, give them good health and military success—ALL BECAUSE OF HIS AFFECTION. (His heart condition).

In 1-Kings9:3, as well as 2-Chronicles7:16, we read about another example of God's heart of love & affection. Speaking to king Solomon, He said *“I have heard the prayer and plea you have made before me; I have consecrated this temple, which you have built, by putting my name there for ever. My eyes and My heart will always be there”*.

God's response to Solomon's prayer affirmed that He had heard & answered—God added that He would establish Solomon's throne and the kingdom of Israel ONLY IF, he and the people (Israelites) would remain faithful and not turn-away from His commands(VV4-9).

As a matter of fact, all of Scriptures expresses this principle. God's promises are fulfilled ONLY WHEN we seek to follow Him & His ways(John 14:21-23 & 15:7).

Other references that highlight this aspect of God's heart are: Ps148:14, Isa 40:11, Jer 31:3 and Jer 32:41

My last reference under the AFFECTION ASPECT of God's heart is found in Jeremiah 32:37-41 where it reads *“Behold, I will gather them out of all countries where I have driven them in My anger, in My fury and in great wrath; I will bring them back to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely. They shall be My people, and I will be their God; then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My Soul”*. (NKJV)

These verses show the height of God's love for Israel and He uses His power to accomplish His purposes through His people. The people of Israel had to & have to learn that trusting God meant radically re-aligning their purposes and desires towards HIM. Our lesson is that we must develop “one heart & one way” in order to love the triune God above anything and everything.

4. HIS INTENTIONS.

In Psalm 33:11, we read *“But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of His heart through all generation”*(NIV).

In 1-Sa2:35, we also read *“Then I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who shall do according to what is in My heart and in MY mind. I will build him a secure house and he shall walk before My anointed forever”* (NKJV).

This prophecy about Samuel was given by God around 1105 B.C after the birth of Samuel and came to pass as we read in 1-kings 2:26-27 in the year 959-930B.C (roughly after 150+years). Eli was guilty of honoring his sons above God by letting them continue in their sinful ways. As a result, God took the necessary disciplinary action against the family and removed them.

Samuel served as priest, Judge (see 1 Sa7:6 & 15-17) and prophet (1-Sa3:20-21). From an early age, he was trained by the high priest Eli, for his sacred duties and he eventually succeeded Eli as the High Priest because he was consistently faithful to God throughout his life. In this way, he points to the perfect priest—Jesus the Messiah (the anointed one Ps:110, Heb5:6).

Another good reference about knowing the intension of God is found in Jeremiah 29:11-actually verses 11-14. God didn't forget his people, even though they were captive in Babylon. He planned to give them a new beginning with a new purpose to make them into a new people. In times of deep trouble, it may appear as though God had forgotten us but God may be preparing us as He did the people of Judah, for a new beginning with HIM @ the center. God spoke about hope, future and to listen to their prayers as well. He assured them that if they will seek & search HIM in newness of life with all their heart, they will find HIM.

My last reference under this aspect of God's heart is the last verse of Jeremiah chapter 30. It reads *"The fierce anger of the LORD will not return until He has done it. And until He has performed the intents of His heart. In the later days you will consider it"*. (NKJV)

Like Isaiah, Jeremiah associated events of the near future and those of the distant future. Reading these prophecies is like looking at several mountain peaks in a range from the distance. They look as though they are next to each other, when actually they are miles apart.. Jeremiah presents near and distant events as if they will happen soon. He sees the exile but he sees also the future day when Christ will reign forever(V8-9).From our subject point of view, we are looking at God's heart and His intensions/purposes and plans for the mankind.

5. HIS INNER PAIN.

In this aspect of God's heart, God reveals Himself as one who deals with people personally and is capable of emotion, disappointment and reaction against the willful sin & rebellion of humankind. In Genesis 6:6 we read *"The LORD was grieved that He had made man on the earth, and His heart was filled with pain"*(NIV).

Does that mean God regretted creating humanity? Was He admitting He made a mistake? No, God does not change His mind (1-Sa 15:29). Instead. He was expressing sorrow for what the people had done to themselves. God was sorry that the people chose sin & death instead of a relationship with Him. The word "grieve" indicates that because of this tragic sin of the human race, God's disposition was changed towards them; His attitude of mercy and patience turns to one of judgment.

In Hosea 11:8, we see another picture of God's heart. It reads "How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I set you like Zeboiim? My heart churns within me: My sympathy is stirred" (NKJV) {Admah & Zeboiim were cities of the plain that perished with Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 14:8 & Dt 29:23)}. This is one of the most powerful verses that shows the intense love, compassion and grief experienced by the LORD, for the plight of sinners. It demonstrates so clearly that His love & compassion are like that of a caring father (Jer 31:9). He does not want to give up on His wayward people and it grieves Him to be forced to punish them.

Although God's existence, character and ultimate purposes remain changeless (1-Sa15:29 and James1:17), He remains open and responsive in His dealings with humans. God does alter His feelings, attitudes, actions and mind in accordance with a changing response to His will (Ex32:14; 2Sa24:16; Jer18:7-8; Jer26:3,13,19 and Jonah3:10). This revelation of God as a God who can feel, regret and grief makes clear that our God exists in a personal & intimate relationship to His creation. He possesses an intense love for human beings and a divine attentiveness to the plight of the human race Ps139:7-18).

In the light of all that we have heard and learned about the **"heart of God"**, we should be in a better position to fully understand the depth of John 3:16. As we prepare for the Holy Communion, let's thank our God for His Joy, Compassion, Affection, Intension and even the grief & sorrow that he endures for us and the mankind