

God is Love

1 John 4:8(b) for God is love.

We are living in tumultuous times. If and when you turn on television, radio or any other form of media, you become bombarded with devastating and horrific news. You hear or read about murders, rapes, robberies, mass shootings and other cruelties that would make barbarians blush with shame. The majority of murders are committed by people known to the victim; spouse, lover, family, close friend.

Yet many murders and atrocities are committed that have no relationship to their chosen victim. The only reason the perpetrator seemingly chose a particular victim was because they were nearby, approachable and vulnerable.

Most animals kill for food and survival; yet some predators kill to amass an abundance of food, which is commonly known as surplus killing or excessive killing. These animals kill more prey than they can eat at one time, while either storing the balance or abandoning it. While others in the animal kingdom play or taunt their target.

The difference between mankind and the animal kingdom is the fact we are created in the image of our God and His Beloved Son. We have been given a mind to think, to logically reason and with the gift of "choice" we hopefully make the correct decision.

Gen. 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

In theory, that verse sounds good, yet we can find examples of man's horrific behavior in the first book of Scripture, the Book of Genesis.

We all know the story of Adam, Eve with their complete disregard and rebellious behavior as they hasten to take action against our God by the breaking of the commandments He had personally given to them.

Gen. 2:16-17 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: **17** But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Adam and Eve were cast out of Yah's Garden of Eden - had to face a world they knew nothing about. Women would begin confronting childbirth in pain while being dominated and ruled over by their husbands. Adam would now spend his days in hard labor, toiling over ground that was cursed, producing stubbornly and grudgingly the meager food needed for their survival.

Gen. 3:16-19 To the woman He said, "I will greatly increase your pain in childbirth. You will bring forth children in pain. Your desire will be toward your husband, but he will rule over you ." **17** To Adam He said, "Because you listened to what your wife said and ate from the tree about which I gave you the order, "You are not to eat from it," the ground is cursed on your account, you will work hard to eat from it as long as you live. **18** It will produce thorns and thistles for

you, and you will eat field plants. **19** You will eat bread by the sweat of your forehead till you return to the ground.” (from the CJB)

Disobedience and rebellion increased as Adam and Eve's eldest son Cain murdered his brother Abel. His murderous deed was prompted by his jealousy and covetness over Yah's acceptance of Abel's offering while showing disapproval of Cains'.

Gen. 4:8 And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

Scripture does not reveal anything of the childhood of Cain and Abel. We can surmise their relationship was not much different than the relationship we share with our siblings or the rapport our children have with each other: laughing together, crying, playing, competing, protecting, and, of course, fighting.

*What does any of this background have to do with “God is Love”? **Everything!***

Scripture is very clear repeating over and over that God is love. Let us list a number of key scriptures that tell us of Yah and Yeshua's love for us.

1 John 4:7-8; 10-12 Beloved, let us love one another: for **love is of God**; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. **8** He that loveth not knoweth not God; **for God is love** **10** Herein is love, **not that we loved God, but that he loved us**, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. **11** Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. **12** No man hath seen God at any time. **If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.**

Rom. 8:35, 37-39 **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? **37** **Nay**, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. **38** For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, **39** Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, **shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Psalms 36:7 How **excellent is thy lovingkindness**, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.

Rom. 5:7-8 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. **8** But **God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**

John 15:9-13 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. **10** If ye keep my commandments, **ye shall abide in my love**; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. **11** These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. **12** This is my commandment, **That ye love one another, as I have loved you.** **13** Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

As stated above, we are created in the image of our God. Our God had already created the angels, the earth, the heavens-the universe prior to the creation of mankind. Why then did Yah create man? Through all of His creations He had proven there wasn't anything He needed since He was more than capable of providing whatever His heart desired.

Acts 17:24-25 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; **25** Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

*The answer to why mankind was created is simple, **Yah wanted us**. He wanted a creation in His image, a creation that would be like Him, think like Him, be loving as He is. He has such an abundance of love. Since He is love, He needed to share it, to give it to creatures that resembled Him. He didn't do this action out of need or necessity: **He chose to create it in His image out of love**.*

Zeph. 3:17 The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, **he will rejoice over thee with joy**; he will rest (be silent) in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.

Jer. 32:41 Yea, **I will rejoice over them to do them good**, and I will plant them in this land assuredly **with my whole heart and with my whole soul**.

*Jeremiah 32:41 states Yah will rejoice over us to do good with His whole heart and with His whole soul. **WOW!!** As with human parents, we love our children, we strive and work hard to not only provide food and shelter for our children but to give them the best and the finest we can afford. We often times do without so our children will not experience the hardships that life doles out. Hardships are a part of life, but, we do all we can to keep them at a distance, for as long as possible, since protecting our children seems to be inbred within us.*

What happened that drastically changed the direction Yah planned for us? Adam and Eve happened! The secret desire, the secret pride that was hidden deep in their hearts, was brought to the surface by Satan's taunts, giving them the permission to disobey Yah, to reject His loving kindness, leaving sin as a favorite companion of mankind.

What was our Father to do? He did exactly what we do since we are made in His image. He punished, we punish, He forgave, we forgive. He gave us commandments, statutes, laws in order for us to learn what is acceptable behavior in His eyes. We, also set ground rules for our children, in expectation they would learn obedience and to love as Yah loves while truly growing and becoming a child of God.

Deut. 7:6 For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

The people of Israel were chosen by Yah to be His "special people". Israel as a nation, then Israel and Judah, as two separate nations, made conscious choices; conscious decisions of honoring Yah with their lips while serving pagan gods.

Isa. 59:2-3 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. **3** For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.

Over and over again, Yah, through His prophets, presented His disapproval of their sinful behavior; of their rejection of Him as they turned more and more to paganistic gods, the sacrificing of their sons and daughters, while the list of their sins continued to grow. Yah is not only love, He is fair, just, righteous and extremely logical. While advising His children of their grievous sins, He proceeded to tell them of their punishment, of what the cost of their sin would be. In His ever-continuing love, He tells them of His forgiveness and how the future years would usher in peace, joy and happiness.

Sin and Punishment

Deut. 28:20 The LORD shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me.

Jer. 7:25-34 Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them: **26** Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers. **27** Therefore thou shalt speak all these words unto them; but they will not hearken to thee: thou shalt also call unto them; but they will not answer thee. **28** But thou shalt say unto them, This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the LORD their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth. **29 ¶** Cut off thine hair, O Jerusalem, and cast it away, and take up a lamentation on high places; for the LORD hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath. **30** For the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, saith the LORD: they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it. **31** And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart. **32** Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter: for they shall bury in Tophet, till there be no place. **33** And the carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray them away. **34** Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride: for the land shall be desolate.

Yah, with His great mercy and grace forgives a repentant Israel then proceeds to tell them of their future with His having forgiven them for their trespasses.

Jer. 30:10-11 Therefore fear not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. **11** For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have

scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.

Jer. 31:3-10 The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. **4** Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel: thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry, **5** Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria: the planters shall plant, and shall eat them as common things. **6** For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the LORD our God. **7** For thus saith the LORD; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O LORD, save thy people, the remnant of Israel. **8** Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither **9** They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. **10** Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.

Jer. 50:19-20 And I will bring Israel again to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, and his soul shall be satisfied upon mount Ephraim and Gilead. **20** In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.

Another sign of Yah's great love: He not only forgives the trespasses that have caused Him deep sorrow and tears, He brings the sinner home with none of their former sins ever to be found.

Psa. 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

How wonderful is this scripture: verifying the analogy of the infinite distance in space between east and west; the remoteness, the "farawayness", where our sins forever now reside.

As stated earlier, with many scriptures, Yah is love, He will not change. He created mankind to satisfy His desire to give His love and to generously give His blessings with a wonderful and glorious life.

Mal. 3:6 For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

When Christ was asked what the greatest commandments are, His reply was:

Matt. 22:37-40 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. **38** This is the first and great commandment. **39** And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. **40** On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (Repeated in Mark 12:28-33, Luke 10:7)

The two greatest commandments have to do with LOVE. We are commanded to love the Lord, our God, and to love our fellow man, our neighbor as we are to love ourselves. Yah is telling us

to be as He is, a Father, a God, a Creator who very much loves His children. The question becomes can we love as deeply, as sincerely, as profoundly as our Lord? I don't think so; we are in His image, yet, there is no one person who can match His strength, His intelligence, His power. We are always relegated to remain His children; and as children we give honor, love and deference to our parents. The Lord, very subtly, tells us we cannot love as He loves.

John 21:15-17 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. **16** He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. **17** He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

In verse 15, Christ asks Peter if he loves (agapao) Him? Peter responded yes, he loves (phileo) Him. In verse 16, Christ repeats His question to Peter, do you love (agapao) Me? Peter responds as he had previously, yes, I love (phileo) you. The third time Christ rephrases His question, do you love (phileo) me? Peter had the exact same response, he loves (phileo) Christ.

Strong's #25. agapaw agapao, ag-ap-ah'-o perhaps from agan (much) (or compare 5689); to love (in a social or moral sense):--(be-)love(-ed).

*Another definition states that: “**Biblical agape love is the love of choice, the love of serving with humility, the highest kind of love, the noblest kind of devotion, the love of the will (intentional, a conscious choice)** not motivated by superficial appearance, emotional attraction, or sentimental relationship.”*

That definition defines the love our Lord has for us.

Strong's #5368. filew phileo, fil-eh'-o from 5384; to be a friend to (fond of (an individual or an object)), i.e. have affection for (denoting personal attachment, as a matter of sentiment or feeling; while 25 is wider, embracing especially the judgment and the deliberate assent of the will as a matter of principle, duty and propriety.

Love is a choice, it cannot be commanded. Even with choosing to love our God and His beloved Son, we cannot love as they love. No matter how fierce a warrior is, how powerful the mighty, how intelligent or creative one is, we are “just an image”, NOT THE REAL THING.

Peter, who followed Christ in life and in death, knew his love could not be equal to the love our Lord, our God has for us.

Peter was willing to die for Christ; the Father was willing for His Son to die, who in turn, was willing to die for all His children in order to save them.

All scripture is KJV unless otherwise noted.

Scripture to ponder:

John 3:16-17 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. **17** For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

Action of Belief Ministry

ActionofBeliefMinistry@gmail.com

Our Website: www.ActionofBeliefMinistry.org