

## God's Love and Membership in the Covenant

### I. *Love as the Basis of the Covenant*

- A. Love is at the heart of all of God's covenants. God does not enter into covenant to benefit from it, but to exceedingly bless the undeserving.
- B. Love is also at the heart of election. God did not choose Israel because they were virtuous or great, but simply because of His love and the promises He had made (**Deut. 7:6-8**). So, the love of God is the basis for our election as Christians as well (**Eph. 1:4-5**).

### II. *Applications of this Covenant Love*

- A. Being in the covenant should never make us feel superior to those outside of the covenant. We are chosen, not because of anything we have done or will do, but only because of God's good pleasure.
- B. We should be exceedingly thankful and confident. The entirety of the lives we are called to live as Christians is premised upon the eternal love God has had for us in Christ. It is in service to that love that God gives commands for how we are to live.
- C. We should have a healthy fear of transgressing so great a love. Every sin is against this love. Apostasy is the antithesis of embracing God's love. We can embrace God's love by walking according to His commands or we can embrace hatred of God by turning from them.

## Love as the Heart of the Law

### I. *Understanding Love and the Heart*

- A. Contrary to how we normally talk about the heart, in Scripture the heart does not deal merely with feelings. Biblically speaking, the heart is the core of who we are. It contains and directs our emotions, but also our thoughts and our will.
- B. Similarly, love is not about the emotions that we have towards someone. Love is the disposition of the heart to honor and do good to the one loved.

### II. *The Centrality of Love in the Law (Deut. 10-11)*

- A. Just as love is the foundation for the covenant, so it is the foundation of the law. The law was not given merely to make God's people outwardly conform to its standard, that is just the beginning. The law is meant to expose the love or lack of love that exists in the human heart. The question is whether the law has penetrated to our deepest depths (**Deut. 10:16; 30:6**).
- B. While many seem to believe that Christ introduces the idea of love into the law, this is not the case. Deuteronomy has a very heavy emphasis on the need to love God from the heart in relation to keeping the law (**Deut. 6:5-6; 10:12; 26:16; 30:2, 10**).
- C. For this reason, then, love to God is equated with keeping the law (**Deut. 5:10; 10:12-13; 11:1, 13, 22; 30:16**). So, Christ reiterates this idea in His own ministry. To love Him is to keep His commandments (**John 14:5, 21; 15:10; 1 John 5:3**).
- D. Love to God, therefore, is also the answer to our waywardness. When we forget our first love and turn to others, it is returning to God with our whole heart that is required (**Deut. 30:1-6**).

### *Outline of Deuteronomy:*

**1-3** – Reflections on God's Love During the 40 Years in the Wilderness

**4-11** – General Exhortations to Love God by Keeping His Commandments

**12-26** – Specific Applications for how Israel was to Love God in the Land

**27-30** – The Blessings and Curses of the Covenant

**31-34** – The Death of Moses