

An Eternal Personal Love

Written by David Wise

Saturday, 05 August 2017 10:39 - Last Updated Saturday, 05 August 2017 10:47

"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." – Jeremiah 31:3

Jehovah God gives a personal admonition to the nation of Israel (that primarily applies to the elect family of spiritual Israel) of God's everlasting love for His elect. This verse affirms that God looked out over all of eternity and saw all the persons that would be created in the world, and He chose to love a set and distinct group of people. However, not just did God love a vague and nebulous group, but His love was "individual and personal" – I have loved "thee" with an everlasting love!

This verse is a great example of the precision and clarity of the King James Bible language, in comparison to the watered-down English that we use today that is also used in essentially every modern English (non-KJV) version of the Bible. In modern English, there is no distinction between a second person singular and a second person plural pronoun. For example, if I'm with a friend in a group of people, and I say "I'm going to leave with you" because there is no distinguishing the singular or plural audience, there is no way for my friend or the collective group as a whole to know who I was addressing. In contrast, using KJV English, if I was addressing my friend I would say, "I'm going to go with thee" (singular 2nd person), and if we all needed to leave together I would address the collective group by saying, "I'm going to leave with you" (plural 2nd person). Thee, thou, thy, and thine in the KJV Bible are simply addressing a singular 2nd person audience (so you are speaking to a specific individual, oftentimes in the midst of a larger crowd), and you, ye, and your are addressing a 2nd person plural audience (so you are addressing group as a whole). Understanding that one simple rule will give great clarity in reading your KJV bible and will actually give you a fuller understanding of the scriptural context of a particular verse than reading a version that makes no such second person distinction.

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This singular versus plural audience identifier is a very important distinction to make in Jesus' sermons in the gospels. He oftentimes addresses individual persons in the midst of a larger group – “thee or thou”. It's very crucial to apply the appropriate context to have the proper understanding if Jesus is actually addressing the group as a whole (“you” or “ye” – 2nd person plural) or specific individuals, usually the disciples, in the midst of a larger group of persons (“thee” or “thou” – 2nd person singular). We must know the intended audience before properly determining the context, and these pronouns help us to identify who Jesus was actually addressing in those verses.

With that understanding, we can now see that God is not just saying that He loved a large group of people eternally (which is certainly true since God loved the elect eternally). Actually, this verse is much more personal than that. God says that he looked out over all of eternity and loved “thee (singular 2nd person) with an everlasting love”! That means God loved me individually and personally from all of eternity past! That also gives us a grand and glorious hope that the God that cannot change will also love me, individually and personally, for all of eternity future. Doesn't that do your heart some good to know that God looked out and chose to love you individually and personally and covenanted within Himself to save and redeem you because of His love towards you! It sure makes my soul glad and happy to think on such a grand thought that God could love such a pitiful sinner such as myself!

When Paul wrote his epistles and taught the grand truths of salvation, he made sure that he included himself in the audience; he made salvation, election, predestination, etc. personal to him. Paul wanted to continually remind himself, that Jesus didn't just die for sinners in general, but Christ died for this sinner, the "chief of sinners", individually (1 Tim. 1:15). Paul believed that he personally (along with the saints of the Ephesian church too – notice the “us” pronoun) had been blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ - *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ”* (Eph. 1:3). When he described election, Paul made sure that he included himself in the group because he believed that God did not just choose an “elect group” but he chose Paul personally before the world began (notice the “us” and “we”) – *“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love”* (Eph. 1:4). Paul believed that God had personally predetermined his final adoption into God's family (notice the “us”) –

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"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ..."

(Eph. 1:5). Paul believed that he was already accepted in the beloved (notice the "us") -

"To the praise and glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved"

(Eph. 1:6). Furthermore, he believed that he was personally redeemed and forgiven by the blood of Christ (notice the "we") -

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace"

(Eph. 1:9). Paul continues to speak in the 1st person plural tense including himself in the narrative, from Eph. 1:3 until Eph. 1:13 when he shifts to 2nd person plural "ye". Then, he generally remains in 2nd person (excluding "us-ward" in Eph. 1:19) until Eph. 2:4 when he again includes himself as the object of God's great love -

"for his great love wherewith he loved us"

. Many other examples from Paul's writing and other epistles could be given to show the disciples personal identification of God's love and salvation of them personally.

If you are discouraged or downtrodden today, is there any better self-esteem booster that to meditate on the fact that God has loved me "individually and personally" with an everlasting love and there is absolutely nothing that can ever separate me from His love (Rom. 8:35-39). For me, there's no better joy than to think and believe that the God of glory loved me in that manner!