

God's Definition of Love ----- written in 2014

What does "love" mean to the average person, to you, and to God?

It is interesting that the word "love" is not used in the first age, before the flood. But it does appear in the next age beginning with Abraham. That suggests to me that one of the reasons God destroyed the whole world by flood, was because there was no love. This study is about how God defines love. The numbers are those found in Strong's Concordance giving the definition of the original Hebrew or Greek word before it was translated into modern languages. We start in the OT that was originally written in Hebrew.

Ge 22:2 And he said Take now thy son, thine only <03173> son Isaac whom thou lovest <0157 and get thee into the land of Moriah and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

Gen 22:2 is the first use of the word Love recorded in the KJ Bible. The original Hebrew word is #0157 "aw-hab" in Strong's Concordance which describes various types of love. Here we see this type of love is maternal - love of a parent for a child.

Ge 24:67 And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah and she became his wife; and he loved <0157> her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

This is a different kind of love, but from the same Hebrew word as above. It is a love between a man and a woman cohabiting in marriage.

Ge 27:4 And make me savoury meat, such as I love <0157> and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die.

This word has nothing to do with emotions, rather it is strictly the physical sense of taste, but used from the same Hebrew word "aw-hab".

2Sa 13:4 And he said unto him, Why art thou, being the king's son, lean from day to day? wilt thou not tell me? And Amnon said unto him, I love <0157> Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.

2Sa 13:15 Then Amnon hated her exceedingly; so that the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love <0157> wherewith he had loved her. And Amnon said unto her, Arise, be gone.

If you read the whole story you will see it involved deception, lust, rape and incest, yet the same word for love is used as when God loves us or when we love Him. See the definition below to see how many ways the word love is used. It is easy to see there have been so many times the same original Hebrew word has been applied for different meanings, and different situations. How can we know the difference?

Strong's definition of the word "love".

0157 אהב 'ahab aw-hab' or אהב 'ahab aw-habe'

a primitive root; v; {See TWOT on 29}

AV-love 169, lover(s) 19, friend(s) 12, beloved 5, liketh 1, lovely 1, loving 1; 208

1) to love

1a1) human love for another, includes family, and sexual

1a2) human appetite for objects such as food, drink, sleep, wisdom

1a3) human love for or to God

1a4) act of being a friend

1a4a) lover (participle)

1a4b) friend (participle)

1a5) God's love toward man

1a5a) to individual men

1a5b) to people Israel

1a5c) to righteousness

1b) (Niphal)

1b1) lovely (participle)

1b2) loveable (participle)

1c) (Piel)

1c1) friends

1c2) lovers (fig. of adulterers)

25 αγαπαω agapao ag-ap-ah'-o

perhaps from agan (much) [or cf 05689 אגב]; TDNT-1:21,5; v AV-love 135, beloved 7; 142

1) to love, to feel and exhibit esteem and goodwill to a person, to prize and delight in a thing.

1a) Of human affection

1a1) to men {#Mt 5:43,44}

1a2) to Christ {#Joh 8:42}

1a3) to God {#Mt 22:37}

1a4) to things {#Lu 11:43 Joh 12:43 Eph 5:25 2Ti 4:8,10 Heb 1:9 1Pe 2:17 3:10 2Pe 2:15 1Jo 2:15 Re 12:11}

1b) Of divine love

1b1) God's love:

1b1a) to men {#Ro 8:37}

1b1b) to Christ {#Joh 3:35}

1b2) Christ's love:

1b2a) to men {#Mr 10:21}

1b2b) to God {#Joh 14:31 17:26 Eph 2:4}

Syn: φιλεω 5368, From its supposed etymology αγαπαω is commonly understood properly to denote love based on esteem (diligo), as distinct from that expressed by φιλεω (amo), spontaneous natural affection, emotional and unreasoning. If this distinction holds, αγαπαω is fitly used in NT of Christians love to God and man, the spiritual affection which follows the direction of the will, and which, therefore, unlike that feeling which is instinctively and unreasoning, can be commended as a duty.

Now we enter the NT Greek and we find a different type of love. Whereas before Christ entered the picture we found love based mostly on “carnal love”. However, “agape” love is a more spiritual commitment.

For Synonyms see entry 5914

26 αγαπη agape ag-ah'-pay

from 25; TDNT-1:21,5; n f

AV-love 86, charity 27, dear 1, charitably+ 2596 1, feast of charity 1; 116

1) {Singular} brotherly love, affection, good will, love, benevolence {#Joh 15:13 Ro 13:10 1Jo 4:18}

1a) Of the love of men to men; esp. Christians towards Christians which is enjoined and prompted by their religion, whether the love be viewed as in the soul or expressed {#Mt 14:12 1Co 13:1-4,8 14:1 2Co 2:4 Gal 5:6 Phm 5,7 1Ti 1:5 Heb 6:10 10:24 1Jo 4:7 Re 2:4,19} &c

1b) Of the love of men towards God {#Lu 11:42 Joh 5:42 1Jo 2:15 3:17 4:12 5:3}

1c) Of the love of God towards man {#Ro 5:8 8:39 2Co 13:14}

1d) Of the love of God towards Christ {#Joh 15:10 17:26}

1e) Of the love of Christ towards men {#Joh 15:8-13 2Co 5:14 Ro 8:35 Eph 3:19}

Syn.: φιλια 5373 αγαπη, signifying properly (v. s. αγαραω 25) love which chooses its object, is taken from the LXX, where its connotation is more general, into the NT, and there used exclusively to express that spiritual bond of love between God and man and between man and man, in Christ which is characteristic of Christianity. It is thus distinct from φιλια, friendship (#Jas 4:4 only), στοργη, natural

affection (in the NT only in its compounds, v. s. ἀστοργος 794) and ἐρως sexual love, which is not used in the NT, in its place being taken by ἐπιθυμία 1939.

For God so loved us sinners (so much), that he came to earth in a body of flesh conceived by his spirit, which became the first born of many brethren, and sacrificed himself and the body, (that became known as Yeshua, the son of God), that he could introduce his love to us, and that we might have eternal life. This the truest of love, that we are to strive for, as his followers.