

The Unfailing Love of God

There are four main words for love in the Bible, two in the Old Testament and two in the New Testament.

Old Testament

Ahab אָהָב

Ahab occurs 208 times in the O.T. and is used in a variety of contexts. It is used of human love for others, family, and sexual love. It is used for love of things such as food, drink, sleep, and wisdom. It is also used of human love for God and God's love toward man.

Human love -

The first occurrence of *ahab* is in Genesis 22:2, "He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you."

Exodus 21:5, "But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man,'"

Love of things –

Prov. 29:3, "A man who loves wisdom makes his father glad..."

Psalms 119:97, "O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day."

Love of God –

Deut. 6:5, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."

God's love of man –

Deut. 10:15, "Yet on your fathers did the Lord set His affection to love them..."

Jeremiah 31:3, "...I have loved you with an everlasting love..."

Hesed חֶסֶד

Hesed occurs 247 times in the O.T. and has the core idea of loyalty within a relationship. The O.T. frequently uses the term *hesed* to denote an aspect of God's character as it relates to his covenant with his people. Three key ideas are expressed in *hesed*:

1. Strength.
2. Steadfastness.
3. Love.

Isaiah 54:10, "For the mountains may be removed and the hills may shake, but My lovingkindness will not be removed from you..."

Lamentations 3:22-23, "The Lord's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. *They* are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness."

Exodus 34:6, "...The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth;"

Psalms 59:16, "But as for me, I shall sing of Your strength; Yes, I shall joyfully sing of Your lovingkindness in the morning, for You have been my stronghold and a refuge in the day of my distress."

Psalms 23:6, "Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Psalms 136...

New Testament

Phileo φιλέω

Phileo occurs 25 times in the N.T. and pictures love that is affectionate and has the sense of friendship attached to it. One dictionary defines it as, "special interest in someone or something with focus on close association or friendship..."

John 5:20, "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing."

John 11:26, "So the Jews were saying, 'See how He loved him!'"

Revelation 3:19, "Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline..."

Agape ἀγάπη

Agape, the noun, occurs 115 times in the N.T. and the verb form *agapao* occurs 143 times. Both refer to the sacrificial love that God is (1 John 4:8, 16), that God shows (John 3:16, 1 John 4:9), and that God gives by His Spirit (Galatians 5:22).

John 15:9-10, "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love."

God's *hesed* and *agape* make us the most loved and secure creatures in the universe! Romans 8:35-39!