

## The Life that God Lives--

### A Life that includes joy and pleasure

*The LORD's **delight** is in those who fear him, those who put their hope in his unfailing love.* (Ps 147:11).

*For the LORD **delights** in his people; he crowns the humble with victory.* (Ps 149:4).

*When people's lives **please** the LORD, even their enemies are at peace with them.* (Pr 16:7).

*It will no longer be said to you, "Forsaken," Nor to your land will it any longer be said, "Desolate"; But you will be called, "My **delight** is in her," And your land, "Married"; For the LORD **delights** in you, And to Him your land will be married. For as a young man marries a virgin, So your sons will marry you; And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, So your God will **rejoice** over you.* (Is 62:4f)

"gil" (like גִּיל) denotes a **spontaneous, vocal outburst of rejoicing**, as seen esp. in Isa 49:13, which juxtaposes לֵאמֹר with שִׂמְחָה, **shout for joy**, and שָׂמַח, **burst into song** (cf. Isa 35:2). As with גִּיל, the juxtaposition of לֵב, **heart** (Ps 13:5 [6]; Prov 24:17; Zech 10:7), and נַפְשׁ, **soul** (Ps 35:9; Isa 61:10) with לֵאמֹר indicates the **depth of this rejoicing**. [NIDOTTE, s.v. 'gil']

### Zephaniah 3:17 --"the John 3.16 of the OT"

*The LORD your God is in your midst, A victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy.* (Zep 3:17).

"Now the prophet moves into the "holy of holies" by a rapturous description of the love of God for his people. **This verse is the John 3:16 of the OT.** ... **The love of God for his own people is not a soft, sentimental emotion that has no strength to act on behalf of its object.** For this God who loves is Yahweh. He is God. He is a mighty hero who saves. The term for mighty hero (gibbôr) frequently refers to a warrior who overpowers his enemies. The Lord goes forth as a "warrior" who marches against his foes (Isa. 42:13). As the God of Gods, the Lord of Lords, the mighty God, the "hero," he defends the orphan, the widow, and the alien (Deut. 10:17). ... This mighty hero is in the midst of his own people with power to save. Many calamities may befall Israel because of their sin against the Lord. But in the end he shall show his power to save from every enemy. His love acts concretely to deliver his people. ... **The next portion of this verse may be called a "poem of personal love."** Three parallel lines each containing three phrases **express the deepest inner joy and satisfaction of God himself in his love for his people. Delight, joy, rejoicing, and singing on God's part** underscore the mutuality of emotional experience felt by God and the redeemed. ... That Almighty God should derive delight from his own creation is significant in itself. But that the Holy One should experience ecstasy over the sinner is incomprehensible.

'God breaking out in singing!  
God joyful with delight!  
All because of you.

"The mutuality of the loving response of Redeemer and redeemed is seen in the fact that some of the same terms used in the admonition to his people now describe the response of God himself to his people (cf. vv. 14 and 17). **Zion is exhorted to sing (rānnî); he rejoices with singing (rinnāh). Jerusalem shall rejoice (śimṭî); he delights over Jerusalem with joy (śimṭāh). The whole scene depicts a grand oratorio as God and his people mutually rejoice in their love for one another.** ..... Almighty God, quiet in his love. God the mighty savior, quietly contemplating, contented in his love for you. ... If the prophet's mode of expression appears excessive, it must be remembered that God in his very essence is love (cf. 1 John 4:8). [NICOT, Zeph 3.17]

"Verses 16–17 unfold before us **how the Lord himself rejoices.** He adopts his people's joy and rejoices together with them. So decisive is this event that has come to pass in Israel's midst that **God himself, the author of joy, rejoices with those who now rejoice.** Once again we meet with a decisive anthropomorphic picture, that of a bridegroom in love (cf. Isa. 62:5). **With a heart overflowing with joy he keeps silence alongside his betrothed, because they understand each other even without any words.** This is a moving way of describing true and undisturbed communion. The expressions used for Yahweh's joy are *sus/sis*, **rejoice, feel merry; gil, exult;** and *rinnah*, **shouting with joy** (see v. 14). [Eszenyi Széles, M. (1987). *Wrath and mercy : A commentary on the books of Habakkuk and Zephaniah.* International theological commentary (112). Grand Rapids; Edinburgh: Eerdmans; Handsel Press.]

## A Life that includes affectionate love

Three kinds of OT Love: *chesed* (loyal love), *chashak* (attachment, passionate devotion) and *ahab* (affectionate love)

All three words:

*"The LORD did not set His love (chashak) on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the LORD loved (ahab) you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. "Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness (chesed) to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments; (Dt 7.7-9)*

*ahab/ahav:*

*Blessed be the LORD your God who delighted in you to set you on the throne of Israel; because the LORD loved (ahab) Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness." (I Kings 10.9)*

*Then the LORD said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by her husband, yet an adulteress, even as the LORD loves (ahab) the sons of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes." (Ho 3:1).*

*In all their affliction He was afflicted, And the angel of His presence saved them; In His love (ahab) and in His mercy He redeemed them, And He lifted them and carried them all the days of old. (Is 63:9–10).*

*“At that time,” declares the LORD, “I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people.” Thus says the LORD, “The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness— Israel, when it went to find its rest.” The LORD appeared to him from afar, saying, “I have loved (**ahab**) you with an everlasting love; Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness (**chesed**).” (Je 31:1–6).*

*When Israel was a youth I loved (**ahab**) him, and out of Egypt I called My son. The more they called them, the more they went from them; they kept sacrificing to the Baals And burning incense to idols. Yet it is I who taught Ephraim to walk, I took them in My arms; but they did not know that I healed them. I led them with cords of a man, with bonds of love (**ahab**), And I became to them as one who lifts the yoke from their jaws; And I bent down and fed them. (Ho 11:1–4)*

## chashaq

*“Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it. “Yet on your fathers did the LORD set His affection to love (**chashaq**) them, and He chose their descendants after them, even you above all peoples, as it is this day. “So circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer. “For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe. “He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love (**ahab**) for the alien by giving him food and clothing. “So show your love (**ahab**) for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. (Dt 10:14–21).*

Do YOU chashaq?

*For He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways. They will bear you up in their hands, that you do not strike your foot against a stone. You will tread upon the lion and cobra; the young lion and the serpent you will trample down. “**Because he has loved Me**, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him securely on high, because he has known My name. He will call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. With a long life I will satisfy him and let him see My salvation.” (Ps 91:11–16).*

## A Life that includes sadness and grief

*In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them; In His love and in His mercy He redeemed them, And He lifted them and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled And **grieved His Holy Spirit**; Therefore He turned Himself to become their enemy, He fought against them. (Is 63:9–10)*

*Oh, **how often** they rebelled against him in the wilderness and **grieved his heart** in that dry wasteland. (Ps 78:40).*

*Is not Ephraim my dear son, the child in whom I delight? Though I often speak against him, I still remember him. Therefore my heart yearns (“**groans**”, hamah) for him; I have great compassion for him,” (Je 31:20).*

## Example: The Judgment on Moab in Isaiah and Jeremiah

***My heart cries out over Moab; her fugitives flee as far as Zoar, as far as Eglath Shelishiyah. They go up the way to Luhith, weeping as they go; on the road to Horonaim they lament their destruction. The waters of Nimrim are dried up and the grass is withered; the vegetation is gone and nothing green is left. So the wealth they have acquired and stored up they carry away over the Ravine of the Poplars. Their outcry echoes along the border of Moab; their wailing reaches as far as Eglaim, their lamentation as far as Beer Elim. Dimon's waters are full of blood, but I will bring still more upon Dimon— a lion upon the fugitives of Moab and upon those who remain in the land.*** (Is 15:5–9).

"My heart (5) is matched by *I will bring* (9), identifying the mourner as the Lord. He grieves over the plight of the fugitives (5), the stricken environment (6), the futile efforts to salvage something from the overthrow (7-8) and over what is yet to come (9). The explanatory conjunction 'for' runs through these verses (sadly omitted by the niv), appearing in verse 5 before *they go* and *on the road*, and in verse 6 at the beginning and instead of *and* before *the grass*. It also appears at the beginning of verses 8 and 9 and instead of *but* in verse 9. **These verses are a long list of what touches the heart of God, who weeps as he smites.** The **grief of the judge of all the earth** is one of the two striking truths of this oracle. The other is that all this total loss and suffering arises from the single sin of pride (16.6)." [Motyer, *Isaiah*, in loc]

"But God himself also mourns for Moab in Isa 15:5, 16:9, and 16:11:

***My heart cries out for Moab. ... Therefore I weep with the weeping of Jazer... I drench you with my tears ... My soul moans like a lyre for Moab and my heart for Kir-heres***

"Jer 48:30-32, 35-36 contains another recension of this oracle against Moab, and we find similar language used there in divine speech:

***I know this insolence, says the Lord... Therefore I wail for Moab; I cry out for all Moab; for the men of Kir-heres I mourn. ...More than for Jazer I weep for you.***

***I will bring an end in Moab, says the Lord... Therefore my heart moans for Moab like a flute, and my heart moans like a flute for the men of Kir-heres.***

"To hear such mourning on the part of God for a non-Israelite people is striking indeed." [*The Suffering of God: An Old Testament Perspective*, Terence Fretheim, Fortress:1984.p 132f]

## Example: The Rejection of a Loving God

***I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed me in the wilderness, in a land not sown.*** (Jer 2.2) ... ***I thought how I would set you among my sons, and give you a pleasant land, a heritage most beautiful of all nations. And I thought you would call me, My Father, and would not turn from following me. Surely, as a faithless wife leaves her husband, so have you been faithless to me, O house of Israel.*** (Jer 3.19-20)

"What intimacy God desired in his relationship with the people, and what disappointment is expressed here! While literary purists might deplore the mixing of the parental and marital metaphors here, the effect is almost overwhelming in its

pathos. God has been rejected both as parent and as husband! **God is like a person who has been rejected not only by his spouse but by his children as well. God suffers the effects of the broken relationship at multiple levels of intimacy.** The wounds of God are manifold... **These texts just examined give us a glimpse into the heart of God. God is revealed not as one who remains coolly unaffected by the rejection of the people, but as one who is deeply wounded by the broken relationship.** The interaction between God and people thus takes place not simply at the intellectual level as it were, nor in a law court; the exchange occurs also at the emotional level. God shares feelings, not just thoughts. The people know not only what God thinks, but what God feels. Thus, a holistic picture of God emerges. God relates at every level with the whole person of each individual. (Fretheim, p 116; 123)

### **But God's Love perseveres through our rejection:**

"While God's suffering is in many respects analogous to the suffering of the people, there are **a number of ways in which the divine suffering differs.** This contrast is especially apparent in those human lament materials not used by God. **Thus, God's suffering is not such that he is overwhelmed by the experience; his emotions do not get out of control or lead to incapacitation.** Nor is God embittered in any way by what has occurred. God is able to "be angry and sin not." God is able to absorb all the arrows of outrageous fortune that pierce him through and, **instead of becoming callous or removing himself from the line of fire, still seeks to bring about a future which is good for those who inflict the wounds.** In spite of the suffering God undergoes, **God's salvific will does not waver; God's steadfast love endures forever.** (Fretheim, p124)

.....

The **New Testament** knows of these aspects of God's life, of course: Rejoicing in Heaven, "enter the joy of your Lord", "Grieve not the Holy Spirit", "For God so loved the world...", 'learn how to please the Lord'.

And **joy, love, and sadness** were **pre-eminently exemplified in the life of Messiah-Christ Jesus:**

- *"A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief",*
- *"that My joy will be in you",*
- *"for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising its shame",*
- *"Greater love hath no man, than that he lay down his life for him..."*

The Life that flowed from the wounds of the Living-Lord Incarnate-- Isaiah 53 (NLT).

Who has believed our message? To whom has the LORD revealed his powerful arm?

<sup>2</sup> My servant grew up in the LORD's presence like a tender green shoot, like a root in dry ground.

There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him.

<sup>3</sup> He was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief.

We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care.

<sup>4</sup> Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down.

And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins!

<sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins.

He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed.

<sup>6</sup> All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own.

Yet the LORD laid on him the sins of us all.

<sup>7</sup> He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word.

He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth.

<sup>8</sup> Unjustly condemned, he was led away.

No one cared that he died without descendants, that his life was cut short in midstream.

But he was struck down for the rebellion of my people.

<sup>9</sup> He had done no wrong and had never deceived anyone.

But he was buried like a criminal; he was put in a rich man's grave.

<sup>10</sup> But it was the LORD's good plan to crush him and cause him grief.

Yet when his life is made an offering for sin, he will have many descendants.

He will enjoy a long life, and the LORD's good plan will prosper in his hands.

<sup>11</sup> When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish, he will be satisfied.

And because of his experience, my righteous servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous, for he will bear all their sins.

<sup>12</sup> I will give him the honors of a victorious soldier, because he exposed himself to death.

He was counted among the rebels. He bore the sins of many and interceded for rebels.<sup>1</sup>

***I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.*** (Jn 10:10).

***In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*** (Jn 1:4–5).