

# **God's Love and Justice**

## **God Is Passionate and Compassionate**

Lesson #4 for January 25, 2025

Scriptures: Psalm 103:13; Isaiah 49:15; Hosea 11:1-9; Matthew 23:37; 1 Corinthians 13:4-8; 2 Corinthians 11:2.

1. Is God passionate? Is He compassionate? Throughout the Bible, in both the Old Testament and New Testament, God is pictured as being passionate and compassionate. Of course, these emotions are supremely exemplified in Jesus Christ.

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] Emotions are often viewed as undesirable and to be avoided. For some people, emotions are intrinsically irrational, and thus, the good man or woman would **not** be described as “emotional.” In some ancient Greek philosophy, the idea of the “rational” man, who is (mostly) either impervious to passions or who rules over his emotions by way of unemotional reason, is prized as the ideal.

Unbridled emotions can be problematic, yes. However, **God created people with the capacity for emotions, and God Himself is displayed throughout Scripture as experiencing profound emotions.** If God can experience deep emotions, as the Bible consistently portrays, then emotions cannot be intrinsically bad or irrational—for the God of the Bible is perfectly good and possesses perfect wisdom.

In fact, there are beautiful truths to be garnered from the realization that God’s love for us is a deeply emotional love, but always with the caveat that though God’s love (emotional or otherwise) is perfect, it should not be thought of as identical to emotions as humans experience them.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Sabbath Afternoon, January 18.<sup>†‡</sup>

2. Throughout Scripture, there are multiple examples of God’s love being compared to the very best love exemplified by a mother or father for her/his child. Could a nursing mother forget her child? That could possibly happen. **However, God will never forget.** Look at the language used to describe the immense amount of God’s love.

**Psalm 103:8-14:** <sup>8</sup>The LORD is merciful and loving,  
slow to become angry and full of constant love.  
<sup>9</sup>He does not keep on rebuking;  
he is not angry for ever [*sic-Br*].  
<sup>10</sup>He does not punish us as we deserve  
or repay us according to our sins and wrongs.  
<sup>11</sup>**As high as the sky is above the earth,**  
**so great is his love for those who honour [*sic-Br*] him.**  
<sup>12</sup>As far as the east is from the west,  
so far does he remove our sins from us.  
<sup>13</sup>**As a father is kind to his children,**  
so the LORD is kind to those who honour [*sic-Br*] him.  
<sup>14</sup>He knows what we are made of;

he remembers that we are dust.—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation\** (2nd ed., Psalm 103:8-14). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].<sup>†‡</sup>

3. Other illustrations of God’s “parenting” love for His people include:

**Isaiah 49:15:** So the LORD answers,  
“Can a woman forget her own baby  
and not love the child she bore?  
**Even if a mother should forget her child,  
I will never forget you.**”—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup>

**Jeremiah 31:20:** “Israel, you are my dearest son,  
the child I love best.  
Whenever I mention your name,  
I think of you with love.  
My heart goes out to you;  
I will be merciful.”—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*</sup>

4. That kind of language is even used for the children of Israel under the worst possible circumstances. Lamentations was probably written during the siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians for the third time when Jerusalem was totally destroyed and many thousands died.

**Lamentations 3:22:** The LORD’s unfailing love and mercy still continue.—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*</sup>

5. The Bible study guide tries to describe the deep emotion of God’s compassion for humans.

[BSG:] Compassion in the Bible is portrayed with **visceral language**. This language makes the descriptions of compassion in Scripture, especially the references to divine compassion, emotionally and physically expressive. For instance, “**the Hebrew word for compassion,**” which is *raḥamim*, “**is etymologically related to reḥem (womb)**” (Shmuel Himelstein, “Compassion,” *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion*, 2nd ed., ed. Adele Berlin [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011]). This idea reinforces the comparison of God’s compassion with the compassion of a mother toward the child that came from her womb. To be sure, this strong bodily language should not be taken literally for God. But such a powerful portrayal is probably the ultimate image we can employ in order to truly express, in the limitations of human concepts and language, the profoundness of God’s loving compassion.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 54.<sup>†‡§</sup>

[BSG:] **God’s compassion is a “womb-like mother-love.” Indeed, it is exponentially greater than any human compassion, even that of a mother for her newborn.**

According to Jeremiah 31:20 [as quoted above] (*NKJV*), God views His covenant people as His “dear son” and “pleasant child,” despite the fact that they often rebelled against Him and grieved Him. Even so, God declares, “My heart yearns for him” and “I will surely have mercy on him.” The term translated “mercy” here is the term used ... for divine compassion (*raḥam*). **Further, the phrase “My heart yearns” can be translated literally as “My innards roar.” This description is the deeply visceral language of divine emotion, signifying the profound**

**depth of God's compassionate love for His people. Even despite their infidelity, God continues to bestow His abundant compassion and mercy on His people and does so beyond all reasonable expectations.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Sunday, January 19.†§**

6. The story of and throughout the Old Testament, of course, is the story of the Israel's repeated rebellion against God. God's love is sometimes described in gut-wrenching, emotional terms.

7. **God's love for His people is expressed almost perfectly by the story of Hosea and his unfaithful wife.** The story of **Hosea's marriage to a prostitute** and the children born—one to him and two others probably fathered by two other men—gives us a **clear metaphor for God's relationship with His people during the times of the Old Testament.**

**Hosea 1:2:** When the LORD first spoke to Israel through Hosea, he said to Hosea, "Go and get married; **your wife will be unfaithful**, and your children will be just like her. In the same way, my people have left me and become unfaithful."—*Good News Bible*.\*† [They believed that sex was a way to get "god's" attention/blessing!]<sup>‡</sup>

8. Hosea 11 describes how God responded to Israel's unfaithfulness. Despite their rebellion and turning away from Him, God still had a marvelous love for Israel, expressed in earnest terms.

**Hosea 11:1-9:** <sup>1</sup>The LORD says,

"When Israel was a child, I loved him  
and called him out of Egypt as my son.

<sup>2</sup>But **the more I called to him,  
the more he turned away from me.**

**My people sacrificed to Baal;**  
they burnt incense to idols.

<sup>3</sup>Yet I was the one who taught Israel to walk.

I took my people up in my arms,  
but they did not acknowledge that I took care of them.

<sup>4</sup>I drew them to me with affection and love.

I picked them up and held them to my cheek; [Will this happen to us in heaven?]  
I bent down to them and fed them.

<sup>5</sup> "They refuse to return to me, and so they must return to Egypt, and Assyria will rule them. <sup>6</sup>**War will sweep through their cities and break down the city gates.**

**It will destroy my people because they do what they themselves think best.**

<sup>7</sup>**They insist on turning away from me.** They will cry out because of the yoke that is on them, but no one will lift it from them.

<sup>8</sup> **"How can I give you up, Israel?**

**How can I abandon you?**

Could I ever destroy you as I did Admah,  
or treat you as I did Zeboiim? [These two cities were destroyed along with Sodom and Gomorrah.]

**My heart will not let me do it!**

**My love for you is too strong.**

<sup>9</sup>I will not punish you in my anger;

I will not destroy Israel again.

For I am God and not a human being.

I, the Holy One, am with you.

I will not come to you in anger.”—*Good News Bible*.\*†‡

9. Look at the tender terms God used for His love for us, teaching us to walk, picking us up, etc.
10. In both the Old Testament and the New Testament, the Hebrew and the Greek describe God’s love in visceral terms. God feels so strongly that when things go wrong, it turns His stomach! But, God has a godly jealousy. He cares about us and really is concerned when some evil is attacking us. His jealous reaction is actually a holy response to the unfaithfulness and idolatry of His people.
11. What does the Bible tell us about Israel’s repeated rebellions and God’s “wrath” or “anger”? See the handout: “God’s Wrath/Anger in the Book of Judges and Other Books” on Theox.org posted under Teacher’s Guides in the section of General Topics.)  
([https://www.theox.org/images/uploads/bbk/KHart\\_BTGG\\_PDF\\_Gnrl\\_Gods\\_Wrath\\_or\\_Anger\\_16.pdf](https://www.theox.org/images/uploads/bbk/KHart_BTGG_PDF_Gnrl_Gods_Wrath_or_Anger_16.pdf))
12. Isaiah also described Israel’s repeated rebellion against God.  
**Isaiah 63:8-10:** <sup>8</sup> “And so he [the LORD] saved them <sup>9</sup> from all their suffering. It was not an angel, but the LORD himself who saved them. In his love and compassion he rescued them. He had always taken care of them in the past, <sup>10</sup>**but they rebelled against him and made his Holy Spirit sad. So the LORD became their enemy and fought against them.**”—*Good News Bible*.\*†‡
13. God’s emotions have been described in terms of human emotions.  
[BSG:] **Have you ever been so upset about something that your stomach churns? That is the kind of imagery used for the depth of God’s emotions over His people. The imagery of one’s heart turning over and compassions being kindled is idiomatic language of deep emotions, used of both God and humans.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Monday, January 20.†‡
14. First Kings 3 depicts a story of two women, one with a dead baby and one with a live baby who came to wise King Solomon. The woman with a dead baby woke up in the middle of the night and exchanged her dead baby for the live baby which belonged to the second woman. King Solomon was asked to discover who was the real mother of the live baby.  
**1 Kings 3:26:** The real mother, her heart full of love for her son, said to the king, “Please, Your Majesty, don’t kill the child! Give it to her!”  
But the other woman said, “Don’t give it to either of us; go ahead and cut it in two.”—*Good News Bible*.\*  
[BSG:] This imagery, of compassions being kindled (*kamar*), is used in the case of the two women who came before Solomon, each one claiming the same baby as her own. When Solomon ordered the infant cut in two (with no intention to harm the child), this imagery described the emotional reaction of the real mother (*1 Kings 3:26; compare with Gen. 43:30*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Monday, January 20.†§ [Solomon recognized which woman was the real mother.]†
15. Another example of filial or familial tenderness is found in Genesis 43:30.  
**Genesis 43:30:** Then Joseph left suddenly, because his heart was full of tender feelings for his brother. He was about to break down, so he went to his room and cried.—*Good News Bible*.\*
16. In the New Testament, there are multiple expressions of Christ’s love for groups of people and

individuals even outside of the Jewish community. One of the obvious examples is the story of the good Samaritan.

**Luke 10:25-38:** <sup>25</sup> A teacher of the Law came up and tried to trap Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to receive eternal life?”

<sup>26</sup> Jesus answered him, “What do the Scriptures say? How do you interpret them?”

<sup>27</sup> The man answered, “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind’; [Deuteronomy 6:5] and ‘Love your neighbour [*sic-Br*] as you love yourself.’ ” [Leviticus 19:18]

<sup>28</sup> “You are right,” Jesus replied; “do this and you will live.”

<sup>29</sup> But the teacher of the Law wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “Who is my neighbour [*sic-Br*]?” [He had answered his own question!]

<sup>30</sup> Jesus answered, “There was once a man who was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho when robbers attacked him, stripped him, and beat him up, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup>It so happened that a priest [By rule, a priest needed to be a Levite.] was going down that road; but when he saw the man, he walked on by, on the other side. <sup>32</sup>In the same way a Levite also came along, went over and looked at the man, and then walked on by, on the other side. <sup>33</sup>But a Samaritan who was travelling that way came upon the man, and when he saw him, his heart was filled with pity. <sup>34</sup>He went over to him, poured oil and wine on his wounds and bandaged them; then he put the man on his own animal and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. <sup>35</sup>The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Take care of him,’ he told the innkeeper, ‘and when I come back this way, I will pay you whatever else you spend on him.’ ”

<sup>36</sup> And Jesus concluded, “In your opinion, which one of these three acted like a neighbour [*sic-Br*] towards the man attacked by the robbers?”

<sup>37</sup> The teacher of the Law answered, “The one who was kind to him.”

<sup>38</sup> Jesus replied, “You go, then, and do the same.”—*Good News Bible*. \*†

17. Ellen White has told us: “The Levite was of the same tribe as was the wounded, bruised sufferer.” *Review and Herald*,\* January 1, 1895, par. 5; *Welfare Ministry*\* 47.1.

18. A second story illustrating God’s love is the story of the reception the father gave to the lost or prodigal son when that wayward son came to his senses and returned home.

**Luke 15:11-32:** <sup>11</sup> Jesus went on to say, “There was once a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup>The younger one said to him, ‘Father, give me my share of the property now.’ So the man divided his property between his two sons. <sup>13</sup>After a few days the younger son sold his part of the property and left home with the money. He went to a country far away, where he wasted his money in reckless living. <sup>14</sup>He spent everything he had. Then a severe famine spread over that country, and he was left without a thing. <sup>15</sup>So he went to work for one of the citizens of that country, who sent him out to his farm to take care of the pigs. <sup>16</sup>He wished he could fill himself with the bean pods the pigs ate, but no one gave him anything to eat. <sup>17</sup>At last he came to his senses and said, ‘All my father’s hired workers have more than they can eat, and here I am about to starve! <sup>18</sup>I will get up and go to my father and say, Father, I have sinned against God and against you. <sup>19</sup>I am no longer fit to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired workers.’ <sup>20</sup>**So he got up and started back to his father.**

**“He was still a long way from home when his father saw him; his heart was filled with pity, and he ran, threw his arms round his son, and kissed him.”** <sup>21</sup> ‘Father,’ the son said, ‘I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son.’ <sup>22</sup>But the father called his servants. ‘Hurry!’ he said. ‘Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. <sup>23</sup>Then go and get the prize calf and kill it, and let us celebrate with a feast! <sup>24</sup>For this son of mine was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he has been found.’ **And so the feasting began.**

<sup>25</sup> “In the meantime the elder son was out in the field. On his way back, when he came close to the house, he heard the music and dancing. <sup>26</sup>So he called one of the servants and asked him, ‘What’s going on?’ <sup>27</sup> **‘Your brother has come back home,’** the servant answered, ‘and **your father has killed the prize calf, because he got him back safe and sound.**’

<sup>28</sup> “The elder brother was so angry that he would not go into the house; so his father came out and begged him to come in. <sup>29</sup>But he answered his father, ‘Look, all these years I have worked for you like a slave, and I have never disobeyed your orders. What have you given me? Not even a goat for me to have a feast with my friends! <sup>30</sup>But this son of yours wasted all your property on prostitutes, and when he comes back home, you kill the prize calf for him!’ <sup>31</sup> ‘My son,’ the father answered, ‘you are always here with me, and everything I have is yours. <sup>32</sup>But we had to celebrate and be happy, because your brother was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he has been found.’ ”—*Good News Bible*.\*†

19. Jesus’s own emotional reaction to the crowds is presented in the following verses:

**Matthew 9:36:** As he saw the crowds, **his heart was filled with pity for them, because they were worried and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.**—*Good News Bible*.\*† [How helpless and hopeless are sheep without a shepherd?]\*†

**Mark 6:34:** When Jesus got out of the boat, he saw this large crowd, and **his heart was filled with pity for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd.** So he began to teach them many things.—*Good News Bible*.\*†

**Mark 1:41:** Jesus was **filled with pity**, and stretched out his hand and touched him [the man with a “dreaded” skin disease]. “I do want to,” he answered. “Be clean!”—*Good News Bible*.\*†† [When Jesus touched the man, he no longer was a leper!]\*†

**Luke 7:13:** When the Lord saw her [the widow of Nain whose son had died], **his heart was filled with pity** for her, and he said to her, “Don’t cry.”—*Good News Bible*.\*††

**Matthew 23:37:** “Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You kill the prophets and stone the messengers God has sent you! **How many times have I wanted to put my arms round all your people**, just as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would not let me!”—*Good News Bible*.\*† [The religious leaders had been plotting His death for two and one-half years already!]\*†

20. Can we even imagine the emotions that were going through the mind and heart of Jesus as He worked His way through His ministry and saw some people turn to Him while others rejected Him? Jesus showed His love for us even to the degree of dying for us.

21. However, God is also described both in the Old Testament and the New Testament as **a jealous God**. What is that supposed to mean?

[BSG:] God is called not only the compassionate God but also the **jealous God**, *el qana*. As Deuteronomy 4:24 puts it, “ ‘The LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God [*el qana*].’ ” (See *Deut. 4:24, Deut. 6:15, Josh. 24:19, Nah. 1:2.*)—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Wednesday, January 22.†‡Ω§

22. Numerous places in the Bible describe God as jealous and not tolerating rivals likely **because we become like what we worship and admire whether that is Baal or Satan or money or....**

**Exodus 20:5:** “Do not bow down to any idol or worship it, because I am the LORD your God and **I tolerate no rivals**. I bring punishment on those who hate me and on their descendants down to the third and fourth generation.”—*Good News Bible*.\*

**Exodus 34:14:** “Do not worship any other god, because **I, the LORD, tolerate no rivals**.”—*Good News Bible*.\*†

**Deuteronomy 4:24:** “The LORD your God is like a flaming fire; **he tolerates no rivals**.”—*Good News Bible*.\*†

**Deuteronomy 6:15:** “If you do worship other gods, the LORD’s anger will come against you like fire and will destroy you completely, because the LORD your God, who is present with you, **tolerates no rivals**.”—*Good News Bible*.\*†

**Psalms 78:58:** They angered him with their heathen places of worship, and with their idols they made him furious.—*Good News Bible*.\*

**Joshua 24:19:** Joshua said to the people, “But you may not be able to serve the LORD. He is a holy God and will not forgive your sins. **He will tolerate no rivals**.”—*Good News Bible*.\*†

**Joel 2:18:** **Then the LORD showed concern for his land; he had mercy on his people.**—*Good News Bible*.\*†

23. Even after God went through that experience described in Hosea and the northern kingdom was taken off into Assyrian captivity, the southern kingdom did not learn the lesson and did worse.

**1 Kings 14:22:** **The people of Judah sinned against the LORD and did more to arouse his anger against them than all their ancestors had done.**—*Good News Bible*.\*†

**Ezekiel 39:25:** The Sovereign LORD said, “But now I will be merciful to Jacob’s descendants, the people of Israel, and make them prosperous again. **I will protect my holy name**.”—*Good News Bible*.\*†

**Nahum 1:2:** **The LORD God tolerates no rivals; he punishes those who oppose him.**

**In his anger he pays them back.**—*Good News Bible*.\*† [These words were spoken in God’s “anger” against the people of Nineveh.]†

**Zechariah 1:14:** **And the angel told me to proclaim what the LORD Almighty had said: “I have a deep love and concern for Jerusalem, my holy city.”**—*Good News Bible*.\*†

**Zechariah 8:2:** **“I have longed to help Jerusalem because of my deep love for her people, a love which has made me angry with her enemies.”**—*Good News Bible*.\*†

24. **What do you think of God being described as “jealous”?**

25. Are we capable as human beings with the help of the Holy Spirit to develop this kind of loving

jealousy for those around us? What would God say to us today?

26. In 1 Corinthians 13:4, we are told that **ultimate love is not jealous**. Have you ever had a friend who could be described by 1 Corinthians 13:4-8? Those who have had such a friend, really appreciate that relationship. But, how can we learn to exemplify that kind of love to others?

**1 Corinthians 13:4:** Love is patient and kind; it is not jealous or conceited or proud.—*Good News Bible*.\*

**Romans 5:5:** This hope does not disappoint us, for God has poured out his love into our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to us.—*Good News Bible*.\*

27. We have just stated that God's love is jealous. How do we fit these ideas together?

28. Paul himself said that God is jealous.

**2 Corinthians 11:2:** I am jealous for you, just as God is; you are like a pure virgin whom I have promised in marriage to one man only, Christ himself.—*Good News Bible*.\*

[BSG:] **The "jealousy" of God is often misunderstood.** If you refer to someone as a jealous husband or wife, you likely do not mean it as a compliment. The term jealousy often has negative connotations in many languages. However, **in the Bible, divine jealousy has no negative connotations. It is the righteous passion of a loving husband for an exclusive relationship with his wife.**

While there is a kind of jealousy that is against love (*1 Cor. 13:4*), according to 2 Corinthians 11:2, there is a good and righteous "jealousy." Paul refers to it as "godly jealousy" (*2 Cor. 11:2*). **God's jealousy is only and always the righteous kind and may better be spoken of as God's passionate love for His people.**

God's passion (*qana'*) for His people stems from His profound love for them. **God desires an exclusive relationship with His people;** He alone is to be their God. Yet, God is often depicted as a scorned lover, whose love is unrequited (see *Hosea 1-3, Jer. 2:2, Jer. 3:1-12*). Thus, God's "jealousy" or "passion" is never unprovoked but always responsive to the infidelity and [*sic*] [of] evil people. God's jealousy (or "passionate love") lacks the negative connotations of human jealousy. It is never envious but always the proper righteous passion for an exclusive relationship with His people and for their good.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Wednesday, January 22.†§

[BSG:] [The] distinction between a negative jealousy to be avoided and God's positive jealousy may be discerned in the Greek language, but via the two possible definitions of jealousy in the New Testament: (1) "be positively and intensely interested" (**zeal**); and (2) "to have intense negative feelings over another's achievements" (**envy**) (Danker et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, p. 427).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 55-56.†§

29. God is described as being not only jealous but also compassionate and passionate.

**Hebrews 4:15:** Our High Priest is not one who cannot feel sympathy for our weaknesses. On the contrary, we have a High Priest who was tempted in every way that we are, but did not sin.—*Good News Bible*.\*

**Judges 10:16:** **So they got rid of their foreign gods and worshipped [*sic-Br*] the LORD; and he became troubled over Israel's distress.**—*Good News Bible*.\*††



**Luke 19:41:** He [Jesus] came closer to the city [Jerusalem], and when he saw it, he wept over it.—*Good News Bible*.\*‡

30. Some portions of the Bible emphasize God’s love and compassion for His children.

[BSG:] By the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, in what practical ways might we respond to, and reflect, God’s profoundly emotional, but always perfectly righteous and rational, love? **First**, the only appropriate response is to worship the God who is love. **Second**, we should respond to God’s love by actively showing compassion and benevolent love to others. We should not simply be comforted in our Christian faith but should be motivated to comfort others. **Finally**, we should recognize that we cannot change our hearts, but that only God can [but He will only change us with our permission].

So, let us ask God to give us a new heart for Him and for others—a pure and purifying love that elevates what is good and removes the chaff from within.

Let our prayer be: “may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, . . . so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints” (1 Thess. 3:12, 13, NKJV).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Thursday, January 23.†§

**1 Thessalonians 3:12-13:** <sup>12</sup>May the Lord make your love for one another and for all people grow more and more and become as great as our love for you. <sup>13</sup>In this way he will strengthen you, and you will be perfect and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all who belong to him.—*Good News Bible*.\*

[BSG:] Why is a death to self and to the selfishness and corruption of our natural hearts the only way to reveal this kind of love? What are the choices that we can make in order to be able to die this death to self?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Thursday, January 23.‡

31. Ellen White described God as being compassionate, even in the judgment.

[From the writings of Ellen G. White:] **All who have a sense of their deep soul poverty, who feel that they have nothing good in themselves, may find righteousness and strength by looking unto Jesus. He says, “Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden.”** Matthew 11:28. He bids you exchange your poverty for the riches of His grace. We are not worthy of God’s love, but Christ, our surety, is worthy, and is abundantly able to save all who shall come unto Him. Whatever may have been your past experience, however discouraging your present circumstances, if you will come to Jesus just as you are, weak, helpless, and despairing, our compassionate Saviour [*sic-Br*] will meet you a great way off, and will throw about you His arms of love and His robe of righteousness. He presents us to the Father clothed in the white raiment of His own character. He pleads before God in our behalf, saying: I have taken the sinner’s place. Look not upon this wayward child, but look on Me. Does Satan plead loudly against our souls, accusing of sin, and claiming us as his prey, the blood of Christ pleads with greater power.—Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*\* 8.2.†‡

[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p150.63&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p150.63&index=0)†

32. In this context, it is very important to review our understanding of how the judgment takes place.

**Zechariah 3:1-5:** <sup>1</sup> In another vision the LORD showed me the High Priest Joshua standing before the angel of the LORD. **And there beside Joshua stood Satan, ready to bring an accusation against him.** <sup>2</sup>The angel of the LORD said to Satan, “May the LORD condemn you, Satan! May the LORD, who loves Jerusalem, condemn you. This man is like a stick snatched from the fire.”

<sup>3</sup> Joshua was standing there, wearing filthy clothes. <sup>4</sup>The angel said to his heavenly attendants, “Take away the filthy clothes this man is wearing.” Then he said to Joshua, “I have taken away your sin and will give you new clothes to wear.”

<sup>5</sup> He commanded the attendants to put a clean turban on Joshua’s head. They did so, and then they put the new clothes on him while the angel of the LORD stood there.—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup>

33. Repeatedly, in Scripture and especially in the Gospels, we see God as Jesus Christ, reaching out to people in incredible ways to show His love, compassion, and action.

34. **In summary:**

[BSG:] 1. Our passionate and compassionate God is vividly presented in Scripture with **parenting imagery**. God’s love has strong emotional and affective aspects, similar to parental love. The metaphor of divine love as maternal love conveys the notion of God’s remembering and having compassion over His people. Maternal imagery is, to some degree, the best illustration of God’s compassion, loving care, and attention to the needs of His people. Scripture also illustrates God’s compassion using the image of a loving and compassionate father.

2. Our passionate and compassionate God is strikingly portrayed in Scripture with **visceral language**. In many Bible passages, visceral language is used to express God’s affection, as He is moved physically and emotionally with profound compassion for people. The Hebrew word for compassion depicts a womb-like maternal love, emphasizing a mother’s compassion toward her child. Similarly, God shows tender affection and compassion for His people.

3. Our passionate and compassionate God is **jealous in a good and righteous way**. God seeks an intimate and exclusive covenantal relationship with us and requires faithfulness from His people. In this sense, God is described in Scripture as zealous and jealous. Instead of the negative connotation of being capricious, this language conveys the idea that God acts in our best interests to protect us from self-harm and broken promises.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 52.<sup>†‡</sup>

[BSG:] Life Application: In His passionate and compassionate love, God invites us to be like Him. In our compassion toward others, we need to be considerate of the people around us and be purposeful as a church about actively caring for others.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 52.<sup>‡</sup>

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