

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF GOD

## AN UNFOLDING STORY OF COVENANTAL LOVE

The God of the Bible defines Himself as a God of *covenant*, a God who makes and keeps promises with unswerving integrity and reliability. God's story is characterized by this ONE chief attribute. The Hebrew people called this core divine characteristic "HESED," which is translated throughout the Old Testament variously as: mercy, unfailing love, steadfast love, faithful love, unchanging love and lovingkindness. Embedded in HESED is the idea of constancy, reliability, changelessness, trustworthiness and integrity, joined with mercy, compassion, patience, determination, commitment, faith and hope. Perhaps the best way to translate HESED is with the words, Faithful Love, meaning love that is full of faith. Another excellent option would be, Covenantal Love, meaning love that makes and keeps promises at any cost to self. This is the essence of God's story.

Notes

### **Our Faith Grounded in God's Faithful Love**

**Romans 4:18-21, NIV**—18Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." 19Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. 20Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, 21being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.

**Hebrew 10:23**—Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

**1 Kings 8:56**—There has not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised through His servant Moses.

**James 1:17**—Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

### **HESED**

**Psalms 36:5-7, NASB**—5Your lovingkindness [HESED], O LORD, extends to the heavens, Your faithfulness reaches to the skies. 6Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; Your judgments are like a great deep O LORD, You preserve man and beast. 7How precious is Your lovingkindness [HESED], O God!

**Exodus 15:13, NIV**—In your unfailing love [HESED] You will lead the people You have redeemed. In your strength you will guide them to Your holy dwelling.

**Numbers 14:19-20, NASB**—19Pardon, I pray, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of Your lovingkindness [HESED], just as You also have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now. 20So the LORD said, "I have pardoned them according to your word.

**Micah 7:18, NASB**—Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity and passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in unchanging love [HESED].

**Lamentations 3:22-23, NIV**—22Because of the LORD's great love [HESED] we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. 23They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

**Psalm 51:1-2**—<sup>1</sup>Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness [HESED]; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions.

**Psalm 21:7, NIV**—The king trusts in the LORD; through the unfailing love [HESED] of the Most High he will not be shaken.

**Psalm 23:7**— Surely goodness and mercy [HESED] shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

**Psalm 26:3**—Your lovingkindness [HESED] is before my eyes, and I have walked in Your truth.

**Psalm 89:28**—<sup>28</sup>My mercy [HESED] I will keep for him forever, and My covenant shall stand firm with him.

**Isaiah 55:3, NIV**—I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love [HESED] promised to David.

**Jeremiah 31:3**—“Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness [HESED] I have drawn you.

**Pre-Creation:** Father, Son and Holy Spirit exist in the fellowship of one another’s faithful love before creation. Col. 1:16-17; Jn. 17:24; Jn. 1:3, 18; Prov. 8:30-31.

**The Creation Covenant:** Father, Son and Holy Spirit agree to create human beings to share in their faithful love. Gen. 1:26.

**The Covenant of Peace:** Father, Son and Holy Spirit know that creating free agents with the capacity for love involves the risk that they will rebel, and know in fact that they will rebel. They also know that the moment they create humanity, they will love their children more than themselves. The Triune God form “the covenant of peace,” an agreement to save fallen humanity at any and all cost to themselves. They agree that the Son will become one with the human race by means of incarnation, suffering the full reality of human sin and guilt, reveal their love and thus save humanity. Zec. 6:11-13; Isa. 54:10; Jer. 29:11; Eph. 1:3-6; Tit. 1:2.

**The Fall of Man and The First Covenant Promise:** As foreseen by God, humanity is deceived and taken captive by Satan. God promises that a warrior will some day be born into the human race and will conquer the Devil on man’s behalf. Gen. 3:15; Jn. 12:27-32; Heb. 2:14; 1 Jn. 3:8.

**A Covenant People Established:** God calls Abram out of Ur to start a lineage through which the Promised One will be born to the world. Gen. 12-15.

**The Prophets Reveal The Covenant Promise:** Through the visions, symbols and songs the various prophets foretell numerous aspects of the covenant as it will be realized in the coming Messiah. Ps. 22, 88; Isa. 11, 42, 53; SS. 8: 6-8; Dan. 9:24-27; Zec. 3.

**The Covenant Promise Realized:** In fulfillment of all the prophets had foretold, God the Son enters our world incarnate, reveal the truth about God, suffers and dies as the consummate act of God’s faith-filled, covenantal love, and on the third day rises from death victorious over sin, guilt, the lie, unbelief and all unfaithfulness. Lk. 1:67-79; Heb. 1:1-3; Jn. 1:1-14; 1 Tim. 3:16; Mat. 26-28.

### ***“Behold Your God”—Isaiah 40:9***