

Why You Are the Apple of God's Eye

Three times in the Old Testament, God's people—both nationally and individually—are described as “the apple of His eye” (Deut. 32:10, Zech. 2:8 and Ps. 17:8).

Although this was originally a title given to the physical offspring of Abraham, born-again believers of the New Covenant have the right to claim this title also. Having been “grafted” into the olive tree of Israel, we inherit the names and titles that apply to God's Old Covenant nation. The church has not replaced Israel's unique relationship and position with Yahweh; however, we are blessed to share it because we are in covenant with Israel's Messiah (see Romans 11:17).

The first time biblically this name for God's people appears is in “The Song of Moses” (see Deuteronomy 31:30-32:43). The prophet was reminding Israelites of their condition when God found them, and the wondrous things He did in their behalf with these words:

“He found him in a desert land and in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; He encircled him, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye” (Deut. 32:10, NKJV).

Often, this statement is wrongly compared to a literal apple—but it has absolutely nothing to do with that popular fruit. The “apple of the eye” is another name for the pupil—the centermost part of the eye. For that reason, the Modern English Version translates the last part of that verse:

“. . . He protected him [Israel] like the pupil of His eye” (Deut. 32:10).

The “apple” of the eye (the pupil) actually has no fleshly substance; it is a hole filled with a liquid solution called

aqueous humor, the same fluid that bathes the entire eye. When we refer to someone as the apple of our eye, it is a symbolic, poetical way of saying that person is the focus of our lives and deeply cherished. How encouraging it is to know God feels this way toward His people! We are the “center” of His attention and the “focus” of His love, and He is constantly watching over us to preserve and protect us.

No wonder the prophet Zechariah warned:

“He who touches you touches the Apple of His Eye” (Zech. 2:8).

In other words, the Lord is communicating, “If someone mistreats or persecutes any of My offspring, it’s as if that person is belligerently jabbing his finger right in the middle of My eye.” Why would the Creator feel this way? Because one of the things that pains God most is the pain of His people. Another version of this same passage has God saying, “Anyone who strikes you strikes what is most precious to me” (Zech. 2:8, GNT).

The Messianic Application

To understand how God will “keep us” as “the apple of His eye,” we need to ask, “How does a human being normally ‘keep’ or ‘guard’ the pupil of his eye?” Simple. The arm is quickly raised to fend off any blow or dangerous object, for any sensible person is far more willing to suffer a temporary bruise to the arm than a permanent injury to the eyes.

In a spiritual sense, that’s what God did when Jesus died on Golgotha. He “raised His arm and took the blow.” You see, from ancient days, the Messiah was referred to biblically as “the arm of the Lord,” as in the following prophecies of Isaiah:

“Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?” (Isa. 53:1, NKJV).

“The LORD has made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the

nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God" (Isa. 52:10).

When the Son of God was lifted up on the cross, as God's "holy arm," He took the death-blow of sin that should have permanently blinded all of us to the things of God—and He did it to preserve and protect His treasured ones, all who would ever belong to Him in a covenant relationship, that we might see His glory—for time and eternity.

Responding in Great Gratitude

When we glimpse the glory of what God has done to "keep" us from this dangerous world, to preserve us in this valley of the shadow of death, it becomes imperative that we respond with gratitude. Is a shout of praise sufficient or is there an even more convincing way to display our devotion? God discloses the best method of returning His exceptional kindness in Proverbs 7:2, a passage in which He urges His own:

"Keep My commandments and live and My law as the apple of your eye."

In other words, God is saying, "Embrace My Word with all your heart. Fall in love with My commandments; let them forever be your focus in life, your most precious possession. Let them be at the very center of all that you are and all that you do. Guard them as you would guard your own eyes."

This is truly the least that we can do. {eo}

Note: To dig deeper into this wonderful revelation, listen to the episode on our calling to be "the Apple of God's Eye" in the podcast series by Mike Shreve called "Discover Your Spiritual identity."

Mike Shreve has taught on the theme of our spiritual identity for over 35 years, giving sons and daughters of God the comfort and empowerment of knowing who they are "in Christ."

This powerful insight is featured on a weekly podcast on , a weekly TV program on It's Supernatural Network (ISN) both titled "Discover Your Spiritual Identity," and a Charisma House book titled WHO AM I? Dynamic Declarations of Who You Are in Christ. A product of the Jesus Movement Era, Mike Shreve has traveled evangelistically in the United States and overseas since 1970, with an emphasis on healing and the prophetic. You may also want to subscribe to his second podcast on comparative religion titled "Revealing the True Light" and visit his website and YouTube channel.

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