

New Covenant / New Heart (7/20)

A New Heart

God says that the new kingdom is formed by a new covenant inaugurated with the sacrifice of Christ. In Jeremiah and Ezekiel this new covenant is described using the ideas of a “new heart” and a “new Spirit.” Over the next two weeks we will be exploring the implications of heart and Spirit.

- Jeremiah 31:31f says, “The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah....I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts.”
- Ezekiel 36:24f says, “For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.”
- Ezek 11:19 – “I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them...”
- Ezek 18:31 – “Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed and get a new heart and a new spirit...”

Heart

The ancient Hebrew ideas differed significantly from our modern, scientific ideas of people. We take a scientific approach to things and recognize that functions such as thinking, emotions, decisions, and consciousness are all centered in the brain. Whereas the body organs such as the lungs, hearts, intestines, stomach, etc. serve specific biological functions. In the ancient Hebrew world, people were viewed holistically with the “heart” representing the center of thought, emotion, and will. We see this kind of thinking in our expressions such as “I love you with all my heart.”

In the Greek world it was the stomach / intestines that were considered to be the emotional center of a person. So to express your deep emotions you might say something like “My affections (guts)....” see (Phil 2:1). Perhaps that is where “I hate your guts” kinds of expressions originate.

Deut 6:5 – “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all our strength.”

Old Heart / New Heart

Discussion

- What is the purpose of saying that the new covenant involves a “new heart?”
- Compare the “heart” phrases of Jer 31:31f with Ezek 36:24f. What is the connection between the two?
- Take a close look at Jer 31:34. What is the meaning of the contrast between “no longer will a man teach his neighbor...” and “they will all know me?”

Consider

- Old Law relies upon external commands using repeated admonitions of Deut 5:1, 32; 6:3, 25.. to “know the lord.” Or “follow and obey,” “be careful to observe...”
- “Careful to Observe” Ex (2x), Lev (1x), Deut (13x), Josh (3x), Ezek (6x)

- Old “law” was supposed to find it’s way into heart Deut 6:6; 11:18
- Matt 5 – depicts the internalization of the “new covenant” the covenant written on their hearts...for out a man’s heart comes the things that defile a man.
- Matt 15:18 – “These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.”

Characteristics of “old hearts” and “new hearts”

Make a questionnaire that results in categorizing difference kinds of heart conditions that range from “heart of stone” to “heart of flesh”

“Stiff necked, hard”

- Acts 7:51 – “stiff necked people....always resisting the holy spirit”
- Rich to enter kingdom (Mk 10:23)
- “Hard to explain because you are slow to learn” – Heb 5:11
- It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law ---divorce (Mk 10:5 // Matt 19:8)
- Zechariah 7:7 – they made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the LORD Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets.

Compassion

- Matt 14:14 – “When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had **compassion** on them and healed their sick.”
- Mark 6:34 - When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had **compassion** on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things.
- Luke 7:13 - And when the Lord saw her, he had **compassion** on her and said to her, “Do not weep.”
- Luke 10:33 - But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had **compassion**.
- Luke 15:20 - And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt **compassion**, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.
- Matt 15:32 - Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I have **compassion** on the crowd because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And I am unwilling to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way.”
- Heb 10:34 - For you had **compassion** on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.

Other references to a change of heart

- Mal 4:6 – “He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children...”
- Troubled heart...a difficult place to write the covenant (Jer 17:1-9)
- “Circumcise your heart...” Deut 10:16; Jer 4:4

Discussion

- How will God accomplish the surgery or the writing?
- How can God gives us a “new heart” and still preserve free will?
- What are the aspects of your following God that you do because you are supposed to? Because you want to?
- How does this “new heart” define the “new kingdom?”