

OUR HEARTS

Proverbs 20:9 *Who can say, "I have made my heart pure; I am clean from my sin"?*

The term "heart" is used of the center of things (Deuteronomy 4:11; Jonah 2:3; Matthew 12:40); the root of the Hebrew word, which is obscure, may actually mean center.

Today we think of the heart as an organ that pumps our blood, but the biblical references to the physical organ are few and not specific. In 2 Samuel 18:14 and 2 Kings 9:24 the meaning seems to be wider, indicating the internal organs generally, especially since, in the former passage, Absalom remained alive after three darts had pierced his 'heart'. But this lack of accurate physiological definition is typical of Hebrew thought, particularly in respect of the internal organs. In Psalm 104:15 the 'heart' is affected by food and drink, and though this may not be true in a direct way physiologically, it certainly is true in experience, if one takes the 'heart' to mean, as much of scripture does as our inner being, it makes sense.

The Hebrews thought in terms of subjective experience rather than scientific observation. The "heart" was essentially the whole person, with all his attributes, physical, intellectual and psychological, of which the Hebrew thought and spoke. The "heart" was conceived of as the governing center for all of who we are. It is the heart that makes a man, or a beast, what he is, and governs all his actions (Proverbs 4:23).

Today we use terms like: character, personality, will, and the mind. These are all terms which reflect something of the meaning of 'heart' in its biblical usage. In the scriptures you can break out the usage of the term in these instances:

- 29 times - physical or figurative.
- 257 times - someone's personality, inner life or character in general.
- 166 times - emotional states of consciousness.
- 204 times - intellectual activities (attention, reflection, memory, understanding, technical skill).
- 195 times - volition or purpose.

In the New Testament the usage of "heart" is very similar. The heart doesn't lose its physical reference, for it is made of 'flesh,' but it is the seat of the will (Mark 3:5), of the intellect (Mark 2:6, 8), and of 'feeling' (Luke. 24:32). This means that 'heart' comes the nearest of the New Testament terms to mean 'person.'



There is no suggestion in the Bible that the brain is the center of consciousness, thought or will. As a broad general statement, it is true that the Bible places the psychological focus one step lower in the anatomy than most popular modern speech, which uses 'mind' for consciousness, thought and will, and 'heart' for emotions.

'Mind' is the closest modern term to the biblical usage of 'heart.' The 'heart' is, however, a wider term, and the Bible does not distinguish the rational or mental processes in the way that Greek philosophy did or does.

The right attitude of heart begins with its being broken or crushed (Psalm 51:17), symbolic of humility and penitence, and synonymous with 'a broken spirit.' This brokenness is necessary because it is the hard or stony heart, which does not submit to the will of God. We are also told that God knows the heart of each one of us and is not deceived by outward appearance.

We are told that:

- A worthy prayer is that God should search and know our heart (Psalm 139:23).
- That God can make our hearts clean again (Psalm 51:10).
- A 'new heart' must be the aim of the wicked (Ezekiel 18:31).
- God's law has to become no longer merely external but 'written on the heart' (Jeremiah 31:33).
- The heart, the spring of all desires, must be guarded (Proverbs 4:23).
- It is the pure in heart who will see God (Matthew 5:8).
- That it is through Christ's dwelling in our heart by faith that we can comprehend the love of God (Ephesians 3:17).

Peace has been made between us and our maker because of Christ. Jesus invites us to go on an interior journey that sees our hearts for what they are and what they can become in Him.

BAPTISMS - APRIL 6TH, 1PM
1371 SOLOMON ROAD

& Nacho Bar *Please bring if your last name begins with:*

A-L - Taco Meat

M-R - Desserts (Few Dozen)

S-Z - Beans & Salsa

Everybody welcome to swim afterwards.

CHURCH FAMILY MEETING
Next Sunday, March 30th, 2pm
What is coming for Element...

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