

# Christianity



is all about the heart!

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## Introduction

In the book of Leviticus it is written; “the life of the flesh is in the blood and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it *is* the blood *that* maketh an atonement for the soul” (17:11).

Just as blood is the life of the flesh the blood of Jesus gave life to our souls and just as the physical heart pumps blood through our flesh to maintain life the heart of God keeps the atoning blood of Christ coursing through our souls so that we might have eternal life.

The human heart sustains physical life and the heart of God sustains spiritual life. Without the human heart there is no physical life and without the heart of God there is no spiritual life.

In either case the heart is the most critical element regarding life.

In this study we will explore our holy scriptures to discover the importance of the heart, as it relates to the spiritual life of man, and the practical application of that knowledge.

May the Holy Spirit of God teach us all things and guide us unto all truth as we search the word of God to learn about the importance of the heart in the eyes of our Father God so that we might apply that which we learn toward the end of growing close to Him. Amen & Amen!

## A Study of The Heart

In the biblical Hebrew language there are two words which have been translated into the English word “heart”:

לֵב – *lêb* – *labe*, *the heart*; also used (figuratively) very widely for the feelings, the will and even the intellect.

לֵבָב – *lêbâb* – *lay-bawb'*, *the heart* (as the most interior organ), used also like *labe*. *bethink themselves, breast, comfortably, courage, ([faint], [tender-] heart([-ed]), midst, mind, unawares, understanding.*

*It is also noteworthy that the Hebrew word **nephesh** which is translated into the English word “soul” is also defined bodily or mentally as heart, and even more so as appetite, mind and pleasure.*

What does the old testament say about the heart?

(Gen 6:5) And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.

(Gen 6:6) And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

These verses show us that man's heart was ONLY evil continually. Therefore there is a part of a mans heart that is not just flesh. There is a spiritual element to it as well as a physical element.

These verses also tell us that God has a heart, a heart that can be grieved.

(Gen 8:21) And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart *is* evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.

Here we see that there is forgiveness and mercy in the heart of God and we also see that the heart speaks. (*Gen 17:17, Gen 24:45, Gen 27:41 to mention a few*).

The heart can also faint (*Gen 45:26*), the heart can be glad (*Exo 4:14*), the heart can be hardened (*Exo 7:13*), the heart can be willing (*Exo 35:5*), the heart can stir you up (*Exod 35:21*), the heart as wisdom (*Exo 36:2*), the heart can hate (*Lev 19:17*), the heart can be discouraged (*Num 32:7*) and the heart can be obstinate (*Deu 2:30*)

According to these scriptures the heart is the seat of emotions that are usually attributed to people (souls).

Now in the new testament the heart (**kardia**) is used primarily in connection with thoughts:

(Mat 5:28) **But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.**

(Mat 13:15) **For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.**

(Mat 15:19) For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

(Mat 15:20) These are *the things* which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.

It is the heart which defiles a man because out of the heart proceeds evil thoughts. But even more significant within new testament thought is the idea that what comes out of the mouth is coming from the heart:

(Mat 15:16) And Jesus said, *Are ye also yet without understanding?*

(Mat 15:17) *Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?*

(Mat 15:18) *But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.*

(Luk 6:44) *For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.*

(Luk 6:45) *A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.*

In the light of what has been said thus far it is quite easy to see how critical the heart is in the life of a person because it reflects what is happening within us spiritually. Even more important to note here is that just as what comes out of the heart through our mouth defiles (*koinoō* - to *make* (or *consider*) *profane* (ceremonially): - call common, defile, pollute, unclean) a man, what comes out of the mouth of someone with a pure heart brings blessings onto them.

In Mat 13:15 our Lord proclaims that the hearts of these people have waxed gross.

“waxed gross” (*pachunō*)

**Thayer Definition:**

- 1) to make thick, to make fat, fatten
- 2) metaphorically to make stupid (to render the soul dull or callous)

Because the hearts of these people had waxed gross their ears became dull of hearing and their eyes dull of seeing and their minds dull of understanding. But if these people convert (the same idea as to repent) Jesus proclaims that He would heal them (their eyes would see, their ears would hear and their hearts would understand).

How would these people be healed?

(Deu 30:6) And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

(2Co 5:17) Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

This was prophesied by the prophet Ezekiel when God said that He would remove the heart of stone from the flesh of His people, give them a new heart of flesh with His laws written upon them (2Cor 3:3), give them a new spirit, and put His Spirit within them so that He would cause them to walk in His statutes, keep His judgments, and do *them* (36:26).

Why did God do all of this work concerning the heart?  
Why did He remove the heart of stone and replace it with a heart of flesh?

To prepare His people for the coming of new testament grace!

You see within both the old and new testaments the word grace (**chên** in Hebrew and **charis** in the Greek) both carry with them the idea of graciousness and favor.

But the apostle John writes something curious within the first chapter of his gospel:

(Joh 1:16) And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.

(Joh 1:17) For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

**Grace for grace** (*χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος* - *charin anti charitos*)

The preposition **ἀντί** - **anti** - **for** originally means *over against; opposite; before* (in a local sense), through the idea of placing one thing over against another is developed that of an *exchange*. “An eye for (**ἀντί**) an eye,” for example.

Now it stands to reason that one is not going to exchange something for the exact same thing. Therefore John is saying that there was going to be an exchange of grace (**charis**) and that another or a new grace would come by Jesus Christ.

**Subsequently the logical question here is:**

What is the difference between **chên** and **charis**?

There is one single distinction between the two words and that is, in manner or act (abstract or concrete; literal, figurative or spiritual; **the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life.**

According to Dr Spiros Zodhiates, arguably the worlds greatest authority on Kione Greek, charis is that which causes joy, pleasure and gratification for a kindness granted with no expectation of return (*unmerited grace*) and that this kindness (**chêsêd** - mercy) is returned to the giver out of gratitude for the forgiveness of ones sinfulness.

(Hos 6:6) For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

Charis (grace)(divine influence on the heart), when received by faith, transforms a man and causes him to love and to seek after the righteousness of God. Charis is initially regeneration, the work of the Holy Spirit in which spiritual life is given to the man and by which his nature is changed.

That is to say that the old nature, which was under the domination of sin is changed into a nature brought under the dominion of righteousness and the maintenance of this condition requires an unbroken supply of grace (divine influence on the heart and it's reflection on the life)! Glory to God!

But in order for this to happen the heart must first be exchanged. The hardened heart, or the heart which has waxed gross, can not receive this divine influence. It can not penetrate such a heart.

The new heart of flesh however can be influenced by the Holy Spirit of God and because the heart is the soul of man, and because it is not only the seat of emotions it is also the seat of our will, we can be changed, we can be healed, we can become the children of God!

This is how God makes us new creations.

This is how God causes us to to walk in His statutes, keep His judgments, and do them.

This is how we come to truly love God, love our neighbors, and love the brethren!

**It's ALL about the heart!**

Be Blessed