

A New Heart and New Spirit

Key Verse: *“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.”*
—Ezekiel 36:26

Selected Scripture:
Ezekiel 36:22-36

sin. “There is none righteous, no, not one. . . . For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”—Rom. 3:10,23

For God’s goodness to reach his fallen human creation, sin must be broken apart and swept away. Man’s very experiences teach that sin is not only the direct cause of many of his sorrows, but it has also had the effect of clogging his heart, so to speak, turning it to stone. Such a condition keeps God’s love from dwelling within fallen man. However, God’s plan, as expressed by the prophet, calls for the cleansing and sanctifying of all the willing and obedient in his coming kingdom. This will include replacing clogged and stony hearts with a “heart of flesh,” and putting “a new spirit” within man’s mind.—Ezek. 36:23-27

IN OUR CONSIDERATION

of God’s people being given a “new heart” as stated in our Key Verse, we first note the previous verse. God says, “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean.” (Ezek. 36:25) “Clean water” is a Scriptural symbol of pure truth and the righteous influence of the Heavenly Father. God’s bestowal of blessings toward his people, as well as to all mankind, must begin with cleansing from Adamic

The basis of God's promise of a new heart and a new spirit is cleansing, and the Apostle John tells us that this comes only through Christ. He says, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (I John 1:7-9) The process of first being cleansed, and then being given a new heart and a new spirit, shows the proper order. The former deals with the removal of Adamic sin, and the latter involves the giving of a new opportunity to develop a heart and spirit in conformity to God's principles of love and righteousness.

In advance of the world, a new heart condition is essential now to those striving to walk in the sacrificial footsteps of Jesus, and separated to God's service. As David counseled his son Solomon, so also we are instructed: "Know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee." (I Chron. 28:9) The high reward of "glory and honour and immortality" is promised to those who have been called "out of darkness into his marvellous light," and who are faithful "unto death."—Rom. 2:7; I Pet. 2:9; Rev. 2:10

For the remainder of the world, God purposes to instruct them in righteousness during his coming kingdom on earth. He will establish a "way of holiness" for man to walk upon toward perfection. (Isa. 35:8) God's instructions, together with man's daily walk toward perfection, will enable all the willing and obedient to have their hardened, stony hearts removed, and replaced with soft and pliable hearts of flesh. For then, God promises, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. . . . For they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them."—Jer. 31:33,34 ■