**A Heart of Flesh**

*Ezekiel 36:26*

**Introduction**

1. Ezekiel prophesies of God renewing Israel for His name’s sake (in captivity for unfaithfulness, God’s name being profaned by nations) – **Ezekiel 36:24-30** (7 things God will do for His name’s sake)
   1. **(v. 24)** – Bring them back to their land.
   2. **(v. 25)** – Cleanse them.
   3. **(v. 26)** – Give them a new heart.
   4. **(v. 27)** – Put His Spirit in them and cause them to obey.
   5. **(v. 28)** – Cause them to dwell in the land and be His people.
   6. **(v. 29)** – Bring them blessings.
   7. **(v. 30)** – Multiply their fruit.
2. These things find their ultimate fulfillment in the blessings of the New Covenant (things which include us).
3. Note:
   1. The cleansing is only the beginning.
   2. A changed heart is a means to an end.
   3. The goal is a people truly devoted to the Lord’s will – from the heart.
4. Also note:
   1. This is something the Lord is doing – pronoun “I” – 11x
   2. However, the Lord requires a compliance in the people – **Ezekiel 18:30-32**
5. Have we allowed the Lord to take out our heart of stone and replace it with a heart of flesh? Are we being directed by the Spirit of God?
6. A Heart of Stone to a Heart of Flesh
7. The Human Heart
   1. Intellect – to know.
      1. The heart thinks – **Genesis 6:5-6** (antediluvian world)
      2. The heart reasons – **Mark 2:8** (Pharisees when Jesus forgave)
      3. The heart understands – **Matthew 13:15** (explanation of Sower)
      4. The heart believes – **Acts 8:37** (Ethiopian Eunuch)
   2. Will – to do.
      1. The heart intends – **Hebrews 4:12** (word of God divides)
      2. The heart purposes – **2 Corinthians 9:7** (contribution)
      3. The heart obeys – **Romans 6:17** (Obedience to gospel, death of old man)
   3. Emotion – to feel.
      1. The heart loves – **Matthew 22:37** (Greatest command)
      2. The heart desires – **Romans 10:1** (Paul’s thoughts for Jews)
      3. The heart trusts – **Proverbs 3:5** (trusts in God’s promises, and that following Him will be worth it)
8. The Heart of Stone
   1. **Ephesians 4:17-19** – the way of the Gentiles.
      1. Intellect:
         1. Futility (of their mind) – *mataiotēs* – state of being without use or value, emptiness, futility, purposelessness, transitoriness (BDAG)
            1. ***“vanity” (ASV)***
            2. ***“great swelling words of EMPTINESS” (2 Peter 2:18).***
         2. Therefore, their ***“understanding [is] darkened,”*** and there is ***“ignorance that is in them.”***
      2. Will:
         1. ***“alienated from the life of God”*** – from the life He directs (because without knowledge)
         2. ***“blindness of their heart”*** – ***“their hardness of heart” (ESV)*** – hardened against God’s will.
      3. Emotion:
         1. ***“past feeling”*** – no facets of the gospel affect them, negatively or positively.
         2. ***“insensible to honor and shame” (VINE)***
         3. **Philippians 3:19** (enemies of the cross) – serve appetite, glory in the shameful, mindset on earthly things.
   2. The heart of stone:
      1. Is devoid of God’s word INTELLECTUALLY.
      2. Therefore, is opposed to God’s word in the WILL.
      3. Therefore, is indifferent toward the warnings and promises of God’s word EMOTIONALLY.
   3. In this we understand – ***“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jeremiah 17:9).***
9. The Heart of Flesh
   1. **Ephesians 4:20-24** – the way of Christ.
      1. Intellect:
         1. ***“not so learned Christ”*** – stated before is opposite of Christ that you learned.
         2. ***“heard Him…taught by Him…the truth”*** – taught by Christ.
      2. Will:
         1. ***“put off…former conduct”*** – you have a change of will which corresponds to the knowledge of Christ.
         2. ***“renewed in the spirit of your mind”*** – your mind is renovated to reflect the will of Christ.
            1. ***“it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” (Galatians 2:20).***
      3. Emotion:
         1. No longer ***“according to deceitful lusts (desires).”***
         2. ***“new man…according to God…true righteousness and holiness”*** – such is now your desire.
         3. **(v. 13)** – desire to measure up to Christ. (trusting God to get there.)
         4. **Philippians 3:20-21** – moved by the longing for heaven, and the eagerness to inherit the incorruptible form.
      4. The heart of flesh:
         1. Is learned in the word of Christ INTELLECTUALLY.
         2. Therefore, is devoted to the way of Christ in the WILL.
         3. Therefore, is moved by the goal of becoming like Christ, and seeing heaven EMOTIONALLY.
10. A Heart Directed by the Spirit of God
11. Ultimately, the heart of flesh is that which gives the Spirit of God free course.
    1. **Romans 8:14** – led by the Spirit.
    2. Opposite – **1 Corinthians 2:14** – natural man.
12. God Puts His Spirit in Us
    1. Rebellious Israel – **Ezekiel 36:17** – own ways and deeds.
    2. God’s solution – **Ezekiel 36:27** – Put His Spirit in them to cause them to do His will.
       1. What does this mean?
    3. Ezekiel’s vision giving further detail – **Ezekiel 37:1-10**
       1. **(v. 1)** – valley of bones.
       2. **(v. 4)** – prophesy to the bones – word of the Lord.
          1. **(v. 5)** – breath will enter – you will live.
          2. Breath – *rûaḥ* – same word for ***“Spirit” (36:27).***
       3. **(v. 10)** – fulfilled.
    4. Interpretation of the vision – **Ezekiel 37:11-14**
       1. **(v. 11)** – Israel is dead – ultimately cut off from God (spiritual).
       2. **(vv. 12-13**) – bring into the land **(36:24**).
       3. **(v. 14)** – Spirit put in them – they live.
          1. **36:27; 37:4-5** – word of the Lord.
          2. **(v. 24)** – observe statutes…
    5. REMEMBER – this is predicated on them having a new heart – **Ezekiel 36:26**
       1. Incumbent upon themselves – **Ezekiel 18:31**
       2. **Jeremiah 31:33-34** – such a covenant does not include those who don’t know the Lord, for its design is for those who enter it to do so by their own choice, moved by their knowledge of God.
       3. **Cf. Ezra 7:10** – self-preparation of heart to seek Lord’s will and do.
13. We (having a heart of flesh) are Guided by His Spirit
    1. We were cut to the heart – **Acts 2:37 – by the Spirit’s revelation.**
    2. We obeyed from the heart – **Romans 6:17 – the Spirit’s gospel.**
       1. Obeyed the truth through the Spirit – **1 Peter 1:22-23**
    3. Therefore, we are guided by the Spirit, and walk by the Spirit – **Galatians 5:16-17, 25 – the Spirit’s direction.**
    4. Let the Spirit/word dwell in us – **Ephesians 5:17-18; Colossians 3:16-17** – and whatever we do we do by the authority of the Lord.
       1. **1 John 3:24** – we know He abides in us by the Spirit when we keep His commandments.
14. Does this describe you?
    1. Do you have a heart of flesh?
       1. A heart that is learned of God’s will?
       2. A heart that is devoted to doing God’s will?
       3. A heart that is moved by God’s will?
       4. A heart that is filled with God’s Spirit through His word, and that is fully obeying Him in all things?

**Conclusion**

1. It is not merely God’s will to cleanse us of our sins initially.
2. God desires a full turn and change of heart and life from what originally led to such a corrupt life of sin.
3. It is this one that God has promised the blessings (**Ezekiel 36:28-30**):
   1. **(v. 28)** – dwell in the land, be His people, He our God – CHURCH, KINGDOM, CONSUMMATED IN HEAVEN.
   2. **(vv. 29-30)** – make life fruitful ultimately for God’s glory – PURIFICATION FROM SINS TO SERVE GOD, BEAR FRUIT. **(cf. Psalm 1:3**)
   3. **(v. 31)** – by the spiritual blessings cultivate a repugnance for the past life, and the barrier of resolve to never turn back lest these blessings be taken away.