

Spiritual Cardiology

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Text: Ezekiel 36:25-27 (NIV)

25 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. **26** 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. **27** And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

The natural process of a heart transplant or heart surgery is similar to the work that God performs when a person comes to him for salvation. The prophet Ezekiel wrote these divinely inspired words thousands of years before modern heart surgery had ever taken place, but notice how closely it resembles to what we know of heart surgery today.

In God's message to his people He makes several important *points*:

I. THE IMPURITIES WITHIN HAD CAUSED CORRUPTION OF THE INNER PERSON (v. 25).

A. As with the natural body, the spiritual body can be corrupted by that which is within.

B. The flow of life within has been tainted.

The use of both water and spirit indicate the spiritual work of the Holy Spirit.

Eze 36:25

I WILL SPRINKLE CLEAN WATER ON YOU, AND YOU WILL BE CLEAN: God will purify His people and cleanse them from all their former uncleanness. Under the LM, the "water of separation" was sprinkled on a person to be cleansed from defilement by contact with a dead body

(Num 19:17-19). It was also used to sanctify the Levites at their consecration (Num 8:7,21), and to separate and consecrate the whole nation to Yahweh (Heb 9:19). All these aspects have a future fulfillment: Israel is to be first of all justified by faith in the blood of their crucified and resurrected Messiah; then they will be set apart as God's special people once again; finally, they will become a true nation of priests, serving God in righteousness and holiness.

II. THE CURE REQUIRES A NEW HEART AND SPIRIT (v. 26).

- A. In the natural body, when the heart is removed or worked on, it is stopped.** Effectively the life in the organ is terminated.

- B. In the spiritual realm, God removes the corrupted heart, stopping it from being the source of life for the body.**

- C. There has to be a new source of life given to the body.**

This is not all. The heart and the lungs are connected. When the surgeon stoops the heart and connects the blood flow of the body to a machine, the machine does not just pump the blood artificially. It does more. It is a heart and lung machine! It causes the body to continue to breathe. The blood flow is not enough. The blood must contain oxygen.

In the spiritual realm, God promised through the prophet, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you..." New life in Christ is about more than a new mindset, or being cleansed, forgiven, or being made a new creature. It is about being empowered in your new life! God puts His spirit within us!

III. THE HEALING REQUIRES A NEW APPROACH TO LIFE (v.27).

A. In the natural world life changes are essential for good health.

B. In one's spiritual life, changes are also essential, BUT they are aided by the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit will move you!

Hebrews 8:9-11

New International Version (NIV)

9 It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord.

10 This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord.

I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.

I will be their God, and they will be my people.

11 No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.

Hebrews 10:15-17

New International Version (NIV)

15 The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says: **16** "This

is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.” 17 Then he adds: “Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.”

CONCLUSION

Minister Matt Dabbs makes a great point when he wrote in his blog: “With a numb left arm, the elephant on the chest pressure, and cold sweats, most of us would be rushing to the hospital for help. When it comes to heart problems it doesn’t take much to send us looking for help and quick. So many times that is not true for the spiritual health of our hearts. We may have been experiencing symptoms of a sick spiritual heart for years but never seek out any help. The warning signs are serious, predictable, and potentially deadly:

- Numbness of our emotions – when we see the hurting and no longer care to help.
- Calloused words – when our speech is full of bitterness and disdain.
- Blurred vision – we no longer see God or others like we used to.
- Isolation – we no longer desire to spend time with others and like to keep to ourselves

There are many other symptoms that could be indicative of an oncoming spiritual infarction but the result of ignoring these warning signs is fatal. The treatment? Give your heart to the best spiritual cardiac surgeon the world has ever known, Jesus Christ. He can restore your emotions, correct your speech problems, bring back your vision, and bring you out of isolation. But first we have to be willing to let him deal with our whole heart. We have to sign off on the release form allowing him to do with our hearts as he wills.

We often only want to give Jesus the lovely areas of our hearts. We like for him to see only those areas we have things together in and keep him out of the embarrassing areas. That is like telling a cardiologist to operate on your heart but only letting him cut on the healthy parts. It just doesn’t make sense. To be spiritually healthy we have to give Christ access to our hearts and all their recesses, good and bad, healthy and sick. He will know what to do. That takes trust and vulnerability but it is the only way to walk out of the operating room alive.” -

<http://mattdabbs.wordpress.com/2007/08/12/spiritual-cardiology/>

Study Notes:

I WILL GIVE YOU A NEW HEART AND PUT A NEW SPIRIT IN YOU: God will give Israel new heart and spirit, and will remove their hardness of heart and give them soft hearts (ie, pliable minds: cp Eze 11:19; 18:31; 2Co 3:3-6). The heart stands for the whole person -- mind, will, and emotions (cp Eze 2:4; 3:7) -- and the spirit describes the motivation that drives thought and conduct.

John Wesley comments:

"V. 25. Sprinkle -- This signifies both the blood of Christ sprinkled upon their conscience, to take away their guilt, as the water of purification was sprinkled, to take away their ceremonial uncleanness and the grace of the spirit sprinkled on the whole soul, to purify it from all corrupt inclinations and dispositions.

"V. 26. A new heart -- A new frame of soul, a mind changed, from sinful to holy, from carnal to spiritual. A heart in which the law of God is written, Jer 31:33. A sanctified heart, in which the almighty grace of God is victorious, and turns it from all sin to God. A new spirit -- A new, holy frame in the spirit of man; which is given to him, not wrought by his own power. The stony -- The senseless unfeeling. Out of your flesh -- Out of you. Of flesh -- That is, quite of another temper, hearkening to God's law, trembling at his threats, moulded into a compliance with his whole will; to forbear, do, be, or suffer what God will, receiving the impress of God, as soft wax receives the impress of the seal.

"V. 29. I will also save you -- I will continue to save you. From all your uncleannesses -- Salvation from all uncleannesses, includes justification, entire sanctification, and meetness for glory. The corn -- All necessaries comprised in one."

— *Explanatory Notes Upon the Old Testament.*

— **Adam Clarke comments:**

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— "Verse 26. A new heart also will I give you] I will change the whole of your infected nature; and give you new appetites, new passions; or, at least, the old ones *purified* and *refined*. The *heart* is generally understood to mean all the *affections* and *passions*.

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— "And a new spirit will I put within you] I will renew your *minds*, also *enlighten* your *understanding*, *correct* your *judgment*, and *refine* your *will*; so that you shall have a *new spirit* to actuate your new *heart*.

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— "I will take away the stony heart] That heart that is *hard*, *impenetrable*, and *cold*; the affections and passions that are unyielding, frozen to good, unaffected by heavenly things; that are slow to credit the words of God. I will entirely remove this heart: it is the opposite to that which I have promised you; and you cannot have the *new heart* and the old *heart* at the same time.

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— "And I will give you a heart of flesh.] One that can *feel*, and that can *enjoy*; that can feel *love to God* and to *all men*, and be a proper habitation for the living God.

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— "Verse 27. And I will put my Spirit within you] To keep the *heart of flesh alive*, the

feeling heart still sensible, the loving heart still happy. I will put my Spirit, the great principle of light, life, and love, within you, to actuate the new spirit, and to influence the new affections and passions; that the animal spirit may not become brutish, that the mental powers become not foolish. I will put my Spirit within you, so that as the new spirit may influence the new heart, so will MY SPIRIT influence YOUR new spirit, that each may have a proper mover; and then all will be pure, regular, and harmonious, when passion is influenced by reason, and reason by the Holy Ghost.

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— "And the *cause* shall be evidenced by the *effects*; for I will *cause you to walk in my statutes* — not only to *believe* and *reverence* my appointments relative to what I command you to *perform*; but ye shall *walk in them*, your *conduct* shall be regulated by them. 'And ye shall keep my judgments;' whatsoever I enjoin you to avoid. And ye shall *do them* - ye shall not only *avoid* every appearance of *evil*, but keep all my ordinances and commandments unblamably.

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— "Here is the salvation that God promises to give to restored Israel; and here is the salvation that is the birthright of every Christian believer: *the complete destruction of all sin in the soul, and the complete renewal of the heart*; no *sin* having any place *within*, and no *unrighteousness* having any place *without*.

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— "'But where are they that are thus saved?' *Ans.* Wherever *true Christians* are to be found. 'But I know many *true Christians* that have not this salvation, but daily mourn over their evil hearts?' *Ans.* They may be sincere, but they are not *true Christians*; i.e., such as are saved from their sins; the true Christians are those who are *filled with the nature and Spirit of Christ*. But I will ask a question in my turn: 'Do those you mention think it a *virtue* to be always *mourning* over their *impurities*?' Most certainly. Then it is a pity they were not *better instructed*. It is right they should *mourn* while they feel an *impure heart*; but why do they not apply to that *blood which cleanses from all unrighteousness*, and to that *Spirit which cleanses the very thoughts of the heart by his inspiration*? Many employ that time in *brooding and mourning* over their impure hearts, which should be spent in prayer and faith before God, that their impurities might be washed away. In what a state of nonage are many members of the Christian Church!"

— — *Clarke's Commentary.*

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Matthew Henry

Water is an emblem of the cleansing our polluted souls from sin. But no water can do more than take away the filth of the flesh. Water seems in general the sacramental sign of the sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost; yet this is always connected with the atoning blood of Christ. When the latter is applied by faith to the conscience, to cleanse it from evil works, the former is always applied to the powers of the soul, to purify it from the pollution of sin. All that have an interest in the new covenant, have a new heart and a new spirit, in order to their walking in newness of life. God would give a heart of flesh, a soft and tender heart, complying with his holy will. Renewing grace works as great a change in the soul, as the turning a dead stone into living flesh. God will put his Spirit within, as a Teacher, Guide, and Sanctifier. The promise of God's grace to fit us for our duty, should quicken our constant care and endeavour to do our duty. These are promises to be pleaded by, and will be fulfilled to, all true believers in every age.