

God's Quest of our Human Heart

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I. Introduction.

II. God's quest for the human heart.

A. The work of creation was done by the Word of God, but the very breath of God created man. (Genesis 1, 2:7)

B. Since man is created in the image of God, he has a unique dignity and capacity for relationship with God. (Psalm 8)

C. Our unique capacity for relationship was broken at the Fall. (Genesis 3, Isaiah 59:2, Romans 5:12)

D. Sin affected man deep down to the very level of his heart. God's heart is grieved at the heart of mankind. (Genesis 6)

E. God's promise is that all the families of the earth will be blessed. God has a quest for the nations with regard to heart-change. (Genesis 12:3, Galatians 3:7-8)

F. God's Old Covenant was His quest for His people under a different plan. (Exodus 24)

1. It centered on the giving of the Law.

2. It was God doing something special to get God to relate to Him.

3. Ways to know God under the Old Covenant.

a. The tabernacle was the place people went to be reconciled to God. There was limited access to God through the tabernacle. (Exodus 20:18-19)

b. The law itself, which was external. Contained in it was God's will for behavior and life with Him, His creation and the rest of the world. The goal was to create a kind of heart in a person. (Deuteronomy 5:29, 6:5, 10:12, 16)

G. God had enough with idolatry, so both nations of Israel ultimately went into captivity.

H. The problem with Israel was a problem of the heart—sin deceives the heart making one unable to repair it. (Jeremiah 3:17, 7:24, 17:1, 17:9, 9:26)

I. God promises a New Covenant. (Jeremiah 31:31)

III. Four blessings of the New Covenant.

A. The law would be written on the heart instead of on tablets of stone, changing the heart. (II Corinthians 3, 5:17)

1. One experiences the ability to change.

2. We are to work out our salvation because God is at work within us. (Philippians 2:13, Ezekiel 11:19, 36:26)

B. God gives us a new covenant relationship with Himself. (Exodus 19:5-6, Jeremiah 33, Romans 8:13, Hebrews 4:16)

1. We have direct access to God.

2. There is intimacy with God.

C. Immediate and personal knowledge of God.

D. The permanent forgiveness of sin.

1. Because of the blood of the perfect sacrifice, our sins are taken away permanently.

2. There is a difference between atonement (Old Covenant) and remission (New Covenant). Jesus' sacrifice is once for all. We are released from an obligation. (Matthew 26:28, John 1:29)

IV. The Old Covenant needed to come first to show that we cannot be right on our own power.

A. Sin will ruin us, and there is nothing in us that can fix us.

B. Only Messiah can save us from our heart problems. He gives us a new heart. (Ephesians 3:16)

Application questions:

1. How would you summarize the relationship between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant?

2. What was function of the Old Covenant?

3. Which blessing of the New Covenant stands out to you the most? What strikes you?
