**A Matter Of The Heart**

By Nathan L Morrison for Sunday November 29th, 2020

Text: Deuteronomy 6:5; Mark 12:30

Intro

1. No matter what time-period it is God has always wanted His people to serve Him from their hearts, and has specified how to worship Him!
   1. Deuteronomy 6:4-7: The Israelites were called upon to love God with all their heart, soul, and might, and to write these words on their hearts.
      1. While these things were to be on their hearts they were also commanded to use physical things to remind them of these words.
      2. Deut. 6:8-12: After they were told to speak of these commands and teach them to their children (6:7) they were to bind them on their hands and to their foreheads, and write them on their door posts and gates so they don’t forget God in Canaan!
         1. God most likely meant their actions (Hands) and desires (Eyes) were to be within the bounds of His commands but the Jews actually wrote portions of the Law and stored them in little containers called Phylacteries and wore them on their wrists and around their foreheads.
         2. Something spiritual was made into something physical, probably from a command to do just that from Exodus 13:16.
      3. God’s point was made clear in Deut. 6:10-12 where He said they were not to forget God and all that He did to bring them into the Promised Land.
      4. Numbers 15:37-41: God commanded the men to wear tassels on their garments with a blue cord or thread to remind them to be obedient and holy. *Physical reminders.*
   2. Mark 12:29-31: Jesus reiterated the two most important commandments regarding love: Love God with whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself.
      1. Jesus said in Matthew 22:40, “On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”
      2. Jesus also said the physical reminders became a stumbling block as it presented some with an opportunity for pride and self-righteousness, meaning they forgot the spiritual meaning and reason for God’s words.
      3. Matthew 23:5: “But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels of their garments.”
      4. They wrote extra stuff and added more than the blue tassel! It became showy!
         1. Over the years other colors were added to signify their authority and status within their communities, such as royalty, nobility, rabbi, teacher or healer. (<https://jewsforjesus.org/publications/newsletter-sep-1993/the-tallit-and-tzitzit>)
      5. Jesus told His followers they needed to give God their whole hearts!
2. A contrast can be seen in the physical manifestations of the Law of Moses and the spiritual focus of the Gospel of Jesus! *(Law of Liberty – James 1:25; 2:12)*
3. **Give Me Your Heart!**
   1. Jeremiah 8:1-2
      1. God’s charge against the people is they have given their devotions (heart, love) to idols, in that they: Loved, served, walked after, sought, and worshiped false gods.
   2. Devotions that belong to God alone!
   3. Mk. 12:29-30: Jesus said man is to: ***Love*** God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Deut. 6:5).
   4. Mt. 4:10: Jesus told Satan, “You shall worship God and ***serve*** Him only!” (Deut. 10:12-13; 11:13-14) – *Perhaps quoted from Deut. 6:13 & 10:20*
   5. Col. 1:9-12: “***Walk*** in a manner worthy of the Lord” (Deut. 5:33)
   6. Mt. 6:33: Jesus said, “***Seek*** first His kingdom and His righteousness” (Deut. 4:29)
   7. John 4:23-24: Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well, “God is spirit, and those who ***worship*** Him must ***worship*** in spirit and truth!” (Deut. 6:13)
   8. God has always wanted the heart of His people and foretold a time where the physical reminders would be done away with.
      1. They (physical manifestations) ultimately failed to keep the people’s hearts pure and became a way to mentally check off a list and call it good!
      2. Jeremiah 31:31-34: The days were coming where God would make a “new covenant” with the people of Israel, “not like the covenant which I made with their fathers.”
      3. This new covenant would consist of God’s “law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”
      4. God always demanded their devotion to Him to be from the heart, but this new covenant would focus on the spiritual relationship over the physical.
   9. The “New Covenant” is here and demands our hearts!
      1. Luke 22:20: Jesus said the New Covenant is in His blood (Acts 20:28: Jesus purchased the church with His own blood) – *Foretold in John 4:21-24*
         1. *Luke 24:44: The Law, Psalms and Prophets had to be fulfilled in Jesus.*
      2. Heb. 8:7-13; 10:15-18: In both places the Hebrew writer quotes from Jer. 31:31-34 to show the “New Covenant” has happened in Jesus, and says when the New Covenant happened the first covenant was made obsolete.
         1. The trouble was not with the first covenant itself: “…the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good” (Rom. 7:12; I Tim. 1:8).
         2. The trouble was with the people to whom it was given. He did not find fault with the covenant but with His covenant people. The first covenant was based on man's promise to obey (Ex. 19:8; 24:7), and therefore it was not destined to last very long.
         3. This New Covenant is not like the Mosaic Law, but a covenant of grace.
         4. Men will be given a new moral nature, and knowledge of the Lord will be universal, just as was foretold by Jeremiah!
         5. The New Covenant emphasized what God will do, not what man must do; notice the occurrences of God saying, “I will” in Jer. 31:33-34.
         6. The promise of forgiveness under the New Covenant means that there is no longer an offering for sin (Heb. 10:14, 18)
      3. Heb. 9:15: Jesus is the Mediator of the New Covenant because it is through Him that its blessings are secured. The Covenant was ratified in His blood (Luke 22:20).
         1. Now those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance!
      4. Heb. 10:19-25: After showing the foretold New Covenant was paid for in the death of Jesus, the Hebrew writer brings into focus what is necessary: A sincere heart!
         1. Heb. 10:22: “let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” (See also: I Tim. 1:5)
         2. A sincere heart full of faith is what God calls upon His people under the New Covenant to possess and to “hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering” (v. 23).
         3. From there we can encourage one another to love and good deeds!
   10. Jesus paid for the New Covenant in His blood and wants your love from a sincere heart!
4. **Contrast of Physical Old Law & Spiritual Gospel Of Jesus**
   1. Under the New Covenant in Jesus’ blood (Luke 22:20) 9 out of the 10 Commandments are repeated, but the Sabbath Day is not one of them!

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| **Old Covenant** | **New Covenant** |
| *Exodus 20:3-17* | *Hebrews 8:6-13* |
| 1. No other gods | 1. Acts 14:15-17; I Thess. 1:9; |
| 1. No idols | 1. Acts 17; I Cor. 6:9; I Thess. 1:9; I John 5:21 |
| 1. Don’t take the Lord’s name in vain | 1. Mt. 6:9; James 5:12; I Tim. 1:17 |
| 1. Keep the Sabbath Day holy |  |
| 1. Honor father & mother | 1. Eph. 6:1-2 |
| 1. Do not murder | 1. Rom. 13:9; Rev. 21:8 |
| 1. Do not commit adultery | 1. Rom. 13:9; I Cor. 6:9 |
| 1. Do not steal | 1. Rom. 13:9; I Cor. 6:10; Eph. 4:26 |
| 1. Do not bear false witness | 1. Col. 3:9-10; Rev. 21:8 |
| 1. Do not covet | 1. Rom. 13:9; I Cor. 6:10; Col. 3:5 |

* 1. Notice the shift from physical, ceremonial things to a focus on the spiritual from the heart. *God has always specified how He wanted mankind to worship Him!*

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| Precedent set by God – Blessings and possession of the Promised Land (their reward) was conditional – they had to be obedient (Deut. Chapters 28-30; Deut. 29:22-29; 30:1-10) | The Christian’s reward (Heaven) is conditional – we must be obedient (Heb. 5:9) |
| Priests: from tribe of Levi, did the “church” work, access to God, must go through them for forgiveness (II Chron. 35:2-4) | All Christians are saints (Phil. 1:1, Eph. 1:1, Col.1:2) & priests (I Pet. 2:9) – Jesus is High Priest (Heb. 7:11-24)  Saints have direct access to God and forgiveness through prayer and the word (Jn. 14:6; Acts 8:22)  Repentance – Greek word means transformative change of heart; a change of direction. |
| Day of Atonement – yearly animal sacrifice for forgiveness of sins, performed by the High Priest (Ex. 30:9, 10; Lev. 23:28) | Christ (our High Priest Heb. 2:13-17) died once for all (Heb. 9:12; 10:10) and for all time! (Heb. 10:12, 14) |
| Gave 1/10 of all they had, various offerings (grain, oil, etc.) Lev. 6:20, Ex. 29:40 | Christians give as prospered (I Cor. 16:2) & purposed in heart – not a set amount (II Cor. 9:7) |
| Circumcision – a physical procedure commanded by God for all male Jews – a physical sign of the covenant with God (Gen. 17:11; Lev. 12:3) | Circumcision of the heart by the Spirit (Romans 2:29). A pure heart separated unto God – the heart must be changed. |
| Do not murder (physical murder) - (Ex. 20:13) | If you hate your brother, you are a murderer  (I John 3:15-17) |
| Do not commit adultery (Ex. 20:14) | If a man looks at a woman to lust after her, he has committed adultery in his heart (Mt. 5:28) |
| Music – played, sang. Playing & singing were part of the ceremony accompanying animal sacrifices (II Chr. 29:25-29) | Music – singing & making melody in the heart (Eph. 5:19) – *No need for animal sacrifices (Heb. 10:4) since Jesus is our perfect sacrifice (Heb. 10:12, 14)* |
| God’s dwelling place – Tabernacle (Ex. 36:8-39:43) and later the Temple (II Kings 23:27) | God dwells in the Christian’s heart (I Cor. 3:16; Rom. 8:9; Eph. 2:20-22) |

**Old Law (ceremonial, physical) New Law (spiritual, from the heart)**

* 1. The Hebrew writer, speaking of Jesus (Heb. 7:24) said, “But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises” (Hebrews 8:6).
  2. We are no longer under the Old Covenant but under the New Covenant in Christ’s blood (Luke 22:20), the law of Christ (I Cor. 9:21), also called the Law of Liberty (James 1:25; 2:12)!

Conclusion

1. No matter what time-period it is, Old Covenant or New Covenant, God has always wanted His people to serve Him from their hearts, and He has always specified how He wanted mankind to worship Him!
2. Mark 12:29-31: Jesus reiterated the two most important commandments regarding love: Love God with whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself.
   1. “On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 22:40)
3. John 14:15: Jesus connects obedience to the heart when He says, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.” *Obedience to God equals love for God!*
4. I John 5:2-3: The apostle John says saints show love for “the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments…and His commandments are not burdensome.”
5. The gospel of Jesus calls us through grace to love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith!
6. If you are not a Christian, you need to be. You can obey the gospel from the heart and purify your souls (Rom. 6:17; I Pet. 1:22)! Repent, be baptized, and inherit the promise of eternal life!
7. If a Christian in error, you need to be doing the will of God from the heart (Eph. 6:5-8) and don’t forget the purification from your sins (II Pet. 1:9)! Repent, be renewed, and let your light shine!
8. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!