

THE HEART

What exactly is the “Heart” in Scripture?

The primary Scripture words for “heart” are the Hebrew לֵבָב (lêbâb pronounced *lay-bawb'*) or the Greek καρδία (kardia pronounced *kar-dee'-ah*)

- ◆ Sometimes our English translations render these words as “soul” but that is clearly wrong
- ◆ The words for soul are the Hebrew נֶפֶשׁ (nephesh pronounced *neh'-fesh*) or the Greek ψυχή (psuchē *psoo-khay'*)

There are 35 verses in the New King James translation that contain both “heart” and “soul”, some of which are shown below:

Deuteronomy 4:29 (NKJV)

But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.

Deuteronomy 6:5 (NKJV)

You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

Psalms 13:2 (NKJV)

How long shall I take counsel in my soul, Having sorrow in my heart daily?

Psalms 84:2 (NKJV)

My soul longs, yes, even faints For the courts of the LORD; My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.

Matthew 22:37 (NKJV)

Jesus said to him, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”

Acts 4:32 (NKJV)

Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV)

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Clearly, **heart and soul** are two **different things**

- ◆ Biblical scholars generally agree that our **soul** is comprised of **mind, emotion and will**
- ◆ So, what then is the **heart**?

Easton's Bible Dictionary says: The heart is the **center** not only of **spiritual activity**, but of **all the operations of human life**... **The heart is also the seat of the conscience** (Rom. 2:15). **It is naturally wicked** (Gen. 8:21), **and hence it contaminates the whole life and character** (Matt. 12:34; 15:18; **compare** Eccl. 8:11; Ps. 73:7). **Hence the heart must be changed, regenerated** (Ezek. 36:26; 11:19; Ps. 51:10-14), **before a man can** willingly obey God. The process of **salvation begins in the heart** by the believing reception of the testimony of God, while the **rejection of that testimony hardens the heart** (Ps. 95:8; Prov. 28:14; 2 Chr. 36:13).

Holman's Bible Dictionary says: **HEART: The center of the physical, mental, and spiritual life of humans...** **The heart became the focus for all the vital functions of the body; including both intellectual and spiritual life. The heart and the intellect are closely connected, the heart being the seat of intelligence...** **The heart is connected with thinking: As a person "thinketh in his heart, so is he"** (Prov. 23:7). **To ponder something in one's heart means to consider it carefully** (Luke 1:66; 2:19).

Closely related to the mind are **acts of the will**, acts resulting from a conscious or even a deliberate decision. Thus, 2 Corinthians 9:7: "Every man according as he **purposeth in his heart**, so let him give." Connected to the will are human **wishes and desires**. Romans 1:24 describes how God gave them up "through the **lusts of their own hearts**, to dishonor their own bodies." David was a **man after God's "own heart"** because he would "fulfill all" of God's will (Acts 13:22).

Not only is the heart associated with the activities of the mind and the will, but **it is also closely connected to the feelings and affections of a person. Emotions such as joy originate in the heart** (Ps. 4:7; Isa 65:14). Other **emotions** are ascribed to the heart, especially in the Old Testament. Nabal's **fear** is described by the phrase: "**his heart died within him**" (1 Sam. 25:37; compare Ps. 143:4). **Discouragement or despair** is described by the phrase "**heaviness in the heart**" which makes it **stoop** (Prov. 12:25). Proverbs 25:20, describes **sorrow** as having "**an heavy heart.**" The heart is also the **seat of the affection of love and its opposite, hate**. In the Old Testament, for example, Israel is commanded: "You shall not hate your brother **in your heart**, but you shall reason with your neighbor, lest you bear sin because of him" (Lev. 19:17 RSV). A similar attitude, **bitter jealousy**, is described in James 3:14 as coming from the heart. On the other hand, **love is based in the heart**. The believer is commanded to **love God "with all your heart"** (Mark 12:30; Deut. 6:5). Paul taught that the purpose of God's command is love which comes from a "**pure heart**" (1 Tim. 1:5).

Finally, the heart is spoken of in Scripture as the **center of the moral and spiritual life. The conscience, for instance, is associated with the heart**. In fact, the **Hebrew language had no word for conscience**, so the word heart was often used to express this concept: "**my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live**" (**Job 27:6**). The Revised Standard Version translates the word for "**heart**" as "**conscience**" in 1 Samuel 25:31 (RSV). All **moral conditions** from the highest to the lowest are said to **center in the heart**. Sometimes the heart is used to represent a person's **true nature or character**. This true nature is contrasted with the outward appearance: "man looks on the outward appearance, but the **Lord looks on the heart**" (1 Sam. 16:7 RSV).

On the negative side, depravity is said to issue from the heart: "**The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?**" (Jer. 17:9). **Jesus said that out of the heart comes evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander** (Matt. 15:19). In other words, defilement comes from within rather than from without.

Because the **heart is at the root of the problem**, this is the place where **God does His work in the individual**. For instance, the work of the law is "**written in their hearts,**" and **conscience** is the proof of this (Rom. 2:15). The heart is the **field where seed (the Word of God) is sown** (Matt. 13:19; Luke 8:15). In addition to being the place where the natural laws of God are written, **the heart is the place of renewal**. Before Saul became king, **God gave him a new heart** (1 Sam. 10:9). God promised Israel that He would give them a **new spirit within**, take away their "**stony heart**" and give them a "**heart of flesh**" (Ezek. 11:19). Paul said that a person must **believe in the heart to be saved, "for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness"** (Rom. 10:10). (See also Mark 11:23; Heb. 3:12.)

Finally, the heart is the **dwelling place of God. Two persons of the Trinity are said to reside in the heart of the believer**. God has given us the "**earnest of the Spirit in our hearts**" (2 Cor. 1:22). Ephesians 3:17 expresses the desire that "**Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.**" The love of God "**is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us**" (Rom. 5:5).

God Created Humans to be the Temple of God (1Corinthians 3:16)

Chart #1 shows the design of the **Temple of God** (from “The Way of Agape” by Chuck & Nancy Missler)

- The **Holy of Holies (A)** was where the **Spirit of God** resided.
 - ⇒ “He (Solomon) built the **twenty-cubit room** at the rear of the temple, from floor to ceiling, with cedar boards; he built it inside as the inner sanctuary, as the **Most Holy Place**... And he prepared the inner sanctuary inside the temple, to set the **ark of the covenant** of the LORD there. ²⁰The inner sanctuary was twenty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and twenty cubits high. He overlaid it with pure gold, and overlaid the altar of cedar. ²¹So Solomon overlaid the inside of the temple with pure gold. He stretched gold chains across the front of the inner sanctuary, and overlaid it with gold... Inside the inner sanctuary he made **two cherubim** of olive wood, each ten cubits high. ²⁴One wing of the cherub was five cubits, and the other wing of the cherub five cubits: ten cubits from the tip of one wing to the tip of the other. ²⁵And the other cherub was ten cubits; both cherubim were of the same size and shape. ²⁶The height of one cherub was ten cubits, and so was the other cherub. ²⁷Then he set the cherubim inside the inner room; and they stretched out the wings of the cherubim so that the wing of the one touched one wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall. And their wings touched each other in the middle of the room. ²⁸Also he overlaid the cherubim with gold.” (1Kings 6:16, 19-21, 23-28)
 - ⇒ No one was permitted to enter it except the high priest, and that only once a year. It **contained the ark of the covenant** only (Ex. 25:10-16). It was in the form of a perfect cube of 20 cubits (21.888 inches per “sacred” cubit, so about 36.5 feet)
- The **Holy Place (B)** is where the **sacrificial acts of worship occurred**
 - ⇒ “And in front of it the temple sanctuary was forty cubits long. ¹⁸The inside of the temple was cedar, carved with ornamental buds and open flowers. All was cedar; there was no stone to be seen.” (1Kings 6:17-18)
 - ⇒ It was 20 cubits long and 10 in height and breadth. It was illuminated by the **golden candlestick**, as it had no opening to admit the light. It contained the **table of showbread** (Ex. 25:23-29) and the **golden altar of incense** (Ex. 30:1-11). It was divided from the holy of holies by a **veil** of the most costly materials and the brightest colours.
- The **Porch (C)** was the last part of the Temple that was on a raised platform called the **Upper Level (G)**
 - ⇒ “The **two doors** were of olive wood; and he carved on them figures of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold; and he spread gold on the cherubim and on the palm trees. ³³So for the door of the sanctuary he also made **doorposts** of olive wood, one-fourth of the wall. ³⁴And the two doors were of cypress wood; two panels comprised one folding door, and two panels comprised the other folding door. ³⁵Then he carved cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers on them, and overlaid them with gold applied evenly on the carved work.” (1Kings 6:31:35)

- ⇒ It is called “**Solomon’s Porch**” because it and the two **Bronze Pillars** (D) were the only relics of Solomon’s temple left standing after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians.
- Around the outside of the Sanctuary on the Upper Level were the **Hidden Chambers** (E)
 - ⇒ This is where the **priests** were supposed to store the **worship items** for the Holy Place and some of Israel’s **treasures and trophies** to remind them of all that God had done for them. However, it was here that the priests actually stored their own **personal idolatrous worship items**
 - ⇒ *“Furthermore He said to me, “Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the **great abominations** that the house of Israel commits here, to **make Me go far away from My sanctuary**? Now turn again, you will see greater abominations.” ⁷So He brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, there was a hole in the wall. ⁸Then He said to me, “Son of man, dig into the wall”; and when I dug into the wall, there was a door. ⁹And He said to me, “Go in, and see the wicked abominations which they are doing there.” ¹⁰So I went in and saw, and there—every sort of creeping thing, **abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed all around on the walls.** ¹¹And there stood before them seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel, and in their midst stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan. Each man had a censer in his hand, and a thick cloud of incense went up. ¹²Then He said to me, “Son of man, have you seen **what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the room of his idols**? For they say, ‘The LORD does not see us, the LORD has forsaken the land.’” (Ezekiel 8:6-12)*
- Stairs led up to the Upper Level and the Sanctuary from the **Lower Level** which was called the **Inner Court** (H)
 - ⇒ *“And he built the inner court with three rows of hewn stone and a row of cedar beams.” (1Kings 6:36)*
- The **Outer Court** (I) was on yet an even lower level
 - ⇒ *“In the fourth year the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid, in the month of Ziv. ³⁸And in the eleventh year, in the month of Bul, which is the eighth month, the house was finished in all its details and according to all its plans. So he was seven years in building it.” (1Kings 6:37)*

Chart #2 shows how the **original blueprint** of humanity (and that of a **new testament born-again believer**) is **modeled** after the **design** of the **Temple of God**:

- The **Holy of Holies** is where the **Holy Spirit** (Greek “pneuma”) is resident
- The **Holy Place** represents the **heart** (Greek “kardia”)
- The **Porch** (including the **Pillars**) represents our **willpower** (Greek “dianoia”)
- The **Hidden Chambers** represent the **subconscious** (Greek “heder”)
- The **Inner Court** represents the **conscious Soul** (Greek “psyche”)
- The **Outer Court** represents the **body** (Greek “soma”) with the shaded area of the charts denoting our **“flesh”**

God Created Humans with a “Good” Heart Which the Devil Corrupted

Scripture tells us that God pronounced what He had created as “*very good*” (Genesis 1:31)

- But then Adam & Eve were **deceived** by the serpent and **sinned**, and the **heart became wicked**

Genesis 6:5

⁵Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Jeremiah 17:9

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?”

Matthew 15:19

¹⁹For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.

- **Chart #3** shows what happened to the **original design** when we were **corrupted by the sins of Adam & Even** and when we were **cast out of the Garden of Eden** (i.e. separated from God)
 - ⇒ **God’s Spirit** was removed from our **Spirit-Man**
 - ⇒ Having eaten of the **Tree of the Knowledge of Good & Evil**, our **heart** became **divided** into “**Good**” (i.e. our conscience”) and “**Evil**” (i.e. our sinful nature)
 - ⇒ And **God’s Will** was replaced with our own **Self-Will** (i.e. selfishness)
- This causes us to have a **divided heart**
 - ⇒ **Psalm 86:11** *Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.* (NIV)

God Sacrificed His Son Jesus so that We Can be Restored & Renewed

- *“I will give you a **new heart** and put a **new spirit** within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.”* (Ezek. 36:26-27)
- **Chart #4** shows how this **new heart & new Spirit** are put back into **our Temple**
 - ⇒ *“Do you not know that you are the **temple of God** and that the **Spirit of God** dwells in you? ¹⁷If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.”* (1Corinthians 3:16-17)

However, We Still have Free Will to Choose or Ignore our Temple

If we “*walk in the Spirit*” (Galatians 5:16, 25) we **open ourselves up by choice to the Spirit within us**

- **Chart #5** shows how this allows **God’s Spirit, Love, Thoughts & Willpower** to work through us **if and only if we choose to relinquish our will to His**
 - ⇒ This allows the **light within** to shine out through our flesh
- This is what is meant by “*putting on the new man*” (Ephesians 4:24 & Colossians 3:10)
 - ⇒ While we are **renewed** within our **inner sanctuary**, however, that does not mean we still don’t have “*lusts of the flesh*” to deal with
 - ⇒ Deep in the “**Hidden Chambers**” of our **subconscious** are all the **hurts, wounds, guilt, shame, etc.** that have **piled up throughout our life**
- This is the area the Bible refers to as our “*inward parts*”
 - ⇒ **Psalm 51:6** “*Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.*”

If we **choose to ignore our renewed Spirit and Heart**, then we will “*fulfill the lusts of the flesh*” (Galatians 5:16)

- **Chart # 6** shows what happens when we **choose our own thoughts, desires, will over His**
 - ⇒ We **close the “sanctuary” doors** to the inner Temple and **don’t allow God to work through us**
 - ⇒ Most of the time, this is an **unconscious or emotional** decision which “*quenches the Spirit*” (1Thessalonians 5:19)