

The “Shema” Series: Part 2

Heart (Levav/Lev)

A four week series of word studies on key words within the Shema Prayer

Sunday, February 25, 2018

Shema: pronounced “Sha-mah” - A prayer that Jews have recited twice a day for thousands of years.

Deuteronomy 6:1-9 (NIV)

Love the LORD Your God

6 These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, ² so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. ³ Hear, Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised you.

⁴ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.^[a] ⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Hear- Listen & Obey

LORD- name of the Jewish God— Yahweh (too holy to speak or even write)- YHWH + AdOnAy (Lord) = Yahowah (where Christian scribes got Jehovah)

Love (Ahavah)- Feeling AND Action

HEART (Levav/Lev)- Thought/Physical/Emotion/Choice

Ancient Hebrews had no concept of the brain and had no word for it. They imagined that all of a human's intellectual activity takes place in the HEART.

-Know

-Understand

-Wisdom (Book of Proverbs)

-Discern (Like Solomon did when he was king)

(All from the HEART)

We feel pain in our HEART, like Hannah did when she learned that she couldn't have children (1 Samuel). In fact, the term "a broken HEART" actually originates in The Bible and is from ancient Hebrew.

We can feel fear, distress and even depression within our HEARTS and yet, our HEARTS can also bring us great satisfaction and even joy.

(Judges 16:25 & Jeremiah 15:16)

Your HEART is also where your affection lies. **Psalm 37:4 (ESV)** says, *"Delight yourself in the LORD and He will give you the desires of your HEART."*

2 Samuel 7:3 (ESV)

"And Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your HEART, for the Lord is with you.""

In The Bible, the HEART is the center of human existence as we read in **Proverbs 4:23 (NLT)**, *"Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life."*

The prophet Jeremiah thought of the human HEART in a different way when he wrote, *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9 ESV)*

Jeremiah had watched an entire generation turn away from God and even sacrifice their own children as if it was a good thing. No wonder he wrote those words! This is why, in the Hebrew imagination, the only hope for the world is the complete renewal of the human HEART.

Moses- a circumcised HEART- (Deut. 30:6)

David- a pure HEART (Psalm 51:10)

Ezekiel- a restored HEART (Ezekiel 36:26)

Jeremiah- a HEART with the Law (Torah) written on it

Mark 12:29-31 (ESV)

“Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.””

Every day God’s people are called to devote to God their bodies and minds, feelings and desires, their futures and their failures. This is what it means to “love the LORD your God with all your HEART.”