

# OIM UPDATE

October 2016

As the Fall feasts of the Lord arrived this month, a variety of personal, providential circumstances during the month of Elul could not be ignored. Unexpectedly, the impetus for this series of events began with a bicycle accident that interrupted my 5 or 6 day-per-week eighteen-mile bike ride, designed to burn calories and get a good cardio workout. Thankfully, a broken collarbone from the accident ended up revealing some serious blockage in my heart arteries, during the pre-operation phase, delaying surgery to repair the break. So, during this season of repentance from the first of Elul through *Yom Kippur*, I have had some time to seriously reflect on not only my heart's physical condition, but most importantly the intentions and motivations of my spiritual heart.

Initially, while praying about my broken bone—before discovering the arteriostenosis in my heart—I was led to some of the Psalms of King David which speak about how fearfully and wonderfully human beings are made in their mother's womb:

“For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, *and* skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book were all written the days that were ordained *for me*, when as yet there was not one of them” (Psalm 139:13-16).

After the discovery of my heart blockage, the focus of my prayers soon added the heart of flesh which was given to me when I was born from above (Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26):

“For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a **new heart** and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a **heart of flesh**. I will **put My Spirit within you** and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. You will live in

the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God” (Ezekiel 36:24-28).

Despite the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, I was reminded that my heart of flesh still struggles with the old nature, which at times can return even as the sanctification process proceeds. During this present season of repentance, passages like the following came to mind:

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way” (Psalm 139:23-24).

This past month, I was invited by a good friend to attend an evangelical Christian men’s retreat via the auspices of the Tres Dias movement, which just happened to conclude on *Yom Teruah/Rosh HaShanah*. The timing was perfect for this season of reflection, and so I joyfully attended the three day retreat. As a result of the confluence of all these events, I was prompted to write this month’s lead article entitled, “**A Messianic Heart**,” in order to share what the Lord was showing me through this confluence of circumstances.

Significant progress continues to be made with Messianic Apologetics expanding its outreach via social media. During the past year, J.K. McKee has made efforts to be quite active on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. We appreciate your efforts of partnering with us via our ongoing **Technology Fund**, as we make upgrades to our computer equipment and abilities. This past month, the transfer of information from the old Messianic Apologetics website to the new WordPress based site steadily continues. We are also pleased to announce that audio teachings are now available via a new Messianic Apologetics channel on both iTunes and Podomatic, which you can download via your iPhone or Android.

Advancing His Kingdom, until the restoration of all things...

Mark Huey

# A MESSIANIC HEART

by Mark Huey

In recent weeks, circumstances surrounding the physical condition of my heart have led me to research not only information on coronary heart disease, but have also prompted me to consider what it means to have a “Messianic heart” for the Creator God. While it has been enlightening to learn about the physiology of how a physical heart functions and how arteries can become blocked, it has been much more profitable to search my spiritual heart and seek the Lord’s face during the annual season of repentance from the first of Elul to *Yom Kippur*. Providentially, during those forty days I was introduced to a ministry which displayed unconditional love to the attendees of a three day retreat that concluded on *Yom Teruah/Rosh HaShanah* or the Feast of Trumpets. *The timing “coincidences” were much too obvious for me to ignore.* So with renewed vigor from dodging a potential tragedy of a “widow maker” termination of my physical life, the thought of what it means to truly have a Messianic heart, or a heart like Yeshua the Messiah, came frequently into my mind.

Quite frankly, because I have never desired to be a cardiologist, but instead, have devoted a considerable amount of time throughout the past forty or so years to read and study the Holy Bible—I am much more comfortable seeking insight on “the heart” from God’s Word, rather than medical journals. After all, I know that the heart muscle is merely an organ created to pump blood throughout the circulatory system. But since the Hebrew terms for heart, *lev* (לֵב) and *levav* (לֵבָב), are mentioned nearly 1,000 times in the Tanakh, and the Greek term *kardia* (καρδία) some 157 times in the Apostolic Writings, in many ways, the Holy Scriptures can be considered a heart manual. I concluded that I could personally gain much more from using this personal “wake up” call to search my own heart, to ascertain if I had the “heart of Messiah,” and was over time being conformed more to His image (Romans 8:29). For most assuredly, the Jewish tradition during the annual forty-day season of repentance accentuated by the Ten Days of Awe culminating on *Yom Kippur*, is an opportune time to ask the Holy One to search our own hearts, as was emphasized and modeled to Israel by King David and recorded in these Psalms:

“Examine me, O LORD, and try me; **test my mind and my heart.** For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes, and I have walked in Your truth” (Psalm 26:2-3).

“**Search me, O God, and know my heart;** try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way” (Psalm 139:23-24).

Needless to say, the memory bank of Scriptures which included the word “heart” flooded my mind, as I sought the Father’s face for answers to the many questions I had about my own heart—but most especially the motivations that came forth from within my heart. Of course, many of the Scripture passages which deal with the heart are found in the Psalms and words of King David, who according to Samuel’s comments to King Saul, was a “man after God’s own heart”:

“Samuel said to Saul, ‘You have acted foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, for now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not endure. The LORD has sought out for Himself a **man after His own heart** [*ish k’levavo*, אִישׁ כְּלֵבָבוֹ], and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you” (1 Samuel 13:13-14).

One discovers in the interactions between the Prophet Samuel and King Saul, that the young David, who is eventually anointed king over Israel, is not chosen for his appearance or stature. Rather, from the Lord’s perspective—as One who looked upon David’s heart—David was chosen for qualities that only God Himself could truly see:

“But the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God *sees* not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, **but the LORD looks at the heart**” (1 Samuel 16:7).

The choice by the Holy One to make David the king over Israel—with David notably being a progenitor of the Messiah, the ultimate Son of David—is quite curious, given the testimony found in Scripture about David’s imperfect life. Yet, one can get a glimpse of David’s heart from the wealth of Psalms he composed, where he poured out his heart to the Lord. Perhaps the thing about David’s heart which indicated a strong desire to please God, is the consistent communion that reflected a sincere yearning to repent of anything which impeded his relationship with Him. David’s remorseful and repentant heart can be found in Psalms 32 and 51, purportedly after David was caught in his sin with Bathsheba. When you read these Psalms, hear David’s heart and his desire for restoration, knowing that the Lord had every right to turn His face away and bring just punishment for the iniquities he committed:

*“A Psalm of David. A Maskil. How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit! When I kept silent **about my sin**, my body wasted away through my **groaning all day long**. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was drained away *as* with the fever heat of summer. Selah. I **acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide**; I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD’; and You forgave the guilt*

of my sin. Selah. Therefore, let everyone who is godly pray to You in a time when You may be found; surely in a flood of great waters they will not reach him. You are my hiding place; You preserve me from trouble; You surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah. I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you. Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check, *otherwise* they will not come near to you. **Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but he who trusts in the LORD, lovingkindness shall surround him.** Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous ones; and shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart” (Psalm 32:1-11).

“For the choir director. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions. **Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.** For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. **Against You, You only, I have sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You are justified when You speak and blameless when You judge.** Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me. Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, and in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom. Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness, let the bones which You have broken rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and sustain me with a willing spirit. *Then* I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners will be converted to You. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation; *then* my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness. **O Lord, open my lips, that my mouth may declare Your praise.** For You do not delight in sacrifice, *otherwise* I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering. **the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.** By Your favor do good to Zion; build the walls of Jerusalem. Then You will delight in righteous sacrifices, in burnt offering and whole burnt offering; then young bulls will be offered on Your altar” (Psalm 51:1-19).

When you read and meditate upon these Psalms and other Psalms of repentance (such as Psalms 6; 38; 102; 130; 143), you find that being honest with the Holy One of Israel is imperative for revealing the inconsistencies in our hearts. The Lord wants His people to be honest with themselves, and totally transparent with Him in order to receive the forgiveness He freely offers—despite the natural condition of the heart before one is born from above, as

noted by the Prophet Jeremiah:

**“The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?”** (Jeremiah 17:9).

However for whatever reasons, despite his recorded sin, King David modeled a significant method of returning to the Almighty, and had a “Messianic heart” which desperately desired communion and intimacy with His Maker throughout his life. Certainly this stellar attribute is one of the primary reasons that the Holy One chose David to be a major ancestor of Yeshua the Messiah.

When one fast forwards to the post-resurrection time, after the early Believers were indwelt with the Holy Spirit, there is some absolute confirmation of this approach to the Holy One by the Apostle John. He succinctly summarizes the need to recognize and admit or confess one’s sin, with the confident knowledge that people will be forgiven and cleansed from all unrighteousness:

“If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Yeshua His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. **If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.** If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us” (1 John 1:6-10).

There are some serious questions for modern-day Believers who have been given a heart of flesh, and indwelt with the power of the Holy Spirit as promised in Ezekiel 36:26-27:

**“Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances”** (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

These questions might include:

- Do I sincerely want to be a man or woman after God’s own heart?
- Do I want a “Messianic heart” like King David?
- Am I willing to be honest with myself (and God), and confess my sin?
- Am I going to repent of my sin and return to the Holy One with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength?
- Am I more “Messiah like” (conformed to Yeshua’s image) today than I was a year ago?

One way to ascertain progress on the road to sanctification in the Messiah, is by listening or recalling what comes out of the mouth in conversations, and at different times when the emotions are moved. There is a significant by

Yeshua in the Gospel of Matthew that gets to the core substance of the matter. When one truly remembers what words have come out of the mouth over the past year, one should be able to discern the condition of his or her heart. In so doing, one might need to choose to continually circumcise the heart, and stiffen the neck no longer (Deuteronomy 10:16). Here is how Yeshua explained to the religious people of His era what they needed to hear, in order to truly understand the hardness of their hearts and their own self-deception:

“Then some Pharisees and scribes came to Yeshua from Jerusalem and said, ‘Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.’ **And He answered and said to them, ‘Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?’** For God said, “HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER” [Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16], and, “HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH” [Exodus 21:17; Leviticus 20:9]. But you say, “Whoever says to *his* father or mother, ‘Whatever I have that would help you has been given *to God,*’ he is not to honor his father or his mother.” And *by this* you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition. You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you: “THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME. BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN” [Isaiah 29:13, LXX]. After Yeshua called the crowd to Him, He said to them, ‘Hear and understand. ***It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man.***’ Then the disciples came and said to Him, ‘Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?’ But He answered and said, ‘Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit.’ Peter said to Him, ‘Explain the parable to us.’ Yeshua said, ‘Are you still lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated? **But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.** These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man” (Matthew 15:1-20).

In this unvarnished explanation to His Disciples, Yeshua detailed how the heart of people can be literally heard in the very words men or women utter. But rather than remember what others have said, think back to the words which have come out of your own mouth that have revealed some hardness of the heart toward others. This introspective self-analysis can be extremely beneficial, if one is truly honest. If there is some recollection of

hateful or impure thoughts which manifested as actual words ushering forth from the mouth, then follow the example of King David or the Apostle John. *Confess the sin, confident that the Lord will forgive and cleanse the repentant heart from all unrighteousness.* If some words were directed at someone within earshot, then take the time to humble yourself and ask the offended person for forgiveness. You will be amazed by the reception of others who might have taken an offense to something which was said inappropriately or in the heat of the moment. In many regards, this exercise will be strengthening your resolve to have a “Messianic heart” that is committed to loving others unconditionally.

Additionally, noting that confessing our sin one to another is beneficial (James 5:16) for physical health and the well-being of the soul, it is also imperative to have a Messianic heart that forgives others for any offense which has been received. Yeshua’s instructions found in Matthew 18 on how to confront others in sin, or resolve conflict between His followers, is concluded by some thoughtful instructions on how to forgive others for any offense they may have committed against another personally. In the summation of the **need to forgive from the heart**, Yeshua utilizes human examples to emphasize the ultimate forgiveness available from our Heavenly Father:

“Then Peter came and said to Him, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?’ **Yeshua said to him, ‘I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.** For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he had begun to settle *them*, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. But since he did not have *the means* to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. So the slave fell *to the ground* and prostrated himself before him, saying, “Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.” And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and *began* to choke *him*, saying, “Pay back what you owe.” So his fellow slave fell *to the ground* and *began* to plead with him, saying, “Have patience with me and I will repay you.” But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened. Then summoning him, his lord said to him, “You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?” **And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the**



torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart” (Matthew 18:21-35).

From these few examples, one witnesses how a Messianic heart—*one after God's own heart*—confesses sin, seeks forgiveness from sin, repents of sin, and forgives others of sin. Given the intrinsic fallen nature that human beings have inherited from Adam, the only way to overcome our lost estate is to be born from above (John 3:16), and receive the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. Born again people receive a new heart of flesh that has God's Torah written upon it as promised in the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27). As the Apostle Paul communicated it to the Corinthians, if this monumental transformation has taken place, then people can be regarded as new creatures in the Messiah, serving as His ambassadors with a ministry of reconciliation toward their fellow human beings:

“Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Messiah according to the flesh, yet now we know *Him in this way* no longer. **Therefore if anyone is in Messiah, *he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*** Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Messiah and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Messiah reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Messiah, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Messiah, be reconciled to God. **He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him**” (2 Corinthians 5:16-21).

Imagine being the “righteousness of God” in the Messiah, simply because of faith in His accomplished work at Golgotha. If God has forgiven us of our sin, how much more should we forgive others—who whether deliberately or inadvertently, sin against us? But in order to do so, followers of the Messiah **must have a Messianic heart** that exudes unconditional love without reservation.

Let me conclude these thoughts about a Messianic heart with some words issued by the Apostle Paul, another redeemed sinner, who like King David, was forgiven the sin of murder (Acts 22:4). In his letter to the Philippians are some comments which have always prompted me to continually strive to be everything God has created me to be in the Messiah. In this passage, after earlier in the epistle describing the ultimate humility epitomized by the Lord Yeshua (Philippians 2:5-11), Paul confesses his own lack of confidence in his background and natural abilities:

“More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Messiah Yeshua my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Messiah, and

may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the Law*, but that which is through faith in Messiah, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained *it* or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Messiah Yeshua. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing *I do*: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Messiah Yeshua. Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you; however, let us keep living by that same *standard* to which we have attained” (Philippians 3:8-16).

Instead of relying upon his own strength and human abilities, Paul encourages every Believer to heed his words: “The righteousness that I have comes from knowing Messiah, the power of his resurrection, and the participation in his sufferings. It includes being conformed to his death” (Philippians 3:10, Common English Bible). *Paul’s exhortation is to develop a heart just like the Messiah, by continually focusing one’s attention on that goal.* Achieving that goal is a lifelong process which comes through pursuing Him with all of one’s heart, mind, soul, and strength on a regular basis. In the annual season of repentance, Messiah followers have ample time to spend reflecting on many aspects of where their hearts are located. If we discover some areas of hardness which need confession, do so believing that forgiveness is available, and that reconciliation with the Father is attainable. If we need to resolve differences with others, do so with a cheerful heart, knowing that this is a part of the ministry of reconciliation that pleases our Heavenly Father. Look to Him and Him alone for the results of any of these acts of humility and contrition.

I am so very thankful for the recent circumstances which have led me to consider just where my heart is Messianic or Messiah-like, and where it is falling short of the goal. I praise my Heavenly Father for being so merciful to me, and orchestrating all of the circumstances of the past month to help me focus on where I currently am in my walk with the Messiah! My prayer is that in so doing, some of the things stated above and the Scriptures cited may be used by the Holy Spirit to inspire others to take the time to take a spiritual inventory on where they are in regard to obtaining a Messianic heart. Hopefully in your own sincere examination, many hearts will be changed for the better, so that whatever heartbeats remain in our numbered days, **they will be spent diligently working to advance His Kingdom, until the Messianic restoration of all things...**