

God's heart is full of love and He loves **you!**



Beloved in Yeshua,

The Heart of God

This month's newsletter (a love letter) has been written with more than the usual amount of prayer for guidance, anointing and insight. Why? The topic. We asked the Lord to show us **His Heart**. God's heart is the only heart that we can seek and delve into and find only goodness, truth, faithfulness and love. If we look into any human heart, we will find evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies and all manner of wickedness (see Jeremiah 17:9 and Matthew 15:19). The longer one knows the Messiah, the clearer this becomes. When we recognize that there are still things in the depths of our hearts that should not be there, we have the promise of I John 3:20 to cling to: *"For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart..."* We can cry out like King David: *"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me"* (Psalm 51:10).

The Heart: The Hebrew Root

The word for heart in Hebrew has two forms: *lev* or *le-VAV*. *Lev* is the more common word, *levav*, the more poetic. They both mean "heart." "Heart" is the richest biblical term for the totality of man's inner nature, the core of his being. "Lev" in Hebrew thought includes the whole spectrum of emotions and thoughts. Heart, understanding, and mind are all included in the concept of "heart." That is why Deuteronomy 6:5 reads: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart (*levav*), with all your soul, and with all your strength." There is no mention of mind. Matthew 22:37 repeats this verse, but changes it slightly, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your **mind**."

The Greek text seeks to emphasize that God should be loved with all our mind as well as our emotions, but this is already understood in the Hebrew *levav* (heart & mind).

We were interested to find that the word "heart" occurs approximately 6 times more frequently in the Tenach than in the New Covenant. There is a tremendous emphasis throughout the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings on the need for man to have a new heart – a "circumcized" heart –

a clean heart. As Chuck and Karen Cohen express so succinctly in their excellent book **Roots of our Faith**, "the Tenach declares that all have sinned; all people have chronic and terminal 'heart disease'." The Brit Hadashah introduces the cure for man's heart problem: the Messiah, Yeshua. Through Him our hearts are circumcized to love God and do His will. Our hearts are healed and cleansed by the blood of God's Passover Lamb.

God's fervent desire is that all people experience hearts cleansed by faith. His heartbeat is felt throughout the Torah in verses such as Deuteronomy 30:6: *"And the Lord your God will circumcize your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live."* The Torah does indeed express the heart of God. The first Hebrew letter in the Torah is *b bet* and the last letter is *L lamed*. If we put those two letters together, guess what word they spell? *lev* – heart! The entire Torah is about "heart": God's heart reaching out to man, and man's heart in desperate need of a supernatural makeover!

On God's Heart

We asked the Lord to show us His heart as we enter 2006. He revealed, and then confirmed almost immediately, four things dear to His heart. As He shared, we took notes. There was no order of priority given. **God's heart is so big, that His love reaches out with equal passion to millions of areas of concern at once.** We have arbitrarily listed the four He shared with us:

God's People Israel

The Jewish people are on God's heart today. So is the Land of Israel. So is Jerusalem. However, the **people** seem to be of primary concern. We were reminded of the verse in Isaiah which says: *"But Zion said, The Lord has forsaken me, and my Lord has forgotten me. Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; your walls are continually before Me"* (Isaiah 49:14-16). The Jewish people, in Israel and in the Diaspora, need God. His heart breaks for them. They don't believe that He still loves them. They don't trust Him. They don't know Him! Last month we offered the book **Why Care About Israel?** by Sandra Teplinsky. The answer: **because God cares!** God's heart aches for His people Israel. Sandra points out in her book an overlooked connection between God's love in Romans 8:38-39 and Paul's words about Israel in Romans 9:1-3. *"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Messiah Yeshua our Lord"* (Romans 8:38-39). *"I tell the truth in Messiah, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Messiah for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh"* (Romans 9:1-3). This is God's heart (not just Paul's) for His People Israel! He loves them unconditionally and passionately. Neil sensed this love when he received "the call" in 1976 to begin Temple Aron HaKodesh. Jamie sensed it shortly after that when God spoke to her one day and said: *"Touch My People for Me. Touch them. Physically. Let them know that I love them."*

In Exodus 19:5, God calls Israel His *"special treasure"* (Hebrew: *segullah*). We know from Luke 12:34 that where one's treasure is, there his heart will be also. **God's heart** is where His treasure Israel is! Do you long to touch the heart of God? Touch His people Israel. Help **us** show them The Way to receive a new, cleansed, circumcized heart – through Yeshua, the Messiah. Help us lead Israel back to her God and her destiny to be a light to the nations.

The Lost: The "Homeless"

As the Lord showed us His heart for those who have not yet received Messiah, He kept making comparisons with the "homeless," speaking to our hearts such thoughts as, "It is all about coming HOME. There's love and joy in the Father's house." Then, the Lord showed us Yeshua, the Messiah without a home (Matthew 8:20), who longs to find a home in us. He even stands at the door of our heart and knocks, wanting to come in and have fellowship with us (Revelation 3:20). We've heard the phrase, "Your heart; God's home," but probably haven't thought of Yeshua being without a home until we invite Him in. The reality of homelessness has invaded our global and national consciousness in this past year as never before. Consider the Tsunami of December 2004 followed by the record Hurricane season of 2005. Thousands were left homeless. No place to go. No security. Alone. Abandoned. Have so many been left **physically homeless** to draw our attention to the millions who are **spiritually homeless**? We connected with both groups on December 25th this year. For the second year in a row, we went with our boys, Jonathan and Jesse, to a homeless shelter in Hollywood, Florida to serve a hot meal to the residents and people living on the streets. We sensed that we were connecting with the heart of God on a level we couldn't even explain. We carved turkeys, peeled potatoes, and stirred huge pots alongside non-believing Jewish volunteers. That's right. If you want to share your faith on "Christmas Day" with a Jewish person, you'll probably find one at a Homeless shelter! Last year, Jonathan was in the kitchen beside a Jewish girl from the University of Florida – his school – his grade! This year, we met a Jewish businessman, a conservative Jewish housewife, another Jewish college student, a self-described "party animal," and an Israeli homeless woman. The Jewish volunteers had good hearts, like so many Jewish people. Measured against other people, they certainly would come out on top. However, measured against a Holy God, none can boast. All have sinned. These Jewish people were spiritually homeless as were most of the people we served. But one homeless man was full of the joy of the Lord. We were surprised that he recognized us from Jewish Jewels TV. Jonathan had the opportunity to share and pray with him. He had found a home even though he was "homeless."

We were reluctant to share our December 25th adventures with you, lest we lose our eternal reward or appear to be "blowing our own horn," so we asked the Lord if He wanted us to share our personal experiences with "homelessness." If so, we asked Him to confirm it in the Sunday newspaper (which we hadn't had a chance to read that week). We opened it up to the front page. The feature story was on "homelessness" with a 6" x 8" photo of Charlotte York, an 84 year old woman who has been living on the streets of Ft. Lauderdale for the past 15 years, sleeping on pieces of cardboard behind office buildings or church parking lots... "close enough to touch the sanctuary walls where she feels safest." Charlotte is both physically and spiritually homeless. She is on God's heart. Pray that she finds a home in Him before He calls her home! (*The very next week teens from our home town beat a homeless man to death! We're still in shock: one of the boys played hockey with our son Jonathan while he was in high school.*)

There are very few places in the Holy Scriptures where **God's heart** is directly mentioned. One of them is Genesis 6:5-6, "*Then 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. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.*" God's heart grieves over sin. Look around you. Read the newspaper. Sin. Sin, and more sin. Sin separates people from God. He wants to be in an intimate relationship with His creations. The only way to gladden the heart of God, is to renounce sin, turn from it, receive Yeshua, come home to The Father, and walk in newness of life.

God's heart for the lost (spiritually homeless) is expressed by the Apostle Peter when he says in

Second Peter 3:9 that the Lord is *"not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."* Our Heavenly Father waits with open arms for prodigal sons and daughters to come home.

Widows and Fatherless

The widows and fatherless children are almost always grouped together as one unit throughout the Holy Scriptures. That's because when a woman lost her husband there were almost always young children involved (not like today's widow of 85 whose children are in their 60's). Today, things are different. Many women with "fatherless children" are not widows, but divorced, and the children's father is still alive. "Fatherlessness" is a tremendous problem in this generation. God has a Father's heart, and feels the pain of our fatherlessness. He makes it clear in Psalm 68:5 that He is *"a father of the fatherless, a defender of widows."* His heart for them is also clearly revealed in Jeremiah 49:11, and James 1:27.

God's heart for the fatherless children includes not only those who have lost fathers through death or divorce, but those who have been abused, neglected or aborted. When we turned to the front page of the Local section of our Sunday paper, there was a big headline: *"Boy's death underlines dilemma."* A three-year-old boy was scalded by his mother as punishment for soiling his diaper. The child, who had persistent medical problems, had been living with his grandmother. She reluctantly agreed to let the boy's mother spend a day alone with him. He died a week later, after failing to receive proper medical care. Jaquez Mason is safe in the arms of Yeshua, but many others are still suffering. No father. No mother. Sometimes they are adults.

At our first Shabbat service, as the new leaders at Temple Aron HaKodesh, we met Alan, a middle-aged Jewish man who told us that 2005 had been a terrible year for him. Among other things, he had lost his father and his mother. Jamie shared Psalm 27:10 with him. *"When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take care of me."* She told him that God wanted to be His Father and give him a new life in Messiah. After about ten minutes of sharing (Isaiah 53; Romans 10:9-10; among others), Alan said that he finally understood and "saw" the truth. He asked God to forgive him of his sins, accepted Yeshua's death as the atonement for them, received Him as his personal Savior and Lord, asked God to give His Word to him, put on his tallit, and entered the morning service just as it was beginning!

The heart of God: being a father to the fatherless, no matter what the age (II Corinthians 6:17-18). As for the widows, we are surrounded by them here in Ft. Lauderdale. Most are in assisted living or nursing homes. They have outlived their husbands, their children are usually far away, and God's heart longs to connect with theirs. He wants to be their husband (Read Isaiah 54:5). We must reach out to them!

The Bride of Messiah

Last, but certainly not least, is the Bride of Messiah, those who have been bought with a price – the precious blood of God's only-begotten Son. This "Bride" is made up of male and female, Jewish and non-Jewish believers. She is the one who ravishes the heart of God! (Song of Songs 4:9). God's heart is jealous over her, and fervently longs for ever-increasing intimacy with her. God longs to give His Bride the kingdom (Luke 12:32) and has prepared unfathomable rewards for those who love Him (I Corinthians 2:9). As we sought a word from the heart of God for His Bride we were led to a classic book called **Come Away My Beloved** by Frances J. Roberts. (The last time we read it was January, 1989). The very first entry in the book is the one we feel is on God's heart for you, today:

The Call of Love

O, My beloved, abide under the shelter of the lattice – for I have betrothed thee unto Myself, and though ye are sometimes indifferent toward Me, My love for thee is at all times as a flame of fire. My ardor never cools. My longing for thy love and affection is deep and constant.

Tarry not for an opportunity to have more time to be alone with Me. Take it, though ye leave the tasks at hand. Nothing will suffer. Things are of less importance than ye think. Our time together is like a garden full of flowers, whereas the time ye give to things is as a field full of stubble.

I love thee, and if ye can always, as it were, feel My pulsebeat, ye shall know many things the knowledge of which shall give thee sustaining strength. I bare thy sins and I wish to carry thy burdens. Ye may have the gift of a light and merry heart. My love bower is the place where ye shall find it, for My love dispels all fear and is a cure for every ill. Lay thy head upon My breast and lose thyself in Me. Thou shalt experience resurrection life and peace; the joy of the Lord shall become thy strength; and wells of salvation shall be opened within thee.

There is no way to adequately express all that is on God's heart. But, if we identify with even one burden, and **do** something about it, we will satisfy the heart of our Father. The Lord spoke to us again through the same Sunday newspaper, when we turned to the front page of the "Community News." There was a photo of Jerry Stevens' airplane, "Holy Smoke," which was destroyed when a hangar at Boca Raton Airport collapsed during Hurricane Wilma. Jerry was not grounded for long. He is already back in the air with a new plane writing "love letters from God" across the Florida skies. God **so** desires to get His message across to us, to reveal His heart to us, that He even makes Himself known through "holy smoke"!

May your heart be touched with those things that touch the heart of God!

Neil & Jamie

Order **Come Away My Beloved** if you long for God to speak to **your heart**. He will!

Order **"In Awe of You" CD** if you love Messianic music that is anointed!

Order **When Being Jewish was a Crime** if God has put a Jewish person in your life that needs to hear a stirring testimony of a Messianic Jew!