

OASIS: October 16 – 22, 2025: Hard Places



"The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? I, the LORD, search the heart; I examine the mind to reward a man according to his way, by what his deeds deserve." (Jeremiah 17:9-10 BSB).

As we continue in the exploration of how our beautiful world became hard Places, let us consider another passage of Scripture that is very fundamental in our contemplation. "***The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure.***" Last week we were reminded that not only was man wicked, "***every Inclination of the thoughts of his heart was all together evil at all the time.***"¹ Such a combination – a wicked heart beyond cure, and one with thoughts that are always evil, cannot but produce Hard Places. We see and even experience this outcome all around us. Sometimes we are over-whelmed and resign ourselves to the situation, at other times, we not only wonder aloud but take steps or join others who are taking steps to mitigate the situation. Still, others give themselves to be agents of satan who is the reason for the hard places, to perpetuate this horror that is the plight and blight of human beings. This was the case with slavery, every form of discrimination; wars of oppression and occupation, murders, terrorist attacks, homelessness, horrible poverty in the midst of plenty, and the many ills of our society. **All of these coming from the heart of human beings!**

But did God not create human beings with a beautiful heart – loving and caring heart like His own, since human beings were created ***in His own Image and Likeness***?² Those who believe in the Almighty God and the Creation Story, will answer in the affirmative, hence human beings were **described as the Masterpiece of God's Creation, for a distinctive and glorifying purpose.**³ But the heart changed because of disobedience and rebellion, starting with Lucifer, who became satan,⁴ and for human beings, with Eve and then Adam, who acted irresponsibly to the action of Eve.⁵ This wicked and rebellious heart has gained the ascendancy since then, and human beings keep "improving and perfecting" the act of wickedness and rebellion. Our passage of reference for this week is tucked inside a chapter with many disturbing revelations. Verse one states that "***The sin of Judah,***" and ***Judah represents the Church, since she (Judah) is the chosen of God, "is written with an iron stylus, and engraved with diamond point on the tablets of their hearts and on the horns of their altars."***⁶ A simple explanation would translate, "the sins of the Church and Christians are so endemic that she is sin personified, and her worship and activities are drenched in sin." This is the situation because though they know the standards of God, they have rejected them for human standards, and have perfected the act of sin to make it look as if it is holiness and righteousness. **The Scripture states that they knew God and His standards but rejected them, and as such their foolish minds became darkened and thinking that they were wise, they became utter fools, who changed the glory of God for idol worship, including the worship of self.**⁷ Furthermore, they began to develop their own standard of righteousness rejecting the clear way provided by the Almighty God.⁸ The Church today, with few exceptions, is filled with hero worship and human doctrines which tolerate sinful behaviours, and the pursuit of material well-being as the mark of spiritual achievement, whitewashed with glossolalia (vocalizing speechlike syllables that lack any readily comprehensible meaning)! There is so much "tongues" today in churches but no message, no conviction of sin, and no righteous living.⁹

A deceitful and wicked heart that is always chumming out evil deeds has created hardness and hardship all over the place, and the Church is an active participant in this process which continue to plunge the world into darkness and hard places for people. But the Church and everyone who practices evil must know that they have kindled the anger of God, which will burn them in the Eternal Lake Of Fire¹⁰ if they do not GENUINELY REPENT and Practice Restitution. The Creator God can cure your heart, and still change and give you a heart of flesh that is responsive and receptive to His Words. But you must Return To The Lord With Sincere Repentance.¹¹

Have a Blessed, God-Centred, and Victorious Week.

Further & Daily Readings: Jeremiah 17:1-11, 13; 1. Genesis 6:5-7; 2. Genesis 1: 26-27; 3. Ephesians 2:10; 4. Isaiah 14:10-17; Revelations 12:3-17; 5. Genesis 3:1-24; 6. Jeremiah 17:1-2; 7. Psalm 19:1- 6; Romans 1:18-25; 8. Romans 10:2-3; 9. Jeremiah 7:8-15; 1 Timothy 6:5; 10. Jeremiah 17:3-6; Revelations 20:10-15; 11. Jeremiah 7:5-7; Hosea 14:1-3.