

Part 2, Week Six - Idolatry of the Heart and Jerusalem the Vine – Ezekiel 14-15

Day 1-Reading to Understand

1. Please start your study with at least 10 minutes of concentrated prayer for God to really open up chapters 14-15 for you personally.
2. Now, just read Ezekiel 14-15.
3. Now, after you have read Ezekiel 14-15, go back and read it word for word. Slow your reading down enough so that you are picking up the details as you go. Be on the alert for key words that we have already identified in the other weeks of study. However, do not mark them at this time.
4. Now, after you have read through Ezekiel 14-15, slowly and with discernment, go back and reread chapters 8 through 13. This is all either part of the second vision of Ezekiel or afterwards and before the next vision. Did you discern anything new from this time of reading? I did: I finally made the connection in chapter 10 that a cherub is a servant of God and oxen/bulls/calves are also servants; so, in the first vision, Ezekiel sees one of the cherubim with the face of an ox, and in the second vision, he sees this same face as a cherub.

Days 2–4 - Ezekiel 14 -15

Please work on your worksheets for chapters 14 through 15 over the next three days and pace yourself accordingly.

Ezekiel 14 – Idolatry of the Heart

Please mark the following key repeated words in your own unique way for Ezekiel chapter 14:

- all references to God as before, including “Lord,” “LORD,” “Lord GOD,” “I am the LORD” with the same marking
- also mark “Lord GOD,” as “Sovereign Lord”
- all references to Israel or “house of Israel,” or “the house of Judah,” as before including “elders of Israel,” “these men,” and all pronouns referring to them
- “the immigrants who stay in Israel,” as one marking; these are those who have become Jews by choice from other nations
- all references to Ezekiel as before, including “Son of man”
- all references to false prophets as before in Ezekiel 13
- “the Remnant” as before including all references to them in chapter 14, i.e., “My people”
- all references to “abominations,” “idols,” “stumbling block” as one marking as before
- “iniquity,” “sin,” as same marking as before
- the phrase: “thus says the Lord GOD,” as before; include “declares the Lord GOD,” as one marking as before
- the phrase: “the word of the LORD came to me saying,” as before

the phrase: “so you will know that I am the LORD,” as the same marking as before
“heart” as before

“Jerusalem” as before

“inquires,” and “inquirer,” in some unique way

“face,” and “faces,” in a unique way

“turn,” with some unique marking

“Noah,” “Daniel,” “Job,” and all pronouns referring to them as the same marking; I mark
mine as NDJ.

I have not said this before, but now is better than never: make yourself an index card (a
BIG index card) with your markings for the key word(s) you are using each week as we
make our way through the double-spaced worksheets on Ezekiel. If you do this, it will be
much easier to remain consistent with your markings.

Mark all references to time in the left margin of the double-spaced worksheets, i.e.
“then,” “now”

Mark all references to the word “therefore” in some unique way in the left margin of the
double-spaced worksheet.

Why is the “therefore” there in verses 14:4 and 14:6? What statement(s) precedes the
“therefore” from that which the reader gains understanding?

Idolatry in Jerusalem was openly and externally displayed. What characterizes the
idolatry of the heart of which Ezekiel speaks about here in Babylon?

How were the “elders,” of the people hypocritical? Who did they come to for answers
while having another “god” in their hearts?

Why was God not obligated to answer them?

Had the elders acknowledged God’s sovereignty?

How does God define these men who sets up their own idols in their hearts,” according to
14:7? Did this include both Jew and Foreigners who became Jewish?

What will God do to those who insist on their in-heart idols and then run to ask truth or guidance from a prophet? Would this prophet be God's prophet or a false prophet? What will happen to this "prophet?" What will God profit from all of this? See 14: 4-11.

Take a look in your concordance for where you see God's name spelled out as Lord GOD in the text of Ezekiel 14:4. Notice the small caps of the word "GOD." To Whom does your concordance say this is referring?

My concordance number for "GOD" is 3608 and refers to Yehovah, the proper name of the God of Israel. Now look up the word for Lord used in 14:4.

It is the concordance numbering of 136 and is the word "Adonay," or "Adonai," and means Lord, Master.

Now, let's put the two names together, "Lord GOD" and what name do we have for GOD?

Did you piece the words together to give the name, "Yehovah Adonay," or "Jehovah Adonai?"

Look up "Lord" in your Vine's dictionary. What does this word mean?

This is what Vine's says on the word "Lord:" "Basically, *Adon* means "lord" or master." It is distinguished from the Hebrew word *ba'al* which signifies "possessor" or "owner." *Adon* basically describes the one who occupies the position of a "master" or "lord" over a slave or servant..." When applied to God, "*Adon* signifies His position as the one who has authority (like a master) over His people to reward the obedient and punish the disobedient, ... In such contexts God is conceived as a Being who is sovereign ruler and almighty master."¹

Ann Spangler says this of "*Adonay*" in her devotional, Praying the Names of God: *Adonay* is a Hebrew word meaning "lord," a name that implies relationship: God is Lord, and we are his servants," And "As you pray to *Adonay*, tell him you want to surrender every aspect of your life to Him. Pray for the grace to become the kind of servant who is

¹ W.E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, William White, Jr. Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words. Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1984, p. 140.

quick to do God's will. Remember, too, that the Lord is the only one who can empower you to fulfill His purpose for your life.”²

Please look up the word “sovereign,” in a Bible dictionary. What does your dictionary tell you about God being “sovereign?”

This is what Unger's Bible Dictionary³ says concerning the “Sovereignty of God:” “a term by which is expressed the supreme ruler ship of God.”

Now, I'll ask you again, what kinds of gods were these elders, who came to see Ezekiel, harboring in their hearts to worship, instead of the Lord GOD?

What are the four “ifs” of Ezekiel 14:13-20?

Did God bring all four of these “ifs” upon Jerusalem?

Who are Noah, Daniel, and Job? Why are these men singled out as righteous?

Please read about Noah in Genesis 6:8-7:1.

Why was Noah allowed to bring along his family on the ark when He alone, was considered righteous by God?

Did the people of Noah's day listen to him? Would the people of Jerusalem have listened to Noah's warning if he had been in Jerusalem during their day?

Please read about Daniel in Daniel 1:6, 2:12-24, 9:21-23,10:11.

How did the angel address Daniel?

Is being “highly esteemed,” being “righteous?”

² Ann Spangler, Praying the Names of God, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI., 2004, p. 40.

³ Merrill F. Unger, Unger's Bible Dictionary, Moody Press, Chicago, 1977, p. 1041.

Daniel was a righteous man who lived at the same time as Ezekiel. Daniel was used by God to speak to others about Him, including the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar listened to Daniel and was saved. If Daniel had been in Jerusalem at this time of Ezekiel 14, would any in Jerusalem have listened to him? Therefore, would any in Jerusalem be saved, if they would not have listened to Daniel?

Please read about Job in Job 1:1, 1:4-5, and 42:7-9.

Job was a righteous man who interceded on behalf of his rather unkind friends in Job 42:7-9 and also for his family on a daily basis. Because Job prayed for his friends, God spared his friends from His wrath against them because of their unkind behavior during Job's trials.

If Job had been in Jerusalem at this time of Ezekiel 14, could his intercession have saved those in Jerusalem?

Daniel, Noah, and Job, were each men of righteousness in their own time and place. All three of them overcame adversity in some form. If these three righteous men had lived in Jerusalem at the time of this siege and they had opened their mouths in Truth, would the rest of those in Jerusalem have listened to them? How do you know?

How could these men, Daniel, Noah, and Job, be considered righteous? And, how through their righteousness, could they "save" any who were in their household or even their friends? I thought, any man's righteousness was as filthy rags, and true righteousness was only obtainable through God. Hint: what do you know about Abraham's righteousness from Genesis 15?

Let's look at two other Old Testament persons of interest, who are not mentioned here in Ezekiel, but were considered by God as "righteous." Read the Genesis account of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 18.

Did you notice that Abraham considered himself to be a servant, and he rushed around to make certain all the preparations for a feast for his LORD and the three angels were done properly and in a timely manner? How does this show God's sovereignty? God's Lordship?

And how about God's statement when Sarah laughed in 18:14? "Is anything too difficult for the LORD?" How does this show God's sovereignty?

Would God save Sodom and Gomorrah if there were any righteous men/women found in it? What did God do instead?

Why would those in Babylon be comforted for the calamity that fell on Jerusalem when the surviving Remnant reported (by both their conduct and actions) what God had done in judgment to the city? See Ezekiel 14:21-23.

Please record the theme of Chapter 14 on the individual double-spaced worksheet for Ezekiel 14 and on the Ezekiel Theme Summary Chart. Both are found in the Appendix.

Ezekiel 15 – Jerusalem, the Vine

Please mark the following key repeated words in your own unique way for Ezekiel 15:

all references to God as before, including “Lord,” “LORD,” “Lord GOD,” “I am the LORD” with the same marking. Also mark “Lord GOD,” as “Sovereign Lord.”
all references to Ezekiel as before, including “Son of man”
the phrase: “Thus says the Lord GOD,” “declares the Lord GOD,” as one marking
the phrase: “the word of the LORD came to me saying,” as before
the phrase: “you will know that I am the LORD,” as before
“Jerusalem,” as before, including “the inhabitants of Jerusalem,” and all pronouns
“unfaithfully,” as you marked “adultery,” before
“wood of the vine,” vs. “any wood of a branch,” separately
“fire,” “charred,” “consumed” as one marking
“face,” as before

Mark all references to time in the left margin of the double-spaced worksheets, i.e.
“then,” “now”

Mark all references to the word “therefore” in some unique way in the left margin of the double-spaced worksheet. What is the “therefore,” there for in Ezekiel 15:6? What statement(s) precede the “therefore” which gives the reader understanding?

How is the wood of a vine different from the wood of a branch from the trees of the forest? Is there any difference in the value of the wood? Can anything be made from the vine’s wood? Can the vine wood bear fruit? Or is the wood of the vine only good for burning?

Who is the “wood of the vine,” in chapter 15? Please cross reference to Isaiah 5:1-7.

Who is the vineyard of the Lord of hosts (Jehovah Sabbaoth) in Isaiah 5:7? Who is God’s delightful plant? (Isaiah 5:7)

What do you think God meant by this statement in Isaiah 5:3, “And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between Me and My vineyard?” For what was the Northern Kingdom of Israel being judged at this time in Isaiah chapter 5?

Please read Ezekiel 15:5-7 once again. Will the wood of the vine be of any value after it is burned and charred?

Ezekiel 15 is a parable. This parable reveals there is no possibility of deliverance for the people of Israel in Jerusalem at this time. How do you know there is no deliverance for them, according to Ezekiel 15: 7. Please reread Ezekiel 15 once again with this understanding from above.

To whom does Ezekiel apply this parable in 15:6-8? Was Jerusalem the vine branch? Was Jerusalem of any use once the vine stopped producing any fruit (perhaps of righteousness)? At this time, was it only good as fuel for the fire?

Ezekiel 15:7 says this, “Though they have come out of the fire, yet the fire will consume them.” Some of the people survived the first two sieges on Jerusalem, but what ultimately happened to them in the final siege?

Please record the theme of Chapter 15 on the individual double-spaced worksheet for Ezekiel 15 and on the Ezekiel Theme Summary Chart. Both are found in the Appendix.

Day 5 – Personal Application

These questions are as much for me as they are for you.

Think about “idolatry of the heart,” for a few moments. What do you think “idolatry of the heart,” might be in our day? Is there something etched on the walls of your mind that might possibly be taking your devotion and love away from your relationship with your Savior?

What does it mean to have Christ as your Savior? What does it mean to have Christ as your Lord? Is accepting Him as Savior and Lord a one-time event? Or can you accept Him as Savior (and be saved) without accepting Him as Lord of your life?

Can you accept Christ as Lord of your life and back out later on? When you change your mind later on, do you then lose your salvation?

When does the Holy Spirit come to dwell within you?

Is there ever a time when you are harboring an idol (at least in your mind) that you pretend to be worshiping God? Are you like the description of the elders of Israel who come to Ezekiel to inquire of the Lord, all the while having the stumbling block of their iniquity right before them?

In Ezekiel, we saw the Glory of God leaving His dwelling place with Man because the men were worshiping other gods in His sanctuary. Will God ever leave you for harboring idols in your mind, knowingly or unknowingly? What will happen instead of Him leaving you?

This past week, I read several articles on the Internet about Obama’s election to the Presidency of the United States and the effects it has had on the Black churches, both the congregations and the clergy. One pastor rightly told his congregation that they must still focus on the Gospel being given out to all people of all colors, and they must keep their relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ as number one priority. Another church, another pastor, preached for 2 and ½ hours on how God had finally vindicated the African

American against the white man by giving them a Black President. Thankful for the Messiah God had sent them, some of the people in the congregation, praised the name of Obama. Does this make you sick? It should!!!⁴ However mad this makes you, be in prayer for yourselves continuously that you do not fall into the same pit with the idols you have etched on your hearts. And be in prayer for all those Believers in these churches who have fallen into this trap. And finally, put your worship and hope in God, not a man.

What kind of judgment do you think God will meter out to you for having a stumbling block of your iniquity in front of you? Does God love you (His children)? Please read this whole passage of Hebrews 12:7-13 and think hard on these verses. Is there now any condemnation for you who are in Christ Jesus? See Romans 8:1. What is in place of condemnation for the true Believer?

Is God sovereign in your life? Think back on our sovereignty of God study this past week. Is He your master in everything or do you have him so bound and wound that He has to go in any direction you pull Him? Sort of like my Sammie dog pulling me around the block on my walk every day. I have to go where she wants to go cause she is pulling on me so hard.

Do you ever feel like your prayers to God just bounce off the ceiling and return to you unheard? I've always been told by other well-meaning Christians, that when this happens to me, that I must have some un-confessed sin in my life. That may be, but it might be something far more insidious, too. Perhaps it is an internal idol: an internal thought to which I'm not willing to release, or fear that I'm hanging onto because it is familiar and reliable. Maybe its even not forgiving myself for something God has already declared forgiven. Could any of these be idols of the heart? I don't know for certain whether or not they are, but I will tell you that they put up a barrier and hinder/hurt my relationship with my God.

Beth Moore in her book, Get Out of that Pit, says this about how "frequent pit-visiting has a way of turning into pit-living." Beth does not equate this with idolatry of the mind, as above, but I am suggesting it as a possibility: "The earlier we enter the pit or the longer we stay, the more it feels like home. We start hanging our pictures on the wall, tidying up the place, and making ourselves comfortable. We invite others over to visit us in the pit,

⁴ The Internet, Fox.com News, electronic articles on week of November 5-10, 2008.

and sometimes they feel sufficiently enough at home to unpack their bags. If we're cool enough, we may even move a Pottery Barn couch and Williams Sonoma kitchenware right into the middle of it..."⁵

Take some quiet time just now, away from everyone else and everything else if you can and have a little chat with Jesus across the table from you. Ask Him to reveal to you your shortcomings and those things or thoughts that hinder your relationship with Him, even the mental idols. For me, this will include my obsessing, my fears and my lack of trust in Jehovah-Jireh, and my insistence on spending my time the way I want and not the way He wants me to spend it.

⁵ Beth Moore, Get Out of that Pit, Thomas Nelson Publisher, Dallas, Texas, 2007, pp. 28-29.

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“www.lockman.org”

Chapter 14

Chapter Theme _____

14:1 Then some elders of Israel came to me and sat down before me.

14:2 And the word of the LORD came to me saying,

14:3 “Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts, and have put right before their faces the stumbling block of their iniquity. Should I be consulted by them at all?”

14:4 “Therefore speak to them and tell them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Any man of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, puts right before his face the stumbling block of his iniquity, and then comes to the prophet, I the LORD will be brought to give him an answer in the matter in view of the multitude of his idols,

14:5 in order to lay hold of the hearts of the house of Israel who are estranged from Me through all their idols.’”

14:6 “Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Repent and turn away from your idols, and turn your faces away from all your abominations.

14:7 “For anyone of the house of Israel or of the immigrants who stay in Israel who separates himself from Me, sets up his idols in his heart, puts right before his face the stumbling block of his iniquity, and then comes to the prophet to inquire of Me for himself, I the LORD will be brought to answer him in My own person.

14:8 “And I shall set My face against that man and make him a sign and a proverb, and I shall cut him off from among My people. So you will know that I am the LORD. 14:9 “But if the prophet is prevailed upon to speak a word, it is I, the LORD, who have prevailed upon that prophet, and I will stretch out My hand against him and destroy him from among My people Israel.

14:10 “And they will bear the punishment of their iniquity; as the iniquity of the inquirer is, so the iniquity of the prophet will be,

14:11 in order that the house of Israel may no longer stray from Me and no longer defile themselves with all their transgressions. Thus they will be My people, and I shall be their God,” declares the Lord GOD.”

14:12 Then the word of the LORD came to me saying,

14:13 “Son of man, if a country sins against Me by committing unfaithfulness, and I stretch out My hand against it, destroy its supply of bread, send famine against it, and cut off from it both man and beast,

14:14 even though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job were in its midst, by their own righteousness they could only deliver themselves, “declares the Lord GOD.

14:15 “If I were to cause wild beasts to pass through the land, and they depopulated it, and it became desolate so that no one would pass through it because of the beasts,

14:16 though these three men were in its midst, as I live,” declares the Lord GOD, “they could not deliver either their sons or their daughters. They alone would be delivered, but the country would be desolate.

14:17 “Or if I should bring a sword on that country and say, ‘Let the sword pass through the country and cut off man and beast from it,’

14:18 even though these three men were in its midst, as I live,” declares the Lord GOD, “they could not deliver either their sons or their daughters, but they alone would be delivered.

14:19 “Or if I should send a plague against that country and pour out My wrath in blood on it, to cut off man and beast from it,

14:20 even though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in its midst, as I live,” declares the Lord GOD, “they could not deliver either their son or their daughter. They would deliver only themselves by their righteousness.”

14:21 For thus says the Lord GOD, “How much more when I send My four severe judgments against Jerusalem: sword, famine, wild beasts, and plague to cut off man and beast from it!

14:22 “Yet, behold, survivors will be left in it who will be brought out, both sons and daughters. Behold, they are going to come forth to you and you will see their conduct and actions; then you will be comforted for the calamity which I have brought against Jerusalem for everything which I have brought upon it.

14:23 “Then they will comfort you when you see their conduct and actions, for you will know that I have not done in vain whatever I did to it,” declares the Lord GOD.

Chapter 15

Chapter Theme _____

15:1 Then the word of the LORD came to me saying,

15:2 “Son of man, how is the wood of the vine better than any wood of a branch which is among the trees of the forest?

15:3 “Can wood be taken from it to make anything, or can men take a peg from it on which to hang any vessel?

15:4 “If it has been put into the fire for fuel, and the fire has consumed both of its ends, and its middle part has been charred, is it then useful for anything?

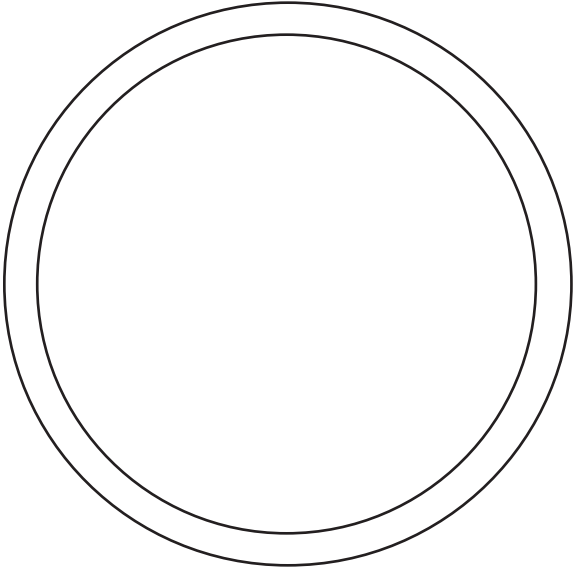
15:5 “Behold, while it is intact, it is not made into anything. How much less, when the fire has consumed it and it is charred, can it still be made into anything!

15:6 “Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, ‘As the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so have I given up the inhabitants of Jerusalem;
15:7 and I set My face against them. Though they have come out of the fire, yet the fire will consume them. Then you will know that I am the LORD, when I set My face against them.
15:8 ‘Thus I will make the land desolate, because they have acted unfaithfully,’” declares the Lord GOD.

Idolatrous Worship

Men with Idols in their Hearts - Ezekiel 14	What does idolatry look like? via Unger's Bible Dictionary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -They set up their idols in their own hearts 14:3 -They place before their faces the stumbling block of their iniquity 14:3 -They have no right to consult the One True God; God is not obligated to hear their words 14:3 -They pretend to worship God at the same time as having the stumbling block of their iniquity right before their faces -When they want a word from God they seek out a (false) prophet 14:4 -The hearts of Israel will be laid hold of by God prevailing upon this (false) prophet to speak a word thru him; this word will be used to confront them about the many idols in their hearts -Both idolater and (false prophet) will be punished by God in order that the house of Israel will no longer stray from God 14:4-5, 9-10 -Their only way back to God is to repent and turn away from their idols, to turn their faces away from all their abominations 14:6 -Some immigrants to Israel have also gone into idolatry 14:7 -They separate themselves from God, includes anyone from house of Israel or immigrants to Israel who have gone into idolatry 14:7 -The man who inquires of that (false) prophet, shall have God's face set against him to make him a sign and a proverb and cut off from among God's peoples 14:8 -The prophet who has been prevailed upon to speak by God, God will stretch out His hand against and destroy from among God's people Israel 14:9 -As a result of punishing both the idolator and the false prophet, the house of Israel will no longer stray from God and no longer defile themselves with all of their transgressions. 14:11 	<p>idolatry: paying of divine honors to any created thing and the ascription of divine power to natural agencies</p> <p>classifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> worship of inanimate objects, i.e., stones, trees worship of animals worship of a higher power, i.e. nature worship of heroes worship of dead ancestors worship of abstractions, i.e., freedom of choice, lifestyle worship of things,. i.e., greed worship of Jehovah or other gods under image or symbol worship of image all by its self

Worship of Jehovah God

Men with a new Heart -Ezekiel 11	Men with a new circumcised heart-
<p>covenant: to cut; to make a compact or an agreement; usually passed down to descendants/seed</p> <p>-these people will be gathered and assembled from all the countries to which they have been scattered and given the land of Israel 11:17</p> <p>-these people will remove all the detestable things and all the abominations from the land 11:18</p> <p>-God will give them a new heart of flesh 11:19</p> <p>-God will put a new spirit within them 11:19</p> <p>-God shall take the heart of stone out of their flesh 11:19</p> <p>-God will do all of this with their hearts in order that they will walk in His statutes and keep His ordinances and do them 11:20</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 20px;">  </div>	<p>circumcision: to cut off, to purify; a sign that the Israelites were different - Joshua 5 at Gilgal</p> <p>if there was no circumcision - there was no belief</p> <p>if there was no circumcision they were cut off from their nation</p> <p>if there was circumcision, they cut away their shame, they wore the mark of their new beginning: belief and obedience followed</p> <p>if you cut out the old heart which is of stone and put in the new heart which is of flesh, then you can truly worship Jehovah</p> <p><u>Romans 2:29</u> “But he is a Jew who is one inwardly ; and <u>circumcision is that which is of the heart</u>, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.”</p> <p>-God will give them a new heart of flesh Ezekiel 11:19</p> <p>-God will put a new spirit within them Ezekiel 11:19</p> <p><u>Deut 10:16</u> ”Yet on your fathers did the Lord set His affection to love them, and He chose their descendants after them, even you above all peoples, as it is this day. <u>Circumcise then your heart</u>, and stiffen your neck no more. For the Lord your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe. He executes justice for the orphan and the widow and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing.</p> <p>-God shall take the heart of stone out of their flesh Ezekiel 11:19</p> <p><u>Deut 30:6</u> “Moreover the Lord your <u>God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants</u>, to love the Lord your God will all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live.</p> <p>-God will do all of this with their hearts in order that they will walk in His statutes and keep His ordinances and do them 11:20</p> <p>Is this not true worship of the One God?</p>