

Prepare Your Heart

The book of 2 Chronicles tells us that Rehoboam was a wicked king. However, the book also takes the unusual step of telling us *why* he was a wicked king:

2 Chronicles 12:14: “And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord.”

Why did Rehoboam did evil? It was because he didn't prepare his heart to seek the Lord. Since he didn't seek God with his heart, he did evil. This means his evil actions came from his wicked heart.

This isn't the only place where we can find this teaching. Later in 2 Chronicles we're told that the high places of Israel weren't taken away. Even though God forbade the Israelites from sacrificing to Him in high places, the people ignored Him and did it anyway. Why did they do something that was evil in God's sight? It's for exactly the same reason Rehoboam was evil:

2 Chronicles 20:33: “Howbeit the high places were not taken away: for as yet the people had not prepared their hearts unto the God of their fathers.”

Since Rehoboam didn't prepare his heart to seek God, he did evil. Since the Israelites didn't prepare their heart to seek God, they did evil. In other words, *evil comes from the heart*. If our heart is evil then we'll continue to do evil things.

The prophet Samuel told the Israelites that if they prepared their heart to seek God then He would save them from their enemies:

1 Samuel 7:3: “And Samuel spake unto all the

house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.”

God will save those who turn to Him with their heart. If we have an evil heart then we won't be able to please God, and we'll continue to do that which is evil in His sight. Those who have an evil heart will do evil things. They may hide their true nature for a time, but it will come out in the end.

The Lord is pleased when people prepare their heart to seek Him. Look at what God said about the righteous king Jehoshaphat:

2 Chronicles 19:3: “Nevertheless there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, and hast prepared thine heart to seek God.”

The Bible tells us that Ezra not only obeyed God, but he taught others to do the same. Why? It was because he prepared his heart:

Ezra 7:10: “For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.”

If we want to do what's right then we *must* address our heart. Those who do nothing about the state of their heart will continue to do evil, because evil comes from the heart:

Mark 7:20-23: “And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil

thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.”

If we haven't repented of our sins and asked God to change our heart then we still have an evil heart and will continue to do evil things. Our heart *must* be changed before we can please God.

God seeks those who have a heart which seeks Him. In fact, Jesus said that if our heart isn't right then we worship Him in vain:

Matthew 15:8-9: “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”

What's the greatest commandment? It's to love God with all our heart:

Matthew 22:37: “Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.”

How are we saved? By believing in the truth with our heart:

Romans 10:10: “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

God seeks those who obey Him from the heart:

Romans 6:17: “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.”

All of this matters a great deal! God rejects the worship of those who serve Him outwardly but whose heart is still evil. Those who never deal with the wickedness in their heart will never be able to overcome sin – and those who never repent of their sin won't be saved. A heart that's hardened against God leads to His wrath:

Romans 2:5: “But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;”

This is so important that there are times when God tests us, to reveal what's in our heart:

1 Thessalonians 2:4: “But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.”

2 Chronicles 32:31: “Howbeit in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to enquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart.”

If you want to overcome sin then you *must* prepare your heart to seek God. If you want to please God then you must seek Him with all your heart – not just with an outward display of piety. God is able to change us and give us a new heart, but if we

never repent and never seek His grace then we will continue to do evil.