

CHAPTER 9

The Make-Up Of A Person

How Is Your Heart?

The Heart of the Matter is the Matter of the Heart!

The health of our physical heart is of vital importance. Suppose you go to the doctor for a complete physical. He listens to your heart with his stethoscope. He takes your blood pressure and checks your pulse. He gives you an electrocardiogram, a stress test and does blood work. When the tests are all in, he informs you that you have a serious heart problem. Would you be concerned about this? Is your heart important to you?

There are many people today who have a very serious heart problem, but tragically, they are not even concerned or alarmed about it. The problem is not with the physical organ, but with the innermost part of the person. The heart of the matter is the matter of the heart. The key issue is this: HOW IS YOUR HEART?

Toward the end of his life, David had something of utmost importance to share with his son Solomon, who would be the next king of Israel: "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect _____ and with a willing mind: for the LORD _____ all _____, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever" (1 Chron. 28:9).

The LORD searches all hearts! What does He find? Does He find a heart that is soft or hard? Does He find a heart that is going toward God or away from God? Does He find a heart that is seeking Him or a heart that is forsaking Him? God wants a "perfect heart," or a heart that is completely devoted to Him. HOW IS YOUR HEART?

Proposition #1--If the heart has a problem, if the heart is not right before God (not soft, not tender), then the best conditions in the world and the most favorable circumstances will not do any good. The best possible outward conditions and the most favorable environment will profit the person nothing **if the heart is not right.**

Consider the following four cases which prove Proposition #1:

1) Solomon

Did Solomon have a godly father (1 Chron. 28:9)? _____

Solomon had a wonderful knowledge of the Scriptures and a high view of God, as can be seen by his prayer of dedication found in 1 Kings chapter 8.

What amazing gift did God give to Solomon (1 Kings 3:12; 4:29-30)?

God even used Solomon to write three books of the Bible. What are they? [Hint: the three books that follow the book of Psalms]

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Solomon seemed to have every advantage: a father who loved the Lord, a knowledge of God's truth, and God-given wisdom like no other man was ever given.

In spite of all the advantages that Solomon had, he fell into terrible sin and experienced major spiritual failure. Read 1 Kings chapter 11.

What was Solomon's problem that caused such a serious spiritual decline?

Read 1 Kings 11:2,3,4,9. What word beginning with "H" is found in all these verses?

In light of these verses, what was Solomon's main problem?

2) The Generation of Israelites Who Came Out of Egypt in the Days of Moses

These people were blessed indeed. They had so many privileges. They saw an amazing demonstration of God's power at the Red Sea (Exodus chapter 14). They witnessed miracle after miracle in the desert wilderness: bitter water made drinkable, food provided in the barren dessert, manna provided every morning, water gushing forth from a rock, clothes and shoes never wearing out for forty years, protection from diseases, etc.

Who talked to the children of Israel face to face at Mount Sinai when the Ten Commandments were given (Deuteronomy 5:4,22)? _____ When it came to knowing God and His power and His Word, the children of Israel had every outward advantage, and they were blessed with a great leader, Moses the man of God.

Yet in spite of all that they had, they failed miserably! They murmured repeatedly; they spoke against Moses and against God; they made a golden calf; they refused to believe God's promises. As the result of this, they could not enter the land, and they all died in the desert except for Joshua and Caleb.

In Hebrews 3:7-13 we read about Israel's tragic failure in the wilderness and how they could not enter the promised land because of their unbelief. In what two verses do you find the word "HEART"?

3) Judas, One of the Twelve

Consider Judas who was "_____ of the twelve" (John 6:71). Seven times in the gospels Judas is described in this way: "ONE OF THE TWELVE." It reminds us of the great privileges and advantages this man had.

How could anyone be closer to the Lord than Judas and the other disciples? He was one of the twelve. Again and again he witnessed the miracles of the Lord, which proved that Jesus was everything He claimed to be. Judas sat under the best Teacher the world has ever known and heard the greatest Preacher. Judas heard the way of salvation from the lips of the Saviour Himself.

In spite of all of the advantages that Judas had, Jesus said of this man: "The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but _____ unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not _____" (Matthew 26:24). In John 17:12 Judas is called "the _____ of P_____." The word "perdition" is related to the word "perish" in John 3:16. Judas was doomed to perish for all eternity because of his unbelief and his rejection of Jesus Christ, the One he betrayed.

Do you realize that even if Jesus Christ Himself would teach and preach from your church pulpit every Sunday and present to you the TRUTH in a perfect way, it would do you absolutely no good, **if your heart were not right.**

4) The Children Who Are Born and Grow Up During the Millennial Kingdom

During the millennial kingdom, the world will enjoy ideal conditions and a perfect environment. "The earth shall be _____ of the knowledge of the _____, as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9). There will no more W_____ (Isaiah 2:4 and see the end of the verse). There will be peace and prosperity everywhere. The Lord Jesus Christ will be King over all the earth (Jeremiah 23:5). During the kingdom age there will be no false religions, no secular humanism, no communism, no Muslim extremists and no atheists. No evolutionary teaching will be permitted because the Creator-God Himself will be on the throne. All the world will enjoy Christian education at its best, with the Messiah Himself as the instructor (Isaiah 2:3). During these thousand years, will Satan have any harmful influence upon the earth (Revelation 20:1-3)? _____

In spite of the best conditions the world has ever known and in spite of a perfect environment, at the end of these one thousand years Satan will be released from his prison and countless thousands of people will follow him and will revolt against God, proving that their hearts were not really with the King. Read carefully Revelation 20:7-8.

This great final rebellion will prove once and for all that...

- ...society is not to blame (the millennial society will be ideal in every way).
- ...the environment is not to blame.
- ...Satan is not to blame (he just stirred up and brought to the front the rebellion that was already there).

The blame can only fall in one place: **the human heart.**

During the kingdom age, nothing is corrupt on the earth. There is only one area that God allows to be

corrupt--the human heart! This is the most critical area of all. If the heart is not right, everything else can be perfect, but the person is doomed.

Proposition #2--If the heart is humbly bent in God's direction, and if the person is seeking God with all his heart, then the worst conditions in the world and the least favorable circumstances will not do him any harm. The worst possible outward conditions and the least favorable environment cannot hinder the spiritual success of the person whose heart is right with God.

Consider the following four cases which prove Proposition #2:

1) Abraham

Did Abraham's father serve the living and true God, or did he serve false gods (Joshua 24:2)? _____ Abraham's father was an idol worshipper, not providing a very good example for his son. Abraham did not come from a "Christian" home. Abraham had a pagan father and he lived in a pagan land. He had no one to teach him about the true and living God. He was all alone except for one thing: God was there!

In his heart, Abraham _____ God (Genesis 15:6) and he became the father of the faithful. God Himself said that Abraham was His Friend (Isaiah 41:8). Abraham was a spiritual success. He survived even though he was surrounded by a world of unbelief. Why did Abraham survive and succeed? The key was his heart. In his heart he simply took God at His Word and believed what God said.

2) Joseph

When we first meet Joseph as a teenager, how old is he (Genesis 37:2)? _____ As you read about what happened to this young man, you find few favorable conditions for his spiritual development.

He was sold into a pagan land as a slave.
He was separated from his family while still a teenager.
He was cut off from any kind of healthy spiritual influence.
He had no one to teach him the ways of God.
He was daily surrounded by pagan, Egyptian influences.

Everything was against him. How could he ever survive? Read Genesis 39:2,3,21,23. The key was the heart. Joseph had a heart that was humble and soft and bent in God's direction. Joseph had a heart that was with God and therefore God was with him. Everything was against him but God was with him!

3) Josiah

How old was Josiah when he became king (2 Chronicles 34:1)? _____ [Could you imagine a third or fourth grader becoming President of the United States?]

Outwardly Josiah was the least likely candidate to be a spiritual success. His grandfather was wicked King Manasseh whose wicked deeds are described in 2 Chronicles 33:2,6. Manasseh was also the man who, according to ancient tradition, murdered the prophet Isaiah in a gruesome manner (it was probably Isaiah who was referred to in Hebrews 11:37, "sawn asunder"). We read about Josiah's

father in 2 Chronicles 33:21-22. What kind of man was he?

Josiah had no godly influences from his grandfather or from his father. The nation was in a time of spiritual decline and apostasy. There were idols and relics all over the land. The nation was sliding downhill fast.

How old was Josiah in 2 Chronicles 34:1 and 3? _____ This teenager had a heart that was tender towards God (verse 2), a heart that was seeking after God (verse 3). The result was a great revival in the land as the rest of 2 Chronicles chapter 34 reveals.

4) Daniel

Daniel was another man who seemed to have everything going against him. He was carried away captive into Babylon as a young man. He served in a heathen Babylonian palace. He had no "Christian" education, except for what he learned before he was carried away as a captive. He was trained by the Babylonians. He was surrounded by ungodly, pagan influences. Outwardly everything seemed to be against him.

Why did Daniel survive? Why did he succeed? What made the difference in this man's life? The answer is found in Daniel 1:8. Daniel "purposed in his _____ that he would not defile himself." Deep in his heart, Daniel resolved to put God first, to live a life that was clean and pure, and to be loyal to the Lord. He determined this in his heart. The heart is the key. The heart of the matter is the matter of the heart.

Conclusion

Read carefully 1 Samuel 12:20,24,25. In which two of these verses do we find the word "heart"?

No matter how wicked you have been (see verse 20),
 No matter what sins you have committed,
 No matter how old or young you are,
 No matter how difficult your present circumstances might be,
 No matter if everything outwardly seems to be against you,
Only ONE THING really matters: How is your heart?

If you turn to God with all your heart, you will survive and you will succeed. You will be blessed indeed. On the other hand, if your heart is not bent towards God and if your heart is turning away from God, then you are in great danger and great trouble, no matter how good your outward circumstances may seem to be.

READ EZRA 8:22. How does this verse summarize our lesson?

