

THE WATCHER

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2 Chronicles 16:7-14

1. Many people live with regrets.
 - a. They regret wasting their early years. Eccl 11:9-12:1
Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things. 10 So, remove grief and anger from your heart and put away pain from your body, because childhood and the prime of life are fleeting. 12:1 Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, "I have no delight in them."
 - b. They regret immoral and unwise choices in their latter years.
2. King Asa of Judah is an example of a man who began well and finished badly.
 - a. "Asa did good and right in the sight of the Lord." 14:2
 - b. After a great victory over Zerah the Ethiopian (14:9-15) God sent a prophet named Azariah with a message of encouragement. 2 Chron 15:1-7
Now the Spirit of God came on Azariah the son of Oded, 2 and he went out to meet Asa and said to him, "**Listen to me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: the Lord is with you when you are with Him. And if you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.** 3 "For many days Israel was without the true God and without a teaching priest and without law. 4 "But in their distress they turned to the Lord God of Israel, and they sought Him, and He let them find Him. 5 "In those times there was no peace to him who went out or to him who came in, for many disturbances afflicted all the inhabitants of the lands. 6 "Nation was crushed by nation, and city by city, for God troubled them with every kind of distress. 7 "**But you, be strong and do not lose courage, for there is reward for your work.**"
 - c. Encouraged by this message Asa made much needed reforms in the religious life of Judah. (15:8-19)
 - d. Then, towards the end of his reign, he allied himself with Ben-hadad, king of Aram (Syria), in order to force Baasha, king of Israel to withdraw from fortifying Ramah. (16:1-6)
 - e. This action on Asa's part brought another visit from one of God's prophets named Hanani who confronted Asa with a sobering message.
 - (1) His reliance on the king of Aram cost Asa an eventual victory over him and his army. NOTE: Aram would eventually turn against Judah.
 - (2) His former victory, gained through his trust in the Lord, should have governed his response to Israel's threat.
 - (3) His foolish actions would have ongoing, negative consequences.

- f. Rather than acknowledging and repenting of his lack of trust Asa became enraged, threw Hanani in prison, and even began to oppress some of his people.
 - g. He ended his life as a cripple and alienated from God. 2 Chron 16:12
In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa became diseased in his feet. His disease was severe, yet even in his disease he did not seek the Lord, but the physicians.
3. What we learn from all this is that Asa had a heart problem in that his heart did not totally belong to God.
4. Even now the eyes of the Lord are moving to and fro throughout the earth so that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely his.

I. God knows our hearts.

- A. There is nothing about us that God does not know.
 - 1. That is clearly implied by 2 Chronicles 16:9.
 - 2. God is constantly monitoring all aspects of our lives. Prov 15:3
The eyes of the Lord are in every place, watching the evil and the good.
- B. God uses His word to perform heart surgery. Heb 4:12-13
For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but **all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.**
- C. The Great Physician never makes a misdiagnosis, nor is His remedy ever wrong.
- D. God uses His knowledge when choosing people to use. 1 Sam 16:6-7
When they entered, he (Samuel) looked at Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him." 7 But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

II. We need to know our own hearts.

- A. Prov 4:23
Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.
- B. Jesus affirmed this truth in Luke 6:43-45.
"For there is no good tree which produces bad fruit, nor, on the other hand, a bad tree which produces good fruit. 44 "For each tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush. 45 "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that (the abundance) which fills his heart."
- C. Apart from Christ our hearts are desperately wicked. Jer 17:9-10
"The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it? 10 "I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds."
NOTE: God knows our hearts and will reveal their condition to us.

D. Through repentance and faith we receive a new heart. Jeremiah 31:31-34
"Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the Lord. 33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the Lord, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

NOTE: Ezekiel puts it a little differently. Ezekiel 36:26

"**Moreover, I will give you a new heart** and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances."

III. The condition of our hearts will determine the quality of our lives.

A. Those whose hearts are completely His will receive God's strong support.

B. Those whose hearts reverence and rejoice in God will find Him to be their protector and provider. Ps 33:18-22

Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope for His lovingkindness, 19 to deliver their soul from death and to keep them alive in famine. 20 Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield. 21 **For our heart rejoices in Him**, because we trust in His holy name. 22 Let Your lovingkindness, O Lord, be upon us, according as we have hoped in You.

C. Those with broken and contrite hearts can pray with confidence. Ps 34:15-18

The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous and His ears are open to their cry. 16 The face of the Lord is against evildoers, to cut off the memory of them from the earth. 17 The righteous cry, and the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. 18 The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed (contrite) in spirit.

APPLICATION

1. When asked what commandment was foremost of all Jesus responded, "The foremost is, 'Hear O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.'" Mark 12:29-30

2. In other words, we are to love God from the heart, and that love will be reflected in every area of our being.

3. Is your heart completely God's, or is your heart a divided heart?