

## Prepare Your Heart – 2 Chronicles 12:13-14

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### A. Reading – Psalm 57

#### B. Taking Aim

1. It was Saturday morning as Jake—an avid hunter—woke up early to bag the first deer of the season.
2. He walked downstairs to make coffee but to his surprise found his wife, Alice, sitting at the kitchen table, dressed in camouflage.
3. Jake asked her: “What are you up to?”
4. Alice replied with a smile, “I’m going huntin’ with you.”
5. Though his reservations were many, Jake reluctantly consented to take her along.
6. When they arrived at the hunting site, Jake put Alice up in the tree-stand & told her, “If you see a deer, take careful aim & I’ll come running back as soon as I hear the shot.”
7. He then walked away with a smile because he’d seen her shoot; she couldn’t hit an elephant—much less a deer.
8. Not 10 minutes passed when he heard several gunshots coming from her direction.
9. He ran back and as he got close, heard Alice screaming: “Get away from my deer!”
10. Fearing she was in danger, Jake raced toward his screaming wife.
11. Again he heard her yell: “I said, get away from my deer!” followed by another volley of gunfire.
12. When Jake arrived at the foot of the tree, he was surprised to see a cowboy standing several yards away with his hands high in the air.
13. The cowboy, with a look of terror, said, “Okay, lady, okay! You can have your deer. Just let me get my saddle off it!”

#### C. Today

1. If you’re not aiming at the right thing, you can get into a heap of trouble.
2. That truth is well illustrated in the life of David’s grandson, Rehoboam.
3. We considered him last week but there’s one more thing said about him here in 2 Chronicles we need to consider.

### II. TEXT

#### A. Vs. 13-14

**<sup>13</sup> Thus King Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem and reigned. Now Rehoboam was 41 years old when he became king; and he reigned 17 years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put His name there. His mother’s name was Naamah, an Ammonitess. <sup>14</sup> And he did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the LORD.**

1. Each of the kings of Israel & Judah are given a kind of report card with a passing or failing grade.

2. We read that some did what was *right* in the sight of the Lord, while others were *evil*.
  3. Rehoboam belongs in the later category..
  4. The *cause* of his evil is given here in v. 14 – *he did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord*.
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5. That phrase is crucial, but before we get into it, let's take a moment to consider what we learn about Rehoboam in v. 13 . . .

### **B. Rehoboam's Background**

1. For those who haven't been with us in our recent studies, let me explain who Rehoboam was . . .
  - a. He was the son of Solomon, the grandson of the great King David.
  - b. Together, David & Solomon raised Israel to its Golden Age.
  - c. Upon Solomon's death, Rehoboam became king & within just 5 years the nation broke apart into 2 lesser kingdoms, then was conquered by Egypt.
2. There was a sad spiritual decline that preceded all this.
  - a. While David was *sold out* to God, Solomon *began* that way *but went bad*.
  - b. *Why* he went bad is spelled out in 1 Kings 11:1-8.

**<sup>1</sup> But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites— <sup>2</sup> from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, "You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love. <sup>3</sup> And he had 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. <sup>4</sup> For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David. <sup>5</sup> For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. <sup>6</sup> Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully follow the LORD, as *did* his father David**

- c. He built altars & shrines for idols on the hills surrounding Jerusalem, many of them within sight of God's temple.
3. Solomon's heart was turned *away from God* because he loved his wives more than the Lord.
  - a. He wanted to appease them.
  - b. So he did what they asked & endorsed the worship of their gods.
4. That's why God had *forbidden* His people *marrying* pagan foreigners; because they would turn their hearts from God.
  - a. They were to be careful about what & who they gave their love & devotion to.
  - b. Nothing must be allowed to compete with our love for God!
  - c. We must be careful to guard our hearts & reserve our devotion for the Lord.
5. Solomon *began* in a place of devotion to God, but as his wealth & power grew, *so did his options*.
  - a. It didn't take long before the inevitable parade of pretty women enticed him

- & he gave in to temptation.
- b. He knew it was wrong; God's Word was clear.
  - c. But there came a day when he decided to do *what we wanted* rather than what God said.
  - d. He made a choice to *turn his heart from God* to satisfy what *his flesh lusted for*.
6. Look what happened – Solomon had a son by Naamah, one of his pagan wives.
  7. That son was *Rehoboam* who became the next king.
  8. Rehoboam continued the example of his father's later years.
    - a. Instead of having a sold-out heart for God like his grandfather,
    - b. Rehoboam's heart was like his dad's – *it was aimed at appeasing others*.
    - c. As we saw last week, Rehoboam forsook God & endorsed the worship of idols because it's what the people wanted.
    - d. It was a lot more *fun* worshipping idols because they allowed people to satisfy their sinful desires while calling it *religion*.
  9. Rehoboam was the *true son* of a *pagan mother* & a *backslidden father*.
    - a. Moses had said in the Law that one of the first things a new king was to do was to write his own copy of the Law of God & use it as the basis of all his decisions,
    - b. Rehoboam never did that & never looked to God for direction or counsel.
    - c. Ever the politician, he only consulted with advisors & used the wisdom of the world as the basis of his choices.
  10. **His heart was never set on any one course.** It was more like a weather vane than a compass.
    - a. His thoughts & choices were determined by the winds of public opinion,
    - b. Rather than the unchanging certainties of God's Word & will.
  11. And so we come to v. 14 –

### **C. Bottom Line**

**And he did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the LORD.**

1. The *bottom line* on Rehoboam is that he goes down in history as an **evil king**.
2. The cause of that determination is this – *He did not prepare his heart to seek Yahweh*.
3. The word *prepare* in Hebrew is “*kuwn*” & means to bring something into being with the result that its existence is permanent.
  - a. In the attempt to bring all of this over into English, different translations render it as *establish, fix, & make ready, & a half dozen other words*.
  - b. *Kuwn* speaks of a choice one makes that becomes obvious by the behavior it produces.
  - c. It's a determination of the will to do a thing.
  - d. *Kuwn* is what Michelangelo did when he sculpted *the Pieta*.
    - 1) He was only 22 & an unknown artist when he received a contract to carve a statue of Mary holding the body of Christ.
    - 2) This was his first real chance to make his mark so *he set himself* to produce a masterpiece.
    - 3) He went to the quarry to select the right block of marble.

- 4) Returning it to his workshop, he set to work & over the next 2 years carved the statue that sits today in St. Peter's in Rome.
- 5) Before Michelangelo ever set chisel to stone, he'd **set his heart** to sculpt the Pieta.
4. Rehoboam's great error was that he **never** set his heart on the one thing that would ensure he went down in history as a good king; he never set his heart to seek God.
- And because of that, his heart spun from one thing to the next –
  - Mostly to things that were wicked.
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5. We can contrast Rehoboam's heart with David's.
6. In Psalm 57:7 David says –
- My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and give praise.**
7. This isn't to say David never messed up. Some of his blunders were doozies!
8. But the **proof** his **basic direction** was God is demonstrated by the fact his repentance was as notable as his sin.
9. Psalm 51 is his cry after his sin with Bathsheba –
- <sup>10</sup> Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.**
10. Don't miss that – David understood **what went wrong** in him that allowed him to get so sideways was that his **heart** had been distracted.
- We know what it was – he **saw** something he ought not because he was someplace he ought not have been.
  - When he should have been out with the army in the field, he was home alone, walking on the elevated porch of his palace – looking into his neighbor's yard.
  - When he saw the bathing Bathsheba, **surely** the Spirit told him to look away.
  - But his flesh said, “No; gaze on.”
  - Because he'd already said “No” to the Spirit Who told him to deploy with the army, it was easier for him now to say “No” when God urged him to look away.
12. David understood coming back to God meant first & foremost getting his heart back on track.
13. All his choices flowed from his heart;
- If his heart was right with God, his choices would be right.
  - But if his heart was wrong, then his choices would be too.
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14. Rehoboam's great error was that he **NEVER** set his heart to seek the Lord, so **most** of his choices were wrong.
15. That's a dangerous place to be when you're a king, because **your** choices affect the lives of **many**.
16. There's a story Yankees manager Billy Martin tells in his autobiography about hunting in Texas with Mickey Mantle.
- Mantle had a friend who'd let him hunt on his ranch.
  - When they reached the ranch, Mickey told Billy to wait in the car while he checked with his friend to see if they could hunt that day.

- c. Mantle's friend gave permission, then asked Mickey a favor.
    - 1) He had an old mule in the barn that was going blind & needed to be put down.
    - 2) But the mule had been around so long he didn't have the heart to do it.
    - 3) He asked Mantle to shoot the mule for him.
  - d. When Mantle came back to the car, he pretended to be angry, scowling & slamming the door.
  - e. Martin asked what was wrong & Mickey said his friend wouldn't let them hunt.
  - f. He said, "I'm so mad at that guy! I'm going out to his barn & shoot one of his mules!"
  - g. Martin thought he was just talking & would cool off but Mantle drove like a maniac to the barn, threw open the car door, grabbed his gun & stormed off.
  - h. Martin followed with his gun in hand as well. As soon as he entered the barn he heard Mantle's gun go off & saw the old mule drop.
  - i. Mickey then turned around & stumped back to the car.
  - j. When he got there he realized Billy hadn't followed him, he was still in the barn.
  - k. 2 shots rang out, then Billy emerged from the barn & ran back to the car.
  - l. Mantle asked, "What are you doing, Martin?"
  - m. His face red with anger Billy said, "We'll show that son of a gun! I just killed 2 of his cows!"
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17. All of us have been given a life to live. **HOW** we live is determined by our heart.
- a. Like a ship at sea, it's the wheel that determines our course.
  - b. Because each of us are created in the image of God, our lives have a **huge impact** on the world around us.
  - c. We may not be a king like Rehoboam, or David, but our choices affect others nonetheless.
  - d. The massive blessing the nation of Israel enjoyed under David's reign was due largely to **his** whole-hearted devotion to God.
  - e. Sol got off to a great start, but because he didn't **guard** his heart as the years went by, he went astray & fathered Rehoboam, whose heart was **never** set to seek the Lord.
  - f. Rehoboam's choices brought devastation to millions!

### III. CONCLUSION

#### A. **Set Your Heart to Seek the Lord**

- 1. The challenge to us today is this – What is our heart set on?
  - 2. Have we set our hearts to seek God, **no matter what?**
  - 3. Or do live with the attitude of keeping our options open & letting our course be determined by the desires of our flesh & the passing fashions of this world?
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- 4. Whenever we have a men's or women's retreat there's a cut off date for registration because we have to call our numbers in to the retreat center.
    - a. And every time there are people who wait until after the deadline to try &

- sign up.
- b. We've asked *why* they waited till so late.
  - c. Some say because they were waiting to see if *something better* was going to come up & when nothing did, they decided to go to the retreat.
  - d. There wasn't something specific they were looking for, just *anything* else that might be *more fun*. We get this a lot with youth camps.
5. I think that's indicative of a heart *not set* to seek the Lord. It's set on fun – so wherever fun is, that's where the heart is.
  6. It isn't hard to see how that can lead to disaster.
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7. Contrast that with the example of Billy Graham who very early in his career as an evangelist realized satan would do his best to bring him down.
    - a. So Graham *prepared his heart* to always seek the Lord & never give even a moment's attention to sin.
    - b. One day while stuck in traffic in LA, the door opened & he looked over to see a woman's shapely leg coming out from under a far-too short skirt, stepping into the back seat with him, he opened the *opposite* door & hurried out, then quickly made his way away from the car.
    - c. A good thing too; it was a trap set by a hostile newspaper that wanted to discredit Graham's ministry.
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8. Christian, listen—the devil hates you & wants to take you down.
  9. Set your heart to seek the Lord, don't put it in neutral & wait to decide *how you'll react* when temptation comes.
  10. Right now in this room, there are believers with *unprepared* hearts.
    - a. There're men here who'd *relish the seduction* of a pretty young thing at work.
      - 1) Rather than planning how they'd overcome the temptation & make good their escape,
      - 2) They're secretly wishing for it.
    - b. There are women here who'd *jump* at the chance to connect with some rich & powerful man.
      - 1) Instead of preparing to cleave to the Lord in the face of temptation,
      - 2) They *fantasize* about being swept off their feet by “Mr. Dashing.”
  11. Christian, when it comes to your heart, **you can't keep your options open.**
  12. We must set our hearts to seek the Lord – fully aware that there *will come* a multitude of things that will try to get us to *negotiate & compromise* our love & devotion.
  13. But nothing moves us – because our hearts belong to God.

### **B. Simon the Pharisee & the Sinful Woman - Luke 7: 36-50**

He invited Jesus for a meal because Jesus was popular and he wanted to be seen with Him.

She invited Jesus into her heart and would not let anything stop her passionate display of love.

That's what's in the church today – “Image Simons” & forgiven lovers.

Which are you?