

THE SEARCHER OF HEARTS

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Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” In answer to the question about the heart, “Who can know it?,” the Lord says in Jeremiah 17:10, “*I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.*” God’s work with mankind is based in the inner man, and the eternal judgment is directly related to this. For these reasons, it is of utmost importance for us to know and understand everything God teaches us about the heart of man.

God’s search of the heart

Repeatedly, the scriptures describe God’s work of searching and knowing every heart. Indeed, Proverbs 20:27 says, “*The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.*” There is nothing in man that God does not search and know. “If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god; shall not God search this out? *for he knoweth the secrets of the heart*” (Psa 44:20-21). Romans 8:27 says, “*And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*” The connection between this work of God in searching our hearts, and how He will ultimately judge us is also made on numerous occasions. For example, in 1 Chronicles 28:9, David said to his son, “And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: *for the Lord searcheth all hearts, 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.” And Revelation 2:23 says, “*And all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.*”

The heart is the source

The relationship between what God finds in our heart and where we will spend our eternity is based on the fact that our heart is the source of our thoughts, words, and deeds. In Mark 7:14-23, Christ taught, “And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand: there is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. And when he was entered into the house

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from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable. And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? 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*" (see also Matt 15:18-20). And Luke 6:43-45 says, "For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. *A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh*" (see also Matt 12:34-35). Therefore, Proverbs 4:23 says, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

Purifying the heart

As David taught Solomon in 1 Chronicles 28:9, God will purify the hearts of those who seek Him. This is why David made this plea to God: "*Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting*" (Psa 139:23-24). In Acts 15:9, we learn that God has the same work for both Jews and Gentiles, as the Apostle Peter said, "And put no difference between us and them, *purifying their hearts by faith.*" Philippians 2:13 says, "*For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*" In the end, God will judge every man and give him according to his ways, and the fruit of his doings (Psa 28:4; Prov 24:12; Jer 17:10; Matt 16:27; Rom 2:6; 2 Cor 5:10; 11:5; Rev 2:23; 22:12). And our doings proceed from our hearts. Therefore, if we are wise, we will study God's word and examine ourselves so that we can learn about our own hearts before it is too late to change and escape eternal punishment. Proverbs 14:8 says, "The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit."