

“Guard Your Heart!”

INTRODUCTION:

“Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life” (Prov 4:23).

B. Your heart—the center of consciousness, source of thinking, fount of feelings, seat of affections, root

of decisions—is a natural wellspring of what the Bible describes as “*the inner man*.”

C. As a result, your heart has immeasurable value.

I. The Historical and Cultural Background of *Proverbs 4:23*

A. Human civilization has always been inseparably tied to sources of fresh water.

B. Kings ruled in close proximity to water.

1. Strongholds were fortified to protect the supply of water.

2. If an enemy was able to cut off a city’s fresh water supply, they would put the inhabitants of

the city in a stranglehold that could not be ignored.

3. Keep the flow of water from pollution and takeover, and a kingdom could thrive and expand.

C. The spiritual application of these truths is powerful.

1. There is a “throne” beside the fountain of your heart.

2. The course of your life will be determined by the one who sits on that throne.

II. The Valley of Your Heart and the Choice Every Human Being Will Make

A. The battleground of the war over your soul is your inward being.

B. On the opposing sides of the valley of your heart are two camps (*Psa 81:8-16*):

1. _____

2. _____

C. The heart your Creator envisions? It’s characterized by the pleas of *Psalm 86:11-12*.

D. In *Psalm 18*, David recounts the mighty acts of God in his life (*Psa 18:19, 28-40, 46-48*).

1. The question, of course, is how?

2. The answer is the orientation of his heart. *Psalm 18:1-3* provides the key.

Conclusion:

A. Today, we typically use the word *keep* as a verb. In ancient times, *keep* could be used as a noun. A

keep was the innermost and strongest structure or central tower of a fortress.

B. God is willing to be your keep. God is able to construct a fortress around your heart (*Psa 91:14*).

“Heart” in the Bible

Heart is used 875 times in the Bible. Clearly, God is trying to tell us something.

Your heart is a tablet on which the things you value the most will be written (Prov 7:1-3; Matt 6:21; 2 Cor 3:3).

Your thoughts, understanding, beliefs, intentions and meditations spring from your heart. (Gen 6:5; Psa 19:14; Prov 15:28; 27:19; Luke 6:45)

God looks beyond your outward appearance, weighing and testing your heart. (1 Sam 16:7; Psa 44:20-21; Prov 21:2; 1 Thes 2:4)

Your heart can be stirred and strengthened with courage or melt in sadness and discouragement. (Psa 27:14; Josh 7:4-5)

Your heart has eyes that can be darkened by selfishness or enlightened by divine revelation. (Eph 1:17-19)

Satan is trying to close and fill your heart with lies; God is trying to open and fill your heart with truth. (Psa 37:30-31; Acts 5:3; 2 Cor 4:6)

Hearts can be made to burn by hearing, understanding and treasuring the words of God. (Luke 24:32)

Integrity and uprightness are the seeds of godliness that germinate in a good and honest heart. (Matt 5:8; Luke 8:15)

Temptation is an enticement, not just of your body, but your heart. (James 4:8)

Wickedness, evil thoughts and perverse actions naturally flow from a defiled and hardened heart. (Matt 15:18-19)

What makes idolatry so serious is that personalities or things other than God are allowed to rule in your heart. (Ezek 14:4-5)

When you are deceived, it is as if your heart has been stolen. (Gen 31:20; 2 Sam 15:6)

God’s intention is that Christ would be invited to dwell in your heart through faith. (Eph 3:14-17)

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, can rule and guard your heart in Christ Jesus. (Phil 4:4-7)