

TWO HEARTS—TWO REACTIONS

By Marc W. Gibson

When a teacher proclaims the gospel and exposes error, his hearers manifest one of two heart types. We see an example of the first in Acts 2 (on the day of Pentecost):

“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’” (Acts 2:37)

Peter’s lesson touched the hearers’ hearts in a way that caused them to penitently ask what they needed to do to resolve their dilemma of sin. This is an example of the way good hearts react to gospel preaching. We see the second heart type displayed in those to whom Stephen preached:

“When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth ... and they cast him out of the city and stoned him.” (Acts 7:54,58)

Stephen’s sermon touched these hearers’ hearts in a way that caused them to become enraged and commit murder. This is an example of the way rebellious hearts react to gospel preaching.

Whenever one preaches the gospel, the audience reacts. Even no response at all is a reaction to the power of truth. The speaker aims the gospel at the hearer’s heart. Why? *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.” {Romans 1:16}* God’s power to save us from our sins is in the message of Christ. We can ponder, discern, think, examine the evidence, and choose what we will do with it. God will not force us to obey – obedience must come from the heart that understands its condition and that Christ is its only hope.

God’s gospel softens some hearts and hardens others. The difference is in their willingness to hear and obey the truth. If you are of a mind to seek God, your heart will hear and obey. If you insist on doing only what you want to do, your heart will refuse to hear and obey. Gospel preaching will cut to the heart - gospel preaching will always receive some type of reaction. How will you react? (–some added by KMG) ***