

Hide & Seek

November 16, 2014 ~ 2 Chronicles 15.1-15

Hide & Seek Explanation

- ❖ III: Hide & Seek game ~ Great fun (play in house or outside after dark)
 - ✧ Variant games:
 - ◇ “**Sardines**” ~ One hides and those finding him join him
 - ◇ “**Ghost in the Graveyard**” ~ One hides, all chime 12 – first to see yells & runs
- ❖ The goal of hide & seek is to be found
 - ✧ But to be found, others must seek . . .
- ❖ I will use hide & seek illustrations today / **Why?**

God Plays Hide & Seek With Us

- ❖ There are about 25 references to God hiding from us (His face, ears, Himself)
 - ✧ **Dt 31.17**, “Then My anger shall be aroused against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will **hide** My face from them, and they shall be devoured.”
 - ✧ **Ps 55.1**, “Give ear to my prayer, O God, And do not **hide** Yourself from my supplication.”
 - ✧ **Ps 89.46**, “How long, Lord? Will You **hide** Yourself forever? Will Your wrath burn like fire?”
 - ✧ **Is 45.15**, “Truly You *are* God, who **hide** Yourself, O God of Israel, the Savior!”
- ❖ There are about 75 references in which we are to seek after God
 - ✧ **Dt 4.29**, “.. you will **seek** the Lord your God, and you will **find** Him if you **seek** Him with all your heart and with all your soul.”
 - ✧ **1 Chr 16.11**, “**Seek** the Lord and His strength; **Seek** His face evermore!”
 - ✧ **1 Chr 22.19**, “Now set your heart and your soul to **seek** the Lord your God.”
 - ✧ **Ezra 8.22**, “The hand of our God *is* upon all those for good who **seek** Him, but His power and His wrath *are* against all those who forsake Him.”

Background on our Text

- ❖ We are 30 years beyond the division of the kingdom under Rehoboam
 - ✧ **Judah** – Rehoboam (17 yrs) / **Abijam** (3 yrs) / **Asa** (10th of 41 years)
 - ✧ **Israel** – Jeroboam (22 yrs) / **Nadab** (2 yrs) / **Baasha** (6th of 24 yrs)
- ❖ Asa commended for removing foreign gods (**14.2-5**)
- ❖ Zerah king of Ethiopia comes against Judah with 1M man army
 - ✧ Asa cried out to God (**14.11**) and God defeated them (**14.12**)
 - ✧ Asa is returning from this battle when the prophet addresses him . . .
- ❖ **Reread** key “**seek**” phrases (**v2b, v4, v12, v15**)

Xition: Let’s walk through verse 2 and use hide & seek illustrations

The Prophet Explains the Rules

v2c ~ “**The Lord is with you while you are with Him”**”

- ✧ **Problem #1:** You don’t find a place to hide in time
 - ◇ **III:** Snipe hunt – My Dad couldn’t lose me ~ I was with him
 - ◇ God can’t hide from us when we are with Him
 - ◇ God being with us is the opposite of being hidden from us

v2d ~ “**If you seek Him, He will be found by You**”

- ✧ **Problem #2:** You cannot find someone no matter how hard you look
 - ◇ **III:** You can’t find someone so you yell, “**Olly, Olly, Oxen Free**”
 - ◇ God promises that won’t be the case with Him ~ He will be found

v2e ~ “**But if you forsake Him, He will forsake you”**”

- ✧ **Problem #3:** Someone is not found, yet the “**Olly**” call doesn’t go out
 - ◇ **III:** Hamper – No one found me ~ they just stopped looking
 - ◇ Some would also cheat – go out of bounds to hide

The Prophet Explains a Past Game

- ❖ v3 ~ This refers to time of judges or more recently to Northern kingdom
- ❖ v4 ~ Yet when the people “**sought Him, He was found by them**”
 - ✧ **Verse 2** was describing theory ~ “**will be found**” and “**will forsake**”
 - ✧ But the prophet is now explaining what really happened
- ❖ v5-6 ~ The former times were tumultuous (v5) and God sent adversity (v6)
- ❖ v7 ~ But He encourages Asa and promises to reward his labor

Asa Acts Boldly

- ❖ v8 ~ Asa took courage, removed idols from land and rebuilt altar
- ❖ v9 ~ Judah, Benjamin and others gathered to Him
- ❖ v10 ~ They gathered in the 3rd month of 15th year of his reign
- ❖ v11 ~ They offered 700 bulls and 7,000 sheep from Ethiopian spoils

Asa and People Covenant to Seek God

- ❖ v12 ~ They covenanted “**to seek the Lord God .. with all their heart and with all their soul”**”
 - ✧ v2 described seeking theoretically
 - ✧ v4 described past experience of finding God
 - ✧ v12 describes covenant to seek God perpetually

Xition: Positive and Negative Sanctions

Asa and People Covenant and Take Maledictory Oath

- ❖ v12 ~ They covenanted together to seek God
- ❖ v13 ~ They also covenanted together for accountability
 - ✧ “whoever would not seek the Lord .. was to be put to death”
 - ✧ Maledictory oath like the Abrahamic Covenant (**Gen 15.9-21**)
 - ✧ But God Himself embraced the responsibility for fulfilling it
 - ◇ God passed between the halves of the slaughtered animals
- ❖ v14 ~ All of these people embraced the covenant and took the oath with joy

Asa and People Honor Covenantal Vow

- ❖ v15a ~ They “rejoiced at the oath” ~ They are not unwilling participants
 - ✧ v9 ~ “they came over to him in great numbers”
- ❖ v15b ~ “they had sworn with all their heart”
- ❖ v15c ~ “sought Him with all their soul”
- ❖ v15d ~ “and He was found by them”
- ❖ Asa and His people find God
 - ✧ What had been theory (v2), history (v4), and promise (v12) has become reality

Sardines – not Hide and Seek

- ❖ Finding God is more like Sardines than classic Hide & Seek
 - ✧ God hides and we seek Him
 - ✧ When we find Him we stay with Him (we join Him)
 - ✧ But through our neglect or inattention we find we’re not with Him
 - ✧ And we must again seek Him until found

Playing Hide & Seek With God

- ❖ Hide and seek instituted in **Dt 4.25-29** ~ **Read it**
- ❖ Hide and seek is a child’s game
 - ✧ Adults don’t play it well (often don’t hide or seek)
 - ✧ Though hide & seek with God is not a game ~ we adults often fail at it too
 - ✧ We forget the importance of seeking God continually
 - ◇ God may hide from us because we neglect Him
 - ◇ He may also hide from us to strengthen our faith
 - ◇ The psalmist often cries out for God (**Read Psalm 13**)

Xition: Four possible states of the game . . .

Four Possible States of the Game

1. You're with God ~ This is often temporary (III: Child walking with faster Father)
2. You're seeking God ~ This makes up the bulk of each game / our lives
3. You're not seeking God ~ You're losing interest / let others do it
4. You're forsaken by God ~ Loss of interest is permanent

Game Expanded to Include Gentiles

❖ Read Isaiah 65.1-3a

- ✧ This game of hide & seek has always encompassed the entire earth
 - ✧ But early on there was a core set of players originating from Abraham
 - ✧ But they eventually tired of the game / They felt they controlled it
 - ✧ But they didn't / It was never their game to control / Nor is it ours...
- ✧ God clearly opened game up to everyone with coming of Christ

- Bumper Sticker: “**Wise Men Still Seek Him**”
- All people are in 1 of the 4 states of this game of Hide and Seek with God
- With Him, Seeking Him, Not Seeking Him or have Forsaken Him
- What is most sad is that outwardly these states can all look so similar . . .

Read Isaiah 55.6-7

Seek the LORD while He may be found,
Call upon Him while He is near.
Let the wicked forsake his way,
And the unrighteous man his thoughts;
Let him return to the LORD,
And He will have mercy on him;
And to our God,
For He will abundantly pardon.

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,
And to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,
To God our Savior, who alone is wise,
Be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever.
Amen *pause* Go in peace . . .