

Finishing Well

Lesson #2

Building A Spiritual Broad Wall

January 12, 2022

Hezekiah the Reformer II Kings 18:4

- ❖ Cleansed The Temple
- ❖ Consecrated The Temple
- ❖ Celebrated Passover
- ❖ Organized The Temple Ministries

II Chronicles 29:3-31:21

- II Chron. 29:3-19
- II Chron. 29:20-26
- II Chron. 30:1-27
- II Chron. 31:1-21

Hezekiah, "the Lord strengthens," ruled as king of Judah from 715 BC - 687 BC.

- He was the 13th king in a line of 20.
- He was 1 of 3 kings that were commended for being like David.

II Chron. 29:1-2 Hezekiah began to reign when he was 25 years old and reigned 29 years in Jerusalem. He did what was right in the sight of the Lord, just as David had done.

II Kings 18:5-7 He trusted in the LORD God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. For he held fast to the Lord; he did not depart from following Him but kept the commandments that the Lord commanded Moses. The Lord was with him; wherever he went, he prospered.

He rebelled against the king of Assyria and would not serve him.

He will be instrumental in the building of a strong physical as well as spiritual BROAD WALL.

Consider: Situation when Hezekiah began to reign as king of Judah; culture

Throughout the books of Kings and Chronicles, we read the sad commentary that kings did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. Hezekiah's father, King Ahaz of Judah was one such king.

He defiled the temple, sacrificed to the gods of Damascus, established centers of idol worship in every Judean town, stopped the Levitical ministry and ultimately closed the Temple doors.

This action had brought discipline to Judah, including invasions by Syria, Edom and Philistia.

Hezekiah had witnessed the destruction of the northern Kingdom of Israel by Sargon's Assyrians in 720 BC. The Assyrian army was known for its brutality and awesome power.

If they conquered Judah, thousands would be slaughtered, people would be hauled into captivity as slaves, and the worship of God among His people would be a thing of the past.

Early in his reign, Hezekiah returned Judah to the sole and true worship of Yahweh.

II Chron. 29-30 relates the sweeping religious reforms of Hezekiah to set "*the service of the house of the Lord ... in order*" [II Chron. 29:35].

Hezekiah The Reformer

II Kings 18:4; II Chron. 29:3-31:21

II Chronicles devotes 3 chapters to his sweeping reforms. [build strong spiritual wall]

Interesting: II Kings has only 1 verse to describe Hezekiah's massive reforms in Judah.

- II Kings 18:4 > Hezekiah destroyed the bronze serpent made by Moses.
- The bronze serpent was a religious relic that had reached the status of an idol.

Wiersbe: It is so easy for human nature to honor religious relics that have no power. Hezekiah was a man of faith who trusted the living God and followed His law, and he didn't want the people worshipping a dead, useless image.

Hezekiah's 1st Priority: Call the nation & its leaders to repent & make a commitment to God.

II Chron. 29:3-11

3. In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the Lord and repaired them. His father Ahaz had neglected God's house.

4-5. He brought in the priests and Levites...,"Listen to me, Levites! Sanctify yourselves, and the house of the Lord, the God of your ancestors, and carry out the filth from the holy place.

- Many of the Levites had never served in the Temple.
- Many of these priests had fallen into unfaithfulness and idolatry.
- Deal with their own sin before they could begin the process of cleansing the temple.

God cannot use you to impact others for Christ until you cleanse yourself from defilement.

6-7. Our ancestors have been unfaithful and have done what was evil in the sight of the Lord our God; they have forsaken Him and have turned away their faces from the dwelling of the Lord and turned their backs. They also shut the doors of the vestibule and put out the lamps and have not offered incense or made burnt offerings in the holy place to the God of Israel.

8-9. Therefore, the wrath of the Lord came upon Judah and Jerusalem, and He has made them an object of horror, of astonishment, and of hissing, as you see with your own eyes.

Our fathers have fallen by the sword and our sons, daughters and wives are in captivity.

10. Now it is in my heart to make a covenant with the Lord, the God of Israel, so that His fierce anger may turn away from us.

11. My sons, do not now be negligent, for the Lord has chosen you to stand in His presence to minister to Him, and to be His ministers and make offerings to Him."

- 29:5 Priests & Levites Consecrate Yourselves Consecrate God's House
 - Reverse the awful conditions from Ahaz
- 29:10 Make a Covenant with the Lord God
- 29:11 Don't be negligent Lord has chosen you to stand before Him to minister to Him

Key Point #1 Spiritual Renewal Comes Through Commitment To The Lord

Truth: When you face a crisis, the natural human response is to focus on the crisis.

Consider: Hezekiah could have looked at his circumstances and thought:

1. Things are so grim. My father shut down the Temple. Idolatry is rampant.
2. We have lost so much to the enemy who seems to be oppressing us.
3. He could have grown depressed and been paralyzed into doing nothing.
4. BUT he committed himself to follow the Lord.

A. Commitment To God Is The Most Pressing Need In Time Of Pressing Need

1. Only AFTER we have committed to Him are we free to seek Him working in our need.
2. Often the very reason God sends the problem is to get us to stop and get our priorities back in line.

3. THEN, He often deals with the problem in ways we never could have --- even if we had put all our efforts into solving it.

Bonhoeffer: The normal Christian life begins with faith in Christ and should continue in an ever-growing commitment to the Lord. [from The Cost of Discipleship]

B. Commitment To God Brings Hope Into The Darkest Situations

Hezekiah: Things are grim. Idolatry is rampant. He could have grown very depressed and have been paralyzed into doing nothing. But instead, he committed himself to follow the Lord.

He rallied the priests to re-open the temple for worship. He called the nation back to God.

We all have been in hopeless, discouraging situations. Are you there now?

You have given every effort to deal with it ---to no avail. Is there any problem too big for God?

Jer. 32:27 Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for me?

Consider: Adoniram Judson, great pioneer missionary to Burma, was suffering from fever in a stinking, rat-infested prison. He had seen little fruit for his years of hard work and sacrifice. He had gone through many setbacks and hardships. A letter from a friend arrived which asked, "Judson, how's the outlook?" He replied, "The outlook is as bright as the promises of God."

Truth: When God breaks into any situation, the darkness is dispelled by the light of His presence.

C. Commitment To God Always Involves A Radical Commitment To His Word

- Willing to obey what God's Word says and how we are to live

Recall Hezekiah's background and the spiritual climate he grew up in. His father was an abusive, self-centered man who had burned some of Hezekiah's brothers to death by offering them to the pagan god, Molech! Ahaz had set up idol worship throughout the whole country. Hezekiah easily could have been a rebellious, angry young man, mad at God, mad at his abusive father, just going with the evil current of his day. He didn't drift into the direction he took.

He had to make a commitment to go against the evil ways of his father. [29:6]

He had to follow God's Word even when it ran counter to the evil customs being practiced.

Ps. 119:130 The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.

- Spiritual renewal is always centered on the renewal of the authority of God's Word
- Commitment puts God's Word into life by obeying it when it confronts the way we live.
- A renewed commitment to God and His Word always reveals areas of our lives that have been displeasing to Him.

Key #2: Spiritual renewal comes through Cleansing in accordance with God's Word [12-24]

Action Of The Levites: II Chron. 29:15-16

Fourteen men were chosen to be the example and lead the way to revive Temple worship.

¹⁵And they gathered their brethren, and sanctified themselves, and came, according to the commandment of the king, by the words of the LORD, to cleanse the house of the LORD.

Timetable To Cleanse The Temple: II Chron. 29:17 Now they began to sanctify on the 1st day of the 1st month, [Nisan 1; day they dedicated the Tabernacle at Mt. Sinai]

- They began in the Holy of Holies and then the Holy Place. [II Chron. 29:16]

- They were to cleanse and sanctify the Temple from the inside out.
- Cleansed the vessels & instruments used in the temple & put them in the proper place.

On the 8th day [new beginnings] of the month, they came to the vestibule of the LORD.

The porch was home to a pagan altar Ahaz had built. They destroyed it and put the altar to the LORD back where it belonged.

So they sanctified the house of the LORD in eight days, and on the sixteenth day of the first month they finished.

- The complete cleansing took 16 days. Missed Passover > Not ready

II Chron. 29:16 And the priests went into the inner part of the house of the LORD, to cleanse it, and brought out all the uncleanness that they found in the temple of the LORD into the court of the house of the LORD. And the Levites took it, to carry it out abroad into the brook Kidron.

- All the trash, filth, idols and the dead were thrown into the Kidron Valley.

John 19:34 Blood & Water flowed from the side of Jesus.

The outflow from Jesus' side mirrors the water and sacrificial blood from the Temple's drains that emptied into the Kidron Valley which then flowed into the Dead Sea. WOW!

Hezekiah Restores Temple Worship - II Chron. 29:20-23

When the cleansing was done, they worshiped and offered 3 kinds of sacrifices.

1. Sin Offering Substitution

God's holiness and justice demand that the penalty for our sin is death.

Heb. 9:22 Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission.

For the person to be cleansed, he had to lay his hands on the head of the animal as the priest slit its throat, thus identifying himself with that shedding of blood on his behalf. His sins were "transferred" to the animal which died in his place. There is no cleansing from sin unless you have by faith identified yourself with Jesus Christ in His death on your behalf.

²⁰Then King Hezekiah rose early, gathered the rulers of the city, and went up to the house of the LORD. ²¹ And they brought 7 bulls, 7 rams, 7 lambs, and 7 male goats for a Sin Offering [atone for sins of people & priests] for the kingdom, for the sanctuary, and for Judah.

And he commanded the priests the sons of Aaron to offer them on the altar of the LORD.

²³And they brought forth the he goats for the sin offering before the king and the congregation; and they laid their hands upon them:

2. Burnt Offering Consecration = Offered TOTALLY to the LORD

- Worshiper did not eat any of it = complete surrender & holiness

My response to His mercy in becoming my sin offering should be: to give myself completely
Rom. 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

II Chron. 29:24 And the priests killed them, and they made reconciliation with their blood upon the altar, to make an atonement for ALL Israel: for the king commanded that the burnt offering and the sin offering should be made for all Israel.

3. Thank Offering Devotion

- Voluntary offering expressing love and gratitude for God's many blessings

Heb. 13:15-16 "Through (Christ) then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. And do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased"

Col. 2:7 We are to be "overflowing with gratitude."

Spiritual renewal starts with commitment; continues with cleansing; and culminates in celebration with God's people II Chron. 29:25-36

29:27b-29 And when the Burnt Offering [symbolized total dedication to the LORD] Began,

- the song of the LORD began also with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David king of Israel. [trumpets, cymbals, harps and lyres]
- And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: and all this continued until the burnt offering was finished.
- And when they had made an end of offering, the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves and worshipped.

29:30b-31 And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped.

Then Hezekiah answered and said, Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the LORD,

- come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the LORD.
- The congregation brought in sacrifices & thank offerings;
- and as many as were of a willing heart burnt offerings. [= total complete sacrifice]

II Chron. 29:32-33 And the number of the burnt offerings, which the congregation brought, was 70 bullocks, 100 rams, and 200 lambs: all these were for a burnt offering to the LORD.

³³ And the consecrated things were six hundred oxen and three thousand sheep.

II Chron. 29:34-36 But the priests were too few, so that they could not flay all the burnt offerings: wherefore their brethren the Levites did help them, till the work was ended, and until the other priests had sanctified themselves:

for the Levites were more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests.

³⁵ And also the burnt offerings were in abundance, with the fat of the peace offerings, and the drink offerings for every burnt offering. So the service of the house of the LORD was set in order.³⁶ And Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that God had prepared the people: for the thing was done suddenly.

Hezekiah Celebrates Passover II Chronicles 30:1-11

Key Precept: Obedience from the heart to our gracious God results in great joy.

Spiritual revival began with the king of Judah & its spiritual leaders.

Restoring the observance of the Passover in the 2nd month:

- Hezekiah invited Israel & Judah to turn to the LORD &
- Come to Jerusalem to worship & observe Passover

II Chron. 30:1 And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover unto the LORD God of Israel.

II Chron. 30:2-3, 5 For the king had taken counsel, and his princes, and all the congregation in Jerusalem, to keep the Passover in the second month. [Iyar]

³ For they could not keep it at that time, [14th Nisan] because the priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently, neither had the people gathered themselves together to Jerusalem.

➤ In Deut. 12, God had commanded there be 1 central place of worship > Jerusalem

⁵ So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the Passover unto the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem: for they had not done it of a long time in such sort as it was written.

Consider: Beersheba to Dan = the whole length of the kingdom.

➤ Those who had been violating the 2nd commandment by using graven images in the worship of the LORD are invited to return to keep the Passover.

Message: Return to the place God said to be > the house of the LORD at Jerusalem

Repent of sinning against God II Chron. 30:6-8

Receive His mercy II Chron. 30:8-9

The Decree & Message:

II Chron. 30:6 So the posts went with the letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah, as the king commanded, saying, O Israelites,

- Return To The Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, that He may return to those left of you who escaped out of the hands of the kings of Assyria.

30:7-9 And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the LORD God of their fathers, who therefore gave them up to desolation, as ye see.

⁸ Now be ye not stiff-necked, as your fathers were, but

- YIELD Yourselves Unto The LORD, and
- ENTER Into His Sanctuary, which He hath sanctified forever: and
- SERVE The LORD Your God, that the fierceness of His wrath may turn away from you.

⁹ For If Ye Turn Again Unto The LORD, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that lead them captive, so that they shall come again into this land: for the LORD your God is gracious and merciful, and Will Not Turn Away His Face From You, If Ye Return Unto Him.

Their Reaction: Some Mocked & Ridiculed:

II Chron. 30:10-11 So the posts passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh even unto Zebulun: but they laughed them to scorn and mocked them.

- Much of the remnant in bondage to Assyria was just as stiff-necked as their ancestors were when God dealt with them in the wilderness.
- They have an opportunity to make a new beginning and seeking God's compassion, grace and mercy.

¹¹ Some of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun Humbled Themselves and Came To Jerusalem. II Chron. 30:12-13 The hand of God was also on Judah to give them one heart to do what the king and the princes commanded by the word of the LORD. And there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the second month, a very great congregation.

Preparing For Passover - II Chron. 30:14-20

- Remove the idolatrous altars which King Ahaz had erected in each of the 4 corners of Jerusalem [II Chron. 28:24].
- Took all the altars for incense away and cast ALL into the brook Kidron where they would be washed away by the flowing stream.
- Then they killed the Passover on the 14th day of the 2nd month [Iyar].
- The priests and the Levites were ashamed they had allowed themselves to become ceremonially unclean. Before they began offering the animals of Passover, they performed their own cleansing rituals and offered the burnt offerings prescribed by law.
- Thus cleansed, they performed the ceremonial sprinkling of the Passover blood.
- There were many in the congregation, mainly from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar & Zebulun, who had not cleansed themselves prior to Passover, yet they participated in the feast. [It had been so long they may not have known the requirements.]
- Rather than berating them for disobedience of the law requirements, Hezekiah prayed for them, for those who would prepare their hearts to seek after God. The word pardon = kophar = to cover or atone; an official removing of the guilt of the sin committed.
- The LORD hearkened to Hezekiah and healed the uncleanness of all who sought to learn and do His will.
- It is our heart that God wants and not mere religious ritual.

Key Precept: Obedience from the heart to our gracious God results in great joy.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread—II Chron. 30: 21-27

And the children of Israel that were present at Jerusalem kept the Feast Of Unleavened Bread 7 days with great gladness: and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the LORD. And Hezekiah spoke comfortably unto all the Levites that taught the good knowledge of the LORD: they did eat throughout the feast 7 days, offering peace offerings, and making confession to the LORD God of their fathers. The whole assembly took counsel to keep other 7 days: and They Kept Other 7 Days With Gladness. For Hezekiah king of Judah did give to the congregation 1,000 bullocks and 7,000 sheep; and the princes gave to the congregation 1,000 bullocks and 10,000 sheep: and a great number of priests sanctified themselves. And all the congregation of Judah, with the priests and the Levites, and all the congregation that came out of Israel, and the strangers that came out of the land of Israel, and that dwelt in Judah, rejoiced.

So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel there was not the like in Jerusalem.

Then the priests the Levites arose and blessed the people: and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to His holy dwelling place, even unto heaven.

When the people left, he pronounced the benediction of God upon them.

Num. 6:24-27 The LORD bless you and keep you; The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace. So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them.

Hezekiah Organized The Temple Ministry -II Chron. 31:1-21

Following the Passover sacrifice, the nation, in a renewed spirit of dedication, destroyed the idols throughout the land.

Then all the children of Israel returned, every man to his possession, into their own cities.

- Hezekiah knew the blessings of the Passover wouldn't continue unless the people could participate in the regular ministry at the temple.
- He followed David's instructions [I Chron. 23-26] and organized the priests and Levites for ministry at the temple.
- He set a good example by providing from his own flocks and herds the sacrifices needed day by day and month by month.
- He admonished the people to bring their tithes and offerings to the temple to support the priests and Levites.
- He allocated special chambers in the temple for storing the gifts.
- He appointed faithful men to oversee the distribution of food.
- In the 3rd month, the time of grain harvest, the people brought the grain and the priests and Levites heaped it up!
- During the 7th month when the orchard and vineyard harvests came in, the gifts of fruit and wine were added to the store.
- The tithes and offerings brought to the newly consecrated temple were far more than the king expected. A worshipping people will always be a generous people.

II Chron. 31:20-21 And thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah and wrought that which was good and right and truth before the LORD his God.

²¹ And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered.

Every day the world, the flesh and the devil seek to pull us back into a spiritual lethargy that chokes the new life we received when we were born again. "Like silver exposed to the elements, we grow tarnished and dull spiritually."

We constantly need renewal or revival to extract the "religious rubbish" that accumulates.

- "Search my heart; try me and see if there be any wicked way in me."

Wiersbe: It is not by doing some unique new thing that we experience blessing from the Lord, but by returning to the "old things" and doing them well. We are to confess our sins, light the lamps, burn the incense [picture of prayer], and offer ourselves as living sacrifices. Create an environment of praise, adoration, thankfulness, and devotion for God's dwelling place.

Ps. 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.