

February 7

Scriptures: Read 2 Chronicles 29

Key Verse: “My sons, do not be negligent now, for the Lord has chosen you to stand before Him, to serve Him, and that you should minister to Him and burn incense.”
(2 Chronicles 29:11)

Overview

The chronicler writes his history with a religious and spiritual perspective, whereas the parallel account of Hezekiah in 2 Kings 18 is viewed more from the political perspective. It is amazing to read of the reign of Hezekiah, who was one of the most righteous kings of Judah, and yet he was the son of Ahaz, the most wicked king. One might ask, “How could this be?” Truly, it was mainly because of the wonderful grace of God. In His desire to see the apostate nation return to Him, God raised up Hezekiah to lead a revival.

Another contribution to the godliness of Hezekiah was that he had a godly mother, Abijah, who was the daughter of Zechariah, the prophet of the Lord (29:1; 2 Chronicles 26:5). She must have had a positive influence on Hezekiah and instilled the Law of God in his heart so he would walk uprightly (cf. Deuteronomy 6:5-6). A godly mother can have a great effect upon her children, so that when they are grown, they continued to follow the Lord. Possibly Hezekiah’s grandfather Zechariah had some spiritual influence on him as well. The prophet Isaiah also influenced Hezekiah. We know Isaiah had access to the king’s court, since he often warned Ahaz (Isaiah 1:1; 7:3-4) and encouraged Hezekiah (2 Chron. 32:20). Yet another reason for Hezekiah’s zeal to please the Lord was that he saw the terrible results of his father’s wickedness and he understood them to be the wrath of God (29:6-9).

The first thing Hezekiah did when he became king was to reopen and repair the House of the Lord that his father had closed (28:24; 29:3), for he recognized the great sin of the nation and the need for repentance and a return to the Lord. He recognized that, just as Moses had predicted, Judah had been ridiculed by the surrounding countries because of the fall of this once great nation (29:8; Deuteronomy 28:37).

Representatives from all three clans, including the three families of Temple singers (29:13-14), responded to Hezekiah’s call to sanctify (ceremonially cleanse) themselves so that they might enter the Temple and cleanse it from all the filth. This was not only the removal of dirt that had accumulated over the years of neglect, but also the removal of things associated with idolatry which Ahaz had brought into the House of God. Then there was the ceremonial purification of the Temple itself and all its articles. Some of these Ahaz had broken and discarded, but they had now been retrieved and repaired (29:19; 28:24).

Hezekiah explained to the Levites that it was his heart’s desire to renew and reaffirm the covenant with the Lord (29:10) and reestablish true worship of God in the way that Moses had instructed. He emphasized the Levites’ responsibility to serve God, since they had been chosen by Him to do so. Hezekiah’s desire was that the children of Israel might once again be God’s

people. He also wished for God's wrath to be turned from them, that He might bring back the captives from Damascus and Edom (29:9; 30:9; 28:5,18).

When all was cleansed outwardly, Hezekiah called for a general assembly to bring revival to the people of Judah, that they might repent and find inner cleansing through the remission of sin. The priests made atonement for Israel by laying their hands upon the heads of the goats for the sin offerings, thus representing the transfer of the nation's sins upon the substitutionary animal (Leviticus 4:15; 8:14), symbolizing the vicarious death of Jesus Christ and the atonement for sin that He procured (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The offerings were accompanied by the worship music of the Temple musicians that Hezekiah revived and re-established as king David had organized. The faithful people who gathered at the Temple brought offerings. They all worshipped the Lord and rejoiced, considering God's goodness in making the restoration possible, when just a short time before the nation had been steeped in idolatry (29:36). We need to continually thank God for His goodness and grace. By His grace He has brought every believer out of the depths of sin and has granted us salvation through Jesus. As His representatives in the world today, we have been called (as had the Levites) to serve Him and minister unto Him so that others might also come to serve Him and experience His cleansing.

Prayer

O Lord God, we humbly ask You to send revival to our time as You did in Hezekiah's time. Cleanse us, O Lord. We turn away from all evil and trust You for Your favour upon us. Amen.