

Week Seven – Hezekiah Part I

2 Chronicles

We have declared our purpose and method for our study.

A key verse we have used to help us in vetting possible leaders is:

Ex 18:21 Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.

To this point we have looked at:

- Rehoboam – The King who listened to bad **counsel**.
- Asa – The King who **almost** finished well.
- Jehoshaphat – The King who kept making terrible **alliances**.
- Ahaziah/Athalia – the **wimp** King and his **conniving** mother.
- Joash – The King who tried to borrow **Character** and **Conviction**
- Amaziah: The King of **Lost Opportunity**. Uzziah: The King of **Pride** and Arrogance

Today: Hezekiah, a good King who let down his guard.

Heritage:

King Uzziah had some failures at the end but he was a very good king for most of his life. King Uzziah's good reign had an impact on his son. Jotham (2 Chronicles 27.1-9) was his son who reigned after him for 16 years. V.6 tells the secret of his good kingship 6 *So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the LORD his God.* Jotham had one area that he let down in and it left Satan a foothold in his kingdom. 2 Kings 15.35 says that Jotham allowed the high places to remain and that the people continued to make sacrifices there like they were doing in Israel.

After Jotham his son became King and his name was Ahaz (chapter 28). He was the polar opposite of Uzziah and Jotham. It truly leaves you stunned to know

that man with such a good father and grandfather can turn out the way Ahaz did. Instead of copying the many good traits of Jotham his father he exploited the one weakness. **Background facts:**

I can't do justice to Ahaz's life story but let me give you the high points.

- He **abandoned** the Lord God and whole-heartedly served the Baals (28.1-4)
- God **punished** Ahaz for his evil (28.5-8). God allowed all of their enemies to run over them.
- God showed them **mercy** by sending a prophet to warn Israel not to enslave their brethren (v.9-15).
- Ahaz **hardened** his heart. Ahaz was so hard-hearted that he did not turn to God in repentance but to the King of Assyria Tiglath-Pileser for help (28.16-21). The Assyrian King took the money and afflicted Judah even more (v.20-21). *Pr 29:1 He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, Will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.*

Situation:

Assyria was now ruling all of the area. Tiglath-Pileser came and took part of the treasures of the Temple further reducing Judah's position in the area (2.20-21). What a far cry from Uzziah's day when the surrounding nations were paying tribute to Judah (26.6-8). How quickly things can change! One would think that Ahaz would see the error of his way, remember the history of his Grandfather – Uzziah and his Father Jotham and then repent throwing himself and his subjects on God's mercy. No Way would he do that. 1) He concluded that the gods of Damascus (capital of Syria) had helped them defeat him and all of Judah so he abandoned the Lord altogether (apostasy) and worshipped and sacrificed to the pagan gods (28.22-23). The end of v.23 says it was the ruin of him and all Israel. We never **sin alone**; we never **fall** alone. 2) If that wasn't enough he wanted to show full devotion to the Baals so he went in and cut the utensils in the Lord's house in pieces, padlocked the Temple, erected altars all over Jerusalem and built high places in every city. He provoked the Lord to anger in every possible way he could think to do it (28.24-25). How he lived to be buried in Jerusalem I don't even understand. But he had a son named Hezekiah and he was different.

One more note is important. We have no record here (2 Kings 17) during the reign of Ahaz in Judah the northern kingdom fell to Shalmaneser V of Assyria in 722 BC. The northern kingdom that began with the Rebellion of Jeroboam I was over. There are still people from all tribes living in Israel but it is a vassal state of Assyria its new ruler Sargon II (Brother of Shalmaneser V.)

Hezekiah (2 Kings 18-20; 2 Chronicles 29-32; Isaiah 36-39)

These are very long passages of scripture and we can't cover them in the time we have. Let me encourage you to read all three passages. They tell the complete story.

- The 2 Kings passage emphasizes the **political and military** affairs of Judah under Hezekiah.
- The 2 Chronicles passage emphasizes the **spiritual reforms** of Hezekiah where he became the King most like David of all the kings since that time. It also gives a brief history of the invasion of King Sennacherib and the ministry of Isaiah.
- Isaiah's account focuses mainly on the threat of Sennacherib, Isaiah's sickness, healing and foolish moment of **pride**.

We are going to focus mainly on 2 Chronicles 29-32.

A call for revival. Somehow God worked in his heart and he longed for the times of his grandfather Uzziah and even further back to King David. Unlike his Father Ahaz he saw that the nation's troubles were directly linked to his nation's wickedness and the fact that they had forsaken God. Initially let me say this: Even an immoral, wicked, depraved or corrupt **environment** can be overcome through the power of God and his **Christ**. It is never too late for God to intervene and it can happen **very suddenly**. *2 Ch 29:36 Then Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced that God had prepared the people, since the events took place so suddenly.*

1. **Revival** can begin with one person - chapter 29. V.2
 - a. Hezekiah was **personally** revived and dedicated. V.10
 - b. **Open up** God's house and repair the doors (v.3). This is about a kingdom but the kingdom could never be right without the proper worship of Jehovah! Churches need to be opened up today.

- c. **Purify** the leadership (v.11-15a).
 - d. Purify the **temple** (v.15-19). It took 16 days to clear out the idols and the wicked images and to cast them into the Kidron Valley - the valley of waste and rubbish. They also repaired and consecrated the utensils that Ahaz had destroyed. I don't want to take too long with this but churches could use a little cleanup as well
 - e. **Reinitiate** worship (20-36). The people present all were amazed and rejoiced over the events occurring in front of them (v.36). Again it all happened so suddenly!
2. **Outreach** always follows revival – chapter 30. This passage is amazing. I know it is about the revival of the kingdom of Judah (and Israel) yet there is so much that is applicable to us. Notice the amazing way God blessed this purified group. It was simply unthinkable that Israel and Judah could ever be reunited. Yet in a way that is exactly what happened by way of a “revived” Judah.
- a. The **messengers** were commissioned and sent. (v.1-12)
 - i. Make the invitations **indiscriminately** V.1-5. *2 Ch 30:5 So they resolved to make a proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, that they should come to keep the Passover to the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem, since they had not done it for a long time in the prescribed manner.*
 - ii. Make the invitations **urgently** V.6. It was sent in the hand of “runners”.
 - iii. Make the invitations **realistically** – expecting a mixed response v.10-12.
 - b. The people **assembled** to celebrate the Passover. They came in great numbers from near and far. (v.13-27)
 - i. They **cleansed** the city (v.14). They broke down the pagan altars and high places all over the city and threw them in the city dump (Kidron Valley). This is where the cultural change that was so necessary happened.
 - ii. They **humbly** sacrificed animals and sprinkled the people according to the Law of Moses even though all the people who had travelled so far had not cleansed themselves V.15-18a.

- iii. The king **interceded** for them v.18b-20. King Hezekiah pleaded with the Lord to atone for everyone who was seeking the Lord with a prepared heart (repentant). It was an issue of the heart. God heard Hezekiah's prayer and he healed the people. What a beautiful picture of Jesus intercession for us.
- iv. Notice the elements of the celebration of Passover and unleavened bread
 1. Gladness, **praise**, singing, music (v.21).
 2. Levitical **teaching** that led to joy fellowship and confession. Oh what a dose of this we need today. A revival has broken out and it is having cultural impact.
 3. Worship once again became a priority. They had to hold over the celebration for another week (v.23-24
 4. The Jews were **united** once again in Jerusalem at least
 5. The people were blessed; their voice was heard; and their prayers were heard in heaven (v.27). Think about that verse.

I can't finish with Hezekiah's entire story in one night. I'll continue this next week. But let me read a well-known verse to you from the prayer of Solomon. Turn to 2 Chronicles 7.12-14

Do you know what we just read about?

Lessons for personal and corporate church life:

- The situation is never so grave that God can't send a **revival**.
- Revival begins in the hearts of a **few** of God's own people.
- Revival results in outreach. Outreach results in lives changed first with **cultural** change to follow.
- God can bring about change **suddenly** - 2 Chron. 29.36.
- Revival and cultural change always puts people back into a **community** of believers for worship and service. There is no such thing as a revival that by-passes the church and leaves the **pews** empty.
- God is still listening to the **humble** prayers of a God seeking heart.