

Week Eight – Hezekiah Part II

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

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
- Hezekiah: A really good king who let down his **guard**.

Heritage and Situation

I spent a lot of time on this last week so let me just mention a couple of things. The very brazen and wicked career of his father Ahaz left the kingdom of Judah in shambles and deeply entrenched in idolatry. Far from the days of Good king Uzziah when surrounding nations paid tribute to Judah, Judah was now paying tribute to just about everyone. He even tried to hire Tiglath-Peleser of Assyria to defend his kingdom. It backfired and the Assyrian King took his money and still invaded and overran Judah. With a reduced and tattered kingdom left to him King Hezekiah made a determination in his heart to seek God's favor and lead the nation in national repentance. As we come into chapter 31 of II Chronicles here are the highlights of his leadership so far.

Background facts:

- Hezekiah was personally revived and dedicated. V.10
- Hezekiah opened up the temple that Ahaz had padlocked (v.3).
- He called for purity in the leadership (v.11-15a).

- He led in purifying the temple (v.15-19) and in reinitiating worship (20-36).
- Once temple worship was reestablished he sought to unify the north and south by sending invitation letters in the hands of messengers from Dan to Beersheba. The messengers were commissioned and sent. (v.1-12)
- The people assembled to celebrate the Passover. They came in great numbers from near and far. (v.13-27). Many rejected but many came.
- They cleansed the city (v.14).
- The Jews were united once again in Jerusalem at least those that had returned to God were united (v.25-26). They were full of joy and celebration.
- Hezekiah had led the people in a II Chronicles 7.12-14 revival. The people were blessed; their voice was heard; and their prayers were heard in heaven (v.27).

How to sustain a revival - chapter 31. I am sure that the 30-40 day period of time that was covered in chapter 29-30 constitutes a spiritual high or a spiritual mountaintop. The revival at Jerusalem was an amazing blessing. God saw their humility, he measured their sincerity and he answered their prayers. But now they have to go home and make a difference. Praise God this was a **sustained** revival. Why?

1. The revival had an extended **cultural impact**. 31.1. The people went and destroyed all vestiges and relics of idolatry. Pillars, Asherim, altars in high places and groves and trees were all cut down and destroyed. They did not need to leave a bridge to past heathen practices still standing. Eph 4:25 -27.
2. The revival had an extended impact on **regular worship** (v.2-19) Hezekiah was very aware that a grand spiritual experience though momentous and important will soon fade if plans for change are not announced and carried out faithfully. If the Jerusalem Revival was going to impact daily life habits had to change.
 - a. v.2-3 – The priest were re-commissioned.
 - b. v.4-6 – The people were reactivated regarding giving.
 - c. v.7-10 – God opened the storehouse of blessings. Heaps of offerings appeared at the Temple.

- d. v.11-13 – Hezekiah required diligent and honest handling of the offerings.
- e. v.14-19 – Hezekiah required diligent and faithful distribution of the offerings.
- f. v.20-21 - Hezekiah had a value system that led to his success. - Illus.

Praise the Lord all of that is true. But there is a metanarrative behind all that is going on here. Satan has been trying to destroy Israel in order to prevent the promised Seed of Gen 3.15 and Gen 12.1-3 from ever taking place. The Messiah was coming through the seed of Abraham and Satan will do all to destroy Israel.

Satan is going to use three attacks to try to destroy Hezekiah and the revival in Israel.

- Hezekiah will face a national **military** crisis.
- He will suffer a personal **physical** crisis.
- He will be confronted with a serious **spiritual test** and crisis.

How to survive a national crisis (Isaiah 36-37). The World Super power of the time was Assyria and its King, Sennacherib. As Assyria got busy with world affairs and further conquests Hezekiah built the kingdom and became very prosperous and wealthy. That led to a series of events that are covered in all three books (2 Kings, 2 Chronicles and Isaiah). Let me summarize.

1. An act of **boldness** (2 Kings 18.8) – Hezekiah rebelled against the Superpower and its king. He stopped paying the tribute. Wow! Bold move!
2. An act of retribution - Sennacherib sent his army to surround and subdue all the well defended cities of Judah. (2 Kings 18.13).
3. An act of **Contrition** - Hezekiah rethought his position and submitted to pay more tribute money; whatever you impose on me.” (2 Kings 18.14). The payment required was 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold [11 tons of silver and 1 ton of gold – quite a lot].
4. Wise preparation – as Hezekiah saw that the Assyrian army was coming he took measures to protect Jerusalem.
5. **Intimidation** and threats (32.9-19)

6. The prophesy of Isaiah (Isaiah 37.5-7) Don't worry about Sennacherib - I am going to run him back to his own land and he will die there.
7. A Royal **Prayer meeting** (Isaiah 37.14-20). We must read this.
8. Divine Answer and **deliverance** (Isaiah 37.21-38).

How to handle a personal crisis. Isaiah was terminally ill - Isaiah 38. Isaiah came and told him, put your house in order; your time is up (Isa. 38.1).

1. **Go** to God – As soon as Hezekiah heard he would not recover from his boils he turned over in his bed toward that wall and begged God for more time (Isa. 38.2).
2. **Confess** your sin (if there is any). 2 Chronicles 32.24-25 reveals that Hezekiah was proud about the deliverance that God had given him from Sennacherib.
3. Remember God's **goodness** (2 Kings 20.4-11).

How to pass a spiritual test (Isaiah 39). We are going to discover together what foolish things Hezekiah did toward the end of his life.

1. Don't let **success** go to your head. Hezekiah was impressed with foreign dignitaries giving him attention.
 2. Don't be so easily **deceived**. Hezekiah was naïve concerning the purpose of the ambassador's visit. How much did boastful Hezekiah show them? He showed them all treasures and his armory (v.2)
 3. Don't be so **self-centered** (Isa. 39.3-8). When told that all would be carried away to Babylon and that his descendants would not be free but slaves and eunuchs in the kingdom of Babylon; his answer is in V.8 is dumbfounding. *Well, at least I won't **have to deal with it!*** Wow! Any lessons here for us?
- God is **able** no matter what the crisis.
 - It is still hard to **finish well**.
 - We can usually handle crisis, problems and affliction better than we can handle wealth, success and **affluence**.
 - We are all tempted by **pride**.