

THE REVIVAL IN JUDAH UNDER HEZEKIAH

BIBLE TEXT : II Chronicles 29:1-36.

LESSON 339 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "My sons, be not now negligent: for the LORD hath chosen you to stand before him, to serve him, and that ye should minister unto him" (II Chronicles 29:11).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

2 Chronicles 29:1-36

¹ Hezekiah began to reign *when he was* five and twenty years old, and he reigned nine and twenty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah.

² And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done.

³ He in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the LORD, and repaired them.

⁴ And he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them together into the east street,

⁵ And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy *place*.

⁶ For our fathers have trespassed, and done *that which was* evil in the eyes of the LORD our God, and have forsaken him, and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the LORD, and turned *their* backs.

⁷ Also they have shut up the doors of the porch, and put out the lamps, and have not burned incense nor offered burnt offerings in the holy *place* unto the God of Israel.

⁸ Wherefore the wrath of the LORD was upon Judah and Jerusalem, and he hath delivered them to trouble, to astonishment, and to hissing, as ye see with your eyes.

⁹ For, lo, our fathers have fallen

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Hezekiah, King of Judah

1. His father was a wicked ruler, II Chronicles 28:1-4;

2 Kings 16:1-4

¹ In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah Ahaz the son of Jotham king of Judah began to reign.

² Twenty years old *was* Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD his God, like David his father.

³ But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel.

⁴ And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree.

2. His mother was the daughter of a prophet, II Chronicles 29:1;

2 Chronicles 26:1

¹ Then all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who *was* sixteen years old, and made him king in the room of his father Amaziah.

2 Chronicles 26:5

⁵ And he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him to prosper.

2 Kings 18:2

² Twenty and five years old *was* he when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* Abi, the daughter of Zachariah.

3. He was a righteous king, in spite of his father's bad example, II Chronicles 29:2;

2 Kings 18:3-7

³ And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did.

⁴ He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan.

⁵ He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him *was* none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor *any* that were before him.

⁶ For he clave to the LORD, *and* departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses.

⁷ And the LORD *was* with him; *and* he prospered whithersoever he went forth: and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not.

II Hezekiah's Move Toward the Establishment of True Worship

1. One of Hezekiah's first official acts was the reopening of the House of God, II Chronicles 29:3;

2 Chronicles 28:21

²¹ For Ahaz took away a portion *out* of the house of the LORD, and *out* of the house of the king, and of the princes, and gave *it* unto the king of Assyria: but he helped him not.

2 Chronicles 28:24

²⁴ And Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and shut up the doors of the house of the LORD, and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem.

by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives *are* in captivity for this.

¹⁰ Now *it is* in mine heart to make a covenant with the LORD God of Israel, that his fierce wrath may turn away from us.

¹¹ My sons, be not now negligent: for the LORD hath chosen you to stand before him, to serve him, and that ye should minister unto him, and burn incense.

¹² Then the Levites arose, Mahath the son of Amasai, and Joel the son of Azariah, of the sons of the Kohathites: and of the sons of Merari, Kish the son of Abdi, and Azariah the son of Jehalelel: and of the Gershonites; Joah the son of Zimmah, and Eden the son of Joah:

¹³ And of the sons of Elizaphan; Shimri, and Jeiel: and of the sons of Asaph; Zechariah, and Mattaniah:

¹⁴ And of the sons of Heman; Jehiel, and Shimei: and of the sons of Jeduthun; Shemaiah, and Uzziel.

¹⁵ And 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.

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.

¹⁷ Now they began on the first *day* of the first month to sanctify, and on the eighth day of the month came they to the porch of the LORD: so they sanctified the house of the LORD in eight days; and in the sixteenth day of the

2 Kings 16:8

⁸ And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent *it for* a present to the king of Assyria.

2 Kings 16:14-18

¹⁴ And he brought also the brasen altar, which *was* before the LORD, from the forefront of the house, from between the altar and the house of the LORD, and put it on the north side of the altar.

¹⁵ And king Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, Upon the great altar burn the morning burnt offering, and the evening meat offering, and the king's burnt sacrifice, and his meat offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings; and sprinkle upon it all the blood of the burnt offering, and all the blood of the sacrifice: and the brasen altar shall be for me to enquire *by*.

¹⁶ Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that king Ahaz commanded.

¹⁷ And king Ahaz cut off the borders of the bases, and removed the laver from off them; and took down the sea from off the brasen oxen that *were* under it, and put it upon a pavement of stones.

¹⁸ And the covert for the sabbath that they had built in the house, and the king's entry without, turned he from the house of the LORD for the king of Assyria.

2. The priests and Levites were encouraged to reconsecrate themselves, II Chronicles 29:4, 5.

3. Hezekiah recounted the evil deeds of past generations, and told of God's judgments upon them, II Chronicles 29:6-9;

2 Chronicles 28:5-8

⁵ Wherefore the LORD his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria; and they smote him, and carried away a great multitude of them captives, and brought *them* to Damascus. And he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who smote him with a great slaughter.

⁶ For Pekah the son of Remaliah slew in Judah an hundred and twenty thousand in one day, *which were* all valiant men; because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers.

⁷ And Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, slew Maaseiah the king's son, and Azrikam the governor of the house, and Elkanah *that was* next to the king.

⁸ And the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand, women, sons, and daughters, and took also away much spoil from them, and brought the spoil to Samaria.

2 Kings 17:13-20

¹³ Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, *and by* all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments *and* my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.

¹⁴ Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God.

¹⁵ And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that *were* round about them, *concerning* whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them.

¹⁶ And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, *even* two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal.

¹⁷ And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

first month they made an end.

¹⁸ Then they went in to Hezekiah the king, and said, We have cleansed all the house of the LORD, and the altar of burnt offering, with all the vessels thereof, and the shewbread table, with all the vessels thereof.

¹⁹ Moreover all the vessels, which king Ahaz in his reign did cast away in his transgression, have we prepared and sanctified, and, behold, they *are* before the altar of the LORD.

²⁰ Then Hezekiah the king rose early, and gathered the rulers of the city, and went up to the house of the LORD.

²¹ And they brought seven bullocks, and seven rams, and seven lambs, and seven he goats, for a sin offering for the kingdom, and for the sanctuary, and for Judah. And he commanded the priests the sons of Aaron to offer *them* on the altar of the LORD.

²² So they killed the bullocks, and the priests received the blood, and sprinkled *it* on the altar: likewise, when they had killed the rams, they sprinkled the blood upon the altar: they killed also the lambs, and they sprinkled the blood upon the altar.

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

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.

²⁵ And he set the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer,

¹⁸ Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.

¹⁹ Also Judah kept not the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made.

²⁰ And the LORD rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight.

4. Hezekiah's desire was for a full restoration of the spiritual relationship they once enjoyed, II Chronicles 29:10, 11;

2 Chronicles 6:24-25

²⁴ And if thy people Israel be put to the worse before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee; and shall return and confess thy name, and pray and make supplication before thee in this house;

²⁵ Then hear thou from the heavens, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest to them and to their fathers.

2 Chronicles 7:12

¹² And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice.

1 Kings 8:23

²³ And he said, LORD God of Israel, *there is* no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart:

1 Kings 8:28-30

²⁸ Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee to day:

²⁹ That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, *even* toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place.

³⁰ And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive.

1 Kings 8:33

³³ When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again to thee, and confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto thee in this house:

1 Kings 8:34

³⁴ Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers.

III The Prompt Response of the Priests and Levites

1. The Levites obeyed Hezekiah and sanctified themselves immediately, II Chronicles 29:12-15.
2. The Levites and the priests cleansed the Temple, each group taking care of their prescribed portion, according to the Law, II Chronicles 29:16, 17;

2 Chronicles 23:1-11

¹ And in the seventh year Jehoiada strengthened himself, and took the captains of hundreds, Azariah the son of Jeroham, and Ishmael the son of Jehohanan, and Azariah the son of Obed, and Maaseiah the son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat the son of Zichri, into covenant with him.

² And they went about in Judah, and gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah, and the chief of the fathers of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem.

³ And all the congregation made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And he said unto them, Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the LORD hath said of the sons of David.

⁴ *This is the thing that ye shall do; A third part of you*

and Nathan the prophet: for *so* was the commandment of the LORD by his prophets.

²⁶ And the Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets.

²⁷ And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt offering upon the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD began *also* with the trumpets, and with the instruments *ordained* by David king of Israel.

²⁸ And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: *and* all *this continued* until the burnt offering was finished.

²⁹ And when they had made an end of offering, the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves, and worshipped.

³⁰ Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the LORD with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped.

³¹ 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. And the congregation brought in sacrifices and thank offerings; and as many as were of a free heart burnt offerings.

³² And the number of the burnt offerings, which the congregation brought, was threescore and ten bullocks, an hundred rams, *and* two hundred lambs: all these *were* for a burnt offering to the LORD.

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

³⁴ But the priests were too few, so that they could not flay all the burnt offerings: wherefore their

entering on the sabbath, of the priests and of the Levites, *shall be* porters of the doors;

⁵ And a third part *shall be* at the king's house; and a third part at the gate of the foundation: and all the people *shall be* in the courts of the house of the LORD.

⁶ But let none come into the house of the LORD, save the priests, and they that minister of the Levites; they shall go in, for they *are* holy: but all the people shall keep the watch of the LORD.

⁷ And the Levites shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand; and whosoever *else* cometh into the house, he shall be put to death: but be ye with the king when he cometh in, and when he goeth out.

⁸ So the Levites and all Judah did according to all things that Jehoiada the priest had commanded, and took every man his men that were to come in on the sabbath, with them that were to go *out* on the sabbath: for Jehoiada the priest dismissed not the courses.

⁹ Moreover Jehoiada the priest delivered to the captains of hundreds spears, and bucklers, and shields, that *had been* king David's, which *were* in the house of God.

¹⁰ And he set all the people, every man having his weapon in his hand, from the right side of the temple to the left side of the temple, along by the altar and the temple, by the king round about.

¹¹ Then they brought out the king's son, and put upon him the crown, and *gave him* the testimony, and made him king. And Jehoiada and his sons anointed him, and said, God save the king.

Numbers 1:50-53

⁵⁰ But thou shalt appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of testimony, and over all the vessels thereof, and over all things that *belong* to it: they shall bear the tabernacle, and all the vessels thereof; and they shall minister unto it, and shall encamp round about the tabernacle.

⁵¹ And when the tabernacle setteth forward, the Levites shall take it down: and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

⁵² And the children of Israel shall pitch their tents, every man by his own camp, and every man by his own standard, throughout their hosts.

⁵³ But the Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony, that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel: and the Levites shall keep the charge of the tabernacle of testimony.

Numbers 3:5-10

⁵ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

⁶ Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him.

⁷ And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle.

⁸ And they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle.

⁹ And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons: they *are* wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel.

¹⁰ And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priest's office: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

Numbers 8:5-26

⁵ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

⁶ Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them.

⁷ And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: Sprinkle water of purifying upon them, and let them shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and *so* make themselves clean.

⁸ Then let them take a young bullock with his meat offering, *even* fine flour mingled with oil, and another young bullock

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.

shalt thou take for a sin offering.

⁹ And thou shalt bring the Levites before the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt gather the whole assembly of the children of Israel together:

¹⁰ And thou shalt bring the Levites before the LORD: and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites:

¹¹ And Aaron shall offer the Levites before the LORD *for* an offering of the children of Israel, that they may execute the service of the LORD.

¹² And the Levites shall lay their hands upon the heads of the bullocks: and thou shalt offer the one *for* a sin offering, and the other *for* a burnt offering, unto the LORD, to make an atonement for the Levites.

¹³ And thou shalt set the Levites before Aaron, and before his sons, and offer them *for* an offering unto the LORD.

¹⁴ Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel: and the Levites shall be mine.

¹⁵ And after that shall the Levites go in to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt cleanse them, and offer them *for* an offering.

¹⁶ For they *are* wholly given unto me from among the children of Israel; instead of such as open every womb, *even instead of* the firstborn of all the children of Israel, have I taken them unto me.

¹⁷ For all the firstborn of the children of Israel *are* mine, *both* man and beast: on the day that I smote every firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanctified them for myself.

¹⁸ And I have taken the Levites for all the firstborn of the children of Israel.

¹⁹ And I have given the Levites *as* a gift to Aaron and to his sons from among the children of Israel, to do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation, and to make an atonement for the children of Israel: that there be no plague among the children of Israel, when the children of Israel come nigh unto the sanctuary.

²⁰ And Moses, and Aaron, and all the congregation of the children of Israel, did to the Levites according unto all that the LORD commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did the children of Israel unto them.

²¹ And the Levites were purified, and they washed their clothes; and Aaron offered them *as* an offering before the LORD; and Aaron made an atonement for them to cleanse them.

²² And after that went the Levites in to do their service in the tabernacle of the congregation before Aaron, and before his sons: as the LORD had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did they unto them.

²³ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

²⁴ This *is it* that *belongeth* unto the Levites: from twenty and five years old and upward they shall go in to wait upon the service of the tabernacle of the congregation:

²⁵ And from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the service *thereof*, and shall serve no more:

²⁶ But shall minister with their brethren in the tabernacle of the congregation, to keep the charge, and shall do no service. Thus shalt thou do unto the Levites touching their charge.

Numbers 18:1-7

¹ And the LORD said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary: and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood.

² And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee *shall minister* before the tabernacle of witness.

³ And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tabernacle: only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary and the altar, that neither they, nor ye also, die.

⁴ And they shall be joined unto thee, and keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, for all the service of the tabernacle: and a stranger shall not come nigh unto you.

⁵ And ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar: that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel.

⁶ And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel: to you *they are given as a gift* for the LORD, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.

⁷ Therefore thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priest's office for every thing of the altar, and within the vail; and ye shall serve: I have given your priest's office *unto you* as a service of gift: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

Numbers 18:20-23

²⁰ And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I *am* thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel.

²¹ And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, *even* the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.

²² Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they bear sin, and die.

²³ But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity: *it shall be* a statute for ever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance.

3. A good report was taken to the king, II Chronicles 29:18, 19.

IV Hezekiah's Re-establishment of the True Worship

1. Sin offerings were made for the kingdom, for the sanctuary, and for the nation, II Chronicles 29:20-24;

Hebrews 7:26

²⁶ For such an high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

Hebrews 7:27

²⁷ Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

2. When atonement was made and the burnt offering was placed upon the altar, worship and praise spontaneously began, II Chronicles 29:25-30;

2 Chronicles 23:18

¹⁸ Also Jehoiada appointed the offices of the house of the LORD by the hand of the priests the Levites, whom David had distributed in the house of the LORD, to offer the burnt offerings of the LORD, as *it is* written in the law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, *as it was ordained* by David.

Psalms 40:1-3

¹ I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

² He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, *and* established my goings.

³ And he hath put a new song in my mouth, *even* praise unto our God: many shall see *it*, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.

Psalms 51:12

¹² Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me *with thy* free spirit.

Psalms 81:1-5

¹ Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.

² Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery.

³ Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day.

⁴ For this *was* a statute for Israel, *and* a law of the God of

Jacob.

⁵ This he ordained in Joseph *for* a testimony, when he went out through the land of Egypt: *where* I heard a language *that* I understood not.

Psalm 95:1-7

¹ O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

² Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

³ For the LORD *is* a great God, and a great King above all gods.

⁴ In his hand *are* the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills *is* his also.

⁵ The sea *is* his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry *land*.

⁶ O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.

⁷ For he *is* our God; and we *are* the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice,

Isaiah 30:29

²⁹ Ye shall have a song, as in the night *when* a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the LORD, to the mighty One of Israel.

1 Corinthians 14:15

¹⁵ What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

Ephesians 5:19-20

¹⁹ Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

²⁰ Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Colossians 3:16

¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

James 5:13

¹³ Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

3. The people were encouraged to bring freewill offerings, to complete the worship of God, II Chronicles 29:31-35;

Deuteronomy 12:5-7

⁵ But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, *even* unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come:

⁶ And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks:

⁷ And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee.

Deuteronomy 16:10-11

¹⁰ And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the LORD thy God with a tribute of a freewill offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give *unto the LORD thy God*, according as the LORD thy God hath blessed thee:

¹¹ And thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that *is* within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that *are* among you, in the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to place his name there.

Ezra 3:4

⁴ They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as *it is* written, and *offered* the daily burnt offerings by number, according to the custom, as the duty of every day required;

Ezra 3:5

⁵ And afterward *offered* the continual burnt offering, both of

the new moons, and of all the set feasts of the LORD that were consecrated, and of every one that willingly offered a freewill offering unto the LORD.

4. Everything had been done in haste, that the re-establishment of worship might not be unnecessarily delayed, II Chronicles 29:36;

1 Kings 19:20

²⁰ And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and *then* I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee?

Mark 1:18

¹⁸ And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.

Zechariah 8:21

²¹ And the inhabitants of one *city* shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts: I will go also.

Ephesians 5:15-16

¹⁵ See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

¹⁶ Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Ecclesiastes 9:10

¹⁰ Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do *it* with thy might; for *there is* no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

NOTES:

Outstanding Passages in the Lesson Text

As one begins to study the life of Hezekiah, King of Judah, from the chapter that has been chosen as the text of this lesson, he sees several passages that stand out from the rest in a remarkable manner. As he considers these passages, he sees that much of the character of the king can be learned from them.

Hezekiah "did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done. He . . . opened the doors of the house of the LORD, and repaired them. And he brought in the priests and the Levites, . . . and said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers." It is also recorded that he said, "It is in mine heart to make a covenant with the LORD God of Israel," and that he further exhorted the Levites: "Be not now negligent: for the LORD hath chosen you to stand before him." Then the Levites "gathered their brethren, and sanctified themselves, and came." "And when the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD began also . . . And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: and all this continued until the burnt offering was finished." "Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that God had prepared the people: for the thing was done suddenly."

These passages show the diligence and sincerity of the king and the people, especially the tribe that God had chosen to do His service. They show that God's ear is ever open to the cry of the penitent, and that he is always ready to pour out His blessings upon those who seek His mercy. They show that God loves those who are wholehearted in His cause, who place His service above every other consideration or obligation that may be theirs.

The Young and Zealous King

Hezekiah had a poor heritage. His father was an idolater, a man who offered his own children as sacrifices to idols and who built these altars of idol worship in every part of Jerusalem. Hezekiah's father made alliances with ungodly rulers and heathen nations, robbing the Temple of its treasures to satisfy the heathen kings. He defamed the brazen altar and allowed filth and refuse to accumulate in the Temple.

But when Hezekiah came to the throne, at the age of 25, he instituted a clean-up campaign that began in the right place. Let

young people of today take example from Hezekiah. With everything against him, it might seem, this young man stood out for God and for the House of God. He had seen the evils of idolatry, and had witnessed in his own family circle the terrible sufferings, which that false worship brought. He had seen the oppression that was upon the nation because of the defeats they suffered at the hands of their enemies, which defeats were due to their turning away from the true God. But in spite of his youth he took a firm stand for God.

It might almost seem that Hezekiah had received the same advice that Paul the Apostle gave the young man, Timothy, in a much later period. Paul wrote: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (I Timothy 4:12). Hezekiah was young in years but he did not let that hinder him from doing the work that he saw awaited him. He stepped out for God, and God backed him up; and because of this, when he later came to a crisis in his life, he could say to God: "Remember now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight" (Isaiah 38:3). Even at that time of crisis he was not old in years; so consider how important it is that the early years of one's life be spent in such a way that when an emergency does come he can point back over the years with confidence that God will consider them and answer the prayer that he prays.

The Importance of Having One's Heart Right

Some of those who lived in the time of Hezekiah could have said, when they saw his zeal and quick attention to the house of God, that the new king was merely pursuing a political policy to win the hearts of a group of people who had been neglected under his father's regime. Or they could have said that he had a love for architecture and did not want to see the beautiful Temple abandoned and filled with debris. Those who might have said these things can be classed with those people of our generation who attend church that they might make good contacts for their business pursuits or to improve their social standing, or who read the Bible purely as literature and even admire it as the greatest of literature but who fail to see it as the living and abiding Word of God. But before long even those who might have brought such unfounded accusations would have had to admit that there was more behind Hezekiah's actions than any such ulterior motives.

Hezekiah said, "It is in mine heart to make a covenant with the LORD God of Israel." The course that Hezekiah had set for his life was correct. His heart was right! The things he undertook so early in his reign were not done for earthly glory, for popular acclaim, or for political strength. What he was doing was for the glory of God (**1 Corinthians 10:31** ³¹ *Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*). He wanted to be right with God, and he wanted the people to return to God. He could see the fierce wrath of God hanging over the nation. He realised that the only deliverance from that wrath was in the salvation of God, and that the first step in turning the hearts of the people to God would be the restoration of the true worship of God. Therefore, his first action was to clean out and repair the house of God, and this could properly be done only by the people God had set aside for that work — the priests and Levites.

In all this we can see that Hezekiah acted wisely. It would be of no value to have a place of worship that was freed from a generation's filthiness and uncleanness if those who attended to the worship were not themselves dedicated to that service, daily fulfilling the exacting requirements of their office. One could not

expect the power and presence of God to be manifest in the House of God if the ministering attendants were ungodly and undedicated to their task. Hezekiah's first appeal was wisely directed to the priests and Levites.

We read that these chosen men responded in different ways, depending on the attitude of their own hearts. A person cannot be forced to serve God; he cannot be legislated into righteousness. And fear alone cannot make him a faithful steward in God's service. There has to be a desire in the individual to take up his cross and follow Jesus. The Levites responded and sanctified themselves according to the ordinances of God.

As we study the great plan of salvation, we find that there are two parts to the second great Christian experience that is given to every person who meets God's requirements, after having been justified by faith. The first part of this experience of entire sanctification is the part that we must do. The second part is that which God does. The first part is to dedicate ourselves in consecration to God. We reach a deeper consecration at this time than we had thought possible theretofore. Sometimes this consecration or dedication is referred to as ceremonial sanctification — sanctifying oneself. The second part is that work of cleansing by the Blood, done by God, in which the inherited depravity is removed and we are renewed in the image of our Creator; this is known as entire sanctification. Jesus prayed: "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John 17:19). Jesus, as our Offering for sin and uncleanness, dedicated or consecrated Himself that we might be cleansed from our inherited sin condition — that we might be sanctified.

As we study our lesson we see that the Levites went to work immediately after they had sanctified themselves — consecrated themselves — as they had been directed by Hezekiah. The same was true of some of the priests, but it is written concerning others of these privileged descendants of Aaron that they had not "sanctified themselves: for the Levites were more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests." The priests who did not respond with enthusiasm to do all they could in preparing themselves for the service of God, were not able to serve in their capacity when the offerings were killed, which service was then done by the Levites who had been faithful in their own spiritual preparation and in their own calling.

The Prayers for Forgiveness, and God's Answer

Since one of the first duties of every kind of God's chosen people was to study the Law of God and make a copy of it with his own hands so its requirements would all the more be impressed upon him, we can assume that Hezekiah had done so. Observe that Hezekiah ordered sin offerings to be made for "the kingdom, and for the sanctuary, and for Judah." This meant that he wanted all the sins of the past to be forgiven by God. The members of the royal staff and family were not to be exempted. Even those who already were doing the service of the Lord were included. And the whole nation itself was not overlooked.

Notice that Hezekiah brought not only the single offering required by the Law, but, perhaps feeling that the extreme character of the people's sin would require more, he brought seven of each animal instead. In matters of eternal importance, Hezekiah did not consider an earthly price worthy of any consideration whatsoever. Some people come to God asking Him for the gift of eternal life, and, when they do so, ponder over the earthy cost they might have to pay to receive God's eternal blessings.

QUESTIONS

1. Was Hezekiah's father a righteous or wicked man?
2. Hezekiah's mother was the daughter of a prophet of God. What other king was influenced by this same man of God?
3. How old was Hezekiah when he began to reign? Read I Timothy 4:12 and then tell how this verse was fulfilled in Hezekiah's own life.
4. What was the first thing Hezekiah did concerning the worship of God?
5. What instructions did Hezekiah give to the priests and Levites?
6. A number of the priests did not respond as they should have to the instructions given them. What did this cost them in privileges in God's service? Who substituted for them so that the service of God would be carried out satisfactorily?
7. What did Hezekiah say was in his heart to do?
8. What admonition did Hezekiah give the Levites relative to God's choosing them for His service?
9. For whom were the sin offerings made?
10. Tell how the priests and Levites cleansed the Temple; and how, in doing so, they followed the Law of God.
11. What is the difference between ceremonial sanctification and the experience of entire sanctification? Which is our part to do? and which is God's?
12. What part did music and singing have in the worship of God at this time? When did the singing start?

Is there any price too high that could ever be required of us in order that we might receive the eternal favour of God? Merely to escape the punishment of hell would be sufficient compensation for every sacrifice one might make, or any price one might pay in worldly advantage, pleasure, situation, or wealth. But God gives us even more than the assurance that we shall not be punished eternally if we come to Him in contrition. God gives us the hope of everlasting life, with opportunities to secure rewards and eternal joys that can never be imagined.

Some people feel that a piece of jewellery, a fashionable piece of clothing that is not in keeping with the teachings of the Bible, a few minutes' illicit pleasure, the favour of some mortal who is also going to stand before God's judgment seat, or the surrender of their will, is of more value than all the Heavenly blessings that God offers them. Sometimes people will knowingly forfeit every hope of Heaven that is extended to them for something they will tire of in a few days and then throw away in favour of some new trinket, or pleasure, which they will soon also consider worthless. But the person whose heart is right will see the true value of earthly things, when compared with the Heavenly, and will take the right course, make the necessary sacrifices, and pay the full price so that he might have God's favour and blessing.

It is obvious that God heard the prayer of these people and of their king. "When the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD began also . . . And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: and all this continued until the burnt offering was finished."

There is nothing that puts such sublime joy in the heart of a person as the knowledge that all the past is forgiven, that the condemnation for sins is gone, and that he has power to live a life that is clean according to God's standard and in accord with his own inner desires. A person may kneel at the place of prayer in the deepest of despair because of Satan's mastery over his life, and then, through a single prayer of contrition, feel that mastery broken and see removed the shackles and bonds that have held him. It is then that the song of praise begins. It is then that the joy of Heaven is implanted in the heart. It is then that a new hope is imparted to him. From then on he is a new creature, a child of the King -- a son of God.