

A MAN NAMED

Hezekiah

~ Facing The Challenges of Life ~

WORKING FOR REVIVAL

(II Chronicles 29 and 30)

Every Christian should be working to see spiritual revival among God's people. If when we look into the Bible we see that God calls for His people to be living at a higher level of spirituality than we see them living, the need is *revival*! A Christian who is walking with God should be praying and making an effort for the believers in his church and in the family of God worldwide to repent and start living right. The New Testament makes any serious Christian want revival, and the Old Testament made any spiritual Jew of the time before Christ want to see Israel get right with Jehovah. One such spiritual Israelite was King Hezekiah, and when he took the throne, he began working right away to see his people get right with God and start living the way He wanted them to live.

We have already seen that Hezekiah adopted good principles of righteousness for his own life early in his reign. But just because the king was doing right doesn't mean that the people were doing right. Hezekiah knew that, and began right away working for a national revival. II Chronicles 29 indicates that this effort began in the earliest days of his reign!

"... he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father had done. He in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the Lord, and repaired them." (2 Chronicles 29:2-3)

Read both II Chronicles 29 and 30 and notice what Hezekiah did to spark revival among God's Old Testament people. He will give us clues as to what we can do to spark revival among God's New Testament people today! Here's what he did.

1. Got the people back to the House of God!

The House of God is an interesting concept in the Bible. We first confront it in Genesis 28, where Jacob met with the Lord in a place he named Bethel (which means the House of God).

"And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." (vs. 16-17)

The concept of a place on earth that especially represents God and His holy presence, a place called His earthly house, is taught in both the Old and New Testaments.

- A. Bethel and Jacob (Genesis 28 and 35).
- B. Israel and the Tabernacle (Exodus 23:19).
- C. The Kingdom and the Temple (II Samuel 7, I Kings 3-9).
- D. Christians and the Church (I Timothy 3:14-15).
- E. The New Creation and the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:1-3).

In Hezekiah's time, the House of God was the Temple Solomon had built. It was the center of Israel's worship of Jehovah, but because of the evil reign of Ahaz, the Temple had been long neglected. The doors had been locked and the place defiled by filth and by idols. Now it was time to clean it up and start using it again! Read carefully II Chronicles 29:3-19. It was a big job, but cleansing and repairing the Temple just had to be done for revival to come to Israel again.

Two truths come powerfully to mind as we read of this restoration of God's House:

- A. The House of God must be sanctified before it can be used! The Church of Jesus Christ is the center of activity for God's people today, but it is in great need of cleansing!

"... sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place." (v. 5)

There is so much carnality, sin, and worldliness in churches today the lost world is unaware of its need to repent. Strong measures need to be taken to cleanse the House of God in order to prepare for an awakening among the lost.

- B. The House of God must be central in an effective revival of God's people. Christians that are revived need to be going to church! There is no such thing as living the New Testament way without being an active part of the local church. Some great revivals have fizzled because the revived believers were not channeled into good churches or because individuals were revived but the churches they attended were still dead or compromised.

Working for revival must involve fixing and promoting God's church!

2. Took the leadership and set the example

Leadership has a lot to do with revival! If the group turns back to God, nearly always somebody needs to lead the way. See in II Chronicles 29:20-36 what Hezekiah did once God's House was made ready. The king got Temple worship started again. He *"gathered the rulers of the city"* as well as the priests and Levites to lead the people in worshiping the Lord according to the ways revealed to Moses. What a beautiful picture we have of what happened. First the leaders and then the people offered sacrifices and sang the praises of God! It was the beginning of a great revival! But notice how important Hezekiah's leadership was to the whole thing. Look at the verbs used to describe what he did. He *"rose early," "went up to the house of the Lord," "set the Levites in the house of the Lord," "commanded to offer the burnt-offering," "bowed . . . and worshiped."* His example, along with his authority and his leadership, brought many back into a right relationship with God. Clearly God was at work (See v. 36), but he used the leadership of his good king!

3. Called for a meeting.

II Chronicles 30 tells the amazing story of Hezekiah's great Passover celebration. He called for all of God's covenant people, even the people of the northern kingdom, to come to Jerusalem to renew their allegiance to the true God. Read the chapter more than once! If revival is to be promoted, meetings need to be called:

meetings for prayer, meetings for praise, meetings for plain Bible preaching. Preachers may call these meetings, but non-preachers can do it, too! If God has revived your heart and life, consider calling for a meeting. See how Hezekiah did it!

- A. He made an appeal (vs. 1-9).

His ideals were high. His faith was strong. His understanding of God's ways was sound. His appeal to backslidden Israel was "on target." Whatever their response would be, the king was making a godly appeal!

- B. He would not be deterred (vs. 10-13). Many in the north laughed at Hezekiah's appeal. It was appropriate that Israel would renew her allegiance to Jehovah at the Passover feast, but many would not respond. They did not want to get right with God! Hezekiah and his men were not discouraged or deterred by this rejection, but rather went ahead with their plans for the great gathering. See in verse 13 that God blessed them with *"a very great congregation"* anyway!

4. Sought a heart revival!

Studying verses 14-26 will show us that this Passover witnessed a true turning of many hearts to God. For various reasons, not every detail of the ceremonial regulations could be kept, but this was a real revival because hearts had turned. As a result the repentant hearts were filled with *"gladness"* and *"singing"* and *"great joy."* Revival will do this, but we must seek a *heart* revival, not just an outward change of activity.

5. Got God's attention!

Read verse 27.

"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."

God was aware of this meeting. Wouldn't it be great to see a revival in our church, or in your family, or in all the Bible-believing churches in our area? Why don't we work with God to see one? Part of this effort will be meeting to seek His face for the revival we need. Would He have you call for a meeting, or attend one? We need to get God's attention with true repentance and believing supplication!