

Two Year Bible Trek
Week 58
2 Chronicles 29-31

Key Concepts: These chapters contain a single theme, and that is that God's people are indeed capable of being obedient to God, given the appropriate leadership.

Stories: We begin with the reign of Hezekiah, then move on to the call to the Levites to sanctify the Temple, the rededication of the Temple, the great Passover feast and then the reestablishment of the Priests and Levites.

Brief Summary: We now encounter one of the good kings of Judah, Hezekiah. He reigned from 715 to 686 BCE. This meant, as 2 Kings 18 reminds us, he reigned during the period in which the Northern kingdom of Israel was utterly destroyed by the Assyrians.

Hezekiah is considered one of the good kings. In fact as the Chronicler puts it, "He did what was good and right and faithful before the Lord his God. And every work that he undertook in the service of the house of God and in accordance with the Law and commandments, seeking his God, he did with all his heart and prospered" (31:20-21). It was also said, "And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that his father David had done." (29:2) Hezekiah receives these accolades for several actions that he took.

First he ordered that the Temple be rededicated. During the rule of his father Ahaz the temple had either been completely closed (2 Chronicles 28:24) or partially closed and used for worship of other gods (2 Kings 16:10-16). Regardless, this meant that it had been desecrated and would need to be cleansed and dedicated before it could be used for appropriate worship. The reason Hezekiah gives for wanting to use the Temple again is that all of the ills that had befallen Judah occurred because the people had not faithfully worshiped.

Hezekiah ordered both the Levites and the Priests to begin the required house cleaning. Once cleansed of the "filthy things" the Levites and Priests were commanded to make the appropriate rededication sacrifices for the Temple and for themselves. In addition to the sacrifices, the Levites played music, the people sang and the entire community worshipped. The songs consisted of Psalms from David Asaph. Following this worship the people brought their sacrifices and free will offerings.

The second action Hezekiah took was to keep the Passover. The writer implies that the people had not kept Passover for an extended period of time. Hezekiah sends an invitation throughout not only Judah but Israel as well. Even though most of the people of Israel has been deported by the Assyrians he and the assembly invite all Israel to be unified once again. The Passover is to be kept in Jerusalem, which may be the reason that so few people from the North respond. In addition to the Passover celebration the people destroyed all of the idols in and around Jerusalem that Ahaz had created.

Finally Hezekiah, acting in the role of prophet, assigned the Priests and Levites to their duties.

Hezekiah became for the Chronicler the perfect king. He cleansed the land of idols. He rededicates the Temple. He holds celebration of the Passover. And he attempts to reunify the Kingdom. For those returning from exile in Babylon, many years later, the example of Hezekiah could, and was, lifted up as an example for the people to follow as they rebuilt the Temple and reinstated its practices. All they had to do was follow Hezekiah's example.

1. What interests you the most about the rededication, and why?
2. Having read many of the Psalms, which would you chose to use at this service?
3. Why would the Passover be of great importance to the people returning from Babylon.