

Unit I: Isaiah and the Renewal of the Temple

Celebrating the Past

DEVOTIONAL READING: Psalm 1

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: 2 Chronicles 30:1-27

PRINT PASSAGE: 2 Chronicles 30:1-9, 26-27

KEY VERSE

There was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel there was not the like in Jerusalem. (2 Chronicles 30:26, KJV)

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There was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the days of Solomon son of David king of Israel there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem. (2 Chronicles 30:26, NIV)

Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

- Identify faithful qualities of Hezekiah's leadership.
- Strengthen the relationship with God through spiritual practices.
- Testify to God's protection and guidance.

*Key Terms

Command (verse 6)—Hebrew: *mitsvah* (mits-vaw'): an order; obligation; "commandment" (KJV).

Decree (verse 5)—Hebrew: *dabar* (daw-baw'): speech; command; promise; a matter, thing; refers to a law or regulation often issued by a king or governing authority; "proclamation" (NIV).

Passover (verse 1)—Hebrew: *pesach* (peh'-sakh): The term *pesach* refers to the Passover, a significant Jewish festival commemorating the Israelites' deliverance from slavery in Egypt.

Pleased (verse 4)—Hebrew: *yâshar* (yaw-shar'): was pleasing, agreeable, right; was accepted favorably; "seemed right" (NIV).

Priests (verse 3)—Hebrew: *kohen* (ko-hane'): chief ministers; individuals who perform religious rites and mediate between God and the people.

Serve (verse 8)—Hebrew: *abad* (aw-bad'): to work, labor, worship; it encompasses a range of activities, from physical labor to acts of service and worship.

***(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 2)**



The Biblical Context

The events in 2 Chronicles 30:1-9, 26-27 occurred during King Hezekiah's reign (approximately 715–686 BC) and represent a significant moment of spiritual reform in Judah. This passage is part of the broader narrative of 2 Chronicles, likely written in the post-exilic period, focusing on Judah's spiritual journey and the importance of engaging in proper Temple worship.

Hezekiah inherited a kingdom in crisis after the reign of his father, Ahaz, who closed the Temple, promoted idolatry, and formed dangerous alliances. The context is particularly important as it follows Israel's fall to Assyria in 722 BC, leading to exile for many northern Israelites. Although Judah remained independent, it faced threats from Assyria, and the religious climate was challenging, with rampant idolatry and neglect of the Temple.

Hezekiah's reforms were politically risky. His invitation to northern tribes for the Passover celebration emphasized Jerusalem as the center of worship, challenging local practices and Assyrian influence. These reforms aimed to restore national unity and shared religious identity during a crisis.

Introduction

In the heart of Sugar Land, Texas, Mother Pearlie Mae Jones remembers when Fifth Ward's churches were more than buildings—they were anchors of community, strength, and survival. "Back then," she recalls, smoothing her white usher's uniform, "we didn't just go to church. Church was where we found our voice, our power, our unity. But nowadays . . ." Her voice trails off as she thinks about how many families have scattered, how many pews sit empty, how many young folks have lost connection with their spiritual roots.

This modern scene of separation and longing for reunion echoes powerfully through 2 Chronicles 30. Just as King Hezekiah sent out a call across divided territories to bring God's people back together for Passover, our communities today face the challenge of rebuilding connections fractured by time, distance, and change. Many understand what it means to witness the scattering of family and community, to see traditions fade, and to feel the weight of generational disconnection.

Amid the uncertainty, the passage still carries profound hope. Today's call for spiritual reunion still resonates in sanctuaries, family gatherings, and hearts. God's invitation to come back together, to revive what has been lost, and to experience His presence as one people remains as powerful now as it was then.

ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT

The Example of Leadership (2 Chronicles 30:1-2)

KJV

AND HEZEKIAH sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel.

2 For the king had taken counsel, and his princes, and all the congregation in Jerusalem, to keep the passover in the second month.

NIV

HEZEKIAH SENT word to all Israel and Judah and also wrote letters to Ephraim and

Manasseh, inviting them to come to the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem and celebrate the Passover to the LORD, the God of Israel.

2 The king and his officials and the whole assembly in Jerusalem decided to celebrate the Passover in the second month.

Upon ascending to the throne, Hezekiah launched extensive religious reforms to restore genuine worship and obedience to God. The passage of 2 Chronicles 30:1-9, 26-27 highlights a pivotal moment in the history of Judah and Israel—a time of spiritual revival under Hezekiah's leadership. Amid a fragmented nation, Hezekiah sparked a revival by reinstating the celebration of Passover, serving as both a ceremonial restoration and a powerful call to repentance, unity, and renewal with God.

Hezekiah's reign was characterized by a genuine desire to restore true worship among God's chosen people. By inviting the people of Judah and the northern tribes of Israel—Ephraim and Manasseh—Hezekiah aimed to heal the division that had separated the nation during the reign of King Solomon's son Rehoboam (verse 1). This courageous move represented a sincere quest for unity, calling all Israelites back to their shared identity and spiritual heritage.

Traditionally, Passover was celebrated in the first month of the Hebrew calendar. However, recognizing the unpreparedness of the people and priests, Hezekiah resolved to observe it in the second month—in accordance with Numbers 9:10-11—for those who were unable to participate at the appointed time (verse 2). This decision reflects his emphasis on inclusivity over strict adherence to tradition, highlighting that the essence of worship takes precedence over rigid compliance in difficult times.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Who in your life right now might be waiting for an invitation to return to fellowship, similar to how Hezekiah reached out to the scattered tribes?

The Call to Spiritual Renewal (2 Chronicles 30:3-9)

KJV

3 For they could not keep it at that time, because the priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently, neither had the people gathered themselves together to Jerusalem.

4 And the thing pleased the king and all the congregation.

5 So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem: for they had not done it of a long time in such sort as it was written.

6 So the posts went with the letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah, and according to the commandment of the king, saying, Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and he will return to the remnant of you, that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria.

7 And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the LORD God of their fathers, who therefore gave them up to desolation, as ye see.

8 Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the LORD, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever: and serve the LORD your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you.

9 For if ye turn again unto the LORD, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that lead them captive, so that they shall come again into this land: for the LORD your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him.

NIV

3 They had not been able to celebrate it at the regular time because not enough priests had consecrated themselves and the people had not assembled in Jerusalem.

4 The plan seemed right both to the king and to the whole assembly.

5 They decided to send a proclamation throughout Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, calling the people to come to Jerusalem and celebrate the Passover to the LORD, the God of Israel. It had not been celebrated in large numbers according to what was written.

6 At the king's command, couriers went throughout Israel and Judah with letters from the king and from his officials, which read: "People of Israel, return to the LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, that he may return to you who are left, who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria.

7 "Do not be like your parents and your fellow Israelites, who were unfaithful to the LORD, the God of their ancestors, so that he made them an object of horror, as you see.

8 "Do not be stiff-necked, as your ancestors were; submit to the LORD. Come to his sanctuary, which he has consecrated forever. Serve the LORD your God, so that his fierce anger will turn away from you.

9 "If you return to the LORD, then your fellow Israelites and your children will be shown compassion by their captors and will return to this land, for the LORD your God is gracious and compassionate. He will not turn his face from you if you return to him."

Confronted with significant challenges—a shortage of consecrated priests and a lack of readiness among the people (verse 3)—Hezekiah and his assembly perceived these obstacles as opportunities for collective repentance and renewal (verse 4). Their proactive approach involved engaging the entire nation—broadcasting the call from Beersheba to Dan, the southernmost to the northernmost points of the land (verse 5).

Hezekiah's determination to send couriers throughout the land signifies an open invitation to partake in God's redemptive work, emphasizing that no one is too distant to return to the Lord (verse 6). His heartfelt appeal, grounded in history and hope, refers to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, reminding the people of their covenant lineage and God's enduring

faithfulness; acknowledging their ancestors' unfaithfulness, he urged them to learn from the past (verses 7-8).

His message conveys compassionate urgency—a plea to return to the Lord, who was ready to receive them (verse 9). The references to past unfaithfulness serve as both a warning and a lesson, with the phrase “do not be stiff-necked” highlighting the stubbornness that led to their ancestors’ downfall. By advocating submission to God, Hezekiah directed the way to restoration and blessing, emphasizing God’s gracious nature. His promise that “He will not turn His face from you if you return to Him” (verse 9b, NIV) offers hope that repentance will be met with mercy, not judgment.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Examine your faith journey: Where do you see parallels with Israel’s need for revival?

The Joy of Revival (2 Chronicles 30:26-27)

KJV

26 So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel there was not the like in Jerusalem.

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.

NIV

26 There was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the days of Solomon son of David king of Israel there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem.

27 The priests and the Levites stood to bless the people, and God heard them, for their prayer reached heaven, his holy dwelling place.

The revival erupted in unprecedented joy throughout Jerusalem (verse 26), reflecting the significance of this moment—an awakening to the glorious days of unified worship and national prosperity. The people’s genuine repentance and collective worship ushered in an atmosphere of joy that could only come from God’s presence.

The priests and Levites fulfilling their roles in blessing the people signifies the restoration of spiritual order (verse 27). Importantly, “God heard them,” indicating His divine acceptance of their worship and prayers. This acknowledgment from heaven confirms that their efforts to return to God were both successful and pleasing to Him.

Hezekiah’s steadfast commitment to God ignited a national movement. Despite facing challenges, his bravery in doing what was right demonstrates the significant impact that one faithful individual can make. Whether in families, workplaces, or churches, courageous people can become agents of change by taking a stand for what is right and leading by example.

God's invitation presents a beautiful opportunity for those seeking to move beyond the things that hinder them—past and present failures, mistakes and divisions. Just as Hezekiah extended his hand to all the tribes, determined leaders can find ways to dismantle barriers and share grace with those around them.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Consider verse 27. Describe the difference between routine prayers and prayers that “reach heaven.” What makes the difference?

A Closing Thought

True repentance is a powerful transformation—a heartfelt change that guides people in new directions. When the Israelites humbled themselves and submitted to God, they opened themselves to receiving abundant mercy. Those who set aside stubbornness and embrace God's will experience the incredible, life-changing grace that God offers.

Your Life

The joy felt in Jerusalem arose from a spirit of obedience and unified worship. This same joy awaits those who wholeheartedly follow God's commands. It goes beyond personal circumstances and fills the soul with divine peace. Embrace this invitation to joy and transformation, and watch God work wonders in your life.

Your World!

God's invitation to renewal never expires. Just as Hezekiah invited all to return to true worship, God continues to extend His grace today. Whether you are coming back to faith or seeking Him for the first time, His promise stands: “He will not turn his face from you if you return to Him.” The joy of celebration awaits all who respond to His call. Will you step beyond past barriers to experience God's transformative presence? The temple doors are open, and His welcome endures for everyone who chooses to come.

Closing Prayer

Gracious Father, as we reflect on Hezekiah's bold leadership and Your promise of restoration, grant us the courage to break down barriers, the humility to turn from our ways, and the joy in authentic worship so that our lives may inspire others to return to You wholeheartedly through Jesus Christ our Lord. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Conclusion

(Preparing for Next Week's Lesson)

Please be prepared for next week's lesson. The lesson topic for Sunday, September 21, 2025, is “Finders Keepers!” The Devotional Reading is Romans 7:7-12, the Background Scripture is 2 Chronicles 34:1-33, and the Print Passage is 2 Chronicles 34:15-22, 26-27.

Home Daily Bible Readings

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| MONDAY, September 15 | “The Command to Love” | (Matthew 22:36-40) |
| TUESDAY, September 16 | “Keep God’s Laws and Do Good” | (Romans 2:9-16) |
| WEDNESDAY, September 17 | “Promised Restoration” | (Deuteronomy 30:1-10) |
| THURSDAY, September 18 | “Choose Life” | (Deuteronomy 30:11-20) |
| FRIDAY, September 19 | “A Greater Message” | (Hebrews 1:13–2:4) |
| SATURDAY, September 20 | “Hidden Treasure” | (Matthew 13:44-52) |
| SUNDAY, September 21 | “Sorrow Leads to Joy” | (2 Chronicles 34:15-22, 26-27) |

NOTES