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R. Les Terrill

### **Lessons from Hezekiah, one of Judah's most faithful kings**

We have all heard the saying, “the fruit doesn’t fall far from the tree”. Not so, Hezekiah. He became king at the age of 25... his father was King Ahaz, notorious for idolatry and wicked and evil abominations:

2 Chr 28:1-4 Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And he did not do what was right in the eyes of the LORD, as his father David had done, but he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel. He even made metal images for the Baals, and he made offerings in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom and burned his sons as an offering, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel. And he sacrificed and made offerings on the high places and on the hills and under every green tree.

As a result, Judah was defeated and taken into captivity. As things continued to get worse, Ahaz became even more faithless to the Lord. When he finally died, he was buried in the city of Jerusalem, but not in the tombs of the kings of Israel.

It would be easy to think that his *remaining* son, Hezekiah, growing up in the midst of this evil and wickedness, might do as his father had done, and carried on in the same ways. Hezekiah, indeed, came to the throne during a spiritually dark time as a result of the rampant idolatry, political compromise and a severely weakened moral fabric and military.

But that’s not what happened. Sometimes we learn what NOT to do from our parents. We see the results of their ways, and we determine that we want no part in it, and we do a 180 degree turn. Maybe this is what happened with Hezekiah... I don’t know. Or, maybe it was because his mother was the daughter of Zechariah

2 Chr 29:1-7 Hezekiah began to reign when he was twenty-five years old, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Abijah the daughter of Zechariah. And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done.

[As Haggai encouraged the returned Jewish exiles to rebuild the temple, Zechariah encouraged them to **repent and renew their covenant with God**. Such **spiritual renewal would be necessary for the people to be ready to worship God once the temple was rebuilt** (about 516 B.C.). **He accused them of doing the very things their ancestors had done before the exile**. He was concerned about social justice for widows, orphans, and foreigners. But as the people endured opposition from the non-Jewish inhabitants of Judea,

Zechariah reassured them of God's abiding comfort and care. God would continue his covenant with Israel. Messianic hope was rekindled during Zechariah's ministry, and the book ends with the promise that the Lord would establish his rule over all the earth].

We see many of these same motives in Hezekiah.

## **Religious Reforms**

### **Cleansing the Temple**

Read 2 Chr 29:3-9

Early days at TFC.

*A heart to covenant with the Lord*

2 Chr 29:10 Now it is in my heart to make a covenant with the LORD, the God of Israel, in order that his fierce anger may turn away from us.

Read v12-19 notated scriptures

### **Restoring Temple Worship**

Read v20-24. Discuss. Sin offering. Re-opened the temple and purified it.

Read v25-30. Restoration of Levitical worship and sacrifices (animal sacrifice and sacrifice of praise)

### **Passover Revival**

Hezekiah reinstated the Passover – not only in Judah, but he also reached out to the northern tribes of Israel (v10-12). He was also NOT deterred by ridicule from others, choosing to please the Lord and not man. What came of this was a rare time of unity, national repentance, gladness and great joy.

Read and discuss 2 Chr 30

### **Organization**

Chapter 31 is the chapter that spoke to me, and initiated this study. I like organization, I like leadership, I like righteous governance, I like quick obedience without question (talk military). I love learning about the Lord's blessing, His superabundant nature and how to be a good steward. We find all of this in chapter 31.

Read 2 Chr 31 – discuss.

## Conflict and how to prepare

As we all know to well, frequently, after the blessing and success, then comes the enemy attack. Here we go... Read 2 Chr 32

- Plan 1-4
- Strengthen 5-6
- Encourage 7-8
- Awareness 9-19
  - Verses 9-19 compile the playbook of the enemy
- Prayer – most importantly!

## Guard

We have to constantly guard against the fruits of success as they can lead to pride, downfall and destruction. “It takes a lifetime to build a reputation. It can be ruined with a word” (or action).

Pt 16:18 Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

Near the end of his life, Hezekiah showed visitors from **Babylon** all his treasures. Isaiah rebuked him, prophesying that these riches—and his descendants—would one day be taken to Babylon. This moment reveals a lingering flaw that we ALL have to be on guard against: **spiritual pride after great blessing**.

Read 2 Chr 32:24-33