

## 2 Chronicles Chapter 30

Verses 1-12: Revival is characterized by a return to the central message of salvation and the study of the Scriptures (30:16; 30:22; 31:3-4, 21). They opened the Scriptures to determine what God wanted them to do, and then they did it. A revival that does not rest squarely on the Word of God will fade into futility or turn into a display of emotionalism and sensationalism.

**2 Chronicles 30:1 "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."**

“Israel”: These would be the remnant of the northern 10 tribes (verses 6, 25), left in the land or escaped from the enemy after the northern kingdom was taken captive following the invasion by Assyria (in 722 B.C.; 2 Kings 17:1-9). Ephraim and Manasseh were the leading tribes.

Hezekiah’s spiritual concern was communicated to all Israel (verses 2-10). It met with a good response in many sections of the country (verses 11-12).

In the last lesson, we discovered that Hezekiah sacrificed the burnt and sin offerings in the name of all 12 tribes of Israel, not just for Judah. We see in the verse above, that Hezekiah was making the temple in Jerusalem open to all of Israel for the purpose of worship. He wanted all of the twelve tribes to come and keep Passover in the temple in Jerusalem.

**2 Chronicles 30:2 "For the king had taken counsel, and his princes, and all the congregation in Jerusalem, to keep the Passover in the second month."**

“Second month”: This call to Passover was to unite the nation again in worship. Normally the Passover would be in the first month (Mar./Apr.). The rule of exception for individuals who were unclean or absent (Num. 9:9-11), was applied to the whole nation.

King Hezekiah had determined the thing to do was to celebrate Passover. The ten tribes of Israel were already in deep trouble, and Hoshea was possibly already in the hands of the Assyrians. Hezekiah believed that even at this late date, if the people would return to God and celebrate the Passover, He would still help Israel.

**2 Chronicles 30:3 "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."**

In the month Nisan, as the Targum adds, on the fourteenth day of the month, as the law enjoined. Because the cleansing of the temple was not finished until the sixteenth day (see 2 Chron. 29:17). And, besides this, two other reasons follow.

"Because the priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently": That is, a sufficient number of them were not sanctified, to slay all the Passover lambs the people that came to the feast would want.

"Neither had the people gathered themselves together to Jerusalem": They had no notice of it, nor summons for it. And it was required that, at such a time, all the males in the land should appear at Jerusalem. But this custom having been long disused, it required time to acquaint them of the revival of it.

Actually, the celebration the king had just after the cleansing of the temple, that we studied in the last lesson, occurred two days after Passover should have been celebrated. It was done on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of the month and Passover should have been on the 14<sup>th</sup>. It was very similar to Passover, but since it was not exact, Hezekiah would have a Passover feast a month later. We see that Hezekiah's reason for the delay, was the fact that the priests were not sanctified and ready to perform their duties in time.

**2 Chronicles 30:4 "And the thing pleased the king and all the congregation."**

They all unanimously agreed to it, and determined it should be done.

The terrible fate of Israel could have frightened the people of Judah to the point that they wanted to seek God. They were pleased about celebrating Passover again.

**2 Chronicles 30:5 "So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beer-sheba 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."**

"Beer-sheba even to Dan": These two cities were at the extreme ends of the country, so this expression was a way of saying, "from south to north".

There were three feasts a year that were not optional. Passover was one of the three. The other two were Tabernacles and Feast of Weeks. These feasts were mandatory for every male, who was considered an adult.

**2 Chronicles 30:6 "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."**

"Return": The nation was required by law to annually celebrate 3 feasts in Jerusalem:

- (1) Passover;
- (2) Weeks, or Pentecost; and

(3) Booths, or Tabernacles (compare Exodus chapter 23; Lev. Chapter 23: Num. Chapters 28 and 29; Deut. Chapter 16).

God would have returned to bless the people of the northern apostate and idolatrous kingdom of Israel if they had returned to Him (compare 15:2; 20:20; 26:5; 31:21), where this recurring theme is affirmed.

There had been some who attempted to celebrate through the years, but the Passover had not been practiced the way the law intended it to be held. This was the first real Passover celebration in many years. The letters were sent to all of the families of Israel, as well as to those of Judah. There seemed to be a remnant of Israel who had been spared, when the Assyrians overran Israel. Hezekiah was encouraging them to return to worship of the One True God, so He would help them.

**2 Chronicles 30:7 "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."**

By worshipping the calves, and neglecting the service of God in the temple at Jerusalem.

The Targum is, "which acted deceitfully with the Word of the Lord their God."

"Who therefore gave them up to desolation, as ye see": Some part of the land of Israel being already made desolate by the kings of Assyria, which was very visible.

The problem that Israel had been in, was because they had turned away from the LORD. Hezekiah encouraged them to break from that pattern of sin and return to the LORD.

**2 Chronicles 30:8 "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."**

"Be ye not stiffnecked": This is the same kind of language used by Stephen in (Acts 7:51-53), which in effect says, "Don't be obstinate".

This is speaking of a people who are self-centered. They are too proud to humble themselves before the LORD. Hezekiah is encouraging them to come back to God. Hezekiah reminded them that the temple was established as the house of the LORD, while all 12 tribes were together. Hezekiah wanted them to come back to the LORD, so His wrath would turn away from them.

**2 Chronicles 30:9 "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."**

Not all the people of Israel had been taken captive in the invasion of the Assyrians during Hezekiah's reign (compare 2 Kings 17:5-23; 18:9-12).

This was almost a plea from Hezekiah. It seems, that Hezekiah was like a preacher in this. He was encouraging Israel to repent and return to God. He was sure that the LORD would even bring their families back from captivity, if they would humble themselves and return to the LORD.

Verses 10-11: The invitation to celebrate Passover received a mixed review. Some "laughed ... and mocked"; others "humbled themselves". When Christians today ask people to consider the cross and the blood of Jesus spilled on that cross (1 Cor. 1:18), they are met with similar reactions. Revival is always characterized by turning our attention back to God's salvation.

**2 Chronicles 30:10 "So the posts passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh even unto Zebulun: but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them."**

Scorn was the response of these tribes, showing their wickedness even after judgment on them had begun. (Note verse 18), for the additional brazen sin of these tribes.

The posts in this were speaking of a written document that Hezekiah sent to the lands of Ephraim, Manasseh, and all of the ten tribes of Israel. Ephraim had always been jealous of Judah, and they along with the other tribes, would not take heed to the message that God had sent to them through Hezekiah. They not only would not accept the message Hezekiah sent, but laughed at him for thinking they might receive the message.

**2 Chronicles 30:11 "Nevertheless divers of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem."**

Confessed their idolatries and impieties, and expressed sorrow and repentance for them. And were willing to obey the commands of God, and attend his worship and ordinances.

"And came to Jerusalem": To keep the Passover.

We see that even though the message was rejected by most of the people, there were a few who listened and came. We see they were not of the tribe of Ephraim, but of Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun. It was worth the effort that Hezekiah had made, just for these few.

**2 Chronicles 30:12 "Also in Judah the hand of God was to give them one heart to do the commandment of the king and of the princes, by the word of the LORD."**

To make them unanimous in this service. Hearty and willing to it, to a man, which was owing to the power and efficacy of divine grace.

"To do the commandment of the king and of the princes, by the word of the Lord": To keep the Passover, which they did not only in obedience to their superiors, and their orders. But considering these as agreeable to the word and will of God.

In Judah, it seemed that everyone wanted to keep the Passover. They listened carefully to the instructions from Hezekiah and from the heads of their families, so they would do exactly as they should in this matter.

**2 Chronicles 30:13 "And there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the second month, a very great congregation."**

“Second month”: Normally, Passover, including the Feast of Unleavened Bread, was held in the first month; however, at this special time it was better to be one month late, than not at all.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread occurred at the same time as Passover. In fact, the celebration lasted a week. The people turned out in masses to keep the Passover and Unleavened Bread Feast.

**2 Chronicles 30:14 "And they arose and took away the altars that [were] in Jerusalem, and all the altars for incense took they away, and cast [them] into the brook Kidron."**

These altars had been erected to idols by Ahaz (see 2 Chron. 28:25; 29:16). Hezekiah was able to cleanse the city of idols and altars, something his predecessors failed to do.

These were the altars to the false gods. They destroyed them and threw them in the brook of Kidron.

**2 Chronicles 30:15 "Then they killed the passover on the fourteenth [day] of the second month: and the priests and the Levites were ashamed, and sanctified themselves, and brought in the burnt offerings into the house of the LORD."**

The enthusiasm of the people caused the “priests and the Levites” to evaluate their loyalties and consider the depths of their own sin. The result was that they “sanctified themselves” and returned to the Lord.

This was a great time of humbling of the priests and the Levites, as well as of the people. This was exactly one month later than the passover lamb would have been sacrificed in ordinary circumstances.

**2 Chronicles 30:16 "And they stood in their place after their manner, according to the law of Moses the man of God: the priests sprinkled the blood, [which they received] of the hand of the Levites."**

The priests in their place, and the Levites in theirs. In which they were ordered to stand when they offered sacrifice.

"The priests sprinkled the blood, which they received of the hand of the Levites": The blood either of the burnt offerings before mentioned, or of the passover lambs, which the Levites slew, and received the blood of them in basins. And which the priests took of them, and sprinkled. Not on the door posts of houses, as in Egypt, but on the altar round about, and which none but priests might do (Lev. 1:5).

All of this was done according to the Mosaic law.

Leviticus 1:11 "And he shall kill it on the side of the altar northward before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall sprinkle his blood round about upon the altar."

To learn more specifics of this, read several verses following this one in Leviticus. The sprinkling of the blood was to atone for sin.

Verses 17-20: Although many had not the opportunity to observe the strict regulations concerning the "Passover", their "hearts" were right before "God". Thus, they found full acceptance with Him. The urgency of the occasion took precedence over mere ritual (compare 40:6-8; Isa. 1:11-20; Micah 6:6-8).

**2 Chronicles 30:17 "For [there were] many in the congregation that were not sanctified: therefore the Levites had the charge of the killing of the passovers for every one [that was] not clean, to sanctify [them] unto the LORD."**

Or purified from uncleanness. Contracted either by idolatry, or through such things which, according to the ceremonial law, made them unclean. And from which they had not now time to cleanse themselves according to the law.

"Therefore the Levites had the charge of the killing of the passovers for everyone that was not clean, to sanctify them unto the Lord": This they did for the masters of families, who were ceremonially unclean. Who otherwise might have killed their passover lambs themselves (see Exodus 12:6). But now the Levites did it for them, that their passovers might be sanctified and consecrated to the Lord. For, as Philo the Jew says, one day in a year the whole sacrificed, everyone acted as a priest, and brought and slew his own sacrifice, meaning at the Passover.

The original instructions were for the people who brought the offering, to kill the animal. They had been away from the LORD for such a long time, they were not ceremonially clean. The Levites who had been cleansed, killed the animals for them.

Verses 18-20: In his beautiful prayer, Hezekiah put the focus on the "heart" of those coming to God, rather than on the "purification" rituals. Jesus made the same point regarding the importance of one's heart (Mark 7:1-23).

The attitude of the heart was to prevail over their outward activity (compare 1 Sam. 15:22; Jer. 7:22-23; Hosea 6:6). Hezekiah reminded them that God forgives even the most heinous sins, and He did (verse 20).

**2 Chronicles 30:18 "For a multitude of the people, [even] many of Ephraim, and Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good LORD pardon every one"**

All which were of the ten tribes, where idolatry had prevailed for a long time.

"Had not cleansed themselves": From impurity contracted by idolatry and other things.

"Yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it was written": Because they ate it in their uncleanness, which was not according to the law. That required that such should be clean that ate of any holy things (see John 18:28). But since these people came a great way off, and there was no deferring it to another month, the king chose rather they should be admitted to eat of it, though in their uncleanness.

"But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, the good Lord pardon everyone": God, who is gracious and merciful, and of his goodness, grace, and mercy. Forgive such who, though ceremonially unclean, ate of the passover, and especially since they were sincere and cordial in their services. And therefore, he hoped that this breach of the ceremonial law would not be laid to their charge. Goodness is such a well-known attribute of God, that the very Heathens ascribe it to their deities. Hence we read of a temple of the "good god", the gods being the givers of good things to men. Jupiter, or Jove, the supreme god, is supposed to be meant.

**2 Chronicles 30:19 "[That] prepareth his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though [he be] not [cleansed] according to the purification of the sanctuary."**

Who was heartily desirous of worshipping God, and observing his ordinances. Which had been enjoined their fathers, and they had kept. Though Aben Ezra, as Kimchi observes, refers this to Hezekiah. Whose whole heart he directed, or prepared to seek the Lord, etc. by prayer and supplication for every one of the said persons.

"Though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary": According to the ceremonial law, which the service of the temple required. Since, though they were attended with a ceremonial impurity, had a moral purity, and their hearts were right with God.

Now we see that some of Ephraim came as well. They were not cleansed, and were not supposed to eat the passover. Hezekiah prayed that God would overlook this error and accept them, because they had come with a clean heart. They were seeking God again, and Hezekiah would not let some technicality keep them from participating.

**2 Chronicles 30:20 "And the LORD hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people."**

Heard his prayer. And accepted of it, and granted what he desired.

"And healed his people": That is, forgave their sins, as Kimchi interprets it. Forgiveness being expressed by healing, for which he refers to (Psalm 41:4). To which may be added (Psalm 103:3). And which was known either by a prophet sent to declare it, or by not punishing them for their offence.

The LORD knew their hearts and He accepted them. The healing was both spiritual and physical. We know they had to have broken hearts over all the problems that had come to them. God restores them to fellowship with Him.

Verses 21-26: This kind of God-centered celebration, full of "great gladness", had occurred at the dedication of the temple in "the time of Solomon (chapters 5-7). Hezekiah restored the true worship of the Lord after other kings, especially Ahaz, had polluted it.

**2 Chronicles 30:21 "And the children of Israel that were present at Jerusalem kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness: and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day by day, [singing] with loud instruments unto the LORD."**

Which, according to the law of Moses, were always to follow the Passover (Exodus 12:18).

"And the Levites and the priests praised the Lord day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the Lord": Or instruments of strength. So called, not from the matter of them, or manner in which they were made. But either from the sound of them, as our version. Or from the strength and power of God, which they set forth in praise. The Targum is, "with instruments of praise," and so the word is sometimes used (see Psalm 8:2 compared with Matt. 21:16). The priests blew with trumpets, and the Levites played on harps, psalteries, etc. And this they did every day when the sacrifices were offered, during the seven days of unleavened bread.

This was a time of celebration. "Unleavened Bread" symbolized the sinless body of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was the Bread of life. The praise, songs, and music that went heavenward were sacrificial offerings of praise unto the Lord. This was a time of great rejoicing.

**2 Chronicles 30:22 "And Hezekiah spake comfortably unto all the Levites that taught the good knowledge of the LORD: and they did eat throughout the feast seven days, offering peace offerings, and making confession to the LORD God of their fathers."**

Or "to the heart" of them. Such things as were very encouraging to them to go on in the work and worship of God. Commending their singing, exhorting them to diligence in instructing the people. And promising them his favor and protection.

"Even those that taught the good knowledge of the Lord": Who instructed the people well in his word, worship, and ordinances. Though some restrain this to their skill in singing the praises of God, both vocally and instrumentally. And their abilities and diligence in teaching others.

"And they did eat throughout the feast seven days": Or did eat the feast. That is, the sacrifices of it. Not the Levites only, but the king, and all the congregation.

"Offering peace offerings": Part of which belonged to the Lord, another part to the priests, and a third to the offerors. On which they feasted with their friends. And this they did throughout all the seven days of the feast.

"And making confession to the Lord God of their fathers": Confessing their sins of omission and commission they had been guilty of. Owning the goodness, grace, and mercy of God towards them. Blessing and praising his name for the restoration of his worship and ordinances among them.

It appears that Hezekiah was pleased with the Levites and the priests, and told them he was pleased. He was depending on them to stay with every letter of the law. They were trained in the law. Notice the confessions were made to the LORD.

**2 Chronicles 30:23 "And the whole assembly took counsel to keep other seven days: and they kept [other] seven days with gladness."**

The extended time for the observance of the Feast of Unleavened Bread gave adequate time for the consecration of the temple. Genuine worship is an occasion for true joy (verse 26).

This speaks to the authenticity of revival in that the people knew how sinful they had been and how desperately in need of cleansing they actually were. They doubled the time for the feast which pointed to God's salvation and deliverance of the faithful.

This is just saying, they kept 14 days of celebration, instead of the normal 7. Hezekiah thought this extended time of celebration would be a lasting impression of the importance of Passover on all the people.

**2 Chronicles 30:24 "For Hezekiah king of Judah did give to the congregation a thousand bullocks and seven thousand sheep; and the princes gave to the congregation a thousand bullocks and ten thousand sheep: and a great number of priests sanctified themselves."**

He separated them, as Kimchi interprets it, from his own herds and flocks. Or out of his own substance, at his own expense purchased them. Or lifted them up, as the word signifies, as heave offerings to the Lord. And gave them to the people for thank offerings to feast upon.

"And the princes gave to the congregation one thousand bullocks, and ten thousand sheep": For the same purposes, following the king's example. This great liberality declares how kings, princes and all they to whom God has given, should be ready to bestow it in the setting forth of God's glory.

"And a great number of priests sanctified themselves": Besides those who had before, that they might be fit to offer this great number of sacrifices.

The priests generally worked a few at a time, but because of the tremendous volume of the sacrifices, many of the priests were sanctified to help with the offerings.

**2 Chronicles 30:25 "And all the congregation of Judah, with the priests and the Levites, and all the congregation that came out of Israel, and the strangers that came out of the land of Israel, and that dwelt in Judah, rejoiced."**

The people that were gathered together out of the several cities of Judah. Which no doubt was the largest congregation, with whom the priests and Levites are joined. As being of that kingdom, and dwellers in Jerusalem, where their office lay.

"And all the congregation that came out of Israel": Out of the ten tribes, particularly Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun (2 Chron. 30:18).

"And the strangers that came out of the land of Israel, and that dwelt in Judah, rejoiced": The proselytes, even such as were circumcised. Who ate of the Passover, and kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread, as well as the other days of rejoicing. The former of which none might partake of but circumcised persons. And it can hardly be thought that any other would come out of Israel on such an occasion (see Exodus 12:48).

This was a time of restoration of their relationship with God. It was a time of rejoicing, because they were back in the good graces of the LORD. This celebration was not just for Judah, but for all who would come.

**2 Chronicles 30:26 "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."**

"Not the like": A telling statement about the spiritual degeneracy of the divided kingdom since the time of Solomon over 215 years earlier.

We know that God visited the temple in Jerusalem, and made His presence known to the congregation at the dedication of the temple. Solomon had knelt before the altar and prayed one of the most beautiful prayers in the Bible at that time. This celebration compared with that for greatness of joy.

**2 Chronicles 30:27 "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."**

The priests who were of the tribe of Levi. For there were some in Israel that were not. But were made of any of the people, as in the times of Jeroboam. Though some supply the copulative "and"; so the Targum: "and blessed the people"; which was the proper work and business of the priests to do. Though, while they were blessing, the Levites might be singing.

"And their voice was heard": Meaning not by the people, though undoubtedly it was. But by the Lord. The Targum is, "their prayer was heard or received;" for the blessing was delivered in a

petitionary way (Num. 6:24). And was no other than a request that God would bless them, which he did.

"And their prayer came up to his holy dwelling place, even unto heaven" (see Psalm 3:4). By what means it was known their prayer was heard and accepted cannot be said. There might be some visible token of it, as the people were dismissed, and departed.

Solomon had spoken a blessing from the LORD on the congregation at the dedication of the temple. The Priests and Levites spoke a blessing on the people here. The priests were anointed of God to bless. God heard in heaven, and was pleased.

## **2 Chronicles Chapter 30 Questions**

1. How did Hezekiah contact all the people to tell them to come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem to keep the Passover?
2. Who is Hezekiah making the temple available to?
3. When were they going to keep the Passover?
4. Where was Hoshea, the king of Israel, at the time Hezekiah sent the letters?
5. Why were they having it a month late?
6. How did the king, and all the congregation, feel about having Passover?
7. The proclamation went out throughout all \_\_\_\_\_.
8. What three feasts were not optional?
9. What is Israel spoken of, in verse 6, that lets us know there were not many?
10. Who did Hezekiah tell them not to be like?
11. What does stiffnecked tell us about these people?
12. Why did Hezekiah want them to come back to God?
13. What promise did he make to them about the Lord in verse 9?
14. How did they accept the letters Hezekiah sent?
15. Who did come?
16. How did the people in Judah feel about the Passover?

17. When is the Feast of Unleavened Bread?
18. What did the people do with the altars to the false gods?
19. When did they kill the passover lamb?
20. Who sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice?
21. The sprinkling of the blood was to \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_.
22. Who had the charge of killing the passovers?
23. Who generally did that?
24. Verse 18 speaks of the large number of the congregation as a \_\_\_\_\_.
25. Hezekiah would not let some \_\_\_\_\_ keep them from participating.
26. How many days did they keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread?
27. How did Hezekiah feel about the Levites and priests?
28. At the end of the celebration, what did they decide to do?
29. How many animals did Hezekiah give?
30. Whose time did they compare this to?