

Hezekiah, Leader for the Lord
2 Kings 18:1-19:21; 2 Chron. 29:1-32:33; Isa. 36-39

Introduction:

1. "He did right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father David had done." That is the way the Chronicler summarizes the reign of good king Hezekiah.
2. He has much to teach us about good leadership.
3. He began his reign when he was only 25 years old. He reigned 29 years in Jerusalem.

Discussion:

I. The first observation that I would make about him is that he did not follow the way of his father.

A. Ahaz's reign was a disaster.

1. He made molten images of the Baals.
2. He burned incense in the valley of Benhinnom and burned his sons in the fire.
3. He sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.
4. And because of this God delivered him into the hands of his enemies: the Arameans, the Israelites, the Edomites, the Philistines and the Assyrians. Many of the people were destroyed in battle, some were taken as captives and instead of repenting Ahaz sacrificed to the gods of Damascus and further provoked the Lord God to anger. When he died the people refused to bury him in the tombs of the honored kings of Israel.
5. Disgrace, disaster and dishonor characterized Ahaz.

B. Hezekiah did not follow this path but instead turned to God as his leader.

1. Many today may blame their parents for their own short-comings, but Hezekiah rose above the deficits of his father.
2. He chose to serve the Lord.

II. He began immediately to do the will of the Lord (2 Chron. 29:3).

A. Ahaz had closed the doors to the house of the Lord. Hezekiah in the first month of his reign opened them.

1. When people have been unfaithful to the Lord it is not time to blame the past administration, to be timid, to act hesitantly, nor to drag ones feet. It is time to do the will of the Lord.
2. Hezekiah acted immediately.

B. Note his priorities.

1. He did not immediately seek a military alliance. He did not immediately strengthen his army.
2. He spoke with the religious leaders, the Levites, and motivated them to get busy for the Lord.
 - a. The Levites arose (12).
 - b. They assembled their brothers, consecrated themselves and went in to cleanse the house of the Lord (15).
 - c. They acted without delay.

- d. In about two weeks they had the temple ready to start offering sacrifices.
- 3. Why did Hezekiah do this? 29:15 ascribes what he did to “the words of the Lord.” Hezekiah lead on the basis of God’s word. Ahaz had acted on the words of mediums, spiritists and necromancers (Isa. 8:19).

III. They worshiped according to the command of the Lord through His prophets (25-28).

- A. This was the source of information that dictated their worship.
- B. They offered sacrifices and thank offerings (31-36).
- C. They sang praises with joy.

IV. They called on others to repent and yield to the gracious and compassionate Lord (30:6-9).

- A. Some laughed at them and mocked (10).
- B. Some humbled themselves and they were given one heart to do what the king and princes commanded by the word of the Lord (11).
 - 1. Observe that there was unity among those who humbled themselves to do as the Lord commanded.
 - 2. Yet these were divided from those who laughed and mocked.
- C. The people of God today call on others to repent and yield to the gracious and compassionate Lord.
 - 1. Some laugh and mock.
 - 2. The humble unite to do what the word of the Lord demands.

V. They celebrated the Passover (30:13ff).

- A. They removed the illegal altars and places for offering incense (cf. 28:24).
- B. The priests and Levites were ashamed of themselves and consecrated themselves and brought burnt offerings to the house of the Lord.
 - 1. Evidently they were ashamed of themselves for their previous behavior—neglect of their responsibility or involvement with illegal altars and inappropriate worship.
 - 2. It is appropriate to be ashamed when we have neglected the worship of God.
- C. Some were not prepared to slaughter the Passover lamb for their household (17-18).
 - 1. The law stipulated that the fathers of the household who slew the lamb was to hand the blood to the priest. But some were ritualistically “unclean.”
 - 2. Therefore the Levites presided over the slaying of the lambs.
 - 3. Hezekiah prayed for God’s forgiveness and the Lord healed the people.
 - 4. Two principles here. . .
 - a. It is necessary to worship God as He has prescribed. This must be taken seriously. In this text failure necessitated God’s pardon or forgiveness.
 - b. God is sympathetic to special circumstances and responsive to people who are trying to do the right thing.
 - c. Hezekiah was sympathetic to the circumstances. We should be sympathetic to such circumstances. Does not give permission to go around looking for special circumstances, nor does it allow for being lax in doing what is prescribed. Not appropriate to gloat over your “cleanness” and someone else’s lack thereof.

- D. Hezekiah encouraged the Levites and they sacrificed peace offerings and gave thanks to God. There was joy in Jerusalem and God heard their prayer.

VI. They destroyed the objects of false worship (31:1ff).

- A. Hezekiah led by administration (31:2).
- B. By giving (31:3).
- C. Supporting the Levites (31:4).
- D. The people gave abundantly (31:6ff).

Conclusion:

1. "Thus the service of the house of the Lord was established again."
2. "Hezekiah did what was good, right and true before the Lord his God. Every work which he began in the service of the house of God in law and in commandment, seeking his God, he did with all his heart and prospered" (31:20-21).
3. If you want the Lord to prosper you do good and right. With all your heart serve the Lord.