

1 **Back From the Edge**

Part 3

2 **The edge**

- After Ahaz dies, his son Hezekiah becomes king. Hezekiah inherits a nation that is experiencing the judgment of God and is on the cusp of ultimate destruction.
- But Hezekiah is not his father.

3 **The edge**

- Hezekiah is a king like David, and seeks to follow the Lord with all of his heart.
- Hezekiah not only sees what Judah is, he sees what it can be. He has two goals which he will try to accomplish with his 29-year reign:
 - Restoring Judah to being a nation that God can bless
 - Restoring Judah's national sovereignty and freeing them from Assyrian rule

4 **Sins forgiven, worship begun**

- *When the offering was finished, the king and all who were present with him bowed themselves and worshiped. And Hezekiah the king and the officials commanded the Levites to sing praises to the LORD with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed down and worshiped. (2Ch 29:29-30)*

5 **Sins forgiven, worship begun**

- *Then Hezekiah said, "You have now consecrated yourselves to the LORD. Come near; bring sacrifices and thank offerings to the house of the LORD." And the assembly brought sacrifices and thank offerings, and all who were of a willing heart brought burnt offerings. (2Ch 29:31)*

6 **Sins forgiven, worship begun**

- *The number of the burnt offerings that the assembly brought was 70 bulls, 100 rams, and 200 lambs; all these were for a burnt offering to the LORD. And the consecrated offerings were 600 bulls and 3,000 sheep.*

7 **The priests**

- *But the priests were too few and could not flay all the burnt offerings, so until other priests had consecrated themselves, their brothers the Levites helped them, until the work was finished—for the Levites were more upright in heart than the priests in consecrating themselves. (2Ch 29:32-34)*

8 **The priests**

- We are not given the reason behind the priests' hesitation to purify themselves.
- What we are given is the statement that the priests were not as zealous as they ought to have been.
- Despite multiple commands from Hezekiah, not all those who ought to have led in worship were able to do so.

9 **8) Revival does not depend on me**

- Although we are not told the reason for the priests' hesitation, a number of possibilities come readily to mind:
 - The priests may have been complicit in the idolatry of Ahaz's reign.
 - The priests may have in fact made their positions of leadership itself into an idol, and failed to personally consecrate themselves.

10 **8) Revival does not depend on me**

- It is easy for those in leadership to be so engaged in the "work of the ministry" that they neglect their own personal walks.
- Regardless of whether you occupy a position of leadership, it's easy to let "busy work" for God (especially good things) get in the way of developing a relationship.

11 **8) Revival does not depend on me**

- The priests may in fact have had an attitude of smug superiority over the "unwashed masses."

- In a time of revival, with hundreds and hundreds of sacrifices being offered, the priests would have experienced the ultimate feeling of “job security”.

12  **8) Revival does not depend on me**

- Feeling themselves indispensable, the priests became sloppy about their own personal purity and were unfit to lead the congregation in worship.
- Contrast these priests with those of two generations before, who withstood Uzziah with force when he unlawfully entered the Temple to burn incense.

13  **8) Revival does not depend on me**

- To remind the priests that they are not essential to the work of God being done in the nation of Judah, the Levites are allowed to step in and fill their duties in an unprecedented exception to Mosaic law.
- The substitution, and the sacrifices offered up by the Levites, are accepted by God.

14  **8) Revival does not depend on me**

- *Besides the great number of burnt offerings, there was the fat of the peace offerings, and there were the drink offerings for the burnt offerings. Thus the service of the house of the LORD was restored. And Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced because God had provided for the people, for the thing came about suddenly. (2Ch 29:35-36)*

15  **The Passover**

- In 2 Chronicles 30, we see Hezekiah’s desire that the nation of Judah observe the Passover once again.
- They are not able to observe it on time for two reasons:
 - The people have not assembled in time
 - The priests have not consecrated themselves in sufficient numbers

16  **The Passover**

- Hezekiah decides that instead they will observe the Passover a month late, citing a precedent from Numbers 9:10-11.
- Thus the revival continues by fits and starts.
- Hezekiah extends an invitation to their estranged brethren in the northern kingdom of Israel.

17  **Hezekiah’s invitation**

- *So couriers went throughout all Israel and Judah with letters from the king and his princes, as the king had commanded, saying, “O people of Israel, return to the LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, that he may turn again to the remnant of you who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria. Do not be like your fathers and your brothers, who were faithless to the LORD God of their fathers, so that he made them a desolation, as you see. (2Ch 30:6-7)*

18  **Hezekiah’s invitation**

- *Do not now be stiff-necked as your fathers were, but yield yourselves to the LORD and come to his sanctuary, which he has consecrated forever, and serve the LORD your God, that his fierce anger may turn away from you. For if you return to the LORD, your brothers and your children will find compassion with their captors and return to this land. For the LORD your God is gracious and merciful and will not turn away his face from you, if you return to him.” (2Ch 30:8-9)*

19  **Hezekiah’s invitation**

- But Hezekiah’s invitation gets various receptions:
 - Most of the men of Israel reject it, even mock it (30:10)
 - A handful of Israelites from Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humble themselves and come to the Passover (30:11)
 - God moves on the entire nation of Judah and they have “one heart” to do as the king commanded (30:12)

20  **The Passover**

- Preparations are made for the Passover:
 - False altars are removed from Jerusalem and burned by the brook Kidron.
 - Priests and Levites (as it was not only the Priests) who had failed to consecrate themselves are now

sufficiently shamed by the zeal of the people and motivated to consecrate themselves.

21  **The Priests & Levites**

- *And they slaughtered the Passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the second month. And the priests and the Levites were ashamed, so that they consecrated themselves and brought burnt offerings into the house of the LORD. (2Ch 30:15)*
- There were more Levites than priests, so if an equal number of each had consecrated themselves originally, Levites would still have been needed to supplement the priestly duties.

22  **9) Revival is for the religious**

- *They took their accustomed posts according to the Law of Moses the man of God. The priests threw the blood that they received from the hand of the Levites. (2Ch 30:16)*
- It is only after the priests and the Levites consecrate themselves that worship is able to resume in the manner prescribed by God.

23  **The people**

- *For there were many in the assembly who had not consecrated themselves. Therefore the Levites had to slaughter the Passover lamb for everyone who was not clean, to consecrate it to the LORD. For a majority of the people, many of them from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet they ate the Passover otherwise than as prescribed. 2Ch 30:17-18)*

24  **The people**

- *For Hezekiah had prayed for them, saying, "May the good LORD pardon everyone who sets his heart to seek God, the LORD, the God of his fathers, even though not according to the sanctuary's rules of cleanness." And the LORD heard Hezekiah and healed the people. (2Ch 30:18-20)*

25  **10) Revival is for the repentant**

- Throughout Scripture, those who are religious are consistently held to a higher standard of expectations than those who are not.
- The difference is not in God's moral standard, but rather in the burden of responsibility that is placed upon those who already know the truth.

26  **10) Revival is for the repentant**

- Examples of this truth can be found throughout the Bible:
 - Jesus contrasts the cities of his day with ancient Sodom and Gomorra.
 - Elisha's words to Naaman the Leper in 2 Kings 5:18-19.

27  **10) Revival is for the repentant**

- In the case of the Priests and Levites who would not sanctify themselves, their failure to do so demonstrated a lack of the Fear of the Lord.
- In the case of the Israelites who could not consecrate themselves in time, their desire to come to the Passover demonstrated deep humility and repentance, which are more valuable to God than animal sacrifice.

28  **Prayer is heard**

- *Then the whole assembly agreed together to keep the feast for another seven days. So they kept it for another seven days with gladness. (2Ch 30:23)*
- *So there was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem. Then the priests and the Levites arose and blessed the people, and their voice was heard, and **their prayer came to his holy habitation in heaven.** (2Ch 30:26-27)*

29  **Prayer is heard**

- As the prayers of the priests and Levites of Judah are finally heard, we are reminded of Solomon and of a promise made to him in this very place:
- *"...if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land." (2Ch 7:14)*

30  **The sacrifices of God**

- *O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. (Psa 51:15-17)*