

2Chronicles 29:1 ¶ Hezekiah began to reign *when he was five and twenty years old, and he reigned nine and twenty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah.*

2Chronicles 29:2 And he did *that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done.*

Hezekiah began his reign as king at age 25; he ruled for 29 years in Jerusalem. His mother name was Abijah, daughter of Zechariah. David Guzik provides this insight: "Hezekiah came to the throne of Judah at the very end of the Kingdom of Israel. Three years after the start of his reign the Assyrian armies set siege to Samaria, and three years after that the northern kingdom was conquered."

Hezekiah was a good king that did what was right "in the sight of the LORD" in accordance with how King David had lived.

This phrase—in the sight of the LORD—appears many times as we read the historian's record of Judah's kings. I think it is an important truth that not many Christians focus on. God sees everything we do and say. There is nothing we can hide from Him. If we would but focus on that truth, I believe it would certainly have more impact on our actions and our speech.

2Chronicles 29:3 He in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the LORD, and repaired them.

2Chronicles 29:4 And he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them together into the east street,

2Chronicles 29:5 And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy *place.*

Hezekiah didn't waste any time in reopening the temple and reinstating worship there; he began in the very first month of his reign. He gathered together all the priests and Levites into the east street (that faced the Eastern Gate according to JFB) to commission them to get back to work. He ordered them to sanctify themselves and proceed to sanctify the house of the LORD and get rid of all the filthiness in the sanctuary caused by the actions of his father Ahaz.

The record in 1Kings adds a bit more. We are told that he removed all the high places, destroyed idols, cut down the groves and destroyed the bronze serpent that Moses had made in the wilderness (see Numbers 21) and that the people had made into an idol. It is also noted that no other king of Judah before or after him trusted the LORD as he did.

2 Kings 18:4–5 "He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan. He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him."

2Chronicles 29:6 For our fathers have trespassed, and done *that which was evil*

in the eyes of the LORD our God, and have forsaken him, and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the LORD, and turned *their* backs. **2Chronicles 29:7** Also they have shut up the doors of the porch, and put out the lamps, and have not burned incense nor offered burnt offerings in the holy *place* unto the God of Israel.

2Chronicles 29:8 Wherefore the wrath of the LORD was upon Judah and Jerusalem, and he hath delivered them to trouble, to astonishment, and to hissing, as ye see with your eyes.

2Chronicles 29:9 For, lo, our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives *are* in captivity for this.

2Chronicles 29:10 Now *it is* in mine heart to make a covenant with the LORD God of Israel, that his fierce wrath may turn away from us.

2Chronicles 29:11 My sons, be not now negligent: for the LORD hath chosen you to stand before him, to serve him, and that ye should minister unto him, and burn incense.

Hezekiah went on to explain that their fathers had sinned and done what was evil according to God's law and rejected Him as their LORD. They had abandoned worship at the temple and turned away from following Him. They had even closed up the temple and stopped all worship that took place there. It is because of these actions that the LORD had judged Judah and caused them to suffer such trouble, ruin and derision from the nations. That was why so many of their fathers had been killed and their sons, daughters and wives were being held in captivity.

Hezekiah then declared that it was in his heart to make a covenant and renew their commitment to follow the LORD God of Israel in order to turn God's wrath away from them. He encouraged the priests and Levites not to be negligent or careless in their task. God had specifically set them apart to stand before Him and serve Him and burn incense and make sacrifices (from the Hebrew) before Him.

I think it is "in one's heart" from which the desire to follow the LORD originates. Consider the following scriptures.

Deuteronomy 5:29 "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!"

2 Chronicles 12:14 "And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD."

Psalms 112:7 "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD."

Proverbs 4:23 "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

2Chronicles 29:12 ¶ Then the Levites arose, Mahath the son of Amasai, and Joel the son of Azariah, of the sons of the Kohathites: and of the sons of Merari, Kish the son of Abdi, and Azariah the son of Jehalelel: and of the Gershonites;

Joah the son of Zimmah, and Eden the son of Joah:

2Chronicles 29:13 And of the sons of Elizaphan; Shimri, and Jeiel: and of the sons of Asaph; Zechariah, and Mattaniah:

2Chronicles 29:14 And of the sons of Heman; Jehiel, and Shimei: and of the sons of Jeduthun; Shemaiah, and Uzziel.

2Chronicles 29:15 And they gathered their brethren, and sanctified themselves, and came, according to the commandment of the king, by the words of the LORD, to cleanse the house of the LORD.

The Levites immediately organized themselves under the leadership as listed above. They sanctified themselves and got to work cleansing the house of the LORD in accordance with the king's command.

2Chronicles 29:16 And the priests went into the inner part of the house of the LORD, to cleanse *it*, and brought out all the uncleanness that they found in the temple of the LORD into the court of the house of the LORD. And the Levites took *it*, to carry *it* out abroad into the brook Kidron.

2Chronicles 29:17 Now they began on the first *day* of the first month to sanctify, and on the eighth day of the month came they to the porch of the LORD: so they sanctified the house of the LORD in eight days; and in the sixteenth day of the first month they made an end.

2Chronicles 29:18 Then they went in to Hezekiah the king, and said, We have cleansed all the house of the LORD, and the altar of burnt offering, with all the vessels thereof, and the shewbread table, with all the vessels thereof.

2Chronicles 29:19 Moreover all the vessels, which king Ahaz in his reign did cast away in his transgression, have we prepared and sanctified, and, behold, they *are* before the altar of the LORD.

The priests set to work thoroughly cleaning the sanctuary and getting rid of all the filth they found. They first brought the garbage out into the courtyard, then the Levites took it to the brook Kidron. They began work on the 1st day of the 1st month, completing the sanctuary by the 8th and finishing the whole on the 16th of the same month.

They went to King Hezekiah and told him that the temple had been cleansed, as well as the altar of burnt offering and all the utensils used there and the showbread table and all the utensils used there. They reported that they had also collected and sanctified all the remaining temple vessels that King Ahaz had removed and placed them before the altar of the LORD.

2Chronicles 29:20 ¶ Then Hezekiah the king rose early, and gathered the rulers of the city, and went up to the house of the LORD.

2Chronicles 29:21 And they brought seven bullocks, and seven rams, and seven lambs, and seven he goats, for a sin offering for the kingdom, and for the sanctuary, and for Judah. And he commanded the priests the sons of Aaron to offer *them* on the altar of the LORD.

2Chronicles 29:22 So they killed the bullocks, and the priests received the blood, and sprinkled *it* on the altar: likewise, when they had killed the rams, they sprinkled the blood upon the altar: they killed also the lambs, and they

sprinkled the blood upon the altar.

2Chronicles 29:23 And they brought forth the he goats *for* the sin offering before the king and the congregation; and they laid their hands upon them:

2Chronicles 29:24 And the priests killed them, and they made reconciliation with their blood upon the altar, to make an atonement for all Israel: for the king commanded *that* the burnt offering and the sin offering *should be made* for all Israel.

So King Hezekiah got up early the next day and gathered together all the rulers of the city and went up to the temple. They brought 7 bulls, 7 rams, 7 lambs and 7 male goats for a sin offering for the kingdom's rulers (from the Hebrew), the sanctuary and the people of Judah. He then commanded the priest to sacrifice them upon the altar of the LORD.

The priests did as the king commanded, sprinkling the blood of the bulls, rams, and lambs upon the altar for the burnt offering. Finally, when they killed the male goats to make the sin offering, the king and city leaders laid their hands on them acknowledging the sins of the whole kingdom. This atoned for the sins of all Israel in accordance with the king's command that the burnt offerings and sin offerings be made on behalf of all of Israel.

As noted in my study of Leviticus, these sacrifices pictured the death of the perfect lamb of God, Jesus, on the cross in consequence of my sin, our sin.

2Chronicles 29:25 And he set the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet: for *so was* the commandment of the LORD by his prophets.

2Chronicles 29:26 And the Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets.

The king then set the Levites in the house of the LORD to lead worship with cymbals, psalteries (lyres) and harps in accordance with the LORD's command as given through the prophets Gad and Nathan to King David. They also used trumpets along with the instruments of David.

2Chronicles 29:27 And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt offering upon the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD began *also* with the trumpets, and with the instruments *ordained* by David king of Israel.

2Chronicles 29:28 And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: *and all this continued* until the burnt offering was finished.

2Chronicles 29:29 And when they had made an end of offering, the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves, and worshipped.

2Chronicles 29:30 Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the LORD with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped.

As the priests began offering the burnt offerings, the Levites began to play the song of the LORD. They whole congregation worshipped as the singers sang and the trumpeters played; they continued until the burnt offerings were completed. Then the king and the whole congregation bowed themselves in worship before the LORD. The king and the leaders of the city commanded the Levites to continue to sing praise to the LORD using the songs of David and Asaph as they continued to worship.

2Chronicles 29:31 Then Hezekiah answered and said, Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the LORD, come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the LORD. And the congregation brought in sacrifices and thank offerings; and as many as were of a free heart burnt offerings.

2Chronicles 29:32 And the number of the burnt offerings, which the congregation brought, was threescore and ten bullocks, an hundred rams, and two hundred lambs: all these *were* for a burnt offering to the LORD.

2Chronicles 29:33 And the consecrated things *were* six hundred oxen and three thousand sheep.

2Chronicles 29:34 But the priests were too few, so that they could not flay all the burnt offerings: wherefore their brethren the Levites did help them, till the work was ended, and until the *other* priests had sanctified themselves: for the Levites *were* more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests.

2Chronicles 29:35 And also the burnt offerings *were* in abundance, with the fat of the peace offerings, and the drink offerings for *every* burnt offering. So the service of the house of the LORD was set in order.

2Chronicles 29:36 And Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that God had prepared the people: for the thing was *done* suddenly.

King Hezekiah next addressed the congregation, calling for them to bring sacrifices and thank offerings to the house of the LORD. The people responded by freely and willingly bringing many animals to sacrifice. They brought 70 bulls, 100 rams and 200 lambs as burnt offerings. They also brought 600 oxen and 3000 sheep to sacrifice. There were too few priests to skin all the burnt offerings, so they called on the Levites to help them until the work was done. This was because the Levites had been more diligent in sanctifying themselves than some of the priests.

The NIV gives a bit more explanation: "...the Chronicler observes that those who were particularly "willing brought burnt offerings" (v. 31); for these were wholly consumed on the altar. In contrast were the more numerous "sacrifices" (the "consecrated" offerings of v. 33, or "fellowship offerings" of v. 35), which were largely eaten by the sacrificers in feasts that followed the services of presentation."

Knowing that the house of the Lord had been set in order caused Hezekiah and the people to rejoice. They praised God for causing such a change in the temple and the hearts of the people so quickly.