

**2Chronicles 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.

**2Chronicles 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.

**2Chronicles 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.

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

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

After the temple had been cleansed and sacrifices and offerings reinstated, King Hezekiah decided that they should keep Passover. They could not keep the Passover at the appointed time because all the priests weren't sanctified and the people did not gather to celebrate the feast since it had not been done for a long time. He shared his desire with his court officers and the people of Jerusalem, and they decided to celebrate the feast in the second month. In principle, there was actually a provision for this in God's law.

*Numbers 9:10–11 "Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any man of you or of your posterity shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or be in a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the passover unto the LORD. The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it, and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs."*

So the king issued a decree to be proclaimed throughout all Israel, from Beersheba to Dan (including those of the Northern Kingdom), to come to Jerusalem to keep the Passover unto the LORD God of Israel, noting that it had not been done in a long time.

Guzik made an apt comparison: "The long neglect of Passover among the tribes of Israel would be like a church that had not celebrated the Lord's Table in a long, long time."

**2Chronicles 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.

**2Chronicles 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.

**2Chronicles 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.

**2Chronicles 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.**

At the king's command the proclamation was sent throughout the whole of the kingdom accompanied by letters from the king and his officials. It stated (my paraphrase): I call for you to turn back to the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel (Jacob). If you do, He will once again turn back to you who have escaped captivity at the hands of the king of Assyria. I urge you not to continue in the sin of your fathers and relatives that were taken captive. Don't continue to be willful and stubborn like your fathers; yield yourselves to the LORD. Come to the house of the LORD that He has made holy forever. Choose to serve the LORD your God, and He will no longer be angry with you. If you repent and choose to follow the LORD, the LORD will show compassion to those you love that are in captivity and bring them back home. The LORD "your" God is gracious and merciful and will not reject you if you turn back to Him.

Scripture is clear in declaring that the LORD will never reject one who comes to Him in repentance.

*Ezekiel 18:21–23 "But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?"*

(Jesus speaking) John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*

(Jesus speaking) John 6:37 *"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."*

Hezekiah recognized the truth that whether or not the people accepted the LORD as "their" God, doesn't change the fact. That is true of all those that reject Him as LORD today. There is only one God, one LORD, and He is God of all.

*Jeremiah 32:26–27 "Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah, saying, Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh...."*

*James 2:19 "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble."*

*Deuteronomy 4:39 "Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else."*

*Isaiah 45:22 "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."*

**2Chronicles 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.

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

**2Chronicles 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.

The proclamation was sent from city to city throughout the whole land, but many of the people laughed when they heard it and mocked the messengers. However, there were those from Asher, Manasseh and Zebulun (a reference to the Northern Kingdom) that humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. God gave those in the kingdom of Judah a unified heart to obey the command of the king and his officials in keeping with God's law.

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

**2Chronicles 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.

A great multitude gathered together in Jerusalem to keep the Passover at the appointed time in the second month. Before the feast, they took away all the existing altars to false gods in Jerusalem and threw them into the brook Kidron.

**2Chronicles 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.

**2Chronicles 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.

They killed the Passover on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the 2<sup>nd</sup> month. The priests and Levites were ashamed and sanctified themselves, bringing burnt offerings into the temple. I think they were ashamed because they had not been more diligent to do so before.

They took their places and served as set forth in the law of Moses. The Levites brought the blood that had been drained from the sacrifices to the priests, and they sprinkled it (on the altar I assume).

**2Chronicles 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.

**2Chronicles 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

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

Many of the people came to the feast unprepared and unclean, so the Levites had to kill the Passover sacrifices for them to consecrate them to the LORD. The head of the family usually did this. Though a great many from the Northern Kingdom had not cleansed themselves, they still participated in the Passover (but not as set forth in the law). I would imagine that most of these people did not even realize that they were supposed to go through a ritual of cleansing in preparation for the Passover feast.

King Hezekiah interceded for these people in prayer, asking the “good LORD” to pardon every one that prepared his heart to seek the LORD God of his fathers even if he hadn’t been cleansed according to the rules of the sanctuary. The historian notes that the LORD answered Hezekiah’s prayer and healed the people. I think that is saying that He supernaturally cleansed them.

“prepareth his heart” – The Hebrew indicates that this is a determined choice to be faithful to God’s command. I am reminded of the truth that though man is focused on the outward appearance of a person, God is focused on what is in his heart.

*1 Samuel 16:7 “But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.”*

Evidently, what God saw in their hearts provoked His compassion and grace to the point of “healing” the people to make them fit participants of the appointed feast.

**2Chronicles 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.**

**2Chronicles 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.**

The multitudes that had gathered at Jerusalem joyfully kept the feast of unleavened bread for seven days. The Levites and priests praised the LORD every day with singing and instrumental music. The king expressed his appreciation to the Levites for their successful (from the Hebrew for “knowledge”) performance in service to the LORD. Everyone feasted that whole week, offering peace offerings and worshipping and confessing their sins (both from the Hebrew for “confession”) before the LORD God of their fathers.

**2Chronicles 30:23 And the whole assembly took counsel to keep other seven**

days: and they kept *other* seven days with gladness.

**2Chronicles 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.

**2Chronicles 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.

At the end of the first week, the whole assembly decided to keep the feast going for another seven days. King Hezekiah provided 1000 bulls and 7000 sheep and his officials gave 1000 bulls and 10,000 sheep for the second week. Meanwhile, many more priests consecrated themselves. The whole congregation of Judah rejoiced—priests, Levites, the people from Israel, strangers from the land of Israel and the people that lived in Judah.

**2Chronicles 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.*

**2Chronicles 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 historian notes that there was great joy in Jerusalem. There had not been a celebration like this since the time of King Solomon, son of David (because the kingdom was split after his reign). The priests and Levites stood up to bless the people, and the LORD heard their prayer from His holy dwelling place in heaven.

I know we think of the LORD as dwelling in the third heaven far beyond our known universe, but who knows the reality. I just **know** that the LORD hears the prayers of His people!

*2 Chronicles 7:14 "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."*

*1 Peter 3:12 "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers...."*

*1 John 5:14 "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us...."*