

2 Chronicles 30 Commentary

PREVIOUS

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SECOND CHRONICLES					
The Kingdom of Israel					
From Splendor to Disaster					
Splendor			Disaster		
King Solomon of Judah 2 Chronicles 1-9			Successive Kings of Judah 2Chr 10-36		
Kingdom United			Kingdom Divided 2Chr 10:1-19	Rulers of the Southern Kingdom of Judah After the Split	The Exile of Judah 2Chr 36:17-23
Inaugural 2Chr 1:1-17	Solomon's Temple 2Chr 2:1-7:22	Solomon's Glory 2Chr 8:1-9:31			
Building of the Temple			Decline & Destruction of the Temple		Temple Destroyed
~40 Years			~393 Years		

TIMELINE OF THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL, KINGS & CHRONICLES

1107	1011				971	931	853	722	586
1Samuel	2 Samuel				1Kings	1Kings	2 Kings		
31	1-4	5-10	11-20	21-24	1-11	12-22	1-17	18-25	
1 Chronicles 10		1Chr 11-19		1Chr 20-29	2 Chronicles 1-9	2 Chronicles 10-20	2 Chronicles 21-36		

Legend: B.C. dates at top of timeline are approximate. Note that 931BC marks the division of the Kingdom into Southern Tribes (Judah and Benjamin) and Ten Northern Tribes. To avoid confusion be aware that **after the division** of the Kingdom in 931BC, the Southern Kingdom is most often designated in Scripture as "**Judah**" and the Northern Kingdom as "**Israel**." Finally, note that 1 Chronicles 1-9 is not identified on the timeline because these chapters are records of genealogy.

SEE ALSO:

[ESV chart - kings of Israel - more information](#)

[ESV chart - kings of Judah - more information](#)

[Another Chart with Variable Dates for Reigns of Kings](#)

NOTE: THESE COMMENTS ARE OFFERED IN AN "AS IS" FORMAT - IF I HAVE TIME IN THE FUTURE, THEY WILL BE UPDATED.

CLICK [2 CHRONICLES COMMENTARIES](#) FOR MULTIPLE SERMONS AND COMMENTARIES

2 Chronicles 30:1 Now 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 celebrate the Passover to the LORD God of Israel.

- Israel (KJV): 2Ch 11:13,16
- Ephraim (KJV): 2Ch 30:10,11 25:7 35:6 Ho 5:4 7:8,9 11:8
- to the house (KJV): De 16:2-6
- to keep (KJV): Ex 12:3-20 1Co 5:7,8
- See [BELOW FOR BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR 1-2 CHRONICLES](#) - adapted from [Paul Apple's Bible Outlines](#)

Source: [Halley's Bible handbook](#) **BORROW**

PAUL APPLE - BIG IDEA: REPENTANCE, HUMILITY AND CONSECRATION PROMOTE AN INCLUSIVE SPIRIT OF UNIFIED CORPORATE WORSHIP THAT ISSUES IN GREAT JOY

INTRODUCTION:

Iain Duguid: The end of the northern kingdom resulted in both the rapid increase in Judah's population due to the influx of refugees and also the opportunity to call those in the north back to worship at the Jerusalem temple. Thus far, temple cleansing and restoration had involved those in Jerusalem: king, priests and Levites, and "officials of the city." But the "sin offering with their blood" was to "make atonement for all Israel" (2 Chron. 29:24). Now Hezekiah made arrangements for a Passover celebration involving "all Israel and Judah" (2Ch 30:1). He continued to provide leadership, but again communal involvement in decision making and implementation was to the fore (Hb. qahal ["assembly"] occurs thirteen times in 2Ch 30:29–30:29:23, 28, 31, 32; 2Ch 30:2, 4, 13, 17, 23, 24 [2x], 25 [2x]).

David Whitcomb: Hezekiah began to reign when he was 25 years old (2 Chronicles 29:1). From the scant evidence we have, it appears that Hezekiah began a co-regency with his father Ahaz in 729 B.C. That would have coincided with the third year of the reign of King Hoshea in Israel. Seven years later (722 B.C.), God finally sent Assyria to destroy Israel and scatter many of the people to distant lands. The seven years after that intervention by God, (715 B.C.) Ahaz died and Hezekiah was the sole king of Judah

Andrew Hill: Hezekiah's festival may be outlined in three broad movements: - the assembling of large numbers of Israelites making the pilgrimage to Jerusalem (2Ch 30:13, 17-18), - the cleansing and consecration rituals (2Ch 30:14-16, 19), and - the "sacrifice" of joyful praise extended over a two-week period (2Ch 30:21-27). The reference to the size of the crowd gathered in Jerusalem for the festival is significant not so much for the sake of the sheer numbers as its composition of people from all over Judah and Israel (2Ch 30:13). The inclusion of worshipers from the northern tribes speaks to the theme of "reunification" under King Hezekiah (cf. 2Ch 30:18).

J.A. Thompson: With the restoration of the temple now achieved, Hezekiah undertook strenuous efforts to reunite "all Israel," both south and north, in national worship, which the Chronicle centered on the observance of the Passover. It is the dominant theme of the early part of the chapter (2Ch 30:1-13) and is prominent in the latter section of chap. 30 (note specially 2Ch 30:25; 31:1) but is present also in the central section of the chapter, which deals with the celebration itself. Hezekiah is portrayed here as a second Solomon (2Ch 30:26), and the celebration of the Passover is a watershed between the disruption of Israel after Solomon's death and a return to the spiritual conditions that existed in Solomon's day.

Now 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 celebrate the Passover to the LORD God of Israel.

Raymond Dillard: This verse is a summary statement introducing the entire narrative (Rudolph, 299). The oral proclamation was accompanied by letters (cf. Esth 1:22).

Mark Boda: The Passover is understood merely as the introduction to the subsequent Festival of Unleavened Bread, which ran for the following seven days (see Exod 12- 13; 23:14-17; 34:18-23; Lev 23; Deut 16:1-17). In Torah legislation the Passover lamb is chosen on the 10th day of the first month, sacrificed on the 14th day, and eaten in an evening meal as the 15th day of the month began. The Festival of Unleavened Bread then ran from the 15th to the 21st day of the first month.

Believer's Study Bible - (2Ch 30:1-4) Hezekiah called for the observance of the Passover at the newly renovated temple in Jerusalem (cf. 29:20-36) during the second month of the first year of his reign over Judah (cf. 2Ch 30:2; 29:1-3). The Passover was instituted when Israel was in Egypt in the month of Abib (Ex. 12:1-28; 13:1-10, especially v. 4). After the Babylonian captivity the name of the month was changed from Abib to Nisan, which was the Babylonian name for the month (Ezra 6:19; Esth. 3:7). This month began during the modern month of March. According to the Law of Moses, provisions were established to permit the observance of the Passover during the second month, Ziv (called Iyyar following the Babylonian captivity), which corresponds with April-May, in order to accommodate those who were unable to observe it at the appointed time (cf. Num. 9:6-14). This supplementary Passover time was utilized by Hezekiah in the present setting (2Ch 30:1-4).

Ryrie - Those in the Northern Kingdom (Ephraim and Manasseh) who had not been taken into captivity by the Assyrians (2 Kings 17:6) were invited to join Judah in celebrating the Passover. Verses 10-11 record their responses.

Matthew Henry Notes: Chapter: 30

In this chapter we have an account of the solemn passover which Hezekiah kept in the first year of his reign.

- I. The consultation about it, and the resolution he and his people came to for the observance of it (2Ch 30:2-5).
- II. The invitation he sent to Judah and Israel to come and keep it (2Ch 30:1, 6-12).
- III. The joyful celebration of it (2Ch 30:13-27).

By this the reformation, set on foot in the foregoing chapter, was greatly advanced and established, and that nail in God's holy place clenched.

2Ch 30:1-12 Here is,

I. A passover resolved upon.

That annual feast was instituted as a memorial of the bringing of the children of Israel out of Egypt. It happened that the reviving of the temple service fell within the appointed days of that feast, the seventeenth day of the first month: this brought that forgotten solemnity to mind. "What shall we do," says Hezekiah, "about the passover? It is a very comfortable ordinance, and has been long neglected. How shall we revive it? The time has elapsed for this year; we cannot go about it immediately; the congregation is thin, the people have not notice, the priests are not prepared, 2Ch 30:3. Must we defer it till another year?" Many, it is likely, were for deferring it; but Hezekiah considered that by that time twelve-month the good affections of the people would cool, and it would be too long to want the benefit of the ordinance; and therefore, finding a proviso in the law of Moses that particular persons who were unclean in the first month might keep the passover the fourteenth day

of the second month and be accepted (Num. 9:11), he doubted not but that it might be extended to the congregation. Whereupon they resolved to keep the passover in the second month. Let the circumstance give way to the substance, and let not the thing itself be lost upon a nicety about the time. It is good striking while the iron is hot, and taking people when they are in a good mind. Delays are dangerous.

II. A proclamation issued out to give notice of this passover and to summon the people to it.

1. An invitation was sent to the ten revolted tribes to stir them up to come and attend this solemnity.

Letters were written to Ephraim and Manasseh to invite them to Jerusalem to keep this passover (2Ch 30:1), not with any political design, to bring them back to the house of David, but with a pious design to bring them back to the Lord God of Israel. "Let them take whom they will for their king," says Hezekiah, "so they will but take him for their God." The matters in difference between Judah and Israel, either upon a civil or sacred account, shall not hinder but that if the people of Israel will sincerely return to the Lord their God Hezekiah will bid them as welcome to the passover as any of his own subjects. Expresses are sent post throughout all the tribes of Israel with memorials earnestly pressing the people to take this opportunity of returning to the God from whom they had revolted. Now here we have,

(1.) The contents of the circular letters that were despatched upon the occasion in which Hezekiah discovers a great concern both for the honour of God and for the welfare of the neighbouring kingdom, the prosperity of which he seems passionately desirous of, though he not only received no toll, tribute, or custom, from it, but it had often, and not long since, been vexatious to his kingdom. This is rendering good for evil. Observe,

{1.} What it is which he presses them to (2Ch 30:8): "Yield yourselves unto the Lord. Before you can come into communion with him you must come into covenant with him." Give the hand to the Lord (so the word is), that is, "Consent to take him for your God." A bargain is confirmed by giving the hand. "Strike this bargain. Join yourselves to him in an everlasting covenant. Subscribe with the hand to be his, Isa. 44:5. Give him your hand, in token of giving him your heart. Lay your hand to his plough. Devote yourselves to his service, to work for him. Yield to him," that is, "Come up to his terms, come under his government, stand it not out any longer against him." "Yield to him, to be absolutely and universally at his command, at his disposal, to be, and do, and have, and suffer, whatever he pleases. In order to this, be not stiff-necked as your fathers were; let not your corrupt and wicked wills rise up in resistance of and rebellion against the will of God. Say not that you will do what you please, but resolve to do what he pleases." There is in the carnal mind a stiffness, an obstinacy, an unaptness to comply with God. We have it from our fathers; it is bred in the bone with us. This must be conquered; and the will that had in it a spirit of contradiction must be melted into the will of God; and to his yoke the neck that was an iron sinew must be bowed and fitted. In pursuance of this resignation to God, he presses them to enter into his sanctuary, that is, to attend upon him in that place which he had chosen, to put his name there, and serve him in the ordinances which he had appointed. "The doors of the sanctuary are now opened, and you have liberty to enter; the temple service is now revived, and you are welcome to join in it." The king says, Come; the princes and priests say, Come; whosoever will, let him come. This he calls (2Ch 30:6) turning to the Lord God; for they had forsaken him, and worshipped other gods. Repent now, and be converted. Thus those who through grace have turned to God themselves should do all they can to bring others back to him.

{2.} What arguments he uses to persuade them to do this.

- First, "You are children of Israel, and therefore stand related, stand obliged, to the God of Israel, from whom you have revolted."
- Secondly, "The God you are called to return to is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, a God in covenant with your first fathers, who served him and yielded themselves to him; and it was their honour and happiness that they did so."
- Thirdly, "Your late fathers that forsook him and trespassed against him have been given up to desolation; their apostasy and idolatry have been their ruin, as you see (2Ch 30:7); let their harms be your warnings."
- Fourthly, "You yourselves are but a remnant narrowly escaped out of the hands of the kings of Assyria (2Ch 30:6), and therefore are concerned to put yourselves under the protection of the God of your fathers, that you be not quite swallowed up."
- Fifthly, "This is the only way of turning away the fierceness of God's anger from you (2Ch 30:8),

which will certainly consume you if you continue stiff-necked."

- Lastly, "If you return to God in a way of duty, he will return to you in a way of mercy." This he begins with (2Ch 30:6) and concludes with, 2Ch 30:9. In general, "You will find him gracious and merciful, and one that will not turn away his face from you, if you seek him, notwithstanding the provocations you have given him." Particularly, "You may hope that he will turn again the captivity of your brethren that are carried away, and bring them back to their own land." Could any thing be expressed more pathetically, more movingly? Could there be a better cause, or could it be better pleaded?

(2.) The entertainment which Hezekiah's messengers and message met with. It does not appear that Hoshea, who was now king of Israel, took any umbrage from, or gave any opposition to, the dispersing of these proclamations through his kingdom, nor that he forbade his subjects to accept the invitation. He seems to have left them entirely to their liberty. They might go to Jerusalem to worship if they pleased; for, though he did evil, yet not like the kings of Israel that were before him, 2 Ki. 17:2. He saw ruin coming upon his kingdom, and, if any of his subjects would try this expedient to prevent it, they had his full permission. But, for the people

{1.} The generality of them slighted the call and turned a deaf ear to it.

The messengers went from city to city, some to one and some to another, and used pressing entreaties with the people to come up to Jerusalem to keep the passover; but they were so far from complying with the message that they abused those that brought it, laughed them to scorn, and mocked them (2Ch 30:10), not only refused, but refused with disdain. Tell them of the God of Abraham! they knew him not, they had other gods to serve, Baal and Ashtaroth. Tell them of the sanctuary! their high places were as good. Tell them of God's mercy and wrath! they neither dreaded the one nor desired the other. No marvel that the king's messengers were thus despitefully used by this apostate race when God's messengers were so, his servants the prophets, who produced credentials from him. The destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes was now at hand. It was but two or three years after this that the king of Assyria laid siege to Samaria, which ended in the captivity of those tribes. Just before this they had not only a king of their own that permitted them to return to God's sanctuary, but a king of Judah that earnestly invited them to do it. Had they generally accepted this invitation, it might have prevented their ruin; but their contempt of it hastened and aggravated it, and left them inexcusable.

{2.} Yet there were some few that accepted the invitation.

The message, though to some it was a savour of death unto death, was to others a savour of life unto life, 2Ch 30:11. In the worst of times God has had a remnant; so he had here, many of Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun (here is no mention of any out of Ephraim, though some of that tribe are mentioned, v. 18), humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem, that is, were sorry for their sins and submitted to God. Pride keeps men from yielding themselves to the Lord; when that is brought down, the work is done.

2. A command was given to the men of Judah to attend this solemnity, and they universally obeyed it, 2Ch 30:12. They did it with one heart, were all of a mind in it, and the hand of God gave them that one heart; for it is in the day of power that Christ's subjects are made willing. It is God that works both to will and to do. When people, at any time, manifest an unexpected forwardness to do that which is good, we must acknowledge that hand of God in it.

James Smith - THE ROYAL MESSAGE 2 CHRONICLES 30:1-12

"Matter exists only spiritually, and to represent
some idea and body it forth."

—Carlyle.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine. Let us see if we cannot find some profitable doctrine from the historical facts here chronicled for our spiritual advantage. Observe the—

I. Great Provision. "The priests made an atonement for all Israel: for the king commanded that the burnt-offering and the sin-offering should be made for all Israel" (chap. 29:24). This was the great day of atonement, when reconciliation was made for the people by the blood of sacrifice. The sin-offering speaks of guilt put away, while the burnt-offering declares acceptance with God. There was no message of hope and blessing to the people until the question of sin had been settled. The Gospel of Salvation could only be preached by the apostles after Christ had suffered for us, as the sin-offering; and had risen again, as the burnt-offering. It is through

Him we have received the reconciliation (Rom. 5:11, R.V.).

II. Urgent Message. These letters, sent from the king, and carried by the posts throughout all Israel, contained—

1. A CALL TO REPENTANCE. “Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the Lord God of Abraham” (v. 6). No turning is effectual that is not unto God. The Thessalonians “turned to God from idols.” A man may rend his garments and turn to idols, but those whose hearts have been rent will turn to God (Joel 2:13). Repentance is needed, for all have gone astray. God hath commanded all men everywhere to repent and believe the Gospel.

2. A CALL TO SURRENDER. “Yield yourselves unto the Lord” (v. 8). This royal letter demanded, not only repentance toward God, but a personal consecration of the life to Him. The yielding of ourselves unto God is the evidence that we have in heart turned to Him. “Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ” (1 Cor. 6:15). We turn to God for life, then we are to yield ourselves unto Him, as those that are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God (Rom. 6:13).

3. A CALL TO SERVICE. “And serve the Lord your God” (v. 8). Acceptable service is the outcome of a consecrated life. Turn, yield, serve—is the royal order. If ye are redeemed by the precious Blood of Christ, therefore glorify God in your body and your spirit, which are God’s. If ye can say, “Whose I am,” ye ought also to add, “Whom I serve” (Acts 27:23).

4. A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT. “For if ye turn unto the Lord, your children shall find compassion ... for the Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away His face from you” (v. 9). This letter, like the Gospel of Christ, contained the only way into a life of true happiness and usefulness.

III. General Invitation. The king’s message was to be “proclaimed throughout all Israel, from Beer-sheba even to Dan” (v. 5). From the southern to the northern extremities of the land. Like the Gospel, it was to be preached to every creature (Mark 16:15). All were invited to “keep the Passover unto the Lord.” It was for the glory of God that they should keep in memory that terrible night in Egypt, when they were saved through the blood of the lamb. How much more is it to His glory that we should remember the “Blood of His Cross?” To share in this great deliverance, the Gospel of God invites us.

IV. Twofold Result.

1. SOME MOCKED. “They laughed them to scorn, and mocked them” (v. 10). The poor postmen had to bear their sneers, but it was the God of Israel, who inspired the message, that was mocked and laughed at. The posts, who passed from city to city as itinerant preachers, were not responsible for the message they carried; they were doing the king’s business, and with him they had to do. The messengers of the Cross and the King of Glory are so closely linked together that to despise the one is to despise the other. “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto Me” (Matt. 25:40). Saul was persecuting the saints when the Lord said to him, “Why persecutest thou Me?” (Acts 9:4).

2. SOME BELIEVED. “Nevertheless divers ... humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem” (v. 11). No doubt this call was a humbling one. It implied a confession of their sins and a turning away from their own wilful, wicked works. It was much easier for some to laugh at the messenger than to do this. Any fool may sneer, but it takes a wise man to repent. Although the Gospel is to be preached to every creature, that does not prove that every creature who hears the message will be saved (Acts 16:34). Only those who repent and believe—who “humble themselves and come”—can partake of the benefits of this Great Passover. Christ, our Passover, sacrificed for us. Whosoever will may come.

2 Chronicles 30:2 For the king and his princes and all the assembly in Jerusalem had decided to celebrate the Passover in the second month,

- the king (KJV): 1Ch 13:1-3 Pr 11:14 15:22 Ec 4:13
- in the second month (KJV): In Ijar, as they could not celebrate in Nisan, the 14th of which month was the proper time. But Hezekiah and his counsellors justly concluded, that the regulation of the 14th day of the second month, which had been made for individuals who were hindered from eating the passover at the appointed season, might in their present circumstances be extended to the people at large. Nu 9:10,11

For the king and his princes and all the assembly in Jerusalem had decided to celebrate the Passover in the second month,

Raymond Dillard: The law allowed for a delayed observance of Passover in the second month for those who had become unclean through contact with a corpse or for those who had been on a journey (Num 9:9–11). The actions of Hezekiah appear to depend on an interpretive extension of these provisions to cover those ritually unclean for any reason (“the priests had not sanctified

themselves,” 2Ch 30:3) and those journeying from the Northern Kingdom or who had not made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem (“the people had not assembled themselves,” 2Ch 30:3; cf. 2Ch 30:17–18); exceptional provisos for individuals have been generalized to apply to the entire nation. The celebration of Passover at the time of Hezekiah thus provides a good example of intrabiblical legal interpretation. The apostasy under Ahaz presumably had left the priesthood in disarray, perhaps almost nonfunctioning, but at least in a ceremonially unacceptable state.

Mark Boda: Before revealing the process for the proclamation of the festival (2Ch 30:5- 10a), the Chronicler describes the process that led to the reinstitution of the festival (2Ch 30:2-4). The decision was reached between Hezekiah, his officials, and “all the community of Jerusalem”. The latter evidences not only the democratizing tone of the Chronicler’s account but also his emphasis on Jerusalem’s leadership role in the worship of Judah. The reason a decision had to be made, according to the Chronicler, was because the first month – the time when the festivals were required to be celebrated – had already passed. The Chronicler explained this anomaly by appealing to the lack of qualified priests to carry on the services (2Ch 29:34) and the lack of people to form an assembly. It was decided to celebrate Passover one month later than usual, in the second month, a provision that appears dependent on the legislation in Numbers 9:1- 14. 2Ch 30:4 again emphasizes the unanimity of both king and “all the people” on this issue.

Ryrie - If circumstances required (v. 3; 29:17), the celebration of Passover could be postponed from the first month to the second (Num. 9:10-11).

2 Chronicles 30:3 since they could not celebrate it at that time, because the priests had not consecrated themselves in sufficient numbers, nor had the people been gathered to Jerusalem.

- at that time (KJV): Ex 12:6,18
- because (KJV): 2Ch 29:34

since they could not celebrate it at that time, because the priests had not consecrated themselves in sufficient numbers, nor had the people been gathered to Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles 30:4 Thus the thing was right in the sight of the king and all the assembly.

- pleased the king (KJV): Heb. was right in the eyes of the king, 1Ch 13:4

Thus the thing was right in the sight of the king and all the assembly.

2 Chronicles 30:5 So they established a decree to circulate a proclamation throughout all Israel from Beersheba even to Dan, that they should come to celebrate the Passover to the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem. For they had not celebrated it in great numbers as it was prescribed.

- established (KJV): Ezr 6:8-12 Es 3:12-15 8:8-10 9:20,21 Da 6:8
- to make proclamation (KJV): 2Ch 24:9 36:22 Lev 23:2,4 Da 4:1-33
- from Beersheba (KJV): Jud 20:1
- for they (KJV): 2Ch 35:18 De 12:32 1Co 11:2

So they established a decree to circulate a proclamation throughout all Israel from Beersheba even to Dan, that they should come to celebrate the Passover to the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem. For they had not celebrated it in great numbers as it was prescribed.

2 Chronicles 30:6 The couriers went throughout all Israel and Judah with the letters from the hand of the king and his princes, even according to the command of the king, saying, “O sons of Israel, return to the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, that He may return to those of you who escaped and are left from the hand of the kings of Assyria.

- the posts went (KJV): {Ratzim,} "runners," or couriers, of the same kind as the running footmen, who were formerly, before the establishment of posts, and still are in some places, trained, and kept on purpose to convey dispatches speedily by running.
Job 9:25 Es 8:14 Jer 51:31
- the king (KJV): Heb. the hand of the king
- turn again (KJV): Isa 55:6,7 Jer 4:1 La 5:21 Eze 33:11 Ho 14:1 Joe 2:12-14 Jas 4:8
- and he will (KJV): Isa 6:13
- escaped (KJV): 2Ch 28:20 2Ki 15:19,29 1Ch 5:26 Isa 1:9

The couriers went throughout all Israel and Judah with the letters from the hand of the king and his princes, even according to the command of the king, saying, “O sons of Israel, return to the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, that He may return to those of you who escaped and are left from the hand of the kings of Assyria

Andrew Hill: The actual text of Hezekiah’s letter is summarized in the second section of the unit (2Ch 30:6-9). Curiously, the letter is summarized in the second section of the unit (2Ch 30:6-9). Curiously, the letter itself does not mention the Passover celebration – although this is the theme of the entire pericope. The so-called “Passover letter” is sent “throughout Israel and Judah” as Hezekiah seeks to reunite the tribes in the aftermath of the Assyrian conquest and annexation of the northern kingdom. The reference to “Ephraim and Manasseh” (a word pair often used for the northern kingdom of Israel, cf. 2Ch 34:9) is inserted almost as a point of clarification or special emphasis.

James Barker: The Revival Under King Hezekiah

1. TURN FROM YOUR BACKSLIDING (2Ch 30:6)
2. TURN FROM YOUR TRESPASSES (2Ch 30:7)
3. TURN FROM YOUR STUBBORNNESS (2Ch 30:8)

Raymond Dillard: In referring to the “kings” of Assyria, the author probably intends more than the destruction in 722 B.C. at the hands of Shalmaneser V and Sargon II, but also all other Assyrian intrusions against the Northern Kingdom, at least from the time of Tiglath-pileser III (2Ch 28:16–21; 1 Chr 5:26), and perhaps even as far back as Shalmaneser III.

J.A. Thompson: The designation “you who are left, who have escaped” would have conveyed simultaneously a sense of fear often experienced by those who have just had a narrow escape and also a sense of gratitude that God had delivered them. They should have identified easily with those escapees from Egypt who first celebrated the Passover, as should the Chronicler’s own audience of postexilic Judah.

Mark Boda: The Chronicler identifies repentance in worship practice as essential to the experience of the presence of Yahweh, as well as to the safe return of ore exiles from captivity. This raise the profile of the Temple and its worship in the Chronicler’s day, placing the lives of the exiles at stake.

2 Chronicles 30:7 “Do not be like your fathers and your brothers, who were unfaithful to the LORD God of their fathers, so that He made them a horror, as you see.

- like (KJV): Eze 20:13-18 Zec 1:3,4
- as (KJV): 2Ch 29:8

Do not be like your fathers and your brothers, who were unfaithful to the LORD God of their fathers, so that He made them a horror, as you see.

Andrew Hill: In addition to calling the people to repentance, Hezekiah’s letter admonishes the Israelites to cease being “unfaithful” (2Ch 30:7) and “stiff-necked” (2Ch 30:8) like their ancestors. The time to break with the past is long overdue. Hezekiah’s letter holds out hope to those who have escaped the wrath of God meted out through Assyrian kings by offering them the possibility of reunion with those exiled in Mesopotamia to return to the worship of God in the Jerusalem sanctuary (2Ch 30:9). The appeal to the Lord, who “is gracious and compassionate” (2Ch 30:9), seems to allude once again to Solomon’s dedicatory prayer, beseeching God to induce Israel’s conquerors to show mercy on his people should they sin and be overtaken by their enemies (cf. 1 Kings 8:50).

2 Chronicles 30:8 “Now do not stiffen your neck like your fathers, but yield to the LORD and enter His sanctuary which He has consecrated forever, and serve the LORD your God, that His burning anger may turn away from you.

- be ye not stiffnecked (KJV): Heb. harden not your necks, 2Ch 36:13 Ex 32:9 De 10:16 Ro 10:21
- yield yourselves (KJV): Heb. give the hand, 1Ch 29:24 Ezr 10:19 Ps 68:31 Ro 6:13-19
- enter into (KJV): Ps 63:2 68:24 73:17
- which he hath (KJV): Ps 132:13,14
- serve (KJV): De 6:13,17 Jos 24:15 Mt 4:10 Joh 12:26 Ro 6:22 Col 3:22-24 Rev 7:15
- the fierceness (KJV): 2Ch 28:11,13 29:10 2Ki 23:26 Ps 78:49

Now do not stiffen your neck like your fathers, but yield to the LORD and enter His sanctuary which He has consecrated forever, and serve the LORD your God, that His burning anger may turn away from you

2 Chronicles 30:9 “For if you return to the LORD, your brothers and your sons will find compassion before those who led them captive and will return to this land. For the LORD your God is gracious and compassionate, and will not turn His face away from you if you return to Him.”

- if ye turn (KJV): 2Ch 7:14 Lev 26:40-42 De 30:2-4 1Ki 8:50 Ps 106:46
- so that they shall (KJV): Jer 29:12-14 31:27,28
- the Lord (KJV): Ex 34:6,7 Ne 9:17,31 Ps 86:5,15 111:4 145:7,8 Jon 4:2 Mic 7:18
- will not (KJV): 2Ch 15:2 Pr 28:13 Isa 55:7 Eze 18:30-32
- turn away (KJV): Jer 18:17

For if you return to the LORD, your brothers and your sons will find compassion before those who led them captive and will return to this land. For the LORD your God is gracious and compassionate, and will not turn His face away from you if you return to Him

David Whitcomb: This is the heart of a person who truly loves God, trusts God, and desires to worship God. He knows that the so-called people of God had abandoned God in favor of the little, make-believe gods of their world. His heart aches for professing flowers of Jesus to worship Him as His perfect character requires. He challenges people to come clean of their sin, restore fellowship with God, and worship Him.

John Piper ([Taste and See](#)) - BEWARE OF COMMON SENSE!

“Command What You Wish, and Give What You Command”

Second Chronicles 30 tells how King Hezekiah recovered the Passover for Israel. It had fallen into neglect, and he was broken by this disobedience. So he sent couriers throughout the land calling the people to repentance and obedience.

The message of the king brimmed with conditional statements. For example: “If you return to the LORD, ... [then] he will not turn His face from you” (2Ch 30:9, NKJV, emphasis added). These conditional statements show that God really responds to our choices. That is, if we make a certain choice, God does one thing, and if we make a different choice, God does something different. So Hezekiah calls the people to return to the Lord so that he will return to them.

This responsiveness of God to the choices we make causes some people to jump to a very unwarranted “common sense” conclusion. They say: “Well, if God responds to our choices, then what we choose and what God does in response must depend ultimately on us.” This is what I call “philosophical” interpretation rather than “exegetical” interpretation. In other words, this way of understanding conditional statements in the Bible comes from commonsense human reasoning rather than careful attention to the uncommon ways of God revealed in the text.

Let me illustrate from 2 Chronicles 30 (emphasis added). Here are the exhortations Hezekiah sends to the people. They are laden with conditions.

- 2Ch 30:6: “O sons of Israel, return to the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, that He may return to those of you who escaped and are left from the hand of the kings of Assyria.” In other words, if you return to the Lord, he will return to you.
- 2Ch 30:7: “Do not be like your fathers and your brothers, who were unfaithful to the LORD God of their fathers, so that He made them a horror, as you see.” God’s action to “make them a horror” was the result of the fathers being unfaithful to the Lord.
- 2Ch 30:8: “Now do not stiffen your neck like your fathers, but yield to the LORD and enter His sanctuary which He has

consecrated forever, and serve the LORD your God, that His burning anger may turn away from you.” God’s burning anger will turn away from you, if you serve the Lord your God.

- 2Ch 30:9: “For if you return to the LORD, [then] your brothers and your sons will find compassion before those who led them captive and will return to this land. For the LORD your God is gracious and compassionate, and will not turn His face away from you if you return to Him.” Returning to the Lord is a condition that the people must meet if they are going to receive the compassion of the Lord in not turning his face away from them.

What was the response to Hezekiah’s couriers who carried these messages of conditional hope? Verse 10 says that some people “laughed them to scorn.” But others from “Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem” (verse 11). The same humble choice was made in Judah (2Ch 30:12). What made the difference in how these people responded? 2Ch 30:12 gives the uncommonsense answer: “The hand of God was also on Judah to give them one heart to do what the king and the princes commanded by the word of the LORD.”

Don’t read this too quickly. Think about the stunning implications. They are enormous. What 2Ch 30:12 teaches, in the light of the preceding context, is that God commanded, “Return to me and I will return to you.” Some people did return. Why did they? 2Ch 30:12 gives the deepest reason: God gave them a heart to do what he had commanded. “The hand of God was also on Judah to give them one heart to do what the king and the princes commanded.”

Is this a contradiction? To say: “If you do what the king commanded, God will turn his anger away from you,” and then to say, “God gave them a heart to do what the king commanded”? Is it a contradiction to state a condition that people must meet, and then say that God enables them to meet the condition? No, it is not a contradiction. Only a philosophical prejudice against what this text teaches would call it so.

This sheds light on dozens of biblical texts. Indeed on the whole structure of biblical thought. When we read sentences like, “If you return to God, he will return to you,” we dare not jump to the conclusion that what we choose, and what God does in response, depends ultimately on us. Verse 12 teaches explicitly: What God commands, God may also give. It is the closest biblical parallel to St. Augustine’s famous prayer,

“Command what you wish, but give what you command”
(Confessions, X, xxix, 40).

The lesson for us is a warning and an exhortation. Beware of interpreting with commonsense inferences, rather than giving heed to the text. Rather, be glad for the grace of God beneath your response to the grace of God. If grace did not awaken us to grace, we would sleep through the revolution. “For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory for ever” (Romans 11:36, RSV).

2 Chronicles 30:10 So the couriers passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, and as far as Zebulun, but they laughed them to scorn and mocked them.

- the posts (KJV): 2Ch 30:6 Es 3:13,15 8:10,14 Job 9:25
- they laughed (KJV): 2Ch 36:16 Ge 19:14 Ne 2:19 Job 12:4 Lu 8:53 16:14 22:63,64 23:35 Ac 17:32 Heb 11:36

So the couriers passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, and as far as Zebulun, but they laughed them to scorn and mocked them

Andrew Hill: Predictably, Hezekiah’s invitation to renew festival worship in the reopened Jerusalem temple receives a mixed response (2Ch 30:10-12). The scornful reception given to his couriers may have been life-threatening, perhaps explaining why the heralds do not traverse the entire northern kingdom with their message (cf. 2Ch 30:5). The majority of Israelites in the regions of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Zebulun spurn the invitation, while others from Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humble themselves before the Lord and make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem (2Ch 30:10-11). The overwhelming response of those in the kingdom of Judah to obey the king is a remarkable demonstration of solidarity and is attributed to the “hand of God” on the people (2Ch 30:12).

James Butler - SERVING THE KING 2 Chronicles 30:10 ([Sermon Starters](#))

“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” (2 Chronicles 30:10).

King Hezekiah ordered the observance of the Passover which had not been observed for many years. He sent messengers (“posts”)

throughout the land of Israel with a message that called people to repent and return to the Lord and to come to Jerusalem to observe the Passover. Our text speaks of the messengers of Hezekiah who took his message throughout the land. It gives a good lesson on serving the Lord.

FIRST—THE WAY OF THE POSTS

“The posts passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh even unto Zebulun.” Hezekiah sent his messengers into the apostate lands of the defunct northern kingdom. The area had a history of cruelty and rejection for God’s servants as the area was given up to idolatry and rejection of God. Therefore the posts would need extra courage to serve the Lord in this area. Serving the Lord is not peaches and cream. It often involves going to places where personal peril is very great. Those who would serve God will need courage, for their ministry is to a sinful world that is often very hostile to God and His servants.

SECOND—THE WORK OF THE POSTS

“The posts passed from city to city.” This was not done by automobile but by foot. The posts had to walk. Hezekiah, though a great king, did not have the convenience of modern technology which could have made the work of the posts much easier. The posts had to travel by foot, not by automobile, plane or train, and they had to endure the hardships that came with travel by foot. There would be a lot of perspiration and privation in this service. The same is true of God’s service. It is not a place where you can enjoy luxury and ease. You will often be without and know much poverty. If you want to be a millionaire, do not apply for God’s service. If you want an easy job, do not look at God’s service as the place to apply for work.

THIRD—THE WICKEDNESS TO THE POSTS

“They laughed them to scorn, and mocked them.” This is the hardest part of service. Hezekiah’s messengers, though employed by a powerful king, were still mocked and scorned in bitter reproach. It is hard to take reproach from people. We want praise and compliments and acceptance. But often God’s servants will experience just the opposite. However, be faithful anyway. You have to answer to the Monarch, not to these mockers. The mocking did not discredit the messengers or the message but only the mockers. The post did find others who responded well to their message (2 Chronicles 30:11). Do not quit in the Lord’s work just because someone laughs at you for the message or ministry. You have been employed by the King of kings and He will take adequate care of all His messengers.

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

- divers of Asher (KJV): It has been said, that Hezekiah had no right to invite Hoshea's subjects to repair to Jerusalem to his passover; but it may be presumed, that he was encouraged to do this by Hoshea himself, who was one of their best kings; besides which, both the golden calves having been taken away by the Assyrians, the apostate Israelites, being thus deprived of idols, had begun to return to the Lord, and to go up to Jerusalem to worship, some time before Hezekiah gave them this invitation. 2Ch 30:18,21 11:16 Ac 17:34
- humbled themselves (KJV): 2Ch 12:6,7,12 33:12,19,23 34:27 Ex 10:3 Lev 26:41 Da 5:22 Lu 14:11 Lu 18:14 Jas 4:10 1Pe 5:6

Nevertheless some men of Asher, Manasseh and Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem

Morris - Here is further evidence that a remnant out of the northern kingdom still followed the true worship of God. In addition to Asher, Manasseh and Zebulun, the tribes of Ephraim and Issachar are mentioned in verse 18. Simeon is mentioned also in 2 Chronicles 15:9. In fact, Hezekiah made a special point of inviting all the tribes of Israel to keep the Passover in Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 30:5), and it is at least possible that some came from every tribe (2 Chronicles 30:25-27).

David Guzik: We note there was no rational argument against the invitation; it was all opposed with simple laughter and mocking. For the frivolous and simple-minded, these replace serious thought.

2 Chronicles 30:12 The hand of God was also on Judah to give them one heart to do what the king and the princes commanded by the word of the LORD.

- the hand of God (KJV): 2Ch 29:36 1Ch 29:18,19 Ezr 7:27 Ps 110:3 Jer 24:7 32:39 Eze 36:26 Php 2:13 2Th 2:13,14
- the commandment (KJV): De 4:2,5,6 1Th 4:2
- by the word (KJV): 2Ch 29:25 Ac 4:19

The hand of God was also on Judah to give them one heart to do what the king and the princes commanded by the word of the LORD.

2 Chronicles 30:13 Now many people were gathered at Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month, a very large assembly.

- there assembled (KJV): Ps 84:7
- the second month (KJV): 2Ch 30:2

Now many people were gathered at Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month, a very large assembly.

August Konkell: Among the challenges facing Hezekiah in observing the Passover was the problem of the impurity of the city. The first task of the assembled multitude was to remove all the foreign cult objects, which were properly disposed of in the Kidron Valley, where they could be burned (2Ch 30:14). A second problem was the failure of the priestly leaders to be properly prepared for the great number of people who had come (2Ch 30:15). The problem may have been the consecration of those officials who had come from outside the city and had not been a part of the earlier purification (2Ch 29:15, 34). Once again the response of the people had outstripped that of the professional clerics, to the great shame of the latter. The priests and Levites had to offer the appropriate burnt offerings before they could take their place in the ceremony. The biggest problem was the impurity of the large number of pilgrims who had traveled great distances from foreign lands and did not have an opportunity to receive the proper purification ceremonies (2Ch 30:13, 17). This rendered them unfit to perform the sacrifice that they had come to observe. The normal practice was that each person would slaughter his own sacrifice; manipulation of the blood was handled by the priests (2Ch 30:15-16). The ritually unclean state of the pilgrims rendered them unfit to participate in the ceremony for which they had come, a point made very clear in the Passover provisions. This was a perpetual problem in observing the festivals in the Second Temple period.

Raymond Dillard: The nation is to “celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread” (2Ch 30:12, 13); earlier they were to “celebrate the Passover” (2Ch 30:1, 2, 5). As elsewhere in both the OT and NT, the two festivals were so closely associated that the entire celebration could be denominated by either designation.

Matthew Henry Notes: Verses: 13-20

The time appointed for the passover having arrived, a very great congregation came together upon the occasion, v. 13. Now here we have,

I. The preparation they made for the passover, and good preparation it was

They took away all the idolatrous altars that were found, not only in the temple, but in Jerusalem, v. 14. Before they kept the feast, they cast out this old leaven. The best preparation we can make for the gospel passover is to cast away our iniquities, our spiritual idolatries.

II. The celebration of the passover.

In this the people were so forward and zealous that the priests and Levites blushed to see themselves outdone by the commonalty, to see them more ready to bring sacrifices than they were to offer them. This put them upon sanctifying themselves (2Ch 30:15), that the work might not stand still for want of hands to carry it on. The notice we take of the zeal of others should make us ashamed of our own coldness, and quicken us not only to do our duty, but to do it well, and to sanctify ourselves to it. They did according to the duty of their place (2Ch 30:16), sprinkling the blood upon the altar, which was a type of Christ our passover sacrificed for us.

III. The irregularities they were guilty of in this solemnity. The substance was well managed, and with a great deal of devotion; but, besides that it was a month out of time,

1. The Levites killed the passover, which should have been done by the priests only, 2Ch 30:17. They also assisted more than the law ordinarily allowed in offering the other sacrifices, particularly those that were for the purifying of the unclean, many of which there was now occasion for. Some think that it was the offerers' work, not the priests', that the Levites had here the charge of. Ordinarily every man killed his lamb, but now for those that were under any ceremonial pollution the Levites killed it.

2. Many were permitted to eat the passover who were not purified according to the strictness of the

law, 2Ch 30:18. This was the second month, and there was not warrant to put them off further to the third month, as, if it had been the first month, the law would have permitted them to eat it the second. And they were loth to forbid them communicating at all, lest they should discourage new converts, and send those away complaining whom they desired to send away rejoicing. Grotius observes from this that ritual institutions must give way, not only to a public necessity, but to a public benefit and advantage.

IV. Hezekiah's prayer to God for the forgiveness of this irregularity. It was his zeal that had called them together in such haste, and he would not that any should fare the worse for being straitened of time in their preparation. He therefore thought himself concerned to be an intercessor for those that ate the passover otherwise than it was written, that there might not be wrath upon them from the Lord. His prayer was,

1. A short prayer, but to the purpose: The good Lord pardon everyone in the congregation that has fixed, engaged, or prepared, his heart to those services, though the ceremonial preparation be wanting. Note,

(1.) The great thing required in our attendance upon God in solemn ordinances is that we prepare our hearts to seek him, that we be sincere and upright in all we do, that the inward man be engaged and employed in it, and that we make heart-work of it; it is all nothing without this. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward part. Hezekiah does not pray that this might be dispensed with, nor that the want of other things might be pardoned where there was not this. For this is the one thing needful, that we seek God, his favour, his honour, and that we set our hearts to do it.

(2.) Where this sincerity and fixedness of heart are there may still be many defects and infirmities, both the frame of the spirit and the performance of the service may be short of the purification of the sanctuary. Corruptions may not be so fully conquered, thoughts not so closely fixed, affections not so lively, faith not so operative, as they should be. Here is a defect in sanctuary purification. There is nothing perfect under the sun, nor a just man that doeth good, and sinneth not.

(3.) These defects need pardoning healing grace; for omissions in duty are sins as well as omissions of duty. If God should deal with us in strict justice according to the best of our performances, we should be undone.

(4.) The way to obtain pardon for our deficiencies in duty, and all the iniquities of our holy things is to seek it of God by prayer; it is not so a pardon of course but that it must be obtained by petition through the blood of Christ.

(5.) In this prayer we must take encouragement from the goodness of God: The good Lord pardon; for, when he proclaimed his goodness, he insisted most upon this branch of it, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin.

(6.) It is the duty of those that have the charge of others, not only to look to themselves, but to those also that are under their charge, to see wherein they are wanting, and to pray for them, as Hezekiah here. See Job 1:5.

2. A successful prayer: The Lord hearkened to Hezekiah, was well pleased with his pious concern for the congregation, and, in answer to his prayer, healed the people (2Ch 30:20), not only did not lay their sin to their charge, but graciously accepted their services notwithstanding; for healing denotes not only forgiveness (Isa. 6:10; Ps. 103:3), but comfort and peace, Isa. 57:18; Mal. 4:2.

2 Chronicles 30:14 They arose and removed the altars which were in Jerusalem; they also removed all the incense altars and cast them into the brook Kidron.

- altars (KJV): 2Ch 28:24 34:4,7 2Ki 18:22 23:12,13 Isa 2:18-20
- the brook (KJV): 2Ch 15:16 29:16 2Sa 15:23 Joh 18:1, Cedron

They arose and removed the altars which were in Jerusalem; they also removed all the incense altars and cast them into the brook Kidron

Iain Duguid: Removal of all signs of pagan worship in Jerusalem was required; “turning” to the Lord involved “turning” from all that was “faithless” (2Ch 30:6–8). The priests and Levites had cleansed the temple and its precincts of all signs of Ahaz’s “faithless” activity (2Ch 29:16, 18–19), and now the “many people” did the same for the city (cf. 2Ch 28:24)

Frederick Mabie: In parallel with the earlier actions taken by the assembly of priests and Levites (cf. 2Ch 29:15-17), the assembly of Judeans and Israelites takes tangible steps in their return to God by removing and destroying items of idolatry and syncretism throughout Jerusalem, most of which had been built by Ahaz (cf. 2Ch 28:24-25). The destruction of such elements during Hezekiah's reign is similar to purges directed by Asa (cf. 2Ch 14:3; 15:16), Joash (cf. 2Ch 23:17), and Josiah (cf. 2Ch 34:3-7) in Judah as well as Jehu in the northern kingdom (cf. 2Ki 10:18-28).

2 Chronicles 30:15 Then they slaughtered the Passover lambs on the fourteenth of the second month. And the priests and Levites were ashamed of themselves, and consecrated themselves and brought burnt offerings to the house of the LORD.

- were ashamed (KJV): 2Ch 29:34 Eze 16:61-63 43:10,11
- and sanctified (KJV): 2Ch 30:24 5:11 29:15,34 31:18 Ex 19:10,22

Then they slaughtered the Passover lambs on the fourteenth of the second month. And the priests and Levites were ashamed of themselves, and consecrated themselves and brought burnt offerings to the house of the LORD.

Andrew Hill: The rituals associated with the Passover are the focus of the Chronicler's report in 2Ch 30:15-20. The Passover animals are killed by the worshipers in keeping with the prescriptions for the feast in Exodus, except for those who are ritually impure and hence unfit to perform the task (2Ch 30:15, 17; cf. Ex. 12:21). The zeal coupled with the appropriate actions of the people in observing the Passover shame the priests and Levites. The religious leaders in charge of instructing the people in the law of Moses and in mediating the sacrificial worship of Israel are outdone by a righteous laity (who presumably have not been taught the Torah for some time by a negligent and corrupt priesthood under King Ahaz). Shortly thereafter the priests and the Levites are consecrated, so they too are careful to follow the prescriptions of the Mosaic law in discharging their duties as mediators of the Passover (2 Chron. 30:16).

2 Chronicles 30:16 They stood at their stations after their custom, according to the law of Moses the man of God; the priests sprinkled the blood which they received from the hand of the Levites.

- they stood (KJV): 2Ch 35:10,15
- place (KJV): Heb. standing
- after their manner (KJV): 2Ki 11:14
- Moses (KJV): De 33:1
- the priests (KJV): 2Ch 35:10,11 Lev 1:5 Heb 11:28

They stood at their stations after their custom, according to the law of Moses the man of God; the priests sprinkled the blood which they received from the hand of the Levites.

2 Chronicles 30:17 For there were many in the assembly who had not consecrated themselves; therefore, the Levites were over the slaughter of the Passover lambs for everyone who was unclean, in order to consecrate them to the LORD.

- the Levites (KJV): 2Ch 29:34 35:3-6
- the killing (KJV): Ex 12:6

For there were many in the assembly who had not consecrated themselves; therefore, the Levites were over the slaughter of the Passover lambs for everyone who was unclean, in order to consecrate them to the LORD.

2 Chronicles 30:18 For a multitude of the people, even many from Ephraim and Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun, had not purified themselves, yet they ate the Passover otherwise than prescribed. For Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, "May the good LORD pardon

- many of Ephraim (KJV): 2Ch 30:11
- had not cleansed (KJV): Nu 9:10-14 19:20 1Co 11:28

- the passover (KJV): Ex 12:43-51
- prayed (KJV): Ge 20:7,17 Job 42:8,9 Jas 5:15,16 1Jn 5:16
- The good (KJV): 2Ch 6:21 Ex 34:6-9 Nu 14:18-20 Ps 25:8 36:5 86:5 119:68 Da 9:19

For a multitude of the people, even many from Ephraim and Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun, had not purified themselves, yet they ate the Passover otherwise than prescribed. For Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, “May the good LORD pardon

Andrew Hill: The Chronicler makes an important theological observation that intent of heart and acts of repentance, when combined with intercessory prayer, override the letter of the law when it comes to the worship of God (2Ch 30::18-19; cf. Isa. 1:15-19; Mic. 6:8).

John Olley: The phrase “good Lord” occurs only here in the OT but probably alludes to the refrain found often in Psalms and cited when David established worship before the ark, when Solomon dedicated the temple, and again at the dedication of the second temple: “Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever” (1 Chron. 16:34; 2 Chron. 5:13; 7:3; Ezra 3:11; Pss. 106:1; 107:1; etc.).

J.A. Thompson: Most of the people from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Issachar were not ritually purified, due either to ignorance or lack of time. Although God’s law was binding, there also was some flexibility in extraordinary circumstances. Hezekiah offered a special prayer on their behalf, asking that God would pardon all those whose hearts were ready to seek God even if they were ritually unclean according to the ceremonial purification laws of the sanctuary. Prayer was effective in overriding purely ritual considerations according to the Chronicler. For all his concern with the cult and its personnel, the Chronicler was not content with a religion of mere external correctness but delighted in the one who “sets his heart on seeking God.” In hearing Hezekiah and healing the people, God was answering Solomon’s prayer as he promised in 2Ch 7:14.

L.M. Grant: The ordinance of the Passover required that those who were defiled by a dead body could not eat of the Passover until they were sanctified from this (Numbers 9:9). Because of some being defiled at the time of the Passover in Numbers, God had made an allowance for them to keep the Passover in the second month (Numbers 9:10-11). However, since it was the second month that Hezekiah arranged the Passover, and there were large numbers from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun who had not been purified, yet they were allowed to eat the Passover, though it was contrary to the Word of God. This was a marked exception, and Hezekiah prayed for them, that the Lord would provide atonement for this infraction of the law. The Lord accepted this prayer and healed all the people (2Ch 30:19-20). In explanation of this, would it not have been cruel to refuse their participation in the Passover after having invited them to come from so far for this purpose, and after these people had shown such faith as to come to God’s centre in order to honour the Lord? This was the exception of pure grace.

C H Spurgeon - [To those who feel unfit for the communion](#)

‘A multitude ... 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 that prepareth his heart to seek God ... though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary. And the LORD hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people.’ 2 Chronicles 30:18–20

If Hezekiah and his people won the blessing and ‘praised the LORD day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the LORD’, we may look for the same joy and holy exultation. They ‘kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness’. If there is any place where we are bound to be glad, it is at the Lord’s Supper. This is no funeral feast, no memorial of one who lies rotting in the grave. Here we remember that Jesus died, but also hear those prophetic words, ‘till he come.’ He lives and shall come with all the glory and majesty of heaven to claim the kingdoms as his own and to judge the nations in equity. Therefore have we joy as we come to the table. It is a memorial of a death by which the life of myriads was purchased, the memorial of a great struggle which ended in the most glorious of victories. ‘It is finished’ is the banner which waves over us. Such a victory is a joy for ever; let it be gladly commemorated. Here we celebrate the feast of pardoning love delighting itself in being enabled justly to spare the guilty. Here is the feast of redeemed bondsmen, the jubilee of emancipation from everlasting slavery. We come as those that are alive from the dead to feast with him who was slain, but has risen again and become our life and joy. Bring ‘an instrument of ten strings’ and the psalter; let every string be awakened to ecstasy on behalf of Jesus, to set forth in worthy notes his passion and triumph.

2 Chronicles 30:19 everyone who prepares his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though not according to the purification rules of the sanctuary.”

- prepareth (KJV): 2Ch 19:3 20:33 1Sa 7:3 1Ch 29:18 Ezr 7:10 Job 11:13 Ps 10:17 Pr 23:26

- though he be not (KJV): Lev 12:4 15:31-33 21:17-23 22:3-6 Nu 9:6 19:13-20

everyone who prepares his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though not according to the purification rules of the sanctuary

2 Chronicles 30:20 So the LORD heard Hezekiah and healed the people.

- healed (KJV): Ex 15:26 Ps 103:3 Jas 5:15,16

So the LORD heard Hezekiah and healed the people.

2 Chronicles 30:21 The sons of Israel present in Jerusalem celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days with great joy, and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day after day with loud instruments to the LORD.

- present (KJV): Heb. found
- the feast (KJV): Ex 12:15 13:6 Lev 23:6 Lu 22:1,7 1Co 5:7,8
- great gladness (KJV): 2Ch 30:26 7:10 De 12:7,12 16:14 Ne 8:10 Ac 2:46 Php 4:4
- the priests (KJV): 2Ch 20:21 29:25-27
- loud instruments (KJV): Heb. instruments of strength, Ps 150:3-5

The sons of Israel present in Jerusalem celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days with great joy, and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day after day with loud instruments to the LORD.

Matthew Henry Notes: 2Ch 30:21-27

After the passover followed the feast of unleavened bread, which continued seven days. How that was observed we are here told, and every thing in this account looks pleasant and lively.

1. Abundance of sacrifices were offered to God in peace-offerings, by which they both acknowledged and implored the favour of God, and on part of which the offerers feasted with their friends during these seven days (2Ch 30:22), in token of their communion with God and the comfort they took in his favour and their reconciliation to him.

To keep up this part of the service, that God's altar might be abundantly regaled with the fat and blood and his priests and people with the flesh of the peace-offerings, Hezekiah gave out of his own stock 1000 bullocks and 7000 sheep, and the princes, excited by his pious example, gave the same number of bullocks and a greater number of sheep, and all for peace-offerings, 2Ch 30:24. By this God was honoured, the joy of the festival was kept up, and the strangers were encouraged to come again to Jerusalem. It was generously done of the king and the princes thus plentifully to entertain the whole congregation; but what is a great estate good for but that it puts men into a capacity of doing so much the more good? Christ feasted those that followed him. I believe neither Hezekiah nor his princes were the poorer at the year's end for this their pious liberality.

2. Many good prayers were put up to God with the peace-offerings, 2Ch 30:22.

They made confession to the Lord God of their fathers, in which the intent and meaning of the peace-offerings were directed and explained. When the priests sprinkled the blood and burnt the fat they made confession, so did the people when they feasted on their part. They made a religious confession of their relation to God and dependence upon him, a penitent confession of their sins and infirmities, a thankful confession of God's mercies to them, and a supplicatory confession of their wants and desires; and, in all these, they had an eye to God as the God of their fathers, a God in covenant with them.

3. There was a great deal of good preaching.

The Levites (whose office it was, Deu. 33:10) taught the people the good knowledge of the Lord, read and opened the scriptures, and instructed the congregation concerning God and their duty to him; and great need there was of this, after so long a famine of the word as there had been in the last reign. Hezekiah did not himself preach, but he spoke comfortably to the Levites that did, attended their preaching, commended their diligence, and assured them of his protection and countenance. Hereby he encouraged them to study hard

and take pains, and put a reputation upon them, that the people might respect and regard them the more. Princes and magistrates, by owning and encouraging faithful and laborious preachers, greatly serve the interest of God's kingdom among men.

4. They sang psalms every day (2Ch 30:21):

The Levites and priests praised the Lord day by day, both with songs and musical instruments, thus expressing their own and exciting one another's joy in God and thankfulness to him. Praising God should be much of our work in our religious assemblies.

5. Having kept the seven days of the feast in this religious manner, they had so much comfort in the service that they kept other seven days, 2Ch 30:23.

They did not institute any new modes of worship, but repeated and continued the old. The case was extraordinary: they had been long without the ordinance; guilt had been contracted by the neglect of it; they had now got a very great congregation together, and were in a devout serious frame; they knew not when they might have such another opportunity, and therefore could not now find in their hearts to separate till they had doubled the time. Many of them were a great way from home, and had business in the country to look after, for, this being the second month, they were in the midst of their harvest; yet they were in no haste to return: the zeal of God's house made them forget their secular affairs. How unlike those who snuffed at God's service, and said, What a weariness is it! Or those who asked, When will the sabbath be gone? The servants of God should abound in his work.

6. All this they did with gladness (2Ch 30:23); they all rejoiced, and particularly the strangers, 2Ch 30:25.

So there was great joy in Jerusalem, v. 26. Never was the like since the dedication of the temple in Solomon's time. Note, Holy duties should be performed with holy gladness; we should be forward to them, and take pleasure in them, relish the sweetness of communion with God, and look upon it as matter of unspeakable joy and comfort that we are thus favoured and have such earnestness of everlasting joy.

7. The congregation was at length dismissed with a solemn blessing, 2Ch 30:27.

(1.) **The priests pronounced it; for it was part of their office to bless the people**(Num. 6:22, 23), in which they were both the people's mouth to God by way of prayer and God's mouth to the people by way of promise; for their blessing included both. In it they testified both their desire of the people's welfare and their dependence upon God and that word of his grace to which they commended them. What a comfort is it to a congregation to be sent home thus crowned!

(2.) **God said Amen to it.** The voice of the priests, when they blessed the people, was heard in heaven and came up to the habitation of God's holiness. When they pronounced the blessing God commanded it, and perhaps gave some sensible token of the ratification of it. The prayer that comes up to heaven in a cloud of incense will come down again to this earth in showers of blessings.

2 Chronicles 30:22 Then Hezekiah spoke encouragingly to all the Levites who showed good insight in the things of the LORD. So they ate for the appointed seven days, sacrificing peace offerings and giving thanks to the LORD God of their fathers.

- comfortably unto all (KJV): Heb. to the heart of all, 2Ch 32:6 Isa 40:1,2 Ho 2:14
- taught (KJV): 2Ch 15:3 17:9 35:3 De 33:10 Ezr 7:10,25 Ne 8:7,8,18 9:3 2Ti 4:2
- the good (KJV): Pr 2:6,7 8:6 Joh 17:3 2Co 4:6 Php 3:8
- and making (KJV): De 26:3-11 Ezr 10:11 Ne 9:3

Then Hezekiah spoke encouragingly to all the Levites who showed good insight in the things of the LORD. So they ate for the appointed seven days, sacrificing peace offerings and giving thanks to the LORD God of their fathers.

2 Chronicles 30:23 Then the whole assembly decided to celebrate the feast another seven days, so they celebrated the seven days with joy.

- took counsel (KJV): 2Ch 30:2
- to keep (KJV): They did not observe other seven days of unleavened bread, but offered sacrifices with praise and thanksgiving, and feasting, other seven days; and, as the people in general, and especially those who came out of the kingdom of Israel, would be unprepared for this additional expense, both Hezekiah and his princes liberally supplied them with cattle for sacrifices. 2Ch 7:9 1Ki 8:65

Then the whole assembly decided to celebrate the feast another seven days, so they celebrated the seven days with joy.

Ryrie - The Feast of Unleavened Bread was observed an extra seven days, marking the rededication of the Temple. See notes on 1 Kings 8:65 and 2 Chron. 7:9.

2 Chronicles 30:24 For Hezekiah king of Judah had contributed to the assembly 1,000 bulls and 7,000 sheep, and the princes had contributed to the assembly 1,000 bulls and 10,000 sheep; and a large number of priests consecrated themselves.

- did give (KJV): Heb. lifted up, or offered, 2Ch 35:7,8 1Ch 29:3-9 Eze 45:17 Eph 4:8
- a great (KJV): 2Ch 29:34

For Hezekiah king of Judah had contributed to the assembly 1,000 bulls and 7,000 sheep, and the princes had contributed to the assembly 1,000 bulls and 10,000 sheep; and a large number of priests consecrated themselves.

2 Chronicles 30:25 All the assembly of Judah rejoiced, with the priests and the Levites and all the assembly that came from Israel, both the sojourners who came from the land of Israel and those living in Judah.

- the strangers (KJV): 2Ch 30:11,18 Ex 12:43-49
- rejoiced (KJV): 1Ch 16:10,11 Ps 92:4 104:34

All the assembly of Judah rejoiced, with the priests and the Levites and all the assembly that came from Israel, both the sojourners who came from the land of Israel and those living in Judah.

2 Chronicles 30:26 So there was great joy in Jerusalem, because there was nothing like this in Jerusalem since the days of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel.

- since the time (KJV): 2Ch 7:9,10

So there was great joy in Jerusalem, because there was nothing like this in Jerusalem since the days of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel.

Mark Boda: The comparison in 2Ch 30:26 to Solomon's reign makes explicit what has been implicit throughout 2Ch 29-30 – that is, that Hezekiah is the second Solomon, uniting the tribes both north and south around the Temple in Jerusalem. Dillard (1987:242-243) argues that in this chapter not only is Hezekiah linked to Solomon by being the first king to reunite the nation at the Temple since his forefather (ch 7), by holding an extended two-week celebration (2Ch 7), and by praying before the assembly (ch 6), but also throughout chapter 30 the vocabulary of God's speech to Solomon in 2Ch 7:14 is used, a speech that identified for the Chronicler the normative vocabulary of response by Israel and Yahweh: "Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves. . ." The Chronicler presented Hezekiah and his g

2 Chronicles 30:27 Then the Levitical priests arose and blessed the people; and their voice was heard and their prayer came to His holy dwelling place, to heaven.

- the priests (KJV): Nu 6:23-26 De 10:8
- their prayer (KJV): 1Ki 8:30,39 Ac 10:4

- his holy dwelling place (KJV): Heb. the habitation of his holiness, De 26:15 Ps 68:5 Isa 57:15 63:15 66:1

Then the Levitical priests arose and blessed the people; and their voice was heard and their prayer came to His holy dwelling place, to heaven.

C H Spurgeon - Morning and Evening -

Their prayer came up to his holy dwelling place, even unto heaven.” —2 Chronicles 30:27

Prayer is the never-failing resort of the Christian in any case, in every plight. When you cannot use your sword you may take to the weapon of all-prayer. Your powder may be damp, your bow-string may be relaxed, but the weapon of all-prayer need never be out of order. Leviathan laughs at the javelin, but he trembles at prayer. Sword and spear need furbishing, but prayer never rusts, and when we think it most blunt it cuts the best. Prayer is an open door which none can shut. Devils may surround you on all sides, but the way upward is always open, and as long as that road is unobstructed, you will not fall into the enemy's hand. We can never be taken by blockade, escalade, mine, or storm, so long as heavenly succours can come down to us by Jacob's ladder to relieve us in the time of our necessities. Prayer is never out of season: in summer and in winter its merchandise is precious. Prayer gains audience with heaven in the dead of night, in the midst of business, in the heat of noonday, in the shades of evening. In every condition, whether of poverty, or sickness, or obscurity, or slander, or doubt, your covenant God will welcome your prayer and answer it from his holy place. Nor is prayer ever futile. True prayer is evermore true power. You may not always get what you ask, but you shall always have your real wants supplied. When God does not answer his children according to the letter, he does so according to the spirit. If thou askest for coarse meal, wilt thou be angered because he gives thee the finest flour? If thou seekest bodily health, shouldst thou complain if instead thereof he makes thy sickness turn to the healing of spiritual maladies? Is it not better to have the cross sanctified than removed? This evening, my soul, forget not to offer thy petition and request, for the Lord is ready to grant thee thy desires.

The Miracle Goes On

Their voice was heard; and their prayer came up to His holy dwelling place, to heaven. —2 Chronicles 30:27

Did you ever think of a prayer meeting as a miracle? That thought came to my mind one evening at church after we divided into small prayer groups. As someone in each group prayed, I heard several people talking to God at the same time. It sounded like a jumble of words. But that's the miracle. God was hearing each prayer—along with millions of others being lifted to Him around the world in many different languages.

For those of us who reach frustration levels when two children are talking to us at the same time, it is indeed a miracle that God can hear so many of His children simultaneously.

Consider the story of Hezekiah's Passover celebration. He called for the Israelites to join him in Jerusalem for praise and prayer (2 Chronicles 30:1). Multitudes came for what turned into a 2-week-long worship service. Huge numbers of people rejoiced and praised God at the same time (v.25). As the religious leaders prayed, "their voice was heard; and their prayer came up . . . to heaven" (v.27).

The miracle goes on. Today, throughout the world, millions of people are praying to God. Let's rejoice in knowing that He hears each prayer. — by Dave Branon (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

God hears us when we call to Him,
He does not miss one voice;
The knowledge that He always hears
Should cause us to rejoice.
—Sper

You'll never get a busy signal on the prayer line to heaven.

PAUL APPLE - DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why is it sometimes necessary to be flexible in light of exceptional circumstances?
- 2) What steps did Hezekiah take to pursue the unity of all of God's people?
- 3) Do we place enough importance on the priority of purification and consecration?
- 4) How does God show His gracious and compassionate character to those who seem far removed from His

presence and favor?

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Raymond Dillard: This chapter functions on a number of levels for the Chronicler as he seeks to address the needs of his contemporaries.

(1) It raises once again the theme of exile and restoration. The path to a restored kingdom is the path of cultic fidelity. This message is pressed home through the observance of Passover, itself a commemoration of redemption and release from bondage to a foreign power.

(2) The Chronicler never tires of portraying the validity of his theology of immediate retribution. Particularly in this chapter he seeks to show the efficacy and validity of Solomon's prayer and God's promise, an efficacy he understood as relevant for his own generation as well.

(3) Hezekiah is presented as an embodiment of the ideal Davidic successor. He is another David/Solomon ruling over a united kingdom with the support of the populace. It is hard to escape the conclusion that the Chronicler held out this portrayal also in speaking of future possibilities and hopes for his own generation.

Andrew Konkel: The motif of spiritual preparedness through repentance is a development found in the postexilic prophets, in Zechariah in particular. The Chronicler cites couriers who, at the king's command, give a message throughout Israel and Judah employing the word *sub* (turn) successively, first in an appeal for a return to the Lord of the covenant (2Ch 30:6a), so that (second) the Lord might return to the remnant that had escaped from Assyria (2Ch 30:6b). Third, God will then turn away the anger of his judgment (2Ch 30:8b) if (fourth) they return to the Lord (2Ch 30:9a), because he is a compassionate God, who (fifth) will allow them to return to their land (9b), and (sixth) will not abandon them if they will return to him (2Ch 30:9c). The Chronicler is deliberately extending the words of Zechariah 1:3: "Turn to me," utterance of the Lord of hosts, "and I will turn to you" says the Lord of hosts" (AT). Zechariah continues with the exhortation not to be as their ancestors, who balked when the prophets appealed to them to turn (sub) from their evil ways (2Ch 30:4; cf. 2 Chron 30:7). The fierce anger of God against the former generation was nothing other than the curse of the covenant (Zech 1:5-6; cf. 2 Chron 30:8). They had no other recourse but to repent (sub), for God had acted exactly as he said he would (Zech 1:6b). The wordplay on *sub*, as adopted by the Chronicler to point the way toward restoration, continues a significant theological development.

Peter Wallace: I would suggest that there is a transformation of the Passover from the original event to the celebration of that event. Think of the Lord's Supper. We don't do exactly what Jesus did at the Last Supper. Rather, that Supper has taken on a ritual form, as Paul describes it in 1 Corinthians 11. (In other words, within a generation, the ritual meal displaced the original) The same thing happened to the Passover 1400 years earlier! The people of Israel did not try to "replay" the original Passover – rather, following the clear teaching of Moses, they commemorated it. Likewise, we do not try to "replicate" the original "Last Supper," rather, following the clear teaching of the apostles, we commemorate it. Clearly, by Deuteronomy, the Passover is no longer just a family celebration. Here in 2 Chronicles, it goes a step further, and now it is the priests and Levites who slaughter the Passover lambs on behalf of the unclean (suggesting that those who were clean slaughtered their own lambs); in Ezra 6:20, after the exile, we hear that the priests and Levites slaughtered all of the Passover lambs. Some people have been perplexed at the variety of directions given regarding Passover. Usually, they are the same people who tend to be "statute-oriented" and who think that God should always be very precise in saying exactly what we need to do, so that everything is cut and dried, and there is no ambiguity in our duty. So when they hear that at one time God commanded that you should not boil the lamb, and then later they hear a command to boil the lamb, they insist on translating the words differently. When they hear that at one time the head of household was to slaughter the lamb, and then they hear that the priests slaughtered all the lambs, they insist that the priests were violating the law of God! I would suggest that they are missing the point. The point is what the Reformed tradition has articulated as the "Regulative Principle of Worship." The Regulative Principle says that we should only do in worship what God has said we should do. But the Regulative Principle also distinguishes between the "elements" of worship and the circumstances. The elements of worship are the basic things: the Word, sacraments, and prayer. The circumstances are pretty much everything else! Even many of the detailed regulations in the OT were "circumstantial." Think about our text here in 2 Chronicles 30. Two of the basic actions of the Passover are very clear from the Pentateuch: - the Passover lamb should be slaughtered on the 14th day of the first month; and - only those who are both circumcised and ceremonially clean may partake of the Passover. Neither of those basic rules are observed in this case! Hezekiah and the priests were convinced that the fundamental principle of the Passover was the celebration of God's saving Israel from Egypt – and that everyone who desired to remember that great salvation should be admitted to the Passover, regardless of ceremonial status. (Sure, in future years, you should make sure that you are ceremonially clean – but if we wait until we are clean before we do this, it'll never happen!) And notice God's response: 2Ch 30:20 And the LORD heard Hezekiah and healed the people. In other words, the LORD entirely approved of Hezekiah's distinction between the essential actions of the Passover, and the circumstantial regulations that were designed to promote the holiness of the Passover. Chronicles is not saying that we can play fast and loose with God's law – but Chronicles is saying what Jesus will say about the Sabbath: "Passover was made for man, not man for the

Passover.” If you are so strict in your adherence to the law that you destroy the point of the law, then you have not truly kept the law! There is an important lesson here. Some have used this text to say that outward actions aren’t that important: the heart is what really matters. But that’s not the point at all. After all, if you think about what is happening here, the whole point of the story is that Israel (all Israel – not just Judah) is doing something outward together! It’s true that they are setting aside certain regulations regarding clean/unclean. But they are setting aside the sanctuary’s rules of cleanness – in other words, they are relaxing some of the purity laws so that the heart can be properly expressed in the outward actions of worship. . . The rigid and heartless application of God’s law leads to legalism and sterility. The loose and lax neglect of God’s law leads to license and rebellion. The equitable and prudent application of God’s law leads to great joy and gladness – with Levites and priests singing with all their might, the King encouraging those who are skilled in the service of the LORD, and all the people rejoicing and giving thanks. <https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/112012211396.pdf>

F.B. Meyer: Pastor and theologian John Stott explained in *The Contemporary Christian*: “Protestants use a [certain] vocabulary to describe the continuously needed restoring and refreshing of the church. Our two favourite words are ‘reformation’, indicating the kind of reformation of faith and life according to Scripture which took place in the sixteenth century, and ‘revival’, denoting an altogether supernatural visitation of a church or community by God, bringing conviction, repentance, confession, the conversion of sinners and the recovery of backsliders. ‘Reformation’ usually stresses the power of the Word of God, and ‘revival’ the power of the Spirit of God, in his work of restoring the church.” Through Hezekiah, God brought both reformation and revival to Judah. In addition to renewing the temple, the king also renewed the celebration of the Passover. Setting aside recent strife in favor of a deeper covenant unity, he even invited people from what remained of northern Israel to come and join in. The letter he sent showed his heart: he wanted the entire nation to return to God, reunite in repentant worship centered around the temple, and be restored to the Lord’s covenant favor. Though many mocked the messengers, some responded openly and humbly. Hezekiah changed the date of Passover, mainly on practical grounds, since there was insufficient time to prepare the priests and gather the people. In fact, the Law was flexible on this point (see Num. 9:10-11). Despite the delay, many participants still had not purified themselves, but the king prayed for their forgiveness and God graciously “healed the people” (2Ch 30:30:20). The entire occasion was a high point in post-Solomon Israelite history (30:26). This was no short-lived emotional rush, but a genuine recommitment followed by a zealous campaign to wipe out places and practices of idolatry. Hezekiah did everything with careful attention to the Law, following David’s and Solomon’s worship examples.

David Guzik: Their pattern of preparing to receive the Passover is instructive for those who come to the communion table, especially those who feel unworthy to partake of communion. They forgot their differences and came together as one people. They removed their idols. They prepared their hearts. Their sins and ignorance were confessed. They prayed.

Geoffrey Kirkland: King Hezekiah’s Invitation to Celebrate the Passover

I. THE INVITATION TO THE PASSOVER (2Ch 30:1-12)

1. The letters (2Ch 30:1-4)
2. The couriers (2Ch 30:5-9)
3. The rejecters/mockers (2Ch 30:10)
4. The worshipers (2Ch 30:11-12)

II. THE REINSTITUTION OF THE PASSOVER (2Ch 30:13-22)

1. The place (2Ch 30:13)
2. The purification (2Ch 30:14)
3. The Passover (2Ch 30:15-16)
4. The prayer (2Ch 30:17-19)

III. THE JUBILATION AT THE PASSOVER (2Ch 30:23-27)

<https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/10111874702.pdf>

STEVEN COLE - The Joy Of Obedience (2 Chronicles 30)

Pretend that you’re on the old TV game show “Password.” You’ll recall that the object of that show was to try to get your partner to say the “password” by a process of word association. For example, if the password was “read,” maybe you would say “book.” Your partner responds, “magazine.” You say, “newspaper.” He gets the connection and says “read.”

Your word that you want your partner to guess is “obedience.” What words would you use to get him to say “obedience”? “Duty.”

“Rules.” “Regulations.” “Laws.” “Restrictions.”

I venture to say that one word you would *not* use is “joy.” Joy and obedience don’t seem to fit together. Joy seems liberating; obedience sounds restrictive. Joy conveys lightheartedness; obedience sounds burdensome and heavy. Most of us would never think that the way to true joy in life lies on the path of obedience to God.

And yet it is so. King Hezekiah’s story reveals that ...

Obedience from the heart to our gracious God results in great joy.

As we saw last week, Hezekiah was a godly king who in the first year of his reign resolved to restore personal and national worship as the top priority. He cleansed and restored the temple and reinstituted the sacrifices. In chapter 30 we learn how Hezekiah invited the whole nation to observe the Passover in Jerusalem. The result was the greatest worship celebration since the division of the kingdom (30:26).

The theme of heartfelt, joyful obedience occurs repeatedly throughout the chapter, as not only Judah, but also many in Israel join together to celebrate the Passover. 2Ch 30:12 sums it up: “The hand of God was also on Judah to give them one heart to do what the king and the princes commanded by the word of the Lord.” The mood of the convocation was “great joy” (2Ch 30:21, 23, 25, 26). They had such a great time that they decided to extend it an extra week (2Ch30:23). They didn’t want it to end. Though some mocked and refused to come (2Ch30:10), those who obeyed knew the deep and lasting joy only God can give.

If we want that kind of joy, we need to imitate that kind of obedience. I want to share five observations about obedience from the heart:

1. Obedience from the heart is founded on God’s Word.

King Hezekiah didn’t get a brilliant idea out of the blue to celebrate the Passover. He was simply obeying what God commanded through Moses as a statute for Israel (Exod. 12:14; see 2 Chron. 30:5 [“prescribed”]; 12 [“the word of the Lord”]; 16 [“according to the law of Moses the man of God”]; 18 [“prescribed”]). And, when Hezekiah decided to celebrate the feast on the second month instead of the first (2Ch 30:2-4), he wasn’t making that up; it was permitted in the Law of Moses (Num. 9:9-10). As we saw in the previous chapter, Hezekiah’s reforms were founded on a return to God’s Word as the standard for how to live. All revivals are centered on a return to God’s Word.

The Passover feast was instituted historically at the culmination of the plagues which God brought on Pharaoh and Egypt when he refused to free Israel. On the night designated by God, the people were to kill an unblemished male lamb and smear its blood on the two doorposts and on the lintel of their homes. Then they roasted the lamb and ate it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. On that night God passed through the land of Egypt and killed all the firstborn men and beasts in homes not covered by the blood, but “passed over” those with the blood.

The Passover is a beautiful picture of the redemption that God would provide through the Messiah. Christ is our Passover lamb (1 Cor. 5:7); every person under the shed blood of Christ will be spared from God’s judgment. The deliverance from slavery in Egypt that the Passover commemorated is a type of the deliverance Christ provides from bondage to sin. The Passover was followed by the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread that typified the life of holiness required by God’s people.

It wasn’t easy for the Jews to obey God’s command regarding the Passover. In fact, it was a major hassle! The man had to take off from his job or leave his fields. The wife had to pack up clothes and food for the whole family. (Those of you who go camping with small children know what that’s like!) They didn’t have cars or paved highways, so they had to walk and ride on donkeys to Jerusalem where the feast was celebrated. All of that hassle just to observe a ceremony that God said was to be a memorial of their deliverance from Egypt.

Obedience to God’s Word is not always convenient or easy. It’s much easier to sack in on Sunday mornings than it is to get up and get the family ready for church. It’s easier not to spend time daily with the Lord than it is to set aside that time to meet with Him. It’s often easier to fudge on the truth than to be honest. It’s easier to spend your money as you please than to be faithful as a manager of God’s resources. It’s easier to yield to sexual temptation than to be pure. It’s easier to go along with the crowd than to stand alone because of your convictions. You often pay a price to obey God.

Obedience to God’s Word is not always popular (2Ch 30:10). Some of the people in the northern kingdom said, “You’ve got to be kidding! You want us to go to all that hassle to go to Jerusalem just to observe some outdated ritual prescribed in the law of Moses?” So they laughed them to scorn and mocked them. It’s ironic that the northern kingdom was on the brink of extinction, yet these men would not turn in repentance to the Lord! It reminds me of Lot’s sons-in-law who thought he was joking when he appealed to them to flee the destruction of Sodom (Gen. 19:14). But it’s the same today: even though people apart from Christ are

on the brink of perishing, they will laugh you to scorn when you take a stand for Christ and experience any kind of hardship because of your obedience. You can expect it! But, remember, the reason you go through the hassle or hardship of obedience is because God's Word is your authority for all of life.

2. Obedience from the heart responds to God's character.

Notice how God is referred to in this chapter: In 2Ch 30:1,5, He is called "the God of Israel"; in 2Ch 30:6, He is "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel"; in 2Ch 30:7, 19, 22 He is "the Lord God of their fathers." Each of these terms underscores the fact that God is a *covenant-keeping* God, faithful to His promises even when His people have been rebellious. The letter of invitation (2Ch 30:6-9) blends both the *holiness* of God who judges sin ("a horror" [2Ch 30:7]; "His burning anger" [2Ch 30:8]) with His *compassion* and willingness to be reconciled if His people would return to Him. The response of the people in destroying all the idolatrous altars (2Ch 30:14) shows the only proper response to a holy God, namely, wholehearted obedience.

My point is that the character of God, while awesome in holiness, is also beautiful in grace and compassion. When you see that God righteously could send you to hell because of your many sins, but that He graciously extends a full pardon through the cross of Christ if you will turn from your sins to trust in Him, the beauty of His holiness and grace draws your heart to Him.

God made us so that we respond to beauty. Why do over four million people a year come from every corner of the globe to the Grand Canyon? Because they are attracted by its beauty. And when we see how beautiful God is in His grace and compassion to receive us to Himself in spite of our sin, it attracts our hearts to obey Him. As the Apostle Paul puts it, "the kindness of God leads you to repentance" (Rom. 2:4).

Thus, obedience from the heart is founded on God's Word; it responds to God's character.

3. Obedience from the heart yields to God's person.

By this I mean that obedience is not merely conformity to a set of rules, although God's commands need to be obeyed. But our obedience ought to be a heart response to a personal God. Note the repetition of "to the Lord" (2Ch 30:2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9). The emphasis isn't so much on "come, observe the Passover" in minute detail as it is rather "return to the Lord" (2Ch 30:6), "yield to the Lord" (30:8), and "serve the Lord" (2Ch 30:8). It's a personal appeal.

Some who came to observe the Passover were not able to purify themselves ceremonially as the Law required (2Ch 30:17-18). Hezekiah prayed for them and God "healed" them, that is, forgave their ceremonial uncleanness. The point is not that God is sloppy about sin, but rather that He looks on the heart (2Ch 30:19, "prepares his heart to seek God"). Jesus rebuked the Pharisees because they outwardly obeyed, but their hearts were far from Him (Mt 12:1-7; 15:8; 23:23). The proper balance is to remember that God's grace never means license to be sloppy about sin; but His grace does mean that He blesses those who do not deserve it. The chief motivation for obedience is that the personal God has called me to Himself. Obedience from the heart responds to God in a personal way because of His grace.

Obedience from the heart is founded on God's Word; it responds to God's character; it yields to God's person.

4. Obedience from the heart promotes unity among God's people.

The northern and southern kingdoms had been divided for over 200 years. During the reign of Hezekiah's father, Ahaz, the northern army had killed 120,000 soldiers from the south. At the present time the Northern Kingdom was either on the verge of defeat by Assyria or had just been defeated, depending on when the events of this chapter are dated. It would have been understandable if Hezekiah had said, "Let them stew in their own juice. I'm not going to invite those guys to the Passover!"

But when you love God, you can't turn your back on God's people. It's significant that Hezekiah named his heir to the throne Manasseh, after one of the northern tribes! Hezekiah was burdened that his brothers to the north come back to God. It's significant that he did *not* say, "Come, and worship God however you conceive Him to be! Bring your idols to our Passover celebration!" He appealed to them to repent (2Ch 30:6-9); but he also appealed to them to come. Some may have accused him of simply trying to extend his power base to the north. But I believe Hezekiah's true motive was to call all of God's covenant people back to Him.

I often hear of Christians who get wounded by other Christians and drop out of the church. They say that they worship God at home; they don't need the church. But invariably they not only drop out of church; they end up drifting away from God. Christ is the Head of His church, and He's not a severed Head! He's organically joined to His body. It would be silly if I said to you, "I like your head, but I can't stand your body!" You and your body are one! I've got to accept or reject the whole package! It's the same with Christ and His church.

I'll promise that you *will* be hurt by someone in the church, maybe by a whole group of Christians! Someone described the church as being like Noah's ark: If it weren't for the storm on the outside, you couldn't stand the stench on the inside! But if you love God and want to obey Him from the heart, you've got to work at being reconciled with your brothers and sisters in Christ. Quite often (as in our text) that reconciliation can't take place unless there is repentance (often on both sides). But like Hezekiah, you shouldn't hold a grudge against those who have wronged you, but should seek to bring any fallen brothers back to the Lord and to promote unity in Christ's body, the church.

Obedience from the heart is founded on God's Word; it responds to God's character; it yields to God's person; it promotes unity among God's people.

5. Obedience from the heart results in the joy of God's blessing.

These people enjoyed the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread so much that they extended it for an extra week (2Ch 30:23, 21, 25, 26)! You know there's revival when people say, "We don't want such a short service; let's extend the worship and the preaching!" 2Ch 30:26 sums it up: "There was great joy in Jerusalem, ..." Note also 2Ch 30:27: "Then the Levitical priests arose and blessed the people; and their voice was heard and their prayer came to His holy dwelling place, to heaven." This means that God fulfilled the priests' blessing on the people. They had great joy that the world doesn't know--joy that comes from obedience to our gracious God.

Conclusion

Maybe you've always associated obedience with oppression. You've thought that obedience means a loss of freedom and fun. That's the devil's lie. Obedience from the heart to our gracious God results in great joy. As the Apostle John put it, "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3).

Sheldon Vanauken wrote this parable or allegory called, "The Day of the Rabbit" (source unknown); it may help you see why obedience to God brings joy:

Gypsy, a furry, wheat-colored collie, found herself in possession of several hundred acres of hills and woods, full of good things like rabbit trails and streams and intriguing burrows, and she delighted in it all. She was given a comfortable bed and good meals. Perhaps she rather took it all for granted. Of obligations there were few, and they not heavy. She was, to be sure, supposed to worship her Master and be right joyous with him. She knew she must not chase the chickens. While she must obey certain commands--to follow, to come, to lie down--there were no unreasonable ones, and no tricks. After all, to obey and to worship were natural to her dog nature.

Then came a day when, as Gypsy was prowling on the far hill past the springhouse and pasture, two things happened at once; the Master called her and a rabbit fled across the hill. Gypsy wheeled and raced towards the Master, as she had always done. Then she stopped. It entered her mind that she didn't have to obey. Perhaps the Master didn't understand about that rabbit. Anyhow, these were her hills. The rabbit was hers, too. Very likely it was all lies--that story of everything, including herself, belonging to the Master. How did she know that the food in her dish came from him?--probably there was some natural explanation. She was a free dog and that was the end of it. These thoughts went through her mind swiftly while she stood irresolute. Again came the Master's command; the rabbit crossed the hilltop. Gypsy whirled and raced after the rabbit. She had made a choice. She was free to choose.

Hours later she came home. She saw the Master waiting for her, but she did not rush gladly to him, leaping and frisking, as she had always done. Something new came into her demeanor: guilt. She crept up to him like a snake on her belly. Undoubtedly she was penitent at the moment. But she had a new knowledge--the knowledge of the possibility of sin--and it was a thrill in her heart and a salt taste in her mouth. Nevertheless, she was very obedient the next day and the day after. Eventually, though, there was a another rabbit--and she did not even hesitate. Soon it was the mere possibility of a rabbit. And then she dropped the rabbit thing altogether and went her way.

The Master loved her still but trusted her no longer. In time she lived in a pen and went for walks with a rope round her neck. All her real freedom was gone. But the Master gave her, from time to time, new chances to obey of her own free will. Had she chosen to obey she would once again have had perfect freedom to wander her hundreds of acres. But she did not return to obedience. She always chose, if she were out of reach, to run

away. The Master, knowing hunger would bring her back to her pen, let her run. He could have stopped her: the rifle that would have ended her rebellion with the crack of doom stood in a corner. But while she lived she might still return to the obedience, might still choose the obedience that was freedom.

One day during a journey by car, Gypsy was taken into the edge of a wood. Always Gypsy had limited her disobedience to her own hills. But now coming back to the car, she suddenly felt the old thrill. She turned and fled. The master called with a note of sharp urgency. Gypsy, her ears dulled to the meanings of the Master, continued her rush into the dark forest. After hours of searching and calling, the Master sadly abandoned the lost one and went home.

Lost Gypsy, if she still lived, wandered the woods and roads an outcast. She became dirty and matted with burrs. No doubt stones were thrown at her and she was often hungry, but she had lost the way home. If she had puppies, they, too, and their children had lost the way home, for Gypsy's perilous and bent will to disobey must infect them; and the comforting hand of the Master would be unknown to them, except as a tale. This is the way Gypsy chose on the Day of the Rabbit and continued to choose until, suddenly, there was no more choosing.

Adam and Eve were the only human beings who knew truly "free" will. The rest of us, as their disobedient children, are bent toward rebellion, prone to go against the will of the Master. But through Jesus Christ and His death on our behalf, we can return and learn the joy of obedience to our gracious God. As Paul put it in Romans 6:17-18, "But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."

Are you a slave of sin or of righteousness? Perhaps God in His grace is calling you from your disobedience to the obedience of faith in Jesus Christ. You begin by receiving the forgiveness that Christ provides through the cross.

Discussion Questions

1. What does the Bible mean, that God's commandments are not burdensome (1 John 5:3)? Sometimes they seem very difficult!
2. Should we obey God even if we don't feel like it? How can we make obedience a matter of the heart?
3. Are obedience and grace at odds? Some say that to emphasize obedience is to be legalistic. What does the Bible say?
4. Where should we draw the line between Christian unity and doctrinal and/or moral purity?

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