PERTH BIBLE CLASS

REVIVAL KINGS IN JUDAH

KING HEZEKIAH – STUDY 1

His Forebears

His grandfather was Jotham – 11 Kings 15 v 32 – 38
He was a good king – doing that which was "right in the sight of the Lord"
Little is known of him apart from the re-building of the highest gate of the Temple

His father was Ahaz – the eleventh king of Judah. (His full name was Jehoahaz but the Jews probably removed the first part "Jeho" which stands for Jehovah, because he was evil). He was noted for his idolatry which included burning his own children as offerings – 11 Chron 28 v 3. In v 4 sacrifices were made in the high and low places. He replaced God's altar with his own and removed the feet of the laver. God delivered him into the hands of the king of Syria v 5 whose army killed 120,000 of the men of Judah v 6. Instead of turning to the Lord he turned to the kings of Assyria. He took valuables from the Temple and gave them to these kings v 21. He destroyed the vessels of the Temple and shut the doors v 24. All that he did provoked the Lord to anger v 25. Though he was buried in Jerusalem his body was not laid beside the other kings.

His Name – Hezekiah means a strong support or Jehovah is strength. There are over a hundred references to him in 11 Kings 1 & 11 Chron, Jeremiah, Hosea and Micah.
11 Kings 18 records that he was 25 when he started to reign and he reigned for 29 years in Jerusalem.
In contrast to his father he removed the "high places", the images and groves 11 Kings 18 v 4. He trusted in the Lord v 5 he clave to the Lord v 6 the Lord was with him v 7.

This study is based on 11 Chronicles 29 & 30

Ch 29 v 3 – 11 **REPAIR**
v 3 Hezekiah opened the doors of the temple and repaired them (our attitude to the House of God) v 4, 5. He called together the Levites to clean out the temple – once they had been cleansed themselves. The Lord has chosen Levites to serve Him (v 11). (God had been deprived of worship for so long).

v 12 – 19 **REGULATION**
v 12 The Levites arose v 15 they sanctified themselves. Obeying the command of the king they cleansed the temple.
v 16 The rubbish was taken to the brook Kedron. v 17 In sixteen days the work was completed. V 18 & 19 The altar and vessels were prepared for use.

v 20 – 24 **REPENTANCE**
Hezekiah coordinated the work. When the rulers were gathered together v 20 they all went to the "house of the Lord". Sin offerings were made also burnt offerings v21 – 24

v 25 – 30 **REJOICING**
The Levites had their musical instruments. After the burnt offerings had been sacrificed everyone burst into song and worshipped God v 25 – 29. They sang with joy v30.

v 31 – 36 **REVIVAL**
Thanks offerings and free will offerings were made v 13 & 32. There were not enough priests to carry out all the work – the Levites had to help them v 34. The Levites were more "spiritually prepared" to serve the Lord than the priests. When everything was in order, the sacrifice had been offered, Hezekiah rejoiced v 36

Ch 30

The **PROBLEMS** – v 3
a) The Priests were not sanctified b) The People were not gathered.

The **POST**
All Israel and Judah covered v 1. The people had to turn again v 6. They were not to be stiff necked but to yield themselves to the Lord v 8. They would find God to be gracious and merciful v 9. Of Israel some laughed and mocked v 10 (there were plenty of carnal people) others came v 11. Those of Judah had one "heart" v 12.

The **PASSOVER**

It was not possible to keep the Passover at the usual time – the first month (Leviticus 23). In Numbers ch 9 due to defilement it had been kept a month late.

The MANNER of it. Everything was done according to the instructions handed down v 16.

The GLADNESS of it. They were filled with gladness v 21 & 26

After the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread (eight days in total) they continued together for another seven days v 23.

There had never been such a happy keeping of the Passover since Solomon's time v 26.

The **PRAYER**

v 18 Hezekiah prayed for the people – for their pardon, and the Lord responded v 23

The **PRAISE**

Their praise was A0 constant v 21 b) intelligent v 22 c) heartfelt v 23 d) involved all the congregation v 25
The priests and the Levites blessed the people. God heard their prayer v 27

There had not been such joy for 250 years v 36 (ch 35 v 18 – for 500 years – since Samuel; Nehemiah ch 8 v 17 back from captivity – for 1000 years i.e. since the days of Joshua)

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STUDY 2 - HEZEKIAH

Reading : 11 Chronicles Chaps. 31 & 32

Ch 31

v 1 **ACTIONS** that followed the great Passover celebration that was held at the close of ch 30. The impact was not for Jerusalem alone they "went out to the cities of Judah". A work begun at Jerusalem now spreads to other places. In New Testament times the Lord Jesus had said to his disciples "ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth" Acts 1 v 8. Good to be zealous in the spread of the gospel. Note that the work involved "all Israel". Good when we are all active in the service of our God. The same actions taken at Jerusalem to remove the idols was followed through in the other places. We need to be consistent in the message we carry not changing it to suit the audience. They were absolutely thorough "brake", "cut down", "threw down" and "utterly destroyed". In the message we carry lets be faithful wherever it is our privilege to preach. We must never water down the great truths of the gospel.

v 2 – 4 **APPOINTMENTS** of the priests and the Levites. Hezekiah is responsible to appoint or ordain those who will be involved in Temple activities. There is a specific work for them to do. He also sets the example for others to follow by providing "the courses" or portions v 2 and in v 3 "the king's portion of his substance". In New Testament times there are clearly those within the Assembly who will have a God given role to perform e.g. elders and in the early days of the church Paul left Titus at Crete to "ordain elders in every city" Titus 1 v 5. Taking the example of the "portions" it is also clear that in New Testament times there will be those who are supported so as to devote their time to the service of God. Paul clearly appreciated the material provisions that were made for him by the believers at Philippi "ye sent once and again unto my necessity" Phil 4 v 16. Having first set the example Hezekiah is able to instruct others "he commanded - - - - the people - - - to give" v 4.

v 5 – 10 **ABUNDANCE –** The response of the people was so great that there was an abundance. They brought for four months v 7 and by the end there was "heaps". The chief priest Azariah will summarise "since the people began to bring - - - - we have had enough to eat and have left plenty" v 10. Good when the people of God are characterised by a generous spirit in their giving to the things of God. In earlier times we are reminded of the materials being given for the Tabernacle "the people bring much more than enough" Exo 36 v 5.

v 11 – 19 **ARRANGEMENTS –** The provision has been so great that Hezekiah will now make "chambers" v 11 or storehouses so that all that the people have given can be properly cared for. He will also set over these storehouses men as "ruler" v 12 and others as "overseers" v 13. Paul will instruct those at Corinth "let all things be done decently and in order" 1 Corinthians 14 v 40. While this instruction was not about the material giving of the Lord's people we can still apply the principal. In the local Assembly when dealing with the offerings given by the believers for the service of God things must never be left under

the control of one person. This is practised in Acts 11 v 30 when a gift is sent to relieve hardship in Judea it is carried by “Barnabas and Saul”.

v 20 – 21 **ATTITUDE** of Hezekiah is summed “he did it with all his heart”. This is again a reminder of the previous history of Israel who at the time of the Tabernacle building are recorded as “every one whose heart stirred him up” Exo 35 v 21. Good to be willing to participate fully in the things of God and to do it with deep heart exercise. “whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might” Eccl 9 v 10.

CH 32

Coping with Adversity
The enemy attacks. This time it is Sennacherib the Assyrian.
v 3 Hezekiah consults with “his princes and his mighty men”. In earlier years the nation was divided when Rehoboam took advice ch 10. We must take care when we consult others.
v 4 – 6 They set the defence for the enemy. We need to “put on the whole armour of God” Eph 6 v 11.
v 7 & 8 They depend on God “with us is the Lord our God”. see ch 14 v 11
v 9 – 19 The tactics of the enemy. To discourage and to despise. He will boast about how he has defeated other nations who had rested in their gods.
v 20 – 21 Hezekiah and Isaiah resort to prayer. How sad that this wasn’t the first step.
v 21 – 23 The victory is won.

Coping with Infirmity
v 24 “Hezekiah was sick to death”. In the parallel account in 11 Kings 20 v 1 the prophet comes with a message from God “set thine house in order; for thou shalt die and not live”. Hezekiah prays and his life is extended 15 years. The sign of God is given in the sun dial going back ten degrees. Good to note that he prayed. The extended years were sadly to be marked by a time of failure. We need great wisdom in knowing what to pray for”. The teaching of James notes that it is possible for us to “ask amiss” ch 4 v 3.
v 25 Sad to note that despite God acting in such a remarkable way “Hezekiah rendered (to turn back) not again according to the benefit (act of good will) done unto him”. He was marked by a spirit of un-thankfulness. God’s wrath will not only be on Hezekiah but upon Judah and Jerusalem. Sometimes our actions can have an impact on others “ a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” 1 Cor 5 v 6.
v 26 A change of heart in Hezekiah leads to a delaying of “the wrath of the Lord”.

Coping with Prosperity
v 27 Records the wealth of Hezekiah “exceeding much riches and honour”. Having made storehouses for the priests and Levites portions in ch 31 he now makes “treasuries” for all the valuable treasures he has amassed and “storehouses” v 28 for the provisions he has.
This great wealth seems to cause him to be lifted up so when in v 31 ambassadors are sent from Babylon with letters and gifts – see 11 Kings 20 v 12 & 13 he immediately shewed them all his precious things in his treasuries. The prophet Isaiah is sent and his message is sadly “all that is in thine house - - - - shall be carried to Babylon” v 17.
Thus his life ends like so many of the other Kings in sad circumstances and with prophetic warnings of the time the nation will be taken to Babylon as captives.
If in this life God graciously gives us processions they are always His and we need to ever realise our dependence on Him. May we be preserved from living like those at Laodicea “I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing” Rev 3 v 17. It was to such that the word came “Behold I stand at the door and knock” v 20. Very clearly possessions had squeezed the Lord out.