II Chronicles 29

Review…

- **II Chronicles 27-28 – A lost Generation…**
  - King Ahaz was the 12th King of Judah…
    - Although he had a Godly father and grandfather – he was a wicked King…
    - He caused his children to pass through the fire – sacrificed to the pagan god Molech…
  - As a result God allowed Judah to be conquered by Israel and Syria…
    - They killed 120,000 soldiers of Judah in one day – **II Chronicles 28:6**
    - Then Israel took 200,000 women and children captive from Judah as slaves…
    - The prophet Isaiah came to Ahaz – and told him God promised to preserve Judah…
    - But Ahaz doubted - so God gave him a sign to prove it – Immanuel - **Isaiah 7:14**
  - Yet Ahaz did not believe the Lord – instead he hired Assyria to help him…
    - And had Uriah the priest build a duplicate of an altar he saw in Damascus…
    - Syria had defeated him in battle – so he wanted to worship their god instead of the Lord…
    - Then Ahaz sealed the doors of the Temple – so other people could not worship God!

Reviving a nation… (*3 things*)

- **1st – Hezekiah reigned for 29 years and was a good King… vs. 1-3**
  - 1st - Hezekiah stands in complete contrast to his Father Ahaz…
    - Ahaz had a Godly father – yet was a wicked King who sealed the doors of the Temple…
    - Hezekiah had a wicked father – yet he was dedicated to the Lord…
    - And in the first year as king – in the month of Nisan - he opened the Temple doors again!
    - Some of us may comes from families that did not know or follow the Lord...
    - But just because we did not have a good example - does not mean we are stuck...
    - We are not stuck - bound to our past - we can be different and follow Jesus!
  - 2nd - Ahaz brought pagan worship to Judah – leading them away from the Lord…
    - I am sure there were many during the reign of Ahaz who expected God to judge Judah…
    - And God would eventually bring judgment on Judah – but not yet…
    - God was not done – instead He gave them a Godly leader to revive the nation!
    - As we look at our nation – we might be convinced that the judgment of God is inevitable…

- And there is no doubt that we are living in the Last Days – Judgment is coming…
- But perhaps – maybe - God still has a Hezekiah who will bring revival yet to our nation!

- **2ND – REVIVAL STARTS WITH THE LEADERS… VS. 4-19**
  - 1st – Hezekiah had the Priests & Levites sanctify themselves – then the House of the Lord… vs. 4-5
    - Men like to focus only on the outside - give the appearance of being clean...
      - But just trying to make a building look good – only ends in 'white washed tombs'…
      - People can carry a bigger Bible – have the fanciest clothes – volunteer at the church...
      - They have their name written in bulletins – or on plaques in the church...
      - They pray long fancy prayers – for what seems like hours – using big words...
      - Giving the appearance of great godliness – but if their lives do not match their words…
    - God is not impressed by the outside – the Lord looks at the heart – **I Samuel 16:7**
      - No matter how 'good you look' - if the heart is not right - you are still unclean...
      - In contrast - if your heart is right - no matter how the outside looks - you are clean!
      - When we get saved Jesus does not clean the outside first - He takes care of the heart…
      - Then in time the outside comes to reflect the new life we have on the inside!
  - 2nd – The result of turning away from God… vs. 6-9
    - Judah had fallen in battle (*120,000*) / been taken into captivity (*200,000 to Israel*)…
      - All because their fathers had forsaken the Lord – and sinned against God…
      - These men had shut the temple / extinguished the Menorah / and stopped the incense…
      - There is a progression of sin here – a deterioration that Hezekiah lays out…
      - Their fathers turned their back on the Lord – which led them into sin…
      - Sin took them away from church (*Temple*) – which extinguished their example (*Menorah*)…
      - Which led them to stop praying to the Lord (*incense*) – cutting off fellowship with God…
      - As a result great calamity came from God – because He was trying to get their attention!
    - Sin is subtle – it gradually sneaks in cutting off our fellowship with God…
      - It begins by not looking to the Lord – which opens up the door to sin in our lives…
      - That erodes our relationship with God – rearranging our priorities…
      - We find that we get 'too busy' to make it to church / go to Bible Studies…
      - Before you know it we know longer have that 'Christian glow' about us…
      - We find less and less time to spend in prayer – no more talking to God – then it happens…
      - Our lives fall apart – everything seems to go wrong – God is trying to get our attention!
      - Better to stick with the Lord – and avoid the problems to begin with!
  - 3rd – Revival began in the church… vs. 11-19
    - Hezekiah wanted to make a covenant with Judah – restore them to the Lord…
      - But it had to begin with the Priests and the Levites – it began with the leaders…
      - So the Levites spent 8 days cleaning out the courtyard of the Temple…
      - The priests (*only they could enter*) then took another 8 days cleaning inside the Temple…
      - Anything that had been polluted in pagan worship was thrown into the Kidron valley!
      - So starting on the 1st of Nissan (*first month*) they took 16 days to clean the Temple!
    - We live in a nation where God has been forgotten/lost…
      - But revival is possible – America just needs to see the example from the church…

- It is sad when the church looks just like the world - no difference...
- When people live together in the church just like they do outside the church...
- If the church looks just like the world – what hope can we offer…
- But if the church is willing to be Holy – clean up the inside – then we can be a light…
- We can be the example that brings revival to our nation!

- **3RD – PURIFYING A NATION… VS. 20-36**
  - 1st - Hezekiah rose early and went to the House of the Lord… vs. 20
    - Restoration / revival comes from seeking the Lord – 'early in the morning'…
    - **Psalms 5:3** – "My voice shall thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up."
    - You might ask – is the morning the only time when we should seek the Lord…
    - **Psalm 55:17** – "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice."
    - It is not about when we seek that Lord – the key is THAT we seek the Lord!
  - 2nd - Hezekiah offered 7 bulls / 7 rams / 7 lambs / and 7 goats to the Lord… vs. 21-23
    - **Leviticus 4** – commanded 1 bull / 1 goat be offered for the sin of the people corporately…
    - Hezekiah understood the people were 'REALLY' guilty – so he offered 7x the requirement!
    - The Priests laid their hands on the goats – 'transferring' the sins of the people...
    - Symbolically is showed that the sins of the people had been removed - forgotten!
    - **Psalms 103:12** - "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."
    - We have the tendency to hold onto our past - not let go of our sins...
    - But God does not just forgive our sins - through the cross He completely removes them!
    - When God looks down on us - because of Jesus - He sees us as perfect – sinless!
  - 3rd - Hezekiah then offered 'Sin offerings' and 'burnt offerings' for the people individually… vs. 24
    - 4 kinds of offerings in the Law – Burnt / Grain / Peace / and Sin offering (*2 mentioned here*)…
    - The 'Sin offering' - had to be an animal without defect - perfect...
      - The idea was the animal had done nothing wrong - it was blameless...
        - It was not going to die for its flaws - but because of your sins!
        - Ultimately it looked forward to THE perfect sacrifice - Jesus Christ!
        - **I Peter 1:19** - "The precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish..."
      - The blood was sprinkled 7 times in front of the veil - before the Altar of incense...
        - The blood represents life - without blood no one can live...
        - By pouring out the blood it symbolized the price of sin - death - had been paid!

- All men are sinners - **Romans 3:23** - and sin separates us from God…
- The dilemma is the price - penalty for sin is death - **Romans 6:23**
- Either we have to pay for our sin with our life - or someone has to die in our place...
- That is why under the Old Covenant - the Law of Moses - they sacrificed animals...
- The animal would die in their place - pay the penalty / the price for their sin...
- **Hebrews 9:22** - "Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins."
- The problem with animal sacrifices is they could only cover sin - not take it away...
- **Hebrews 10:4** - "It is not possible the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins."
- Every time you made a mistake - you had to go to the temple and offer a sacrifice...
- That covered your sin - no longer guilty - but it did not change your heart!
- The sacrifices under the Law had no power to change the person to not want to sin!

- The fat of the animal would be burnt on the bonze Altar...
  - But the rest of the animal was to be taken outside the camp and burnt...
  - The picture - sin causes separation - isolation - from fellowship with God…
  - No longer in the Temple - no longer in the presence of the Lord...
  - When we have unrepentant sin in our heart we are far from God - outside the camp
  - So Jesus suffered and died in our place – He went outside the camp to get us back…
  - **Hebrews 13:12-13** - "Jesus suffered and died outside the city gates in order to make his people holy by shedding his own blood..."
  - Jesus gave us a better covenant – He took away our sin – and gave us a new heart!
  - He restored our relationship to God – brought us back into the presence of the Lord

- The 'Burt offering' – was a free will offering - no one was required to offer the burnt offering...
  - God is a gentleman - He will not force us to do anything we don't want to...
    - God does not make anyone go to heaven - He just provides the way...
    - God does not make us surrender our lives to Him - we have to choose to give it...
    - To often we cling onto our life - thinking we cannot afford to give it away to God...
    - But when we give our life away - when we live for Jesus - we find true life!
    - A seed is no good by itself - if you take a seed and hold onto it - nothing happens...
    - If you let it go – if you bury it – if it dies – then it becomes what God intended!
    - **John 12:24-25** – "I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life."

    - Only when we are willing to let our life go – do we truly find life in Jesus!
    - Then we will find the ultimate reward – not only eternal life with Jesus...
    - But a fruitful / full / and fulfilling life while we wait for His soon return!
  - The whole animal would be burnt on the bronze Alter - completely consumed by fire...
    - **Hebrews 12:29** - "For our God is a consuming fire."
    - God does not just want part of our lives - He wants us to be completely sold out to Him!
    - A tool is only effective when it submits itself to the master's commands....
    - If we only follow the Lord when we want to - we are not much use to the Lord...
    - If we are to be effective for the Lord - we must submit ourselves to the Lord...

- 4th – Worshiping the Lord… vs. 25-34

- As a result of seeking the Lord (*in the morning*) / being forgiven by the Lord – the sin offering…
  - And dedicating themselves to the Lord – the burnt offering…
  - The people now were able to come before the Lord and worship!
- Worship as a result of relationship…
  - The common view is that we worship so that we can 'enter in' to the presence of God…
  - But the truth is worship is the result of being in the presence of God…
  - As we see the Lord – know Him more – we are going to break out in Praise and Worship!
  - **Psalm 16:11** – "You will show me the path of life; In Your presence *is* fullness of joy…"
- Worship with cymbals / harps / stringed instruments / trumpets…
  - It is nice to have a variety of instruments to allow lots of people to get involved…
  - It is important to make sure that those who are leading - are skilled!
  - But more importantly - when we worship - our perspective changes…
  - It is easy for us to get caught up in the troubles of this life / concern of the day…
  - Through worship we get to see our God who is greater than any problem!
  - Our problems swallowed up in the praise of our incredible Lord!
- Worship at all times…
  - When God does something 'AMAZING' in our lives - we do tend to respond in worship...
  - The question is - how long does that thankful heart last - for how long do we worship...
  - Who would not worship the Lord if He poured out His blessings on them...
  - But do we only worship the Lord - get excited - when God does amazing things...
  - What do we do - what happens - during the hard times of life - do we still worship!
  - When we praise God in the hard times – that is when the World takes note!
- Worship in every place…
  - We worship and praise Jesus at church - but it should not stop there...
  - A church building is not the only place we can worship God – sing praise to the Lord...
  - We can worship God in our own homes - in our workplace - in our cars (*safe place*)!
- Worship through giving… vs. 31-34
  - The people offered their own burnt offerings to the Lord – 70 bull / 100 rams / 200 lambs…
  - They also dedicated 600 bulls and 3000 sheep to the Lord!
  - We choose who we worship - in the simple seemingly insignificant choices of life...
  - We are either going to be devoted to the world - to the pursuit of money/pleasure...
  - Or we are going to be devoted to the Lord - worshiping and following Him…
  - We cannot go in two directions at the same time - we cannot worship two things!
  - **Matthew 6:24** - "No one can serve two masters..."

- 5th – Be ready… vs. 35-36
  - The priests were too few to handle all of the sacrifices…
    - And only the priest had the right under the Law to perform the sacrifices…
    - But the event had taken place so spontaneously – they were caught off guard…

- Yet the Levites were more prepared – so they were allowed to join in!

- The qualification for being used by God – be ready to answer the call – 'Here I am!'
  - **Isaiah 6:8** – "Whom shall I send… I said, 'Here I am! Send me.'"
  - If you only turned on your phone for 5 minutes a day – miss a lot of texts…
  - If you left your cell phone at home – you would not know if someone called…
  - For that reason we like to have our phones always on / always with us…
  - You never know when God is going to speak to us – we need to be ready…
  - We need to keep our Bible close at hand – in case God sends us a message…
  - Keeping in constant prayer – just in case the Lord gives us a call!