

PREPARING FOR REVIVAL

1. The Example of King Hezekiah



Introduction

Revival! Many Christians are praying for revival, waiting for revival and talking about revival. Does it just happen, or do we have to prepare for it? We need to prepare if we truly want to see revival. We are going to look at several times in Israel's history when they experienced revival and see what we can learn from these stories, and how this applies to our lives.

Scripture Reading: 2 Chronicles 29:1-36

- ❖ What were the first things King Hezekiah did that prepared the way for revival in the nation?
2 Chronicles 29:3, 4-5

*(He ordered that the gates of the temple be repaired.
He ordered the priests to consecrate themselves and the temple.
The priests were told to remove everything that defiled the temple.)*

- ❖ How was the temple purified according to v15-17?

(They took out everything that was unclean and got rid of it.)

- ❖ In the New Testament we read that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. What can we learn from King Hezekiah's example if we want to prepare ourselves for revival? What do we need to do?

(Just as King Hezekiah ordered that everything that is unclean to be removed from the temple, so we need to get rid of any sin or uncleanness in our lives. The way to do this is to ask the Holy Spirit to search our hearts and show us what needs to be dealt with. Then we need to ask God's forgiveness and turn away from our sin.)

- ❖ What had the people in King Hezekiah's time failed to do that caused judgement to come on the nation?
2 Chronicles 29:6-11. List the four things mentioned in verse 7.

(We read in these verses that they neglected the worship in the temple.

- *They shut the doors of the portico.*
- *They put out the lamps.*
- *They did not burn incense.*
- *They did not offer burnt offerings in the sanctuary.)*

- ❖ What significance does each one of these have in our lives? Discuss.

- (1. They shut the doors of the porch or portico. This was the entrance to the Holy Place, so it seems they no longer used the temple to worship the Lord. Are we spending time in the presence of the Lord or have we shut the door?*
- (2. They had put out the lamps. This means they were no longer putting oil into the lamps to burn. Our lives are to be like lamps filled with the oil of the Holy Spirit and on fire for Jesus. Are we being filled with the Spirit day by day?*
- (3. They did not burn incense. Incense speaks of prayer in the New Testament. How is our prayer life?*
- (4. They did not bring burnt offerings. The burnt offering spoke of dedication and consecration. Are we truly dedicated to the Lord?)*

The first thing King Hezekiah did when he dedicated the temple to the Lord was offer sin offerings. We no longer need to do this as Jesus has offered himself as a sin offering on our behalf. However the King and the people then brought other sacrifices to the Lord.

- ❖ What were these sacrifices? 2 Chronicles 29:27, 31, 35

(They brought burnt offerings as well as thank offerings and peace offerings.)

- ❖ We no longer need to bring animal sacrifices to the Lord, but what are we to bring instead? Romans 12:1-2. What does this mean to you? Share.

(We are to bring ourselves as a living sacrifice to the Lord. This means we will no longer follow the ways of the world, but be renewed in our minds and do what the Lord wants us to.)

- ❖ Not only did the people in Hezekiah's time offer sacrifices, they also worshipped by singing praise to the Lord. 2 Chronicles 29:27-30. How does praise and worship help us prepare for revival? Look at the following scriptures: Psalm 100:4-5, Psalm 22:3, James 4:8.

(When we praise and worship God using our voices and musical instruments, we are choosing to draw near to him. This is the way we enter into his presence and the Bible says that he is in the midst of his people when they worship him. This is one of the more beautiful ways to welcome the Holy Spirit into our midst and allow him to work among us. Not only is it the way we welcome him, but when he is in our midst our response is praise and worship!)

Conclusion

On that day, in the time of Hezekiah, worship at the temple was re-established. The Scriptures tell us that the King and all his people were filled with joy.

There are some important truths we can learn from this story that teach us how to prepare ourselves for revival. Just as King Hezekiah ordered that everything unclean should be removed from the temple, so we too as temples of the Holy Spirit are to remove anything unclean from our lives. How sad to read that the doors to the Holy Place had been closed, the lamps put out and they no longer burned incense or offered sacrifices. This speaks to us about spending time in the presence of the Lord. Are we being filled with the Holy Spirit each day? Are we spending time with the Lord or have we closed the door and no longer burn incense, which speaks of prayer? Let's set things right in our temple!

God longs to draw near to us, and he will, when we draw near to him. That is his promise!