



Hezekiah: Warrior Against Cynicism

By: Greg Chandler

The final days of the Divided Kingdom period of Israel's history offered little respite for the righteous. From the king down to the commoner, most had turned from faithful service to the Lord and followed either pagan religions or to the dictates of their own hearts. God was weary of their antics. Through His prophets, He warned that the end was near and that the fierce Assyrian Empire would soon be used as His instrument of judgment on the wicked Jews who were once known as a part of His chosen people.

Though the southern kingdom of Judah also had difficulty remaining loyal to their Lord, a few good kings helped to bring the people back to faithful service to Jehovah. One such king was Hezekiah. Though he had his moments of weakness, Hezekiah was a devoted servant of the Lord and a man who desired others to show the same loyalty. This is well documented in II Chronicles 29-31 where the religious revival orchestrated by the king is recorded in great detail. As a part of this revival, Hezekiah chose to reinstitute the holy Passover feast which had ceased to be observed correctly for many years. While this is an

amazing feat for a king interested in godliness, what is even more amazing is who the king had the audacity to invite. II Chronicles 30:5-9 states:

So they decreed to make a proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, that the people should come and keep the Passover to the LORD, the God of Israel, at Jerusalem, for they had not kept it as often as prescribed. So couriers went throughout all Israel and Judah with letters from the king and his princes, as the king had commanded, saying, “O people of Israel, return to the LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, that he may turn again to the remnant of you who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria. Do not be like your fathers and your brothers, who were faithless to the LORD God of their fathers, so that he made them a desolation, as you see. Do not now be stiff-necked as your fathers were, but yield yourselves to the LORD and come to his sanctuary, which he has consecrated forever, and serve the LORD your God, that his fierce anger may turn away from you. For if you return to the LORD, your brothers and your children will find compassion with their captors and return to this land. For the LORD your God is gracious and merciful and will not turn away his face from you, if you return to him.”

Not only did good King Hezekiah desire obedience on the part of his own people in Judah, he sought to bring his brethren in the wicked northern country of Israel

back into God's fold. What possibly could have motivated him to take such drastic action amongst such a spiritually dark people? It was his love for God and his love for his fellow man. Hezekiah refused to grow cynical in the belief that there was no hope for their spiritual revival. Though numerous excuses could have been given as to why this was a bad idea, Hezekiah put them all aside to pursue what was right.

When one seeks to please the Lord during wicked times, it is very easy to allow cynicism to run rampant. Consider the time in which we currently live. A quick scan of modern television programming shows a culture that is quickly losing grasp of its last remaining morals. Decisions by government indicate a shift from traditional, godly values to an outlook that is seeking to remove any vestige of God from the public arena. Such shifts can make the God-fearer feel alone in a world that is foreign to his or her outlook. In such times, Hezekiah sets a high standard for those who seek righteousness.

Like Hezekiah, the God-fearer should never come to the inappropriate conclusion that the blackness of sin has caused everyone to give up on finding and pleasing God. In times when wickedness prevails, it is essential that saints seek to spread the message of light and hope in the midst of darkness and despair. As Jesus walked the earth in the spiritually dark shadow of the

Roman Empire, He told His followers “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden” (Matthew 5:14). This is true for His followers in any age. The only outcome of cynicism is denying those in sin the opportunity to hear the life changing message of the gospel.

When saints choose to shun the way of cynicism, will they see results from their efforts to bring the message of hope to a lost and dying world? This really does not matter. It is beyond the capability of anyone to change the heart of another. This is something that can only happen between an individual and God. The duty of the faithful is to bring this message of salvation and to provide opportunity for a change of heart to happen.

Still cynical? Continue reading the account of Hezekiah's revival:

So the couriers went 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. However, some men of Asher, of Manasseh, and of Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem.

Because Hezekiah refused to give in to cynicism, a choice was given. Some chose to scorn the message and continue in their wicked ways. Others, however,

took advantage of an opportunity to come back to their Lord. Because one man chose to do the right thing, several citizens of the northern kingdom chose to humble themselves under the mighty hand of Jehovah. Are you a faithful follower of the Lord? Are you giving opportunity to others to join you in this walk? Hezekiah did and great things followed. They still can today.