

1 AND 2 CHRONICLES: GAINING DIRECTION OUT OF THE AIMLESSNESS OF APOSTASY
Part V: Gaining Direction From God's Work In The Rest Of Judah's Davidic Dynasty, 2 Chronicles 13-36
M. Learning To Heed Scripture COURAGEOUSLY Amid Massive Spiritual Darkness
(2 Chronicles 29:1-31:21)

I. Introduction

A. The spiritual darkness of our era can make heeding Scripture seem to be an imposing task: the ungodly may mock us, and disorder and harmful ignorance in even the supportive may block our path to blessing.

B. However, **God blesses** us if we heed Him **courageously** in such times as did Hezekiah (as follows):

II. Learning To Heed Scripture COURAGEOUSLY Amid Massive Spiritual Darkness, 2 Chron. 29-31.

A. When Hezekiah came to the throne, he was led by his godly mother's heritage to heed God, 29:1-2:

1. Hezekiah's mother was Abijah, "Yahweh [the I AM' Lord] is my father," and her father was named Zechariah, "God has remembered," Zond. Pic. Ency. of the Bible, v. One, p. 13; v. Five, p. 1042.

2. This explains why Hezekiah was led to be a good king versus his evil father, Ahaz, 29:1-2 & 28:1-4.

B. Hezekiah thus courageously tried to make great reforms in a very ungodly era:

1. He opened the doors of the temple that his father had closed (2 Chronicles 29:3 versus 28:24), and directed the Levites to cleanse the temple of its idols in order to gain God's blessing, 2 Chron. 29:4-11.

2. The Levites heeded the king, cleansing the temple in sixteen days of its idolatrous pollutions, 29:12-17.

3. Hezekiah then led Jerusalem's leaders to worship the Lord with extensive sacrifices, a move that was copied by the people of Judah under Hezekiah's bidding, 2 Chronicles 29:18-30, 31-34.

C. Hezekiah's courageous efforts were initially obstructed by complications as a result of his era's deep sin, but God graciously worked to counter each of them in blessing for obedience to Him, 29:34-31:21:

1. God motivated the people to heed Hezekiah's directive to sacrifice to Him: in response to the king's call to offer sacrifices to God, the Lord led them to offer many sacrifices quickly, 29:31, 35-36!

2. God countered the mockery of the ungodly, giving those who heeded Hezekiah's lead great unity:

a. Hezekiah sent couriers to the Hebrews of the Northern Kingdom of Israel to join Judah to celebrate the Passover, 2 Chron. 30:1-10a. He tried to motivate them to obey God that He might bless them opposite their countrymen who had been taken captive by Assyria due to apostasy, 2 Chron. 30:7.

b. However, this effort was met by many in the Northern Kingdom with mockery; many in Israel laughed at Hezekiah's invitation to attend the Jerusalem Passover, 2 Chronicles 30:10b.

c. Nevertheless, some of the Hebrews in Israel came to the celebration in Judah, and God countered the mockery by giving those who gathered a united heart to heed Hezekiah's command, 30:11-12.

3. God countered the disorder and ignorance apostasy had brought for those who heeded Hezekiah:

a. Among those who gathered at Jerusalem, the effects of apostasy were so great that woeful ignorance unbiblical disorder and errant practices still abounded among them, 2 Chron. 29:34 with 30:13-18b: (1) When Hezekiah directed the temple offerings to be given, the Levites were more upright than the priests, many of whom were unclean as they had been negatively impacted from the past king's sinful reign, so the Levites helped flay the sacrifices until more priests decided to be cleansed, 29:34! (2) Then, many who came to the feast from apostate Israel ignorantly violated the Law and ate the Passover without heeding Biblical ceremonial cleansing regulations, 2 Chronicles 30:15-18b.

b. However, when Hezekiah interceded to God in their behalf, asking Him graciously to forgive the people due to the good intents of their heart, and God graciously forgave them, 2 Chron. 30:18c-20.

c. Also, due to apostate uncleanliness, God's gracious Numbers 9:10-11 stipulation was used to justify celebrating Passover in the second month versus the first month as it was originally designed, for the formerly apostate priests were not yet cleansed in time to heed the original date, cf. 2 Chron. 30:1-3.

4. Thus, the people celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread associated with Passover for an added seven days, and there followed great reforms and great giving by the people, 30:21-27; 31:1-21.

Lesson: Though it took COURAGE for Hezekiah to HEED Scripture in HIS era of DEEP apostasy, GOD rewarded him, GRACIOUSLY smoothing out the dreadful effects of apostasy to bless the godly!

Application: If we COURAGEOUSLY obey God EVEN in a GROSSLY dark era, HE will bless us!