CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
JUNE08 2024

recipe for revival

Scripture Story: 2 Chronicles 29–31; 2 Kings 18–20; Isaiah 39.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 28; 29.



Photo by Alden Ho

keytext

"Hezekiah trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel. . . . He held fast to the LORD and did not stop following him."

(2 Kings 18:5, 6, NIV)

flashlight

"These and other like messages revealing the willingness of God to forgive and accept those who turned to Him with full purpose of heart, had brought hope to many a fainting soul in the dark years when the temple doors remained closed; and now, as the leaders began to institute a reform, a multitude of the people, weary of the thralldom of sin, were ready to respond" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 334).

what do you think?

Which sentence best describes your church, Sabbath School class, or youth group?

___ Everyone is on fire for the Lord.
___ A few people are excited about God, but most aren't.
___ Everyone seems to be going through the motions of religion.
___ People want to know God better but don't seem to know how.
___ Nobody takes God seriously.

Do you think you need a revival among young people in your church? What would it take to get everyone really excited about serving the Lord? Would you want to be part of a group that was "on fire" for God?

did you know?

The word "revival" is often used to call people to true heart religion and a return to God. In fact, one of the dictionary definitions of the word is "a time of reawakened interest in religion."

The Bible never uses the word "revival." It comes from a Latin word that means "to live again." It wasn't used in a religious sense until 1702, when it was used by the American preacher Cotton Mather. But the Bible does describe several periods in Israel's history that we would probably call "revivals." These were times when Israel had turned away from God, but a strong leader—usually a king or a prophet—led the people back to God and, once again, they became excited about serving and worshipping Him.

INTO THE STORY

"Hezekiah was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-nine years. . . . He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father David had done.

"In the first month of the first year of his reign, he opened the doors of the temple of the LORD and repaired them. He brought in the priests and the Levites, assembled them in the square on the east side and said: 'Listen to me, Levites! Consecrate yourselves now and consecrate the temple of the LORD, the God of your ancestors. Remove all defilement from the sanctuary. . . . I intend to make a covenant with the LORD, the God of Israel, so that his fierce anger will turn away from us. My sons, do not be negligent now, for the LORD has chosen you to stand before him and serve him, to minister before him and to burn incense.'. . .

"So the service of the temple of the LORD was reestablished. Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced at what God had brought about for his people, because it was done so quickly."

"Hezekiah sent word to all Israel and Judah and also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, inviting them to come to the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem and celebrate the Passover to the LORD, the God of Israel. The king and his officials and the whole assembly in Jerusalem decided to celebrate the Passover in the second month. . . . They decided to send a proclamation throughout Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, calling the people to come to Jerusalem and celebrate the Passover to the LORD, the God of Israel. It had not been celebrated in large numbers according to what was written. . . .

"A very large crowd of people assembled in Jerusalem to celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread in the second month. They removed the altars in Jerusalem and cleared away the incense altars and threw them into the Kidron Valley. . . .

"The whole assembly then agreed to celebrate the festival seven more days; so for another seven days they celebrated joyfully. . . . There was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the days of Solomon son of David king of Israel there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem. The priests and the Levites stood to bless the people, and God heard them, for their prayer reached heaven, his holy dwelling place."

(2 Chronicles 29:1-11, 35, 36; 30:1-5, 13-27, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

What was the first step in Hezekiah's reform program?

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_____
_____
_____

What kind of "defilement" needed to be removed from the Temple?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Why did Hezekiah want to make a covenant with God?

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How do you think the priests and Levites reacted to the changes Hezekiah asked them to make?

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_____

What had to be done before the Passover feast could be celebrated?

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_____

Why was this celebration of the Passover such a big deal?

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_____

Why do you think the people wanted to celebrate the Passover for seven days longer than usual?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

punch lines

"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land" **(2 Chronicles 7:14, NIV).**

"LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, LORD. Repeat them in our day, in our time make them known" **(Habakkuk 3:2, NIV).**

"I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days" **(Joel 2:28, 29, NIV).**

"Instead of your shame you will receive a double portion, and instead of disgrace you will rejoice in your inheritance. And so you will inherit a double portion in your land, and everlasting joy will be yours" **(Isaiah 61:7, NIV).**

further insight

"In the heart renewed by divine grace, love is the principle of action. It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, subdues enmity, and ennobles the affections. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the life and sheds a refining influence on all around."—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 59

Sabbath

Read 2 Chronicles 30:32.

Look back at your answers to *What Do You Think?* Do you think your church or youth group needs a revival? What would "revival" look like for you and your friends?

The people of Israel joyfully chose to celebrate Passover for an extra seven days after King Hezekiah brought back the festival that had been forgotten for so many years.

Have you ever wanted a church service or program to last longer? What kind of worship service would you enjoy so much that you'd want to stay twice as long as you were supposed to?

Sunday

Read 2 Chronicles 29:2, 5; 30:14.

King Hezekiah's revival included three steps that can give us an idea of how God brings about revival for His people today.

Seeking God's will. Hezekiah "did what was right in the eyes of the LORD" (2 Chronicles 29:2, NIV). True revival begins by seeking God's will for us as it's revealed in the Bible.

Sacrifice. There were things the people of Israel had to give up in order to truly follow God. All evidence of idol worship had to go (2 Chronicles 29:5; 30:14, NIV). What are the "idols" in your life that you would need to remove before God could completely rule your world?

Celebration. During that Passover—the first in many years—people were having such a good time, they decided to stay, worship, and celebrate for an extra week! When God truly takes over our lives, our churches, our communities, we'll enjoy spending time in His presence.

Monday

Read 2 Chronicles 7:14.

Hezekiah "held fast" to the Lord. He held on and kept following God even when temptations and distractions threatened to tear Him away. Without a firm grip on God, we can never experience revival ourselves, or help bring revival to God's church.

What temptations and distractions in your life might lead you to let go of God?

What helps you "hold fast" to the Lord when times get tough?

Tuesday

Read Habakkuk 3:2.

Read the *Flashlight* section of the lesson. According to Ellen White, how did the people of Israel feel about God during the years when the Temple's doors were closed? What made them "ready to respond" to Hezekiah's plans for revival?

Many people who might not seem to be active in church are quietly longing for a relationship with God. If a revival were to start in your church or youth group, you might be surprised by some of the people who were "ready to respond." Don't ever write off anyone as a lost cause!

Wednesday

Read Joel 2:28, 29.

Hezekiah's revival reawakened the spiritual life of Judah at a time when the nation had been spiritually asleep for years. God calls men and women, youth and adults, in every era to reconnect with Him and get others excited about following Him again.

Today's Bible reading was probably written during the same period of Jewish history. This passage is quoted in Acts 2 to show that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost fulfilled Joel's prophecy.

As we get closer to the end of earth's history, God again promises to pour His Spirit out on young and old, men and women—anyone who will commit their lives to Him and get serious about bringing revival to His church and the world.

Thursday

Read Psalm 51:10; Matthew 4:19.

Revival begins inside—with a person who is, as Hezekiah was, completely committed to following God. It then moves outside—to change a church, a community, the world.

What's one thing you'd want to do in your own spiritual life to make it happen?

What's one thing you'd like to see happen in your church or youth group? (And share it with your youth group leader, Sabbath School teacher, and/or pastor!)

Friday

Read Isaiah 61:7.

A true spiritual revival is exciting and inspiring—but also scary.

As you think about revival coming to your church or youth group, to your life, is there anything about it that scares you? Are there things you'd be afraid to give up? Are you afraid of what God might ask you to do?

Ask God to help make you, your family, friends, and church ready for revival.

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 28; 29.

**Royalty in Ruins* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.