

2 Chronicles 30:1-12

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[0 : 00] We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. 2 Chronicles chapter 30, starting in verse 1. If you remember the events which took place in the last chapter.

! In the first year, on the first month, on the first day of Hezekiah's reign, he opened up the doors to the temple. Then they began to cleanse the temple.

He reaffirmed or renewed the call to the Levites and the priests. They began to cleanse the temple from the inside out. And then they come and He consecrates not only the temple but the people of the Lord.

He does this beautiful thing recorded for us there in the end of the 29th chapter where He offers a number, four different sin sacrifices. And we looked at that as not just that He was going above and beyond.

Because when we go back to the book of Leviticus, Leviticus chapter 3 and 4, we see that each sin sacrifice, it was offered in a multiple of seven of these, seven of those, seven of that.

[1 : 06] Each one had a part and portion of the people. There were sin sacrifices for the priest. There were sacrifices for the people who sinned unknowingly. There were sacrifices for the people who entered into a covenant in a sinful manner.

And then finally there was the sacrifice for the king. So he has shed the blood for the sins, literally, of the people of God. And he has done all that in the first month of his reign.

And now we come to this portion where Hezekiah does something that has not been done since the days of Solomon. Really, we don't even have it recorded for us as being done properly during that time.

So it is really a unique portion of scripture. And it says in verse 30, starting in verse, I mean, verse 1 of chapter 30, Now Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah and wrote letters, also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover to the Lord God of Israel.

For the king and his princes and all the assembly in Jerusalem had decided to celebrate the Passover in the second month, since they could not celebrate it at that time because the priests had not consecrated themselves in sufficient numbers, nor had the people been gathered to Jerusalem.

[2 : 25] Thus the thing was right in the sight of the king and all the assembly. So they established a decree to circulate a proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba even to Dan, that they should come to celebrate the Passover to the Lord God of Israel at Jerusalem.

For they had not celebrated it in great numbers as it was prescribed. The couriers went throughout all Israel and Judah with the letters from the hand of the king and his princes, even according to the command of the king, saying, O sons of Israel, return to the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, that he may return to those of you who escaped and are left from the hand of the kings of Assyria.

Do not be like your fathers and your brothers who were unfaithful to the Lord God of their fathers, so that he made them a horror, as you see. Now do not stiffen your neck like your fathers, but yield to the Lord and enter his sanctuary, which he has consecrated forever, and serve the Lord your God, that his burning anger may turn away from you.

For if you return to the Lord, your brothers and your sons will find compassion before those who led them captive and will return to this land. For the Lord your God is gracious and compassionate and will not turn his face away from you if you return to him.

So the couriers passed from city to city throughout the country of Ephraim and Manasseh and as far as Zebulun, but they laughed at them to scorn and mocked them. Nevertheless, some men of Assyria, Manasseh, and Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem.

[4 : 01] The hand of God was also on Judah to give them one heart to do what the king and the princes commanded by the word of the Lord. I want you to see this evening the extended invitation.

Though in the writings of Moses we have the prescription for every person of Israel to gather together to celebrate as a corporate body the Passover festival once a year, we do not find that happening.

We do not find the records of it happening very often at all, but we do not find it happening as it should. It is the first and primary festival of the people of the Lord to remind them of the blood that was shed as the death angel passed over them.

We know because we studied the book of Exodus together and we understand in Scripture that the Passover is pointing to the true Passover who is Jesus Christ.

We know that he is the true Passover lamb slain at the proper time, that he came so that the death angel may pass over those whose blood who have been covered with the blood of that lamb who is Jesus Christ.

[5 : 21] But the people of the Lord here have also been set apart. They were set apart in Egypt. They were set apart during that time of judgment and they're set apart throughout all of eternity by their celebration of the festivals that God has called them to, yet they had failed to do so.

Here, Hezekiah, the king who has a heart that clings to the Lord his God and will not let him go, in his first year of reign is extending this invitation for the people to come.

Now it is telling to be reminded throughout the Old Testament that when we read of the Passover, and this is something we need to pay attention to in transition between the Old and the New Testament, I know this is kind of a side note, this isn't the primary note, but throughout the Old Testament, it is always referred to as the Passover of the Lord, the Passover of the Lord, Passover of the Lord.

That is, it is His Passover. It is what He did for His people. When you get to the New Testament, you will notice that the changing, the wording has changed.

It is referred to as the Passover of the Jews. It now has become a national holiday rather than a recognition of what the Lord has done. They have taken what God did to set them apart and made it about themselves.

[6 : 36] And it has become a national celebration rather than a celebration of the Lord. But that's easy to do if you don't ever celebrate it as you should, as the people of the Lord.

But yet Hezekiah here extends this invitation. Now this invitation is given, and they respond, and they celebrate this Passover. We will find, when we read a little bit further, not only do they celebrate it for the seven days that it was intended to be celebrated, but they also extend that celebration, and they celebrate it another seven days.

So they have a 14-day celebration. One thing that we notice in reading the Old Testament is when the people of the Lord return and come back to a genuine place of worship, and they do what He's called them to do, they don't want to leave that moment.

They usually extend that moment. Think the book of Nehemiah and Ezra, when they come together and they gather together and they're celebrating the festival of booths, and it was supposed to be for a prescribed number of days, but yet it went on and on and on and on.

Why? Because it's the sweetness of that fellowship and the sweetness of that worship which had been unknown to the people. But yet here Hezekiah extends this invitation, and I want you to notice what this invitation is all about and what it entails, because it has much to say to us by way of application, because we know that not only are they called to worship in the chapter which precedes this, but here they're called to set their hearts and minds on the atonement of their sins and to be reminded of the price that was paid for their freedom.

[8 : 11] They're called to walk in faithfulness. So this extended invitation is first and foremost one of united focus. It is an invitation of united focus.

Notice what it says. Now Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah. By this time, the Assyrians have carried away the northern kingdom of Israel, yet there is a remnant that has remained scattered throughout the land.

And yet Hezekiah, still reigning in the southern kingdom of Judah, still holding true, though they have been unfaithful in the kings prior to him, now they have restored temple worship, he extends this invitation beyond his borders.

There have been allegiances with the kings of the southern kingdom and the kings of the northern kingdom which were detrimental. He's not seeking to make an allegiance. He's not reaching out to the vassal king who has been put in place by the Assyrian leaders.

He's not reaching out to anyone to create some kind of political allegiance so that they can fend off an enemy. There's nothing to do with politics here. But we are told multiple times in this passage that He extends this invitation to all of Israel and Judah from Beersheba to Dan, that is from the southernmost part of the land to the northernmost part of the land, regardless if you are a part of the northern kingdom or the southern kingdom.

[9 : 40] He is looking at the entirety of the people of the Lord because He understands though politically they have been divided, spiritually God still sees them as His people because God had entered into a covenant with a unique people group, not just with one people confined to a certain geographic region.

Hezekiah has a foresight to understand that it is an invitation for all of Israel for it was the Lord God who declared that when the Passover was to be celebrated, every male from all of Israel should come to Jerusalem and worship.

And here we see the reality that His desire to worship is not self-centered nor self-focused. It is not about strengthening His own empire. It is not about a sense of security.

Rather, He is wanting to do what God has commanded Him to do and He is extending this invitation to the entirety of the people of the Lord. It is the entire people that were born under the covenant of the Abrahamic covenant and is extended to them with no strings attached.

Because we notice what the invitation is. The invitation is to come to Jerusalem to the house of the Lord. The invitation is not to come to the king's palace.

[11 : 05] He's not asking you to come sit down and let's have political discussion. He's not asking anyone to come and let's talk about who we ought to fight against. There's no mentioning of enemies.

There's no mentioning of any other body outside of who they are. And He says, Come and join us at the house of the Lord. Because the invitation is extended to all regardless of what had divided them in the past.

They have been divided as a nation for a number of years. Many dynasties, if you want to call them that, have passed across the scene of history in the northern kingdom.

Much harm has been done by the northern kingdom to the southern kingdom and vice versa. There have been wars between the two of them. Just if you go back to the reign of Hezekiah's father, the people from the northern kingdom carried away 200,000 captives from the southern kingdom.

After they had slain a great number of them, civil war had always been ongoing. Yet in this moment, He does not see them as His enemies.

[12 : 20] He extends an invitation that is focused on unity. Why? Because one of the greatest things throughout church history has not been that the people of God are always alike.

One of the greatest things throughout church history is that often, in spite of their differences, those who respond to the invitation come and they find unity among one another.

And they are grafted into one body. It is the beautiful testimony of the church that we do not all come because we all see the things the same way and we all understand things the same way or we're all from the same background.

No, it is the beauty of the body that though we have so many differences, the response to the invitation is the one thing that unites us. There was a king who sent out an invitation and the people of the Lord responded to that invitation and they come and they celebrate the blood that was shed so that the death angel could pass over.

And we find union and unity there. Too often in our churches, what becomes the dividing thing is when we forget what is the main thing.

[13 : 34] We try to bring other things into the house of the Lord rather than just coming and meeting with one another at the house of the Lord. I'm not talking about doctrine or any of those matters because doctrine matters.

But I'm also, I told someone just this past week, I'm also not naive enough to think that as a man, I have every doctrine figured out completely and I am 100% right.

That's a good way of me saying that I acknowledge that there may be people who see things different than me that may be right. That I could be wrong. It takes a little humility to acknowledge

that but I study scripture and when I see the main things, I'm not talking about the virgin birth of Christ, I'm not talking about the perfection of Christ, I'm talking about the small matters, right? The small rocks, the big rocks we have to put in place and say yes, there we are. There are a multitude of small rock issues that do not need to be a dividing factor among us. And we see that, we understand that because when the invitation is extended, it is extended with a united focus. What does Peter tell us? That the people of God are being built up into a spiritual household. Let's not forget that every letter in the New Testament is written to a local church.

[14:57] Everyone, I believe the local church matters. But let's also not forget that every local church is also united to the universal church. That we may be one part of the wall of the spiritual house but we are just a part of the spiritual house.

We are not the entirety of the spiritual house. Right? We are a part and portion of it but we are being united with those around us. So we understand the united focus.

Second, with this invitation, we see that it is grounded in mercy. It is an invitation grounded in mercy. It is striking really. I'm going to tell you there's no alliteration tonight.

Okay? I know that throws some of your note keepings off. There's no alliteration. It's alright. There's just no way good to do it for the needed to be. So it's an invitation grounded in mercy. You say, well pastor, where do you see the mercy?

Well look at the mercy here. It says, for the king and his princes and all the assembly of Jerusalem had decided to celebrate the Passover in the second month. Now the Passover is to be celebrated in the first month. The reason the first month was the first month was because that was a unique month to the Jewish people.

[16:02] The thing that made it first was the celebration of the Passover. That was what was to start their calendar year. It was not what the rest of the world recognized but for the Jewish people that's what they recognized because things began when the Passover happened.

Almost like when we celebrate our new birth in Christ. We are born again. That is the first of it. We are the first fruits of that. So we understand this but Hezekiah and the people around him and his counselors decided well let's do it in the second month.

Now the legalist would stand up and say you can't do that. It's supposed to be in the first month. We can go back and we can read the Old Testament and we can read it over and over again. It's supposed to be on a particular day on a particular month at a particular time and if it's not done then it's not done right.

And we can get real bent out of shape about this and we can understand that. If you don't believe that I'm accurate in there just ask people on which day of the week was Christ crucified and ask them about the Passover celebration and the Passion Week of Christ there's great controversy there.

You say well Pastor now wait a minute when did He keep the Passover meal? Was it actually on Passover? Let me ask you a question and make you think for just a moment. Okay can I do that? Did Christ eat the Passover meal on the Passover?

[17:12] Now I'm not going to answer it for you. or did He eat it the day before the Passover? And the reason I ask the question is because for Jesus to be the Passover lamb He had to die on the day of preparation when they were preparing the Passover lamb which it says in the Gospels that He was crucified on the day of preparation for it was the day of preparation that is the day that the Passover lambs were slain.

it is my interpretation that Jesus I will give you this much Jesus died the very moment or He was crucified the very moment the Passover lambs were to be slain for He is the Passover lamb. But for that to be true that means He ate that meal the day before. So you're like oh wait a minute it messes up your whole understanding right?

So how could He do that? Did He celebrate the Passover? He said I desire to celebrate this Passover with you. I'm going to let you think about that for just a moment because just in case you think that's unique Hezekiah and his people are about to celebrate it in a totally different month. Not just the day prior but in a totally different month. Why? He says that they decided to do this because they had not had enough time to consecrate enough priests and all the people weren't there.

[18:45] So they thought and this is where we see the mercy and grace of God it is better to have the hearts and people prepared to worship as we should rather than just to go through the motions and do it at the right time.

what's more important the preparation of the heart and the people and the setting apart as holy those who would prepare the sacrifices or making sure we get things done at the right time. And see they understood the reality we may miss the day but we're not going to miss the intent the reason God puts a day on the calendar do you remember what the book of Genesis tells us about the stars and the moon and the suns that when he created the greater light to rule today and the lesser light to rule tonight and he set the stars in the heavens what does it say?

He said for seasons and a sign right? It makes no sense early in the book of Genesis like why do we need seasons and a sign because it's not even raining and you know weather's perfect and paradise and everything's great but God knew that there was going to be a day where he would tell the people you need to set up a calendar how do you set up a calendar through the seasons and a sign God put a testimony up there why?

So the people could look throughout today and say I need to get ready the Passover's coming I need to be preparing to go worship that Passover I need to be preparing to go stand before the Lord my God if there's any sins I need to confess I need to do that now so that I can worship him as I should but that does not mean that God is a legalist God had to put a day on a calendar so that they would make preparation to do it but when they had not made preparations to do it God in his mercy and grace said I would rather you come before me in the right manner than come to me haphazardly at the right time and think about that for just a moment so many people get caught up in it we have to do things the exact way and this way and it has to always be this way I'm going to be the first to admit when it comes to Sunday morning services my mind works that way I want to make sure things flow properly but I know I haven't said this in a while but the quote remains to be said people are more important in process right we can have our process right and we can neglect people and more importantly we can neglect the person that we're encountering or we're trying to encounter in that process they could have went through the process and went through the motions and Hezekiah could have thrown it all together you know how many people would not have made it to that celebration of the Passover to Him the people were more important to encounter the person of Yahweh as they stood before the covenant

[21 : 34] God Yahweh and celebrated the blood that spared them the death angel and we see God's mercy because He accepts that right He receives that there's no judgment that rains down upon them so if we look at that and we say well I'm not sure we did that the right way the greater question would be did I do it with the right heart not did I do it in the right way was my heart prepared and was I prepared to enter into His presence not just did I was it time so I showed up and I went through the motions and I did everything right friend listen to me it has everything to do with your Bible study with your prayer time with our church attendance every aspect because it can come habitual right oh it's time to do my Bible study let me go through the motions and do it and I'll rush through it I've done it each one of us has rather than preparing my heart

God know me get my heart right so that I may hear from you or our coming together as a church body we see here that this invitation is grounded in mercy I remember several years ago when some of you were there when I was pastoring down Normandy we had some rather new believers in our choir and they were kind of we would say maybe they were kind of half believers some of you may say that but they were rather new believers and it was choir practice one Sunday morning and just like here they practiced before and I was walking through the sanctuary and one of our new believers made a mistake in the choir and he got upset in himself and he let a word fly out and about that time I was walking through the back and he goes oh I'm sorry pastor I was like hey I'm just glad you're there you know I'm just glad you're there and you recognize the fact that maybe there was something wrong with that why?

because people are more important than process now does that mean if it's Sunday morning and we were singing and he decided to let it fly on all the kids I wouldn't have called him back let's go talk about that for just a moment right but I was just glad he was there he needed to be there I'd spent the whole month prior to that meeting with him off and on off and on off and on and answering every question and I knew the background he came from it's okay is God gracious and merciful to accept that hey he accepts it not only when you're in the building even out there right he hears it there too but look at this God says I'd rather you just come before me this invitation I wonder if we extend invitations that are grounded in mercy if we say you just come and you look like us and you act like us and we'll be okay no it's grounded in mercy third we see that this is an invitation of personal choice it's an invitation of personal choice Hezekiah the king here he is a type of Christ

don't miss the typology don't press the type too much but understand it right so when we come to the Old Testament we see Christ in every aspect we don't want to force the issue but there are those we can say that is a type of Christ he is a king extending the invitation to come celebrate the shedding of blood don't miss that right

I mean you can't you can't escape that notice and he is a king giving an invitation to the people and he is sending it by his couriers we call that the great commission right it is the king on the throne telling his couriers that is the church today to go proclaim Jesus himself said there was a king who gave a wedding feast and sent his messengers out and told him to go invite people to the feast right but when he invited the people to the feast they weren't forced to come they had the option to come the messengers would go say hey the banquet is prepared it's time to come here the couriers run they go from Beersheba to Dan they go to all the villages on Judah and they even go to Ephraim and Manasseh they even go over to the other side of the Jordan they're over there in all that region and they're extending this invitation and they're doing it to everybody to come into context with but look at what it says most of them are not going to accept it but it is their decision now does God know who's going to receive it sure but as far as man is concerned the couriers are just to deliver the invitation but it is then the responsibility of the individual listening to the invitation what they do with it and we notice that what they do they go to them and it says oh sons of Israel return to the Lord

God of Abraham Isaac and Israel notice did I say return to the Lord God of Hezekiah because Hezekiah is not the unifying factor here none could argue with the fact that they were a part of Abraham Isaac and Israel they were all descended from there and so we understand here that this invitation is given in their context that He may return to those of you who escaped and are left from the hand of the king of Assyria so the invitation comes with the full transparency of the dire strait that they're in some of their fathers and their brothers have been carried away into captivity and they understand that He does not try to say you've been doing what is right He does not say come and do as you've been doing He says now it's time to come He says but do not be like your fathers and your brothers who were unfaithful to the Lord God of their fathers so that He made them a horror as you see notice this in this personal choice the personal choice comes down to this reality none of us none of us are restricted by our past nor our present circumstances into how we choose to respond to the invitation they had not grown up in a believing land they had not been from believing homes their fathers and their brothers were in captivity because of the wickedness they had done and the invitation says do not be like them they don't have to be like them they have the choice right the extended invitation and it says do not stiffen your neck like your fathers but yield to the Lord and enter His sanctuary which He has consecrated forever the legacy standard

[28 : 01] Bible says but take the hand of the Lord and come into His house so it means to yield right it's like taking the hand it's like the child walking across the street in the parking lot that takes the hand or ought to take the hand of the one who understands the way it is a yielding the reason children don't like to do that is because they don't want to yield that control it is surrendering saying I want to take the hand of the one who's going to lead me into this house and it's the invitation it's extended but it's one of personal choice listen this invitation was coming from the throne of the king we are told multiple times that king Hezekiah from his very throne he sent out this invitation yet he did not force anyone Christ is the king of kings and lord of lords you know where we'll be at this week we'll be in Mark chapter 6 it's a really telling passage I don't want to preach the sermon to you but it's the only only location in which we find where it says that Christ could not do any miracles there

I mean think about that in context he's just told to see to be still he's cast a legion of demons out of a demoniac he's healed the woman with a flow of blood for 12 years because she touched the hem of his garment he's just raised a dead girl to life and yet he walks into his hometown and he cannot do any miracles because of their unbelief that makes no sense other than the fact that the king who sits on the throne doesn't force himself on anyone and what we find is Hezekiah has the authority the northern kingdom they have already fallen to the Assyrian empire there is no authority in that land Hezekiah is the authority and yet he doesn't force anyone he leaves it up to them as a matter of fact it tells us that the multitude of the people laughed and mocked them to scorn but they just kept extending the invitation why?

because it's one of personal choice the majority of the people neglected and rejected that because it's easy to mock and laugh off that which is calling us to change and be different it's easy to say oh

I don't want anything to do with that when it's calling us to change our ways and yield our will and the reality is that most people most people will laugh that off either to your face or behind your back and they will think it's crazy I will never forget the first time I was ever asked if I was some kind of preacher man or Jesus freak and just for context that was about four years before I thought the Lord was calling me to preach and I was sitting on the roof of a house right across the tracks off of Spring Street putting shingles on the roof and it was not meant in an encouraging context by the way it was someone asking me if I was crazy

I stopped for a minute and I went yeah I think I might be and we just went back to doing a poor roofing job it's okay it's okay right most people respond but that's their choice we don't force the couriers had the authority of the king but the couriers did not have authority over the individuals they just extended the invitation it's not our responsibility we extend the invitation there's the hope people have asked pastor how do you how do you keep going how do you stay encouraged because once I deliver it it's out of my hands your response is not my responsibility that seems cold but that's real my responsibility is to give you something to respond to whether or not you respond to it that's your responsibility you say you really walk around like yes I do now that doesn't mean that I don't carry a concern for everybody that sits in front of me it does not mean that my heart doesn't break and it doesn't mean that there are not burdens and I'm not praying over that but I can't I'm too busy trying to respond myself to what

God's telling me to do and that's where my responsibility is so many people are afraid to be the courier who delivers the invitation because they are scared of how people are going to respond to it it's their personal choice has nothing to do with you nothing you are the avenue who's supposed to extend it so we see this fourth and finally but what about those who do this extended invitation is finally one that requires humility to respond to the invitation of Hezekiah and of Christ is one that requires humility look at what it says verse 11 after verse 10 tells us that people laughed and mocked them scorn and you know tells us in verse 11 nevertheless some some men of Asher [33 : 28] Maness and Zebulun by the way that's outside the region of Judah nevertheless some we rejoice over some the book of Hebrews tells us that all of heaven rejoices over the some some men humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem any response to the invitation to come and celebrate the shedding of the blood for the sin of mankind is one of humility why because there's an acknowledgement that the kingdom we are a part of was wrong that we haven't been doing this right that what was what we thought was working for us hey it's not working for us anymore so now I'm going to come down here and I'm going to humble myself and acknowledge publicly we were wrong which is why most people didn't respond the northern kingdom wanted nothing to do with the southern kingdom because they had their own forms of worship and it's humbling to say we've been worshiping all these years but we've been doing it in a wrong fashion we've been doing it in a wrong way we haven't been doing it as the

Lord called us to nor where he's called us to we have our golden calves and Dan we have our places of worship but we were wrong and some of them had this humility and when we come to Christ humility is required because it tells us that we must come to him and say Lord I've been trying to do it all these years and unfortunately I've been doing it wrong and I've just come to the realization that it's I might have even been going through the motions I might have even been doing the motions at the right place and maybe even from outward appearances in the right way that's my testimony for a lot of years I was at the right place doing the motions the right way from all appearances but my heart was desperately wicked and it was absolutely wrong and it took humility for me to acknowledge reality that everything I've been doing has just been me and it is one that requires that and it says in the hand of God was also on Judah to give them one heart to do what the king and the princess commanded by the word of the Lord make no mistake about it this type of invitation is only responded to people of so many differences only come together in unity because it's a work of the Lord as he exercises a humble heart in the heart of his people it's not the work of me it's astounding we'll read the rest of this chapter these people who have been fighting with one another these people who have not gotten along about anything will worship together for 14 days they'll tear down idolatrous temples together not only in Judah and Jerusalem but also in some of their hometowns and then they'll all go back to their own homes it's not like on the outside after the aftermath of this we have one big united kingdom we don't have that anymore I mean it's still a divided kingdom but the one thing that united them was the celebration of this Passover meal why because it was a work of the Lord God calling them together fixing their hearts

and minds to focus on the one thing at that moment was a celebration of the blood that had been shed so that the death angel would pass over them so that they could be set free from their enslavement to the Egyptians and God could call them out of that captivity and call them his people and it was an invitation that came from a king but it was a work that was rooted and founded in the Lord we have a greater invitation we have an invitation that comes from the king but that king is the Lord God we're not looking at a king Hezekiah but we're looking at a king Jesus Christ who extends the invitation and he calls us to be his couriers who take that invitation and it is he who is working in the hearts and minds of people and uniting them around the central aspects of the gospel so that when they gather together they can worship in sincerity and truth and they can worship as they ought to and the things that divided them and separated them they no longer matter when they come together in his presence it's a beautiful thing when it can happen too often life just goes on and we don't see it happen as much as we ought to yet we hear here we see in this passage the extended invitation and how the king invites all to come into the house of the Lord and to worship together in 2nd chronicles 30 verses 1 through 12 thank you my brothers and I