

2 Chronicles 31:2-21

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 13 August 2025

Preacher: Billy Joe Calvert

[0 : 00] And we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. Let's get ourselves in context because this context really matters.! We are wrapping up a portion of Scripture that is very unique to the Chronicler, in particular 2 Chronicles, as it pertains to the story of Hezekiah.

Hezekiah is one of those great kings. It tells us in the book of 2 Kings that he loved the Lord and clung to the Lord all of his days like none that went before him nor any that went after him. But then we are given one verse in the book of 2 Kings that declares that Hezekiah reinstated the temple worship and brought all that back together. And then we move, we fast forward in the king's account to the 14th year of his reign.

We come now to the book of 2 Chronicles and it does not start with the events of the 14th year of his reign. We will get to that in chapter 32 because it is of great importance.

As a matter of fact, what happens in the 14th year of his reign is recorded verbatim, not only in 2 Kings, but also is recorded in 2 Chronicles. And then we find it recorded a third time in the book of Isaiah, Isaiah 38 and 39, I believe it is.

[1 : 17] So much so that the Isaiah portion is considered by many to be the authentic one and it was the writing of Isaiah that was inserted into the 2 Kings portion to kind of put the history together.

So it is a really amazing thing. And in case you do not remember, it is when the king of Assyria encamped around the walls of Jerusalem. Every other city had fallen, but at that time, Jerusalem was standing strong.

And Hezekiah, a lot of things happened. They plugged up the canals, Hezekiah's tunnel. If you have ever heard about the discovery of Hezekiah's tunnel in archaeology, that transpired at that time. There is a lot of things that happened historically during those days in which the people of the Lord remained true and they remained steadfast.

And they saw God deliver them from this Assyrian empire, which was mocking God. But we're getting ahead of ourselves because we'll find that in the 32nd chapter. But the thing that we need to understand is that you don't go from living as an idolatrous, rebellious people to being steadfast and immovable, even in the sight of the enemy, by coincidence.

Something happened. Because the kings that reigned prior to Hezekiah, in particular his father, had shut the temple doors, had brought in a false altar inside the temple before they did that, really were leading the people, had his own sons pass through the fire.

[2 : 50] However you want to interpret that passage, it says it's there. I believe in a little interpretation that they were practicing child sacrifice. Some horrific things happening, even among the high priest.

The high priest was the one who built the false altar that consumed the space of the altar within the temple of the Lord. And they built it after the pattern of the Assyrians' altar.

And yet we fast forward some 14 years, and they're resisting the Assyrians. Not only are they no longer paying them tribute, but they're standing strong.

They're not even entering into arguments with them. They're remaining silent. And Hezekiah goes and he prays before the Lord. And then one of the few corporate prayers recorded for us in the Old Testament, Hezekiah asks Isaiah to join him.

And Hezekiah and Isaiah pray before the Lord. And then the Lord delivers them. So the question that we ask ourselves is how? How did we get there?

[3 : 53] How are they so faithful and true and steadfast now? Because it's not just Hezekiah, it's all the people. How are they dependent upon what Hezekiah is telling them?

How are they so faithful? And the answer to that is found in 2 Chronicles. He, the first month of the first year of His reign, He opens the doors of the temple. He calls the Levites back.

He offers a sin offering. Four different types and multiples of seven, which, as we saw, was the atonement for every aspect of society. There was the sin given for the priest.

There was the sin given for the king. There was the sin given for the people who had made false vows, like idolatrous worship. And there was the sin offering given for the people who had sinned unintentionally.

So He had atoned, Hezekiah did, for all the sins of all the people. And then He welcomed them and extended that invitation to not only the people of Judah, but also the people that were left behind by the Assyrians in the northern kingdom to come and celebrate the Passover.

[4 : 53] And as many as humbled themselves came and they celebrated the Passover for 14 days. In the second month, because God was merciful and gracious and kind, He gave them time to prepare their hearts and minds.

In all of this, we've seen that Hezekiah is a type of Christ. He's not perfect. We know that. But He is a type of Christ. That is, offering the sacrifice that atones for the sin of the people.

Inviting the people to come and to worship correctly. And paving the way. We'll see a further type of that here in just a moment. But that is all well and good. I know this is a long introduction, but I want you to see why this part is so important.

Because that happened in the first and second month of the first year of His reign. The Assyrians did not come until the 14th year of His reign.

Is one celebratory festival enough to maintain faithfulness for 13 years? And the answer to that is no.

[6 : 00] So how did they remain faithful? How did they stay steadfast for the next 13 years? That's what I want you to see this evening.

Persevering faithfulness. How did they persevere for the next 13 years? That when the Assyrians came. And were mocking them.

Mocking Hezekiah. Mocking God. That they didn't say a word. And they waited. And they trusted. How did they persevere until the end?

Well that question. Or the answer to that question starts in verse 2. And Hezekiah appointed the divisions of the priests and the Levites by their divisions. Each according to his service. Both the priests and the Levites.

For burnt offerings and for peace offerings. To minister and to give thanks. And to praise in the gates of the camp of the Lord. He also appointed the king's portion of his goods. For the burnt offerings.

[6 : 59] Namely for the morning and evening burnt offerings. And the burnt offerings for the Sabbaths. And for the new moons. And for the fixed festivals. As it is written in the law of the Lord. Also he commanded the people who lived in Jerusalem.

To give the portion due to the priests and the Levites. That they might devote themselves to the law of the Lord. As soon as the order spread. The sons of Israel provided in abundance.

The first fruits of grain. New wine. Oil. Honey. And of all the produce of the field. And they brought in abundantly the tithe of all. The sons of Israel and Judah.

Who lived in the cities of Judah. Also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep. And the tithe of sacred gifts. Which were consecrated to the Lord their God. And placed them in heaps. In the third month. They began to make the heaps. And finished them by the seventh month. When Hezekiah and the rulers came. And saw the heaps. They blessed the Lord and his people Israel. Then Hezekiah questioned the priests and the Levites.

[7 : 56] Concerning the heaps. As a riot. The chief priest. Of the house of Zadok. Said to him. Since the contributions began to be brought into the house of the Lord. We have had enough to eat.

With plenty left over. For the Lord has blessed his people. And this great quantity is left over. Then Hezekiah commanded them to prepare rooms in the house of the Lord.

And they prepared them. They faithfully brought in the contributions. And the tithes. And the consecrated things. And Conaniah the Levite was the officer in charge of them. And his brother Shimei was second. Jehill.

Azariah. Nahath. Asahel. Jeremoth. Jezabad. Eliil. Emikah. Mahath. And Benaniah. Were overseers under the authority of Conaniah and Shimei.

His brother. By the appointment of King Hezekiah. And Azariah was the chief officer of the house of God. Kor. The son of Emnah the Levite. The keeper of the eastern gate. Was over the free will

offerings of God.

[8 : 52] To apportion the contributions. For the Lord and most holy things. Under his authority were Eden. Men and them men. Jeshua.

Shemiah. Amariah. And Shekaniah. In the cities of the priests. To distribute faithfully their portions. To their brothers by divisions. Whether great or small. Without regard to their genealogical enrollment.

To the males from 30 years old and upward. Everyone who entered the house of the Lord. For his daily obligations. For their work and their duties. According to their divisions.

As well as the priests who were enrolled genealogically. According to their fathers households. And the Levites from 20 years old and upwards. By their duties and their divisions. The genealogical enrollment included all their little children.

Their wives. Their sons. And their daughters. For the whole assembly. For they consecrated themselves faithfully in holiness. Also for the sons of Aaron. The priests who were in the pasture lands.

[9 : 49] Of their cities. Or in each and every city. There were men who were designated. By name to distribute portions. To every male among the priests. And everyone genealogically enrolled.

Among the Levites. Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah. And he did what was good. Right and true. Before the Lord his God. Every work which he began.

In the service of the house of God. In law and in commandment. And seeking his God. He did with all his heart. And prospered. What a great testimony.

Right? He did with all his heart. And prospered. I know it's business meeting night tonight. But I want you to see this. What does it take to have persevering faithfulness. Among the people of the Lord.

We get into it really quickly. First we see that there is a work. That has to be done. There is a work that has to be done. They had this great feast. And the people came.

[10 : 44] And they brought their sacrifices. And the Levites and the priests were there. If you remember. The priests were ashamed. During that celebration of Passover. Because they realized. That they had not been living. According to the holiness.

Which God had called them to. So as the Passover celebration was going on. Shame and conviction fell upon the priest. And this reality. That they had not been doing the work. God had called them to.

One of the first things that Hezekiah did. And it is telling. Because the chronicler writes this. So that the people reading it at his time. Would see it as well. That's important. Because you know.

That it is being written. To the people who came out of Babylonian captivity. If you'll understand the context. Just a little bit. We'll get to it rather quickly. When we get to the book of Ezra and Nehemiah. And you all of a sudden.

Capture your attention. When they start talking about building storehouses. In the temple. Because it is these storehouses. Or this type of storehouses. It wasn't these. Because this temple of the past. Was torn down.

[11 : 39] And the smaller one was built. But it is this type of storehouse. Which Nehemiah goes into. And has to kick the enemy out of. Because it's supposed to be filled with the tithes and offerings. And yet had been filled with the enemy of the people of the Lord.

But yet we understand. Kind of what's going on. If you remember why Nehemiah had to do that. It's because there was some confusion. As to what should be taking place. In and among the temple. Well it would be real easy to do.

Because after the time of Nehemiah. The book of Chronicles was written. First and second Chronicles. Now they can read. This is the work we are to be doing. This is how we ought to be doing it.

So if you think about it. In that manner. It is like a handbook of Old Testament worship. Right. It is just a good book that says. Hey this is what it looks like to worship. This is what the priests ought to be doing.

This is what the Levites ought to be doing. This is why they ought to be doing it. And all these other realities. Now it has application to us as well. But we see that Hezekiah.

[12 : 35] Not only did he call them to this celebratory feast. He appointed them to their work. Each according to his division. So the priests and the Levites. To put it very bluntly.

Were put to work. And they were put to work in the temple. And notice it tells us what they were put to work doing. They were there. The priests and the Levites. For burnt offerings. For peace offerings.

To minister. And to give thanks and praise. So they were there to keep the celebration going. Each and every day. Now I know we are looking at the Old Testament.

Right. And so we scratch our heads. And we say well. That was the Old Testament. Where they celebrated through festivals. And they celebrated through offerings and sacrifices. Right. And they were a people with priests.

Not a people of priests. We have that. Praise be the Lord. We are on the other side of the cross. And we are no longer in this sacrificial system of worship. For our great grand sacrifice has already been offered.

[13 : 31] But here we see the labor of those who are to lead the people in this ongoing worship. To maintain their faithfulness. Is that someone needed to be present. To keep up the requirements that God had called them to do.

And God had set those people apart. Those were the Levites and the priests. And now Hezekiah gives them their work. And he calls them to it. And so he doesn't say wow that was a great Passover.

That was a great festival. Let's all go back to doing what we've always done. Right. One of the. And I don't mean this in any disrespect or disharm. But one of the despairing things in church history. Recent church history. And please have a little love for your pastor when he says this. And don't throw anything at me. Is when we have quote unquote revivals. But you go back to the church two weeks later.

And nothing looks different. Because in Ezekiel's valley of dead bones. When the bones were revived. They walked out of there looking different. You might have had a great meeting.

[14 : 30] But you didn't have a revival. Revival implies something was dead. And it came back to life. And when a living thing comes back to life. It doesn't look the same anymore. Right.

So if they had this Passover celebration. And it is a great awakening spiritually among the people. We want it to look different. You can't say wow that was great. Now let's all go home and just do what we've always done.

And the reason is because. What they've always done hasn't been right. And it's not going to maintain faithfulness for the next 13 years. And the enemy's coming.

And so we understand here. That to ensure this doesn't happen. Hezekiah calls out the call. So to say. And says hey you have a work to do of the Lord.

And he puts them to work. And he equips them. And says go into the temple. This is what you ought to do. Give the sacrifices. Burn the offerings. Keep it going daily. Give thanks and praise.

[15 : 30] God is worthy of praise. And we don't even see their work confined to this. And this is why when we read to the end of the chapter. We even find some of those priests and Levites in the fields.

Why are they in the fields? Well. Because that's where the sacrificial animals were coming from. Right. And these cities. They had fields around there. And so there was an entire work to be done. Mark your word. When you read scripture. When you find the priest and the Levites leaving their post. You find the people leaving off worship.

Because it was their work. It was their job. You say well what application does that have to do with us today pastor? Well. God still has called each and every one of us to work.

There are works prepared for each one of us to walk into. And unless we fulfill our obligations. One of the hardest things going on right now in churches across denominational lines.

[16 : 33] But especially it's going on across baptistic lines. Is that the pipeline quote unquote of pastors is running dry. We don't have anybody saying well I'm going to be a pastor anymore.

We're not having young men rise up and say oh I think God's calling me to the ministry. And we have these people there. And so we have churches after churches after churches. I can't remember. I heard a count recently.

I mean there are like several hundred churches across our own state. That have no pastor. They have no pastor. And yet so where you don't have people stepping up to the work.

You say well does that mean God's not calling people? Well sometimes I think it's maybe pastors aren't issuing that call. We don't have enough Hezekiahs going hey. Have you ever considered that

maybe God is calling you into pastoral ministry?

We don't have enough Hezekiahs to end up going maybe you ought to do this. We don't have enough people challenging you. We don't have enough of that. Or maybe we just have so many Levites and priests who say but there's a better job over there.

[17 : 32] Because that's the temptation. And when you go and you find in the book of Judges what you find is you have a Levite, a priest looking for work. Is it better to be a priest without a job or to be a personal priest of an individual?

Well I'll be the priest of this individual. And then the tribe of Dan shows up and says is it better to be a priest of the house or to be a priest of a tribe? Well I'll be a priest of a tribe. And you keep going on and you keep going on and you keep going on. And we know that idolatry originated from the tribe of Dan among the people of Israel.

And what happens is that we have the allure and the temptation. And we say well God may be calling me to that but I have a better opportunity of the world standards over here.

And it's a true temptation. It's a reality. But we as a church aren't undergirding that. And by church I mean universal. We as a church aren't undergirding that.

I'll never forget the reality. I believe it was Martin Lloyd-Jones who said. To call to the pastor is the highest calling among men. If we think that the church is the bride of Christ.

[18 : 37] And it is. If we believe that Christ is coming back to call his bride home. And he is. If he is preparing a marriage supper for his bride. And he is. If we believe that Christ died for his bride.

And he did. Then the call to pastor the bride of Christ is the highest position in the world.

Regardless. How the world treats you.

And until. We. Pastors have that mindset. We will always. Think that there's something better. It is my interpretation.

Now you can get me if you want to. I just. I don't mind. I'm getting a little preachy tonight. So I'll be preachy right now. I have this thing about our association and our denomination. That likes to take the best pastors.

And put them in denominational positions. Because. I even have a thing about pastors that do that. Because. If the bride of Christ is the highest calling. Then to move away from that is a demotion. I've heard people say.

[19 : 40] Well. Well they're helping other pastors. Right. But I believe. The highest calling. Is the pastor. And we don't express that enough. Right.

We don't. Because. Because I don't think we agree. I don't think we believe that. There was a day and time. And. I get it. I'll walk around. I don't put pastor across my forehead. Because pastors aren't the most respected people.

In society anymore. I get it. But. It really doesn't matter. You say. Well yeah. We need our pastors to stay strong. And then. Good. I'm glad you agree with me. I'm glad I painted that.

Because so. Stay with me. And the second point. The second point. Not only is there work to be done. There is a weight. To be shared. Because these Levites. And these priests. Have families. Did you notice. There was their. Breads. And their children. And all those other things. There was a weight. To be shared. It's easy to point the fingers. So the Levites. And the priests. And never left their post. But just as.

[20 : 38] Telling. Every time a Levite. And priest. Left their post. Worship failed. Go back and find. Why. The Levites. And priests. Left their post. And we find that.

In the very next thing. Look at what it says. Verse 3. Tells us. He. That's Hezekiah. Also appointed. The king's portion. Of his goods. For the burnt offerings. Namely. For the morning.

And evening offerings. And the burnt offerings. For the Sabbath. And for the new moons. For the fixed festivals. As it is written. In the law of the Lord. Now I went back. And looked in the book of Leviticus. We find all these burnt offerings. That are expected.

By the way. Just so you see. The enormity of this. These burnt offerings. The morning and evening. That is. He was providing rams. For every day. Morning and evening. He was also providing. All the rams. It would take. For all the special festivals.

Everything that God declared. In the book of Leviticus. Leviticus chapter 3 and 4. Hezekiah said. I'm going to take care of it. He said. Well yes. That's the king's portion. Well here's one grand thing. We never find. A decree in the law.

[21 : 32] Saying that the king. Has to give this. There is not a quote. Unquote. King's portion. What he did. Is he said. I'm going to be the first to give. And he set the example.

So now we begin to see. Again. Another type of Christ. Hezekiah said. I'm going to give from my riches. And pour it out. So that everyone has the opportunity.

To worship. He was not going to be a hindrance. He was not going to be the one. Who said. Hey guys. You need to do this. No. He said. First of all. He gave from his riches. His wealth.

The king's portion. And he gave. And he maintained. What he gave. The offering he gave.

Maintained the temple worship. Every day. The foundation.

And then. It says. And then. He. Commanded. The inhabitants of Jerusalem. So pay attention to that. To bring in their tithe too. So the people inside of the city. They begin to bring theirs in.

[22 : 32] And then the people of all of Judah. Begin to bring theirs in. And then some people from outside of Judah. And Israel. That are those people who came and worshipped. And passed over. Began to bring their gifts in. And then we start having these heaps being built.

In the third month. And these heaps are built. Until the seventh month. And all this surplus. But notice what happens. Because the priests are doing their work. The priests and Levites are doing their work.

They're in the temple. They're praising God. They're offering sacrifices. And they're doing their work. They're doing their work. And they're doing their work. Well we know the answer. How were they able to do that? It says that when Hezekiah came to look at this. Look at what Azariah the chief priest said.

Since the contributions began to be brought to the house of the Lord. We have had enough to eat and plenty left over. They had no reason to go look anywhere else.

It was their responsibility to do the daily work. But the weight of that work fell upon the entire people group. That was what God had declared. Right?

[23 : 30] In the Old Testament. That the Levites were set apart. They were not to have an inheritance. And then by not having an inheritance. They were. They belonged to the Lord. But the way God provided for the Levites and the priest.

Was through the offerings of His people. And when His people failed to bring in their tithes and offerings. Then the priest would go look for work somewhere else. And when the priest went to look for work somewhere else.

Then the worship would kind of fall away. But as long as everybody was sharing the weight.

Because it's not like. Oh well they get to do that. And I can live my life however I want to. Because worship was always a corporate event.

You say well I'm glad I'm not called to that work. Well they may not have been called to that work. In that reality they were not born a Levite or a priest. They were not born from the tribe of Levi. So that went.

They weren't quote unquote called. But that doesn't remove every other tribe from responsibility. Because their responsibility is to bring in the tithes and offerings. And they bring it in.

[24 : 28] They support them. And while they support them. They're doing the work. And this goes on for the next 13 years. So much so they build these storehouses. So that they ensure.

And the people in the fields. They stay in the fields. And the people in the temple. They're staying in the temple. And nobody has a reason to go anywhere else. See worship is always a corporate event.

Always. Just as much. If we want to bring it to our daily level. Just as much as it is my calling in Ephesians 4. To equip you to do the work of the ministry. So if you say.

Well I feel like God has called me to do this. Then it is my. It is my role. And my responsibility. To equip you. And even over equip you. And to the point you say. Okay pastor. That's enough. I don't need any more of that.

And to keep funneling all this stuff to you. So you can do what God is calling you to do. If that means I need to open up avenues for you. Or I need to do this. That's my responsibility. But I also.

[25 : 25] Count on you to equip me to do the work of ministry. It's just wonderful aspect of. Of corporate unity. Right. There's no isolation. No. There's no individual.

We all depend upon one another. It's the beautiful picture that has been going on. From the very beginning. When God called Abram out of the land of the Ur of Chaldeans. To create a people for himself.

It is this interdependency. Of God's people. Where they're all bearing the weight together. The weight doesn't fall on one individual. Because when it does.

It crumbles. And it falls down. And all of a sudden. We have a failure of worship. Not a persevering in faithfulness. So we see there's a weight to be shared. Which leads to the final thing.

It's a witness to be seen. Because it tells us that when Hezekiah and the rulers went into the temple. They saw the heaps. Right. They saw the heaps. And look at what it says. So he praised the Lord.

[26 : 23] His God. For the faithfulness of his people. Obedience. Leads to a visible witness. And he praised God.

Not for the Levites. Not for the priests. He praised God for the faithfulness of the people. And it was a testimony to him. That the people were walking faithfully.

But then. There's also the witness of how the Levites and the priests handled the resources they were given. Right. They had an abundance. And so we have all this listing of people. Some of their names. Very hard to say.

But these people. They were being responsible. Right. They weren't just wasting it. They were being wise. How they distributed. They were ensuring. Notice what it says.

Regardless if your name was on a genealogical enrollment. If you came into the temple. And you did a work. They supported you. If your name was on the genealogical enrollment. Then they would find you.

[27 : 17] And support you. If they didn't know about you. I'm sorry. But if you were coming in. If you did work any day. Then they gave it to you. They met your needs. You could go back home. If you were on the genealogical enrollment.

And they knew you were a Levite. They knew you were a priest. They would find you. And they'd support you. So that you can ensure to do your work. There was the witness of their faithfulness too. They weren't abusing it. I mean you think the sons of Eli.

Right. They abused these tithes and offerings. Even Eli. He's a fat guy. You don't get fat by. You know. Not abusing the offering. So he's a fat guy sitting on the stool. You say you picking on him because he's fat.

No I'm just saying. There's two things happening there. For one he was a glutton. He wasn't supposed to be eating that many tithes and offerings. And that's why he didn't get on to his sons. Number two. There's not supposed to be any furniture to sit on in the temple. And somehow or another.

He is sitting on the stool at the doorway of the temple. And falls off and dies. God never said anything about building a stool. But if you've eaten too much of the tithes and offerings. That you can't stand on your feet to do your work.

[28 : 16] Sorry. Maybe it's a little harsh. But that's not happening here. Right. They're walking faithfully. They're giving. They're supporting one another. It's not just one family that's being taken care of.

Everyone is being. And so there's the witness of the Levites and the priests. And then there's just this grand witness of Hezekiah himself. That last verse there where it says. Hezekiah did throughout all Judah.

And he did what was good. And right. And true before the Lord his God. And every work which he began. In the service of the house of God.

In law and in commandment. Seeking his God. So he didn't do it just so he could say I did it. He did it to seek his God. He did it with all his heart. And he prospered. What a testimony.

Right. He wasn't just wanting to check a box. And oh I did that. He was doing these things to be seeking. Actively seeking the Lord God.

[29 : 16] So are we surprised. That for 13 years. They persevered in faithfulness. No. Because look who they have walking before them. This is why.

13 years later. When they come mocking him. They come mocking the people in Jerusalem. They come mocking God. They don't say anything. They go to Hezekiah.

And they trust him. Because they know everything he's done. Has been to seek. The Lord God. And Hezekiah goes into that temple.

And falls on his face. And prays. And then the first time we're introduced. Historically to Isaiah. Is in connection with that. Even though Isaiah had been. Been a prophet.

Had held the office of prophet. Multiple years prior to that. The first time historically. We're introduced to him. Is during the reign of Hezekiah. He had been the setting prophet. Quote unquote. For the kings who had preceded Hezekiah.

[30 : 11] Since the days of Uzziah. But. We find him here. Mentioned for the first time. Why? Because now they're praying together.

And God's going to move. We see here. Persevering faithfulness. Record it for us. In 2 Chronicles 31. Verses 2 through 21. Thank you my brothers. Sorry.
I went a little long. A little long. little longer