

Lesson 57

Hezekiah Restores the Temple and Worship

2 Chronicles 29:3-36



Teacher, please remember that the commentary below is intended to help you in your study, not to be read to your students. Make your own list of applications, using the help from the commentary, but don't necessarily try to cover everything! Think of the students in your class, then be prayerfully selective.

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1. Preparation

- 1) Choose memory verse
- 2) Select attention grabber to start off lesson / break the ice - optional, recommended for younger classes. (see point 7)
- 3) Suggested activities- optional, recommended for younger children (see point 8)

2. Memory verse

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body”. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20, NASB)

3. Theme

The place where God is worshiped is holy, set apart to Him and special. We must care for it, just as King Hezekiah cleaned out the dirt from the temple in Jerusalem, which had fallen into disarray. We use the temple of our body---if we have trusted in Jesus---to worship God. So we must care for our body and our minds, since we worship God in our hearts, not at the temple in Jerusalem. ***We are God's temple, created to worship Him. Let us not neglect to worship God with our whole hearts.***

4. Lesson introduction

(Note: this is a combined lesson that takes in most of the chapter. Pick out the items you wish to emphasize; you may not be able to cover everything).

The wicked King Ahaz had closed the temple doors and set up places of idol worship throughout Jerusalem and Judah (2 Chronicles 28:24). Although Ahaz was wicked, he had a godly son, Hezekiah. When Hezekiah became king, he immediately set out to undo the wrongs of his father. He determined to eliminate the idols of his father and again establish the worship of God. The Bible says, “And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David, his father, had done” (2 Chronicles 29:2).

5. Verse by Verse Commentary

2 CHRONICLES 29:3-5

Ahaz had devastated the temple. His son, Hezekiah, “opened the doors of the house of the Lord and repaired them.” Hezekiah wisely attended to the things of God as his first business (“In the first year of his reign, in the first month,...”); for, if the nation was to be blessed, God must be first. He approached the priests and the Levites calling for them to sanctify themselves and then to sanctify the house of the Lord. To purify the temple, they must first sanctify themselves. Perhaps, the influence of wicked King Ahaz had caused the hearts of God’s servants to become lazy (uncommitted) and even hardened. Certainly, those who serve idols find their hearts as hard and cold as the idols they serve. As we serve the one true and living God, who is full of compassion and mercy, our hearts of stone become hearts of flesh.

To sanctify the temple, the priests were to remove all that was “unclean” from the sanctuary, all the abominations of idolatry. The New Testament tells us that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit. As God’s temple, we are to sanctify (set apart) ourselves. Through God’s help, we are to keep our hearts clean and sweep away the rubbish that sometimes collects inside of our hearts and minds. We are God’s temple created to worship Him. Let us not neglect to worship God.

2 CHRONICLES 29:6-9

Hezekiah points out that it was “our fathers.” It was not only Ahaz, but also those with him who had been guilty in forsaking God, turning their backs on Him. They had neglected the care of the place of worship--the doors were closed to people, the lamps were not lit, and the incense was not burned.

Christians, today, can be guilty of neglecting the ministry of the church. Matthew Henry says, “There are still such neglects as these, and they are no less culpable, when the word is not duly read and opened (for that was signified by the lighting of the lamps) and when prayers and praises are not duly offered up, for that was signified by the burning of incense.” Let us not neglect to worship God.

What was the result of this behavior? The wrath of God came on Judah and Jerusalem. As the Living Bible describes it, “He has caused us to be objects of horror, amazement, and contempt, as you see us today. Our fathers have been killed in war, and our sons and daughters and wives are in captivity because of this.”

The result of rebellion against the Lord is always disaster. Their disobedience had caused them to be dealt troubles, the sword, and captivity. It is never wise to neglect the Lord. He loves each of us and desires only good for our lives. If we choose to go astray, His long-suffering and goodness toward us will prompt Him to discipline us. Hebrews 12:6 tells us, “For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.”

2 CHRONICLES 29:10-11

To turn away the anger of God, Hezekiah determined to make a covenant with the Lord by restoring worship. He became fully determined to worship only God and to worship Him in the way He had commanded. As the nation’s leader, he committed himself and the nation to repentance. A leader can only lead where he himself goes. Ahaz led the people into idol worship, but Hezekiah led them to the worship of the Lord.

Hezekiah exhorted the Levites to not neglect the performance of their duty, to no longer be careless in their calling. What a privilege it is to serve the Lord! It is sad when one takes the call of God carelessly. May we examine our hearts in light of Colossians 3:17, “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.”

2 CHRONICLES 29:12-17

It seems that his exhortation was received with gladness. The Levites that were there assembled their brethren and set to work -- first sanctifying themselves, then the temple of God.

There were fourteen heads of the various families and branches of Levi who brought together the brethren to work on cleansing the temple. The priests went into the inner part of the house of the Lord to cleanse it and remove all the uncleanness, and the Levites carried the debris out to the Brook Kidron.

In eight days, they cleared and cleansed the temple; and in another eight days, they cleared and cleansed the courts of the temple. They took their work seriously and set about to do it as quickly and as well as they could.

2 CHRONICLES 29:18-19

The priests then let Hezekiah know that all the things that had been profaned were now sanctified according to the law of God. The temple was now cleansed!--fit for the Lord. Jesus has taken each one of us and purified and cleansed us by His blood, making us acceptable in the Father's sight. Now, since we are the temple of the Lord--His habitation of worship--let us worship Him. Let us not neglect to use the gifts or calling He has given us for His glory. Let us not neglect to worship God.

2 CHRONICLES 29:20-24

The king and the city officials brought seven bulls, seven rams, and seven lambs for burnt offerings. According to Leviticus 1, a burnt offering is a male from a herd or flock, a year old and without defect. The sacrifice is to be prepared in a specific way. The burnt offering, according to the Law of Moses, was an aroma pleasing to the Lord. Given from the best (most valuable) of the animals, the offering reflected a true heart of worship and dedication. The burnt offering was an offering of consecration—the consecration of one's life, one's body, to serve God. We are called to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice in praise and worship to the Lord (Romans 12:1). God wants us to worship Him with our whole hearts.

After twenty-one burnt offerings, the seven male goats were offered up as a sin offering. Per God's instruction, the blood of the animal sacrifice was sprinkled on the altar after they were slaughtered. We see here a picture of the Lord Jesus' blood being sprinkled, being shed on the altar of the cross almost a thousand years later. He offered His body freely, one sacrifice for our sins forever. Because of His sacrifice, we are sanctified (set apart) for His service!

2 CHRONICLES 29:25-30

Levites with instruments were stationed, per Hezekiah's instructions, and ready to play. In 2 Chronicles 23:18, we read that David set up this special ministry of the Levites. King David loved to worship the Lord in the tabernacle with song, instruments, and dance. Some Levites were appointed as singers; others played to the Lord on cymbals, harps and lyres. When the burnt offerings began, the song of the Lord began!

The whole assembly bowed and worshiped; they sang praises with gladness. King Hezekiah led the nation in this joyful revival. Today, the pastors and teachers of the church seek to lead their congregations in worship and consecration to the Lord. Remember to pray for those who work among you—that they might have an undivided heart just as Hezekiah did. God wants us to worship Him with our whole hearts.

Suggested activity: Musical chairs

2 CHRONICLES 29:31-36

Now it was time for the people to bring their sacrifices. Remember what a sacrifice is? An acceptable sacrifice was to be the best (most valuable) of one's flock. The Bible says, "all whose hearts are willing." God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7). May our demonstrations of worship always be with true, willing hearts. God wants us to worship Him with our whole hearts.

Try to imagine what it must have been like to offer 3,600 bulls, sheep, and goats. First they were slaughtered, then their blood was sprinkled on the altar and the pieces were all laid out in just a certain way. These things took time. The priests needed some help for this big task. Some of the priests had not sanctified themselves

yet (it took seven days to do this, Leviticus 8:33-35). So, some of the Levites were allowed to participate in the sacrificing, since they had already sanctified themselves by going through the special cleansing process. Do you remember that the Levites came from Levi, who was one of the twelve sons of Jacob? The priests were Levites also, but they served as priests because they were great-grandsons of Aaron, the brother of Moses.

There were so many sacrifices to carry out; it probably took a few days to finish. Meanwhile the Levites were leading the music and all the people of Israel were rejoicing and worshipping the Lord.

So the service of the house of the LORD was set in order. How blessed the nation was to have a godly King who turned the people's heart toward the Lord. How thankful the people should be that King Hezekiah chose to do "what was right in the eyes of the Lord." For, the Bible says, "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34).

Suggested activity: Memory Verse Puzzler

Prayer

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to never neglect to worship the Lord. Pray for strength to always keep focused on the Lord and keep Him in first place in our hearts. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity

6. Attention-getters

The Potato Shuffle

WHAT YOU WILL NEED: A small potato for each group (for a large class form up to 4 – 6 groups) and a watch with a second hand. A "God's House" template, scissors, construction paper, crayons, and glue. A Hula-Hoop.

The temple of God had been neglected. Sin can cause us to neglect the things of the Lord and our lives can become a mess. God is so patient as He works in our lives—reviving, restoring, renewing, and transforming us into the image of His Son. How patient are you?

You will need a small potato for each group (for a large class form 4–6 groups) and a watch with a second hand. Form at least two groups and have these groups stand in lines at opposite ends of the class. Take a potato and demonstrate the following procedure.

Place your feet closely together. Set the potato on top of your feet. Carefully shuffle your feet so you move forward, keeping the potato balanced on the tops of your feet. After everyone has seen your demonstration, give the first person in one of the lines the potato. The idea is for this person to shuffle along to the first person in the opposite line, pass off the potato, and then have that person shuffle back to the next person in the first line. Keep track of the time it takes for everyone to shuffle with the potato. Allow the groups to race if they like.

If children have trouble keeping the potato on top of their feet, allow them to place it on the floor between their feet and move by waddling with both feet always touching the potato. The younger the children, the closer together you should move your opposing lines. This way it can go faster and the children in line will not get bored.

7. Activities

What's All The "Hoop"la? For this game you will need a Hula Hoop.

Have children form a circle, holding hands with those on either side. Give the first child a Hula Hoop. Explain that this child must pass his or her entire body through the hoop, then pass the hoop down the line so it goes over the body of the next person, and so on. What makes this difficult is that the chain of hands must never be

broken! It's a challenge for kids to get their bodies through the hoop when they cannot let go of those beside them.

Play several times, timing how long it takes for kids to get the hoop from one end of the line to the other. As kids play, they may realize the hoop will move faster as they help each other. They do not have to stay in a straight line, so those with free hands on the ends of the line could help those in the middle. Do not point this out immediately; see if kids can figure out these tricks themselves. The more they help each other, the faster they'll get at passing the hoop! Application: Just as the people worked together to cleanse the temple, you must work together to get the hoop to the other side. Set about to do it as quickly and as well as you can, just as they did the temple.

Respecting God's House.

In today's lesson, we learned that we need to take care of God's house. We should not neglect the worship of God. Use the enclosed God's House template. You will also need a sheet of construction paper for each child, scissors, glue, and crayons. Follow the instructions listed on the template.

Musical Chairs

For a fun time, play a game of musical chairs. Find some lively children's music to play, enough chairs for the number of children in your class, and a CD player.

Explain to the children that it is important to worship the Lord. Take the opportunity to talk about appropriate behavior during worship and the privilege that it is.

Place all of the chairs in a circle. Have one chair for each child. When the music begins have them stand up and go in a circle around the room. Take one chair out then stop the music. Tell the children to scramble to the chairs. The one child remaining can sit out until they have another turn. Keep playing as long as time allows.

Memory Verse Puzzler

You will need the "puzzler" template for this. Make enough copies for each child in your class. You will also need construction paper, glue sticks, scissors, and markers.

Have the children cut out the puzzle and glue it onto a sheet of construction paper. Use the memory verse and write one word in each puzzle piece (some can remain blank). For younger children, you can fill in the words on the puzzle pieces prior to copying your template.

Next allow the children to cut out the puzzle pieces. After they are cut out, they can mix them up and put them back together again in order of the verse.

Note: As an option for younger children, you can just draw a picture of a temple to go with your story in addition to or instead of the memory verse. It would be easier for young children to put together a picture instead of words.

8. Scripture text 2 Chronicles 29:3-36, NIV

³In the first month of the first year of his reign, he opened the doors of the temple of the LORD and repaired them.

⁴He brought in the priests and the Levites, assembled them in the square on the east side ⁵and 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. ⁶Our parents were unfaithful; they did evil in the eyes of the LORD our God and forsook him. They turned their faces away from the LORD's dwelling place and turned their backs on him. ⁷They also shut the doors of the portico and put out the lamps. They did not burn incense or present any burnt offerings at the sanctuary to the God of Israel. ⁸Therefore, the anger of the LORD has fallen on Judah and Jerusalem; he has made them an object of dread and horror and scorn, as you can see with your own eyes. ⁹This is why our fathers have fallen by the sword and why our sons and daughters and our wives are in captivity. ¹⁰Now I intend to make a

covenant with the LORD, the God of Israel, so that his fierce anger will turn away from us. ¹¹ 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.”

¹² Then these Levites set to work:

from the Kohathites, Mahath son of Amasai and Joel son of Azariah;

from the Merarites, Kish son of Abdi and Azariah son of Jehallelel;

from the Gershonites, Joah son of Zimmah and Eden son of Joah;

¹³ from the descendants of Elizaphan, Shimri and Jeiel;

from the descendants of Asaph, Zechariah and Mattaniah;

¹⁴ from the descendants of Heman, Jehiel and Shimei;

from the descendants of Jeduthun, Shemaiah and Uzziel.

¹⁵ When they had assembled their fellow Levites and consecrated themselves, they went in to purify the temple of the LORD, as the king had ordered, following the word of the LORD. ¹⁶ The priests went into the sanctuary of the LORD to purify it. They brought out to the courtyard of the LORD’s temple everything unclean that they found in the temple of the LORD. The Levites took it and carried it out to the Kidron Valley. ¹⁷ They began the consecration on the first day of the first month, and by the eighth day of the month they reached the portico of the LORD. For eight more days they consecrated the temple of the LORD itself, finishing on the sixteenth day of the first month.

¹⁸ Then they went in to King Hezekiah and reported: “We have purified the entire temple of the LORD, the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the table for setting out the consecrated bread, with all its articles. ¹⁹ We have prepared and consecrated all the articles that King Ahaz removed in his unfaithfulness while he was king. They are now in front of the LORD’s altar.”

²⁰ Early the next morning King Hezekiah gathered the city officials together and went up to the temple of the LORD.

²¹ They brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven male lambs and seven male goats as a sin offering^[a] for the kingdom, for the sanctuary and for Judah. The king commanded the priests, the descendants of Aaron, to offer these on the altar of the LORD. ²² So they slaughtered the bulls, and the priests took the blood and splashed it against the altar; next they slaughtered the rams and splashed their blood against the altar; then they slaughtered the lambs and splashed their blood against the altar. ²³ The goats for the sin offering were brought before the king and the assembly, and they laid their hands on them. ²⁴ The priests then slaughtered the goats and presented their blood on the altar for a sin offering to atone for all Israel, because the king had ordered the burnt offering and the sin offering for all Israel.

²⁵ He stationed the Levites in the temple of the LORD with cymbals, harps and lyres in the way prescribed by David and Gad the king’s seer and Nathan the prophet; this was commanded by the LORD through his prophets. ²⁶ So the Levites stood ready with David’s instruments, and the priests with their trumpets.

²⁷ Hezekiah gave the order to sacrifice the burnt offering on the altar. As the offering began, singing to the LORD began also, accompanied by trumpets and the instruments of David king of Israel. ²⁸ The whole assembly bowed in worship, while the musicians played and the trumpets sounded. All this continued until the sacrifice of the burnt offering was completed.

²⁹ When the offerings were finished, the king and everyone present with him knelt down and worshiped. ³⁰ King Hezekiah and his officials ordered the Levites to praise the LORD with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with gladness and bowed down and worshiped.

³¹ Then Hezekiah said, “You have now dedicated yourselves to the LORD. Come and bring sacrifices and thank offerings to the temple of the LORD.” So the assembly brought sacrifices and thank offerings, and all whose hearts were willing brought burnt offerings.

³²The number of burnt offerings the assembly brought was seventy bulls, a hundred rams and two hundred male lambs—all of them for burnt offerings to the LORD. ³³The animals consecrated as sacrifices amounted to six hundred bulls and three thousand sheep and goats. ³⁴The priests, however, were too few to skin all the burnt offerings; so their relatives the Levites helped them until the task was finished and until other priests had been consecrated, for the Levites had been more conscientious in consecrating themselves than the priests had been. ³⁵There were burnt offerings in abundance, together with the fat of the fellowship offerings and the drink offerings that accompanied the burnt offerings.

So the service of the temple of the LORD was reestablished. ³⁶Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced at what God had brought about for his people, because it was done so quickly.