

A God-blessed morning to each of you, my family and friends. I am continuing our brief study on Revival, as we find it in the time of King Hezekiah of Judah. So, let's get back into 2 Chronicles and see what we can learn today about why we need revival. So, come with me to 2 Chronicles 28. God bless you as you study with me.

WHY IS A TRUE REVIVAL NEEDED?

A Devotional prepared by Dr. Robert L. Morris

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2 Chronicles 28:1-25

This is the second in a series of five Devotionals that call our attention to the Biblical subject of revival. The first lesson, or Devotional, was introductory. The Biblical focus for this five-part study comprises the material in 2 Chronicles, chapters 28 through 31. Following the Introductory Study, the key parts can be formulated into four sections as follows:

1. Why is revival needed? (Chapter 28)
2. What are the characteristics of true revival? (Chapter 29)
3. What results from true revival? (Chapter 30)
4. What are the lasting evidences of true revival? (Chapter 31)

It is from the revival under King Hezekiah that the New Testament church may easily learn some basic keys to revival. If revival is to come to the contemporary church of Jesus Christ these keys will help open the door. And for a true, heaven-sent, Bible-focused revival, every Christian needs to be praying earnestly. A revival! A great turning to God and learning from His Word and living in obedience to its powerful teachings. May God challenge us as we think together through these four chapters of 2 Chronicles.

So, why is a revival needed in our time? We can easily see the parallel between our time in history and that of King Hezekiah of Judah. Chapter 28 of 2 Chronicles is paralleled in 2 Kings 16:1-20. These two passages of Scripture might well be called "The Evil Reign of King Ahaz of Judah." This is the depiction of what may well be declared the reign of the worst king of Judah. Many previous, and later kings of Judah fell short in some area or another, but of Ahaz the introduction of his evil reign simply states: "... he did not do what was right in the sight of the LORD, as his father David had done." (2 Chronicles 28:1) Why is this evident? We need to look at the character of the reign of King Ahaz. It was a time when there was a Renouncement of Biblical authority. (vv 1-8)

For this Devotional I have space to develop little more than listing of the four characteristics of the evil days of King Ahaz, as they are identified in this chapter of 2 Chronicles, and to which King Hezekiah needed to direct his reformation actions. These are as follows:

1. A Renouncement of Biblical Authority. (vv 1-8) King Ahaz who was twenty years old when he became the King of Judah reigned only sixteen years. The initial descriptive of his reign are stated immediately: "He did not do what was right in the sight of the LORD, as his father David had done." (2 Chronicles 28:1; NKJV) Those years were bitter in their renouncement of Biblical authority. He "made molded images for the Baals." (v 2) Here is the first instance where Judah imitated the horrific apostasy of Israel. King Ahaz also "burned incense in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom ..." (2 Chronicles 28:3a) The Chronicler appends to this account a serious notation, that it was "according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel." (2 Chronicles 28:3b) Wicked King Ahaz seemed to reach the depths of his barbarity as recorded in 2 Chronicles 28:3b. I am not going to provide vivid descriptions of this horrible act. It is too heart-wrenching to print. The Sacred record simply states: "... and burned his children (or his posterity) in the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel." (2 Chronicles 28:3) In the and century, one of the devastating sins of the culture is the governmental approval of aborting tiny babies, even at the point of their natural birth. This is a total forsaking of God's standard of recognizing the importance of children and the sanctity of life. It is an abomination before the Lord. It is one of the reasons why in God's timing, He may well bring severe judgment against our nation. We fight with each other over the "pro-life" and "pro-choice" issues, and very possibly we will be judged because we ignored the standards of God's Word. Someone has said: "Abortion is when a baby gets the death penalty for someone else's actions." Revival is desperately needed!
2. A Resistance to Prophetic Preaching. (vv 9-15) "But a prophet of the LORD was there, whose name was Oded; and he went out before the army that came to Samaria, and said to them: 'Look, because the LORD God

of your fathers was angry with Judah. He has delivered them into your hand; but you have killed them in a rage that reaches up to heaven. And now you propose to force the children of Judah and Jerusalem to be your male and female slaves; but are you not also guilty before the LORD your God? Now hear me, therefore, and return the captives, whom you have taken captive from your brethren for the fierce wrath of the LORD is upon you.” (vv 9-11, NKJV) The key to a true, heaven sent revival is found in 2 Chronicles 15:1-4. The scene: Samaria. The condition: potentially oppressive slavery. The prophet: the same Oded as in 2 Chronicles 28:9. The message: “. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you. (2 Chronicles 15:2; NKJV) In 2 Chronicles 28 we find that the prophet Oded called the leaders of Israel to conscience for this horrific crime against their fellow Israelites. The message was simple, and obviously convincing. They had already acted “in a rage that reaches up to heaven.” (2 Chronicles 28:9; NKJV) Oded continued his message: “...the fierce wrath of the LORD is upon you.” (2 Chronicles 28:11; NKJV) While King Ahaz did not respond positively to the Prophet’s message, the leaders of Israel did. It resulted in the 200,000 captives of Judah being taken to the City of Palms, Jericho. The Palm Tree, תְּמָר - “tamar” was used metaphorically to note spiritual prosperity. (Psalm 92:12) It was considered to be a “tree of life.” Palm trees were often carved on public buildings to represent the beauty of life. This was true of the pilasters of Solomon’s Temple. (See 1 Kings 6:29) For the people of Judah the prayer of the prophet Habakkuk was resoundingly important: “O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years. In the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy.” (Habakkuk 3:2; NKJV) And He did! However, it did not alter the sinful condition in Judah or in Ahaz. Somehow, I get the impression that a revival was desperately needed! And today? Should we not be praying the prayer of Habakkuk ... and meeting the conditions?

3. A Reliance on Ungodly Methods. (vv 16-18) Note this in these two verses: “At the same time, King Ahaz sent to the kings of Assyria to help him. For again the Edomites had come, attacked Judah, and carried away captives. The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the lowland and of the South of Judah, and had taken Beth Shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, Sochoh with its villages, Timnah with its villages, and Gimzo with its villages; and they dwelt there.” (2 Chronicles 28:16-18; NKJV) The words “at the same time” become a clue in helping one follow accurately the sequence of events in the life of King Ahaz. More detailed accounts of these events may be found in 2 Kings 16 and Isaiah 7. From those we learn that before King Ahaz called for help from the kings of Assyria, the Prophet Isaiah offered to Ahaz a sign of assurance that God’s help was available for the struggle against the combined armies of Israel and Syria. The kings of Israel and Syria considered themselves as burning torches (Isaiah 7:4) and came to Jerusalem to destroy the dynasty of King David. From 2 Chronicles 28:17-18 it is evident that the Israel-Syria coalition was helped by the Edomites and the Philistines ... ungodly methods! These combined forces came against King Ahaz in Jerusalem, “but could not overcome him.” (2 Kings 16:5) Ahaz refused the sign offered by the Prophet Isaiah on the flimsy excuse that he did not want to test the LORD. (See Isaiah 7:1-12) To his shame, what he really wanted was to call for help from Tiglath-Pileser, the King of Assyria. In this time of crisis in Judah, King Ahaz turned to ungodly methods instead of to the LORD. Because of His eternal promise concerning His people, God would not allow that Satanic plot against the Messianic dynasty of David to succeed. My friends, trying to walk with one hand in the hand of God and the other in the hand of the soul’s enemy will not work! That is what constitutes “ungodly methods” and we dare not follow that life style.

4. A Refusal to Adhere to God’s Standards. (vv 19-21) Very disturbing words in Scripture are: “Ahaz king of Israel, encouraged moral decline in Judah and had been continually unfaithful to the LORD.” (2 Chronicles 28:19; NKJV) It is evident that King Ahaz had no intention of walking obediently before the LORD God of Israel. Because of his belligerent spirit against God, the people of Judah suffered greatly. King Ahaz attempted to persuade the Assyrian king, Tiglath Pileser, with flattering words and by taking the silver and gold from “the house of the LORD, and in the treasuries of the king’s house, and sent it as a present to the king of Assyria.” (2 Kings 16:8; NKJV) In this time of crisis in Judah, King Ahaz continued to use ungodly methods instead of trusting in the LORD. Because of His eternal promise concerning His people, God would not allow that Satanic plot against the Messianic dynasty of David to succeed. Through the message of the Prophet Isaiah spoken to King Ahaz, although the king did not listen seriously, it was made clear that there would always be a remnant that would one day return to the Land of Promise. The sacred, God-established dynasty of David could never be destroyed. Of Immanuel’s kingdom there shall be no end, even though King Ahaz acted so foolishly in relying on ungodly methods and in turning to ungodly neighboring kings for help. Alliances with nations of the world, diplomatic maneuverings, political posturing, promises of financial

assistance ... sound familiar? Shouldn't we live in and practice God's way? Is true, heaven-sent revival needed? I think so! Desperately!

The key to revival is well-known. We hear it, and we read it in various media sources. I quote it one more time for all of us: "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 will forgive their sin and heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14; NKJV) Now, let's close this Devotional by singing together a familiar chorus we have known for many years. It was written, words and music, by B.B. McKinney, in 1925. It is a prayer that we need to be praying.

SEND A GREAT REVIVAL

Send a great revival in my soul.

Send a great revival in my soul.

Let the Holy Spirit come and take control,

And send a great revival in my soul.