

July 17 Answers

- 1) The death of Ahaz and the early reign of his son, Hezekiah. Hezekiah was the complete **opposite** of Ahaz. The first thing he did as king was gather the priests and Levites and tell them to **consecrate** themselves and the temple. He said, “Now it is in my heart to make a **covenant** with the LORD, the God of Israel, in order that his fierce anger may turn away from us” (2 Chr 29:10). Surely this was the result of Hezekiah listening to **Isaiah** and **Micah** and realizing that God was judging Judah for its sin. Hezekiah led the **princes** of the city to God’s house to worship, and they rededicated the temple. What an inspiring example of spiritual leadership! Hezekiah knew that reform begins at the **top**, and he made sure his officials set a godly example for the people (cf. 2 Chr 29:20a, 30a, 36). Hezekiah then celebrated the **Passover** in Jerusalem. There had been nothing like it since the days of Solomon, and the people enjoyed worshiping God so much that they decided to celebrate another seven days beyond the normal feast time. Several things stand out: (1) The priests and Levites were put to **shame** by the enthusiasm of the people, and they consecrated themselves so they could properly execute their duties. This shows how **zeal** for God can motivate others to live a holy life. (2) Many of the people, especially those from the northern tribes, were not purified before eating the Passover, yet Hezekiah prayed for them and God forgave them. This shows that God puts more weight on the attitude of the **heart** than on the strict observance of the letter of the law (2 Chr 30:18–30). (3) As soon as the celebration was over, the people went out and **destroyed** all their idols. This shows that when we draw close to God in repentance and worship, the result is a **transformed** life. Unlike Solomon who “clung” to his many wives (1 Kgs 11:2), Hezekiah “held fast” to God in love (2 Kgs 18:6). That’s what we want God to be able to say about us! Hezekiah motivates us to stand strong in the faith and run our race with endurance.