

Restorer of the Ancient Paths

And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shall raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shall be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in. Isaiah 58:12

Overview: Great reformation was undertaken in the days of King Hezekiah in the house of Judah. A great number of people turned to the Lord with all their heart and the God of Israel was glorified in His people.

Lessons from the

“House of Hezekiah”

***Extreme Makeover
The Spiritual Edition***

Setting: Hezekiah, King of Judah in the late 8th Century (724– 695 B.C.E.?)

Reigned for 29 years, Ascended to the Throne at the age of 25.

Contemporary Prophets – Isaiah, Micah, and Hosea

Five lessons gleaned from the context and setting of II Chronicles 29 – 32 will serve as our template for restoration.

“ Song of the Prophets” – Let him that has ears to hear, let him hear!

Encourages the student to take a closer look at the context that precedes the great reformation under King Hezekiah, and to also consider the voices of the three contemporary prophets Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah in the tumultuous time of the 8th Century B.C. To truly appreciate this great time of restoration – read, meditate, and reread the records of II Chronicles 28 –33, II Kings 16 – 21 (17*), The book of Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah chapters 1 –11, 35 – 3940, 42,49,50,52,53, 58, 60, 61,62....

“House Rules” - examines how King Hezekiah set his house in order to minister to the Lord, fulfilling the ‘**Great Commandment**’ (II Chron. 29)

“Fill the House” – extends and considers the invitation that fulfills God’s desire toward all His children. Exemplifying the ‘**Great Commission**’. (II Chron. 30)

“Keep the House” – reflects on the ‘**Great charge**’ given to His faithful servants. (II Chron. 31)

“United House” – reveals effective keys to sustain an enduring house. Looking into the ‘**Great Mystery**’ (II Chron. 32)

How blessed is the man whose strength is in You, In whose heart are the highways to Zion!
Psalm 84:5 NASB **

This unique record under the leadership of King Hezekiah is repeated three times in the Hebrew scripture. This model for restoration offers the student of the bible a rich mosaic that can be revisited over and over again in order to better understand the prophetic voice and its implications. We believe there is a clear, distinct, and emphatic template drawn here for the present day *Church* in these records. If we can only grasp and retain its fullness we believe these God breathed writings will come to birth in our midst. As we keep in mind the Author and Finisher of our faith we will see images of the ‘King of Righteousness, a royal ‘High Priest’ offering acceptable sacrifices, and the ‘True prophet’ resounding the new torah ‘**Behold! I make all things new..**’ Rev. 21:5 .

If we hear the voice, our call cries out for a response for **understanding** this life giving message, **unpacking** and wisely distributing the truth, and **applying** this wisdom liberally for a generation to come. We, as ambassadors for the kingdom are to prepare the way along the King’s Highway, awaiting the new exodus, when the King of Glory shall appear - for we seek a city (the new Jerusalem) whose builder and maker is God.

The wisdom literature serves as a good stepping off point for the king or leader.
(Consider: Psalm 2, 24, 48, 72, 84, 102, 110, 126, 128, 133, 134, 145)

*But thou, O LORD, shall endure for ever; and thy remembrance unto all generations. Thou shall arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favor her, yea, the set time, is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favor the dust thereof. So the heathen shall fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth thy glory. When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory. He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer. **This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD.** For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the LORD behold the earth; To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death; To declare the name of the LORD in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem; When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the LORD.*
Psalm 102: 12-22

We know that *whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*
Romans 15:4

We understand that the scriptures teach us...*all these things were written for examples and for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.* I Cor. 10:11

We have heard it said that the *Old Testament* is the *New Testament* concealed, and the *New Testament* is the *Old Testament* revealed. In search of this treasure of we must clear the way, unearth the foundations and pillars of truth, and uncover the richness of God’s unfailing, everlasting, covenant. We must blow the trumpet of salvation, a clear distinct call that revives God’s vision of **One God, One people, One hope** and sound off...
Come to the light, Come taste and see, Come through the gates, Come, all you weary and I will give you rest unto your soul for great is the faithfulness of our Lord to His people.

The secret of Jehovah is with those who fear Him; and He will show them His covenant.
Psalm 25:14

King Hezekiah must have had a clear vision in his mind, a bright picture, and a colorful dream overflowing in his heart. For on the first day, of the first month, on the first year of his reign as King of Judah he started this Extreme Makeover on the house of God honoring the covenant of Yahweh...

And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did. He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan. He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. For he clave to the LORD, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses. And the LORD was with him; and he prospered whithersoever he went forth: and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not. II Kings 18:3-7

Under the leadership of King Ahaz (father of Hezekiah), the covenant of God was broken, the house of the Lord was defiled, and the Temple had fallen into ruin.

A lament of the weeping prophet lends us a picture of the dark days under King Ahaz.

How alone sits the city that was full of people! The roads of Zion mourn without any going to the appointed feasts. All her gates are deserted; her priests sigh; her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness...She has become like a widow, once great among the nations, She now bitterly weeps in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks; she has no comfort, she finds no rest, all her strength is gone, and from the daughter of Zion all her beauty has departed. (Lamentations 1).

Many churches need an extreme makeover, some of us need an extreme makeover. We are in the restoration business. **Build lives**, our task is enormous, need SPIRIT. Wise master builder, Ezra 7:27 Arise!!! build up: living stones, plum line, righteous level

Restore: to bring back into existence, use, or the like, reestablish. To bring back to former or more desirable condition. To bring back to a state of health, soundness, or vigor.

Restoration – the act of building up, raise up, repair, renovate, renew – make new, revive – give life , redeem – buy back, salvage – the act of saving anything from destruction or danger.

Our theological studies must reflect and effect changes in the practice of our faith -if they are to have any merit or impact. They must move us to a change that radiates the Lords' vision; “ **Song of the Prophets**” – Let him that has ears to hear, let him hear!

Context: a brief summary of this time in the history of Israel and Judah – in the time of king Hezekiah.

Rebellious! Unfaithful! Transgressors! The Prophets shout in unison as a trio sounding the alarm of impending doom. A message and plea in three part harmony is heralded to the once glorious nation of Israel, now divided, tottering on the edge of ruin. Return rebellious, return unfaithful, return transgressors to the Holy One of Israel. The voices of God's servants pierce the silence with a call to repentance, righteousness, and restoration through Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah, seers late in the tumultuous 8th century B.C. Congruous messages are amplified through recurring illustrations and themes urgently pronounced by these three contemporary prophets. We should first explore the setting and background that sets the tempo of our storyline.

To overhear the echoes of the prophets' voices and to feel the weight of the resounding notes we must consider the setting and surrounding carefully. The golden age of Israel is less than two centuries past and now a divided Kingdom vacillates allegiance and loyalties to impending conquerors. Their posture is pictured like a pair of senseless fluttering doves refusing the haven provided by the God of their fathers. Israel and Judah's virtues are compared to a morning cloud dissipating rapidly with the early rising sun. The glory and peace of Solomon's Kingdom have become a faint reverberation, the land of Canaan is forfeited daily as foreign Kingdoms march onward diminishing their borders, and the heartbeats of the faithful have become increasingly discouraged.

Unrest and political instability permeate this era. Fear of invasion is imminent on every side. Israel experiences great strife within its' Kingdom with six different kings in a twenty-five year period. Four of the kings are murdered while in office and one is taken captive. Judah also endures four rulers in this season of great upheaval. Economically the nation still carries a residue of the former glory and prospers, but recently a levy and tax has been placed on the kings by Assyrian forces. Spiritually the nation experiences some of its' darkest hours. Idolatry runs rampant, moral corruption prevails, injustice wins the day, the rich squeeze the life out of the poor, and a haughty rejection of God dominates society. To this status the prophets make an urgent last chance appeal to the hardhearted nations who have turned their back on their first love. 'Return to me, return to me says the Lord, and I will return to you!' Seek me and live! Still, immorality breaks out and a spirit of whoredom reigns. Perverted religion and false prophets lure the innocent away, the priests receive bribes and prophets prophecy for beer.

Truth, mercy, and knowledge of God have become desolate in the land. Adultery, stealing, lying, and killing have become commonplace. The very land mourns and weeps over the abundant bloodshed - craving and desiring the serenity of its' former beauty.
(Hosea 4)

Each one of the prophets raises charges against the nations in judgment in their opening proclamation. Injustices are confronted headlong. Rebuke of idolatry and immorality are chastened, false religious pretense is counted as an abomination before the Lord. The prophets reiterated the same message over and over again complimenting one another with a harmonious refrain. A call for repentance to walk humbly, justly, and showing mercy to the needy envelops our progression (Mic. 6:8).

Salvation tidings are induced through Hosea the prophet as he lifts his voice from the northern hills of Canaan. Hosea is the strong tender lead voice among our three contemporary prophets inaugurating a clarion call to repentance. A dissonant shrill fills the eardrums of the inhabitants of Samaria as certain and swift judgment is pronounced upon the kingdom of the house of Israel.

The thundering yet eloquent voice of the prince of prophets rises from the southern kingdom of Judah through Isaiah the son of Amoz. The poetic versatile style of Isaiah is layered with rich prophetic declarations of the coming Messiah and a stern reproof that calls for a radical reform and action from his audience.

The prophet Micah steps forward to center stage and joins hands with his partners in a volatile merging that intensifies and thrusts the movement to a crescendo of imminent resolve. His announcement pleases to both kingdoms as the presence of the Lord promises to invade the scene in an abrupt intervention that will consume and refurbish all the land.

As the sound of the trumpet awakens and arouses the dormant, unbelief is interrogated and called to the light. The word and will of God is delivered in its' purest form by these men of God through their own powerful style - revealing and illuminating indelible life giving messages. Through great courage, faithful obedience, and fervent faith the voices of the prophets carry on despite the hardness and unbelieving hearts of the wayward children of God.

Their lyrics continue to resonate a call for reform in every area of society: in the home, at work, in the church, on the streets and everywhere your feet shall tread. ***Cease from evil, do good, seek justice, reprove the ruthless, defend the orphan, and plead for the widow.*** (Isaiah 1) God calls for discipline and punishment of the violators. Yet, the promise of hope and comfort through the Messiah is the expectation of all those who would repent and follow the way of the Lord.

In radical obedience the prophets plunge into their task fulfilling the commission of the Lord. They speak clear distinct words of judgment, comfort, and hope using startling figures, detailed parables, weeping, wailing, and even degrading themselves unselfishly.

Hosea becomes a living allegory to his countrymen, a final appeal is summonsed to a renewed repentance; constrained through the benevolent grace of God. The 'faithful' prophet is to marry 'unfaithful' and together their children will join the chorus of voices to proclaim the condition of God's children through - 'judgment', 'not loved', and 'not my people'. Hosea himself learns and becomes a prophet of extreme love through a spirit of mercy. This colorful, living, breathing picture is painted for all Israel to see the great lengths God will endure to restore His children.

Isaiah had a son who would be named "quick to the plunder, swift to spoil" for before the child grows Samaria shall be conquered; tell me these guys were not committed. We think our kid's give us a hard time over their names – how would you like to try these on

for size. God assigned Isaiah to go barefoot and naked for three years around the city to preview Judah's impending status, crying, it's not too late! turn around unfaithful!

Micah also strips his clothes off to reiterate the destruction and exile to come, he wails like a jackal, rolls in the dust, and shaves his head to communicate this lively ballad arranged by the Lord. It appears to me that the prophets were not so concerned with being politically correct, or worried about offending people, but were focused on practicing and conveying the will of the Lord.

We find the prophets continually striking the gavel- calling for order and issuing charges:

'Let him that hath ears to hear let him hear' ... sounds like 'The Prophet'.

Hear, O Israel! Listen up Judah! Hear, O peoples, all of you!

For the Lord has a great controversy against the inhabitants of the land. {Hosea 4}

The Lord has a case against you. {Micah 6} You have abandoned the Lord! {Isaiah 1}

God instructs Isaiah to go to the people saying: Isaiah 6: 9,10

"Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

Hosea continues in this vein 'my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge – for they have not sought the Lord.' Micah shouts - falsehood and lying have hidden you from accessing the throne of God. All day have I stretched out my arms to a rebellious people – exclaims Isaiah. Yet the lord says through his prophets in diverse ways, through many voices, RETURN TO ME ! If you only turn to me and open your eyes, ears, and heart I will graciously receive you and heal you. {Hos. 14, Mic. 6, Is. 44}

The prophets used their surroundings to emphatically illustrate their message of hope – from animals to agriculture, heaven to hills, streets and structures, and zeniths to Zion; in a solemn voice to the high pitched soprano - no cost too high to reach the hearts of men. The depth and breadth of these messages must be listened to over, and over again - like the classical symphonies that lift us to the higher ground of praise. A deeper appreciation is nurtured by reflecting on God whose gracious songs triumph gloriously in the hearts of the children of men who put their trust in Him. Through it all a promise of a renewed kingdom awaits in the city of righteousness, where justice rules; offering a lively hope to all those who will join the chorus of infinite praise to the Holy One of Israel.

King Hezekiah may have heard the echoes of this refrain – this song may have resonated in his heart, and this vision called to him for restoration.

Calling for an extreme makeover will demand a clear vision, it requires everything we have: resources, time, gifts, service, perseverance and pooling our abilities together.

Reestablishing the ‘**House Rules**’ – fulfilling the ‘*Great Commandment*’. This vision sets renewal in motion and overflows with God’s righteousness in a passionate plea for souls (bringing many sons to glory). What actions could we take to fulfill the will of God?

II Chronicles 29: 1 – 11 **

(Joshua 24:15, Psalm 127: 1, I Cor. 3:11)

Hezekiah – ‘God is my Strength’

He did what was right in the sight of the Lord. (Matthew 6:33 *) ZEAL 4 Thy house

Great Commandment** 1st Commandment Deut 6:4

1st year, 1st month, 1st day opens and repairs doors to the house of the Lord.

Call – ‘the gathering’

Consecration – cleansing of priests and house

Confession - forsaken the Lord, Door shut, Lamp out,
No incense No offerings State of Affairs (Ps.19, 51, II Chron. 7:14)

Covenant – commitment (Mt 22:37)

Charge - Be not negligent (II Chron.19:5, Zech. 3:7)

Corporate Obedience to King’s command - example II Chronicles 29*

Offerings – Lev. 4 (for the Kingdom) Altar of the Lord Ezek. 14

Worship restored Levites (Clothing) (Neh 13:11)

Corporate worship – offerings

Service re-established in the house of the Lord. V.12 – 36

God prepared the hearts V. 36 Suddenly- Spirit of God,

What idols or stumbling blocks must be cleared from the temple of our heart?

Our challenge is to remove self - interest over God interest, to struggle past indifference and apathy. To break free of the bonds of religion. (Mt. 23:13, Lk.11:52). First pray and invite the Lord Jesus into our temple to take inventory. Joel 2: mourn, weep, fast.

Jesus clears the Temple – My House shall be called a house of prayer! Mt. 21:13.

Problem is not prayer in the schools, but no prayer in the Churches.

Nehemiah: letters from the King. Open door, enter in narrow is the gate that leads to life.

One God, One people, One hope. Restoration of all things.. Acts 3:18-21

‘Fill the House’ Gatherers that celebrate a spirit of communion ‘*The Great Commission*’
(I will be their God, they will be My people, and I will dwell among them).
Where should we begin such a great endeavor?

The Great Commission - Go into all the world!

II Chronicles 30

Good things

Invitation to the Passover V. 1 - 6 (Mt. 22, Lk. 14)

Christ’s parallel I Cor. 5:7 Mt. 21:12,13

Call for repentance V. 7-10 Joel 2/ Is. 58

Humbled themselves V. 11, 12 Service I Peter 5

Passover Re-instituted Josiah John 2:13

Gathered many, progression of cleansing Luke 11:23

Hezekiah’s prayer 30:18-20 encouragement

Good and honest heart, hold it fast , with all perseverance Lk. 8

Hearts established - Re –Do ** Another 7 Days

Leaders example of service and dedication

II Chron 30: 27 Priests stood in the gap – preserved knowledge of Lord

Prayers heard on high - acceptable sacrifices ** Aroma of life / Fire

* Reconciliation - II Cor 3, 4, 5 living epistles / billboards, emergency lights, Water

Not so much preaching in the streets – heralding a clear message in our gatherings that sounds out to the streets. They turned from idols to serve the true and living God.

We do not need more mental exercise - we need ground... not a pat on the back, but a push on the back out the door – no self congratulations. We are losing the war for Souls. We have stopped short of the mark, ...mile markers (losing ground), press on.

If you faint in the day of trial, your strength is small. Deliver those being taken to death, and those stumbling to be killed, unless you hold back. If you say, Behold, we did not know; does not He who searches the heart consider it? And the Keeper of your soul, does He know? And He repays to a man according to his works.

Proverbs 24:10-12

‘Keep the House’ - the *‘Great charge’* given to faithful servants who raise up new leaders, those who will carry the torch (*the word of the kingdom*) to a generation to come.

As stewards and faithful servants over the great mysteries of God what is our responsibility in the church today?

II Chronicles 31

I Cor. 4:1-5, I Peter 4:7-11

Destroyed altars , high places in the region (progression) Lk 4:43

Returned to their cities - so let your light shine (Mt 5:14-16, Phil 2:15,16)

Reform continued - Holding fast the faithful word. Zechariah 3

Opened his hand wide.

Sacrifice – Hebrews 12:12 – 18

Acts 4, 6 , 13 - ministering to the Lord 1st Commandment

What is our reasonable service Romans 12:1,2

Singers sing, bakers bake conformed to the image of the son, Col. 3

V. 5 –10 plurality ** II Cor 9:6-14

Distribution centers: not collection centers
not a lack of social funds lack of funds in the storehouse

II Chron 19: overseers - Jehoshaphat v. 9 Joshua 1: 7,8

Good and Faithful servant Mt 25:23 Paul – abase and abound

V. 20, 21 Hezekiah ministered to the Lord with all of his heart,
fulfilling the great commandment.

Our Strategy must focus on equipping faithful men and women for service. Committed to supporting – discipleship and equipping workers for service. (II Tim 2:1,2. Eph 4:12,13)
Leadership training, otherwise the burden is on the few. Regional redemption centers.
Church builders league – churches yes, people leaders Yes.
Build leaders they will build Churches.

We must translate our powerful message so this generation may run with it.

** Pictures and parables, words, ideas, meanings, connection What is the big idea?

“United House” – the ‘*Great Mystery*’ keeps in mind the Lord’s picture of wholeness to sustain an enduring house. A house divided against itself cannot stand. We are to endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit (Oneness) in the body of Christ. The spirit of the Lord must be working within us in all wisdom and prudence. Therefore we must continually discover, rediscover, and reflect the heart of God. Understanding the depths of His love and covenant are the key to freeing ourselves for unity among His people.

Who will stand in the gap?

II Chronicles 32

Luke 11:17

V. 1 Attack of Sennacherib on fortified cities, timing of attack.

V. 2 Hezekiah seeks wise counsel .

multitude of counselors is safety Proverbs 11:14 collaboration

v. 5 took courage - rebuilt {breach} Isaiah 58, Psalm 51, Nehemiah

v.7 – Be strong and courageous Joshua, David , Ephesians 6

V.8 – Trust Psalm 127 Lies/ Accuser

v.9 – Die of hunger and thirst. Relied on God Mt. 4:4

Fear - Degrading our God. v.20 - Prayer with the Godly ones.

Angel of the Lord encamps round about those that fear Him. Psalm 34:7

Rear guard Pride/Humility Lord Proved His heart

Psalm 84, 93:5

Enemies tactics – be not ignorant of the enemies tactics and devices. In the multitude of counselors there is wise war strategy. Military campaign – breaks communication, takes out the bridge, works in the dark. Smoke confusion. The war is for our youth. They are being consumed and slaughtered, carried into captivity. Read the warning labels. If He can get us to fight in the wrong war – He is winning. Watch distractions and decoys. Careful not to get sidetracked - doctrinal disputes, schisms, threats, division. No vision, the people perish for lack of knowledge and understanding. Not so much disunity in the churches – but disunity in the hearts of men..they did not understand the covenant of God. Jesus reconnected that which was broken. Jesus actions always restored the paths of righteousness.

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