

Summary Handout

“Come to the House of the Lord”

Lesson
30
Summary

2 Chronicles 29; Hezekiah reigns in righteousness and restores worship of Jehovah—Levites cleanse and sanctify the house of the Lord—Priests offer sacrifices and make reconciliation and atonement for the people—Hezekiah and all the people worship the Lord and praise his name.

2 Chronicles 30; Hezekiah invites all Israel to a solemn passover in Jerusalem—Some accept the call; others laugh him to scorn—Faithful portion of Israel worship the Lord in Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles 32; Sennacherib invades Judah and besieges her cities—He rails against the Lord—Isaiah and Hezekiah pray, and an angel destroys the leaders of Assyrian armies—Hezekiah reigns in righteousness despite some faults.

2 Chronicles 34; Josiah destroys idolatry in Judah—They repair the house of the Lord—Hilkiah finds a book of the law—Huldah, the prophetess, reveals the desolations to come upon the people—Josiah and the people covenant to serve the Lord.

Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

Hezekiah, Highly Favored among the Jews: We can also consider several things in his life that are powerful metaphors to the Savior. One is bringing "Living Water" to Jerusalem and another is bringing the people to the Lord and bringing them back to the Temple by awakening the scriptures to them. "Hezekiah was king of Judah for 29 years in the late eighth or early seventh century B.C.E. Hezekiah is remembered as a great king by Jews, both for his religious virtue and his political and military skill." ". . . a king who purified the religion of the people of Judah by eliminating idolatry, and who tried to return to the glorious days of David and Solomon. Through his piety, Hezekiah was responsible for a national awakening in Judah." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Hezekiah Understood and Emulated the Messiah: "In the aggadah, Hezekiah is idealized as a completely righteous man, devoted to the study of Torah and to "strengthening the bonds between Israel and its Father in Heaven." The Talmud states that in his time there was not a child in the whole of the land who was not expert in the complicated laws of ritual purity, so great was the knowledge of the Torah. One sage went so far as to say that "there is no messiah for Israel because all the scriptural verses prophesying the coming of the Messiah were fulfilled in Hezekiah's time." Hezekiah was the father-in-law of the prophet Isaiah." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Hezekiah the Writer: "King Hezekiah and his colleagues committed the Book of Isaiah to writing; and Ezekiel and the Twelve Prophets were committed to writing by the Great Assembly, an institution that existed some time after Ezra." "The Song of Songs is read on the Sabbath of Passover. The Book is a song of love which the rabbis interpreted as being a poetic expression of the love between God and Israel. King Solomon is said to have composed this Book in his youth, though one tradition attributes its commitment to writing to King Hezekiah." "Another tradition has it that King Hezekiah committed Ecclesiastes to writing. This Scroll is read during Sukkot." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Hezekiah's Tunnel: Hezekiah reinforced the walls of Jerusalem and repaired the temple. Remembering David's time and the vulnerability of the city through its water source (a short tunnel leading into the city from a spring outside the walls) he built a longer water tunnel capable of supplying the city in times of emergency. He covered the Gihon spring outside the walls "sending" the water to the pool of Siloam, the name meaning "sent" (Shiloah in Hebrew).

Siloam, Water from a "Kosher" Spring: In Judaism, water used for ritual purposes such as temple washings, immersions and other ceremonies, require "Living Water;" that is, water from a spring, from bedrock, "The Rock of Salvation." That water must flow naturally and the immersion font (mikveh) is best suited below ground level.

Jewish Criteria for Immersions: “1) A mikveh must not be filled with water that has been drawn (i.e., has been in a vessel or a receptacle), but with water from a naturally flowing source; spring water or rainwater are the ideal sources, but melted snow and ice are also permitted. 2) The water must be able to flow into the mikveh freely and unimpeded (any blockage renders the water "drawn water") and must reach the mikveh in vessels that are not susceptible to ritual uncleanness. 3) The minimum size of the mikveh is of a vessel which has a volume of "40 seah," variously estimated at between 250 and 1,000 liters (quarts). 4) The mikveh must be watertight and must be constructed of natural materials on the spot, for otherwise it is deemed itself to be a "vessel" and renders the water in it "drawn water.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

In Present Judaism, No Immersion for “Forgiveness of Sins:” However, prayers asking for forgiveness are always required prior to immersions.

Immersion for Sins - Red Heifer: “. . . from the Siloam pool . . . water was taken for the Red Heifer ceremony in Temple times.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*) As stated in the Book of Numbers (19:1-9), the Red Heifer ritual was for forgiveness of sins. This was made possible through the "red" atonement of the Lord on the Mount of Olives. Jews have a tradition that this red calf offering had to be high on the Mount of Olives, above the Temple itself and opposite the Gate Beautiful. Those who have had the experience of sitting on the upper part of the Mount of Olives opposite of the present day Gate Beautiful can attest to the spirit of Gethsemane (well away from the traditional Church of Gethsemane on the lower part of the mount).

Water and Sins in Jewish Traditions: “It is a particularly important religious duty to wash the hands before eating bread and this washing must be performed by pouring water over the hands from a utensil with a wide mouth, the lip of which must be undamaged. Prior to this ritual washing, the hands must be clean and without any foreign object (such as a ring) to intervene between hand and the water.”

Casting Sins in Water: “On the afternoon of the first day (of Rosh Hashana), it is customary to walk to the nearest body of running water and there symbolically "cast" one's sins into the water. The ceremony may be based on a verse in the biblical book of Micah: "And Thou (referring to God) shall cast all their sins into the depths of the seas" (Micah 7:19). This practice, to which there is no reference in the Talmud, is generally called *Tashlikh*, probably after the Hebrew word meaning "cast" (va-tashlikh) in the verse from Micah.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Scriptures Discovered, Call to Repentance: During the renovation of the temple, the book of Deuteronomy, a distinctive part of the "Torah" was discovered in one of the storage chambers. “The biblical Books had previously been destroyed by Amon so that the find caused a sensation. When the Book was read to Josiah he was deeply shocked by its prophesies of doom. He immediately sent a delegation to the prophetess Hulda to ask her advice. The answer was forthright and not reassuring --- Jerusalem and the Temple were doomed, but Josiah himself would not live to see their destruction. Josiah led the people to the Temple in repentance.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Are You Ready for a Temple City? Before Solomon’s temple, the entire encampment of Israel was a "city temple" (apparently it will be that way again when the Lord returns to Jerusalem): “In pre-Temple times, in the desert, the whole encampment was considered to be in a state of sanctity, and hence anyone who was *tameh* (unclean) was forced to go outside the marked boundaries and was forbidden to return until he had completed the purification ritual. With the destruction of the Temple, such sanctions ceased to apply. Nevertheless, the maintenance of ritual impurity has remained an essential aspect of Jewish life.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

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