

THEY BROUGHT IN ABUNDANTLY

TEXT: II CHRONICLES 31:1-10

Introduction:

1. King Hezekiah was one of the greatest kings of Judah. Second Kings 18:5 says, King Hezekiah “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.”
2. In II Kings 20:1, King Hezekiah was told he was going to die.
3. King Hezekiah was sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah came to him and said to him, “Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.”
4. The Bible says the king wept sore and he prayed to God, “I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight” (II Kings 20:3).
5. Right here in II Chronicles 31:20 and 21 we read, “And thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah, and wrought that which was good and right and truth before the LORD his God. And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered.”
6. One of the greatest revivals recorded in the Bible occurred under the leadership of King Hezekiah. Many wonderful things happened during this revival – in II Kings 18:4, we are told King Hezekiah “removed the high places...”
7. The Bible says that one of the first things Hezekiah did after his coronation was to open the doors of the temple (II Chron. 29:3).
8. The house of the LORD had been neglected during the reign of his father, King Ahaz. But as soon as Hezekiah became king he opened the doors of the temple and repaired them.
9. King Hezekiah instructed the Levites to sanctify themselves, and to sanctify the house of God, and to carry the filthiness out of the temple (II Chron. 29:5).
10. King Hezekiah restored the blood sacrifices (II Chron. 29:22-24), and the celebration of Passover (II Chron. 30:1).
11. King Hezekiah led the people to worship the Lord with music and singing (II Chron. 29:25-30).
12. And King Hezekiah commanded the people to give their tithes and offerings, and the people did (II Chron. 31:4-10).

I. THEY ENCOURAGED THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES (31:4).

1. The office of the OT priesthood was vested in the tribe of Levi. The Levites were descended from Levi, one of the twelve sons of Jacob.
2. Moses and his brother Aaron were descended from Levi.

3. The priests were to minister at the altar in the temple, and they were to teach the law.
4. Today in this dispensation of grace – the church age – we have no priests and Levites. In the NT church we have pastors and evangelists who teach us the Word of God.
5. The apostle Paul said in I Corinthians 9:13 and 14, “Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.”
6. In other words, Paul was saying, just as the priests and Levites (“they which wait at the altar”) were “partakers with the altar,” they which preach the Gospel should be taken care of as well.
7. This is the message of this entire passage of Scripture (cf. I Cor. 9:1-14).
8. The priests and Levites were to be provided for and “encouraged in the law of the LORD” (II Chron. 31:4). Likewise preachers today are to be provided for and encouraged by God’s people.
9. When the preacher gets a decent salary, he is then freed from worldly cares and distractions. He is then enabled to give himself up entirely to prayer and the serious study of God’s law.
10. Do you remember what the twelve apostles said to the members of the growing church at Jerusalem, when they were instructed to select seven new deacons?
11. They said, “But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.”
12. Unfortunately, many pastors cannot give themselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word because they are constantly distracted by a lack of money.
13. The priests and Levites were not to be distracted by a lack of money. They were encouraged by the giving of God’s people (II Chron. 31:4).
14. But unfortunately, many pastors today are discouraged. They often have to work two jobs to provide for their family. Some pastors even give up on the ministry altogether.
15. When I graduated from Bible college, my pastor advised me not to seek secular employment because he had seen many preachers do that and become discouraged and quit the ministry.
16. First Timothy 5:17 and 18 says, “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.”
17. If Christians obeyed this and were careful to follow it, God would bless them and their churches. The churches would grow and prosper.

18. And pastors would be greatly encouraged (cf. II Chron. 31:4).

II. THEY BROUGHT IN ABUNDANCE THE FIRSTFRUITS (31:5).

1. Before the reign of King Hezekiah, the Biblical practice of tithing had been long neglected, which meant the work of God had been neglected.
2. King Hezekiah was determined to make this right.
3. When God's people do not give, the work of God slows down.
4. King Hezekiah wanted the work of God to go forward. Note the words "abundance" and "abundantly" (31:5).
5. They brought in "the tithe of all things" (31:5, 6) "and laid them by heaps" (31:6b). This refers to the huge surplus.
6. The word "heaps" is found four times (vss. 6, 7, 8, 9). The repetition emphasizes the large piles brought in by the people.
7. The great commentator Matthew Henry said, "They did not hoard these heaps for covetousness, but to show what plentiful provision God by his law had made for them, if they could but have it collected and brought in, and that those who conscientiously give God his dues out of their estates bring a blessing upon all they have."

III. THEY HAD PLENTY LEFT (31:10).

1. This is a Biblical principal. It reminds us of what happened when they built the tabernacle (Ex. 36:5-7), and when they built the temple (I Chron. 29:1-20).
2. Hudson Taylor said, "God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply."
3. But God's work must be done God's way. And God's Word gives us plenty of instruction (Luke 6:38; Acts 20:35; I Cor. 16:1, 2; II Cor. 9:6, 7).
4. When God's people give the way they ought to, there will always be plenty left over (II Chron. 31:10).
5. Malachi 3:10 says, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."
6. Matthew Henry said, "They gave thanks to God for his good providence, which gave them something to bring, and his good grace, which gave them hearts to bring it. And they also *blessed the people*, that is, commended them for their doing well now, without reproaching them for their former neglects. It is observable that after they had tasted the sweetness of God's ordinance, in the late comfortable passover, they were thus free in maintaining the temple service. Those that experience the benefit of a settled ministry will not grudge the expense of it."

CONCLUSION:

1. A Baptist preacher named Earle Pierce visited Japan and wrote this:
2. “In a beautiful lacquered temple to Buddha in Kyoto, Japan, we were shown great coils of shiny black rope two inches in diameter. Why was it there? Years before, when the temple was built, they had no rope strong enough to lift the huge bronze statue of Buddha into place. The women of the region gave their hair, their glory, to make the ropes for this cause. Used for that, they have been kept in sacred memory of this devotion. How much more should we give our glory, our dearest possessions, to lift up Christ for the world’s worship.”
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