

Lesson 68: Good King, Bad King

2 Chronicles 29:1 - 33:25 (pg. 136-137, Gospel Story Bible)

Teaching Points:

Hezekiah follows the Lord — Hezekiah becomes king of Judah not long after the kingdom of Israel is defeated by the Assyrians. It had been more than 160 years since any king of Judah had even tried to follow God.

Hezekiah knows the reason for Israel's and Judah's suffering — The reason for their suffering was their stubborn disobedience to God, so Hezekiah cleanses the temple and restores worship of God there. He also reinstates the Passover and transforms Jerusalem for the better.

Manasseh rejects the Lord — As Hezekiah ages, his desire to honor God weakens. Becoming rich, proud and selfish, all he cares about is having peace and security.

Hezekiah's son, Manasseh, had not been alive to see his father during his best days when he was restoring the temple. Clearly, Manasseh is more influenced by pagan culture than by any godly example he may have received from his father. Manasseh's fall into sin is deep. He sacrifices his own children to idols and draws Judah away from God. In his pride, he wants his name to live forever in Jerusalem, the city of God's holy temple. God uses the Assyrian army to discipline Manasseh.

Manasseh repents — While in prison, Manasseh humbles himself and prays. God hears his prayer and makes him king of Jerusalem again. Manasseh strengthens the city with walls and removes both the idols and the places where the idols are worshiped. He restores God's altar and offers sacrifices on it.

Sadly, after Manasseh dies, his son, Amon, does not follow the Lord. Less than sixty years after the death of Hezekiah, all the things he did to bring the kingdom of Judah back to God have been lost and forgotten. However, as we will soon see, Amon's son, Josiah, becomes the best king in the entire history of the divided kingdom.

Where is the Gospel?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Read 2 Chronicles 30:21-26.

Hezekiah called the people to obey the Lord by celebrating the Passover. Then, after the Passover lamb was sacrificed, thousands of bulls were also killed. All of these animals that were sacrificed pointed forward to Jesus. Jesus became the perfect sacrifice. Once Jesus died, no more sacrifices were needed because everyone who trusts in Jesus' blood shed on the cross will be saved for all time.

Bible Truth:

God's plan is bigger than our sin.

A Little Bit More (grades 3-5) - Chronicles

The books of First and Second Chronicles were written after the release of the exiles from Babylon in 538 BC. Chronicles is written as a compilation of other books, some of which we have, like the historical books of Samuel and Kings and the prophetic book of Isaiah. It also references books that are lost, such as the chronicles of King David (1 Chronicles 27:24), the Book of the Kings of Israel (1 Chronicles 9:1), and the writings of Nathan (1 Chronicles 29:29). When studying the books of Chronicles, it is always helpful to check the cross-references to see if more information is given in another passage of Scripture that we still have in the Bible.

Object Lessons:

1. Tear Down the Idols & Worship Restored (Grades K-5)

Supplies:

- 15-25 pictures of idols (print from internet & photocopy)
- 3M tabs to tape pictures to walls
- Percussion instruments, enough for everyone
- A worship song the kids would know for them to sing

Before your class arrives, tape up the pictures of idols low enough for the children to take them down. The more idols you tape up, the more dramatic the effect. Overturn the furniture to show that the classroom is also in bad condition.

Read 2 Chronicles 29:1–18. Tell the children you are going to pretend your classroom is the temple. They can be the Levites who cleanse the temple. Have some children tear down the idols while others restore the furniture. Ask how they felt when they walked into the room and saw the furniture turned upside down. Talk about how Hezekiah obeyed the Lord.

Read the account of the restoration of worship in the temple, 2 Chronicles 29:20–30, and then lead the children in singing and playing a song that celebrates our worship of the Lord. Ask the class the following questions:

- Why did worship need to be restored?

(Hezekiah's father was a wicked king who did not make God's worship a priority. As a result, the people worshiped idols.)

- Second Chronicles 29:30 tells us that the people sang praises to the Lord with the words of David and Asaph. To what does this refer?

(Both David and Asaph were songwriters. Many of their songs are preserved for us in the book of Psalms. For K-2, play a worship song they would know and sing together. For 3rd-5th grade, either choose a worship song to sing or read Psalm 108:1–5 and Psalm 73:25–28 as examples of their songs.)