

When Simple Worship Just Doesn't Satisfy

Hezekiah begins his reign as king in 2 Chronicles chapter 29. He orders, "Hear me, Levites! Now sanctify yourselves, sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers, and carry out the rubbish from the holy place. For our fathers have trespassed and done evil in the eyes of the Lord our God; they have forsaken Him, have turned their faces away from the dwelling place of the Lord, and turned their backs on Him" (2 Chronicles 29:5-6). Hezekiah restored the simple, devout, proper worship of God that had been replaced with worship that was apparently more glamorous in the mind of men - worship of the Baals. Hezekiah replaced what man had put in place with that which God had commanded and intended.

Hezekiah brought about change to a whole generation of people. People who appreciated with gladness that in which they are allowed to participate. "Moreover King Hezekiah and the leaders commanded the Levites to sing praise to the Lord with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped" (2 Chronicles 29:30). The inspired writer furthers with, "So the service of the Lord was set in order... then Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced" (2 Chronicles 29:35-36). Having gathered together a great assembly of the people we read that "...the people of Israel who were present at Jerusalem kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with great gladness, and the Levites and the priests praised the Lord day by day, singing to the Lord" (2 Chronicles 30:21). The whole assembly rejoiced (2 Chronicles 30:25). "So there was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem" (2 Chronicles 30:26). Amazing what worshipping God His way can produce within the willing heart.

Sadly, worshipping God His way will fade away. God's people will lose their joy and gladness in worshipping God to replace it with an attitude of weariness and sneering (Malachi 1:13). The temple service will be the same and more importantly, God will be the same. However, the hearts of the people will once again find His worship dreary, weary, and less glamorous. But why?

The answer appears to be obvious. Instead of finding joy in the worship of God as He prescribed, God's people seemingly lost their zeal and enthusiasm, allowing and convincing themselves that worship was just too boring and mundane. Their worship was sprinkled with resentment. After all, God was the one who prescribed worship the way He wanted it done. Their worship became more about themselves and satisfying their own desires rather than being focused and centered upon God. God has always intended that worship be centered on Him, His holiness, and glory. When our feelings or wants become that which drives worship, our hearts (whether we realize it or not) have become hardened and our love for God has become useless and cold.

May it be that we continue to worship in proper spirit and truth (John 4:23-24). And, let us pray that those in the world who have turned worship into that which God has not authorized will come to their senses before it is everlastingly too late.