

**II Chronicles 29**  
**"Right Resolutions"**

1. BE THE KIND OF SAINT YOU SHOULD BE
  - A. One who understands their royalty
  - B. One who undertakes their responsibility
2. BE THE KIND OF SANCTUARY YOU SHOULD BE
  - A. One fit for the presence of God
  - B. One filled with the praises of God
3. BE THE KIND OF SERVANT YOU SHOULD BE
  - A. A passionate servant
  - B. A prepared servant

1. On Wednesday of this past week, *TIME* magazine posted an online article entitled "New Year's Resolutions: The Good, the Bad, and the Annoying."<sup>i</sup>
2. The article was a review of various resolutions being offered up for the coming year. For instance, a survey by *CNNMoney* found that 84% of employees plan on looking for a better job in the coming year.
3. Another survey found that 4 in 10 New Year's resolutions involved either diet and exercise or better money management.
4. Listed among the annoying resolutions were ones given by celebrities like Justin Timberlake, who is resolved to sleep more and take some time off next year. What a noble endeavor.
5. In II Chronicles 29, we read about King Hezekiah, and a worthy New Year's resolution that he made just after he became the King of Judah.
6. A summary of what he did is recorded in verse 3. It says, "*He in the first year of his reign, in the first month (that is the first month of the year), opened the doors of the house of the LORD, and repaired them.*"
7. Hezekiah gave orders to the priests and Levites regarding this work. They were instructed to clean out and clean up the House of God, which had been disgraced and abandoned under the reign of his father, King Ahaz.
8. Verse 17 tells us, "*Now they began on the first day of the first month...*" This New Year was started in the right way as this king, along with the men of God, resolved to change some things that were wrong in their day.
9. I believe when we look with spiritual eyes at this Old Testament text, we are pointed to some right resolutions for our own lives and our own day.

10. Notice what we draw from this story and from the way these men started their New Year. First of all, learning from this text, you should resolve to:

### **I. BE THE KIND OF SAINT YOU SHOULD BE**

1. The main characters in this chapter are the twenty five year-old king, Hezekiah, and the priests and Levites that helped him carry out his New Year's resolution.

2. Though you may not immediately realize it, we as believers have something in common with both this king, and the men who helped him.

3. Let me explain. In Revelation chapter one, John is giving praise to Jesus, and says in verse 5, "...Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

5. He goes on in verse 6, and adds this: "*And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father...*" This same statement is repeated in Revelation 5:10.

6. The Apostle Peter seems to echo this in I Peter 2:9, where he describes us as, "...a royal priesthood." In other words, there is a sense in which we as saints are similar to both this king, and these priests.

7. In his commentary on Revelation, the late Dr. John Phillips said, "He has bestowed upon us all the majesty of a prince and all the ministry of a priest."<sup>ii</sup>

8. Learning from the examples before us in this chapter, what kind of saint should you be? Well, first of all resolve to be:

#### **A. One who understands their royalty**

1. In a monarchy, such as the one that ruled over Judah in the days recorded in our text, when one king died, his oldest son would take his place.

2. Therefore, because of the family he belonged to, Hezekiah ascended to the throne of Judah.

3. As king, Hezekiah had great power, but he realized that His rule was one that was superseded by God. He was the king who ruled under the real King, the Lord God Jehovah.

4. May I remind you that once you are born again by the grace of God, your family lineage changes. When you are saved, you become a child of the King.

5. You may not look like it or feel like it right now, but you are royalty, and you have the privilege of exercising spiritual power under Him to whom all power has been given in heaven and on earth!

6. Sadly, ours is a day of sickly, weak, and impotent Christianity. Most Christians today live like prisoners instead princes. Their lives are pitiful rather than powerful.

7. In this New Year, let us remember that we are more than conquerors through Jesus. Therefore, we don't have to live in defeat. We don't have surrender to the forces of evil in this world.

8. We are royalty because of our spiritual family, and we need more saints who grasp and appreciate that truth. Be the kind of saint who understands their royalty. Furthermore, be:

### **B. One who undertakes their responsibility**

1. Along with King Hezekiah, this chapter has much to say about the Priests and their counterparts, the Levites.

2. In the Old Testament, the priests served as the go-between for God and His people. The priests offered the sacrifices on behalf of the people. Also, the priests confessed the sins of the people, and interceded for their forgiveness.

3. In the New Testament, it becomes clear that the old Israelite priesthood has been done away with, and that through Jesus Christ, a new priesthood has developed, that is the priesthood of the believer.

4. Again, Peter calls us a "royal priesthood", and in I Peter 2:5, He says that as believers, we have the responsibility, "*...to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*"

5. The priesthood of the believer is a great opportunity. It means that you can go to God yourself, and you need no one to stand between you and the Lord.

6. However, while it is a great opportunity, it is also a great responsibility. As a priest, you have a spiritual duty. You must do the priestly work in your own life. You must offer to God *yourself* the things He asks of you.

8. You have the responsibility of taking care of your own spiritual life and relationship with God. If you do not do it, no one can do it on your behalf.

9. I can pray *for* you, but I cannot pray *as* you. You alone must accept the responsibility that comes with being a saint of God, and a priest for your own life.

10. While on his deathbed, American writer Wilson Mizner awoke from a coma to find a priest standing over his bed. Mizner said to him, "Why should I talk to you? I've just been talking to your boss?"

11. As we see these Old Testament priests at work in our text, may I remind you that *you* are a priest serving under the great High Priest, Jesus Christ!

12. It is a responsibility that you must undertake for yourself. Why not start this New Year by submitting yourself to God, and offering to Him the things He expects of you as a child in His family and a priest in His service!

13. Notice a second resolution we draw from this text. You are challenged here not only to *be the kind of saint you should be*, but as the New Year begins, you ought to resolve as well to:

## **II. BE THE KIND OF SANCTUARY YOU SHOULD BE**

1. While King Hezekiah and the priests are the main characters in this chapter, the main concern of this chapter is the Temple.

2. The Temple was literally the House of God. It was the place where God would dwell among His people, and where they could come to meet with Him.

3. Today, on this side of the cross, God does not dwell in Temples made by human hands. No, instead, we are told in I Corinthians 6:19 that, "*...your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you...*"

4. The Holy Spirit of God who was sent to this earth after Jesus ascended back into heaven dwells within the bodies of those who have been born again.

5. Like the Temple of old, we are to be the sanctuary of God on earth. With that being said, what kind of sanctuary should you be?

6. Drawing from this chapter, I would say that firstly, you should resolve to be:

### **A. One fit for the presence of God**

1. Hezekiah called the priests and the Levites together and gave them specific instructions regarding the Temple. In verse 5, the young king said, "*Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place.*"

2. The task was to clean up the inside of the Temple, which had become polluted and desecrated under the previous kingdom.
3. Look down at verse 16. It says, *"And the priests went into the inner part of the house of the LORD, to cleanse it, and brought out all the uncleanness that they found in the temple of the LORD into the court of the house of the LORD. And the Levites took it, to carry it out abroad into the brook Kidron."*
4. These men cleaned the Temple from the inside out, and they carried away all the things that had polluted the House of God.
5. Let's apply this to our own lives mindful of the fact that now we are the Temple of God. We learn here that cleaning the outside is not enough. You can look good on the outside and still be a mess on the inside.
6. In order that our hearts may be fit homes for the presence of God, you and I must constantly let the Lord cleanse us, even in the innermost parts of our lives.
7. In Psalm 139, verses 23 and 24, the Psalmist prayed, *"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."*
8. Imagine coming home tonight to find that some animal has made it into your house and somehow managed to die inside your closet.
9. As disturbing as that would be, imagine that instead of removing it, you just let it rot right there inside your house.
10. As horrible and unsettling as that would be, how much more disturbing must it be to the Holy Ghost of God when we harbor some old putrid, disgusting, displeasing sin in our hearts, and expect the Lord to just live with it?
11. We need to have clean hearts in the coming year so that we can be a sanctuary fit for the presence of God. I would add further, the kind of sanctuary you should be is:

#### **B. One filled with the praises of God**

1. Once the priests and Levites had cleansed the Temple, and everything was as it should be for the presence of God, then they were able to worship Him as He deserved to be worshipped.
2. Verse 20 says, *"Then Hezekiah the king rose early, and gathered the rulers of the city, and went up to the house of the LORD."*

3. Once in the newly cleansed Temple, there they offered sacrifices and burnt offerings unto the Lord, as had been commanded by God through Moses.
4. Verse 27 says, "*And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt offering upon the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD began also with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David king of Israel.*"
5. Look at verse 28. Along with the sacrifices, we read, "*And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: and all this continued until the burnt offering was finished.*"
6. Once again the Temple of God was filled with praises to His name, and He was worshipped by His people.
7. If our bodies are the Temple of the Holy Ghost, that means that everywhere we go throughout every moment of the day, the Lord Himself is within us.
8. That means that we don't have to wait until Sunday to worship Him. Every day of our lives we can spend time in His presence, and offer Him the worship and praise He is due.
9. One of the most treasured books I own is a tiny little volume called, "The King's Son". It is a memoir of the life of Billy Bray.
10. Billy was a rough, rowdy coal miner from Cornwall, England. He was wicked before his conversion, but after he was saved, the Lord did not have a more passionate preacher and servant than Billy Bray.
11. Billy praised the Lord everywhere he went. On one occasion, he said, "I can't help praising the Lord. As I go along the street I lift up one foot, and it seems to say, 'Glory!' and I lift up the other, and it seems to say 'Amen!' and so they keep on like that all the time I am walking."<sup>iiii</sup>
12. As a walking, talking Temple of the Lord, it would be good for you to resolve that as you take each step in this New Year, you do so filled with praises to Jesus for what He has done for you!
13. There is a third resolution we draw from this text. Not only would it be right for you to resolve *to be the kind of saint you should be*, and *to be the kind of sanctuary you should be*, but I would add lastly, resolve to:

### **III. BE THE KIND OF SERVANT YOU SHOULD BE**

1. I want to draw your attention back to the priests and Levites in this chapter. They were the servants who did the work in getting the House of God ready, as well as leading the worship once it was ready.
2. As a New Year approaches, one of the greatest resolutions you can make is a resolution to serve the Lord and His church in the year to come.
3. In Matthew 23:11, Jesus said, "*But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.*" In the kingdom of Christ, the servant is the highest rank you can reach.
4. What kind of servant should you resolve to be? Let me point out a couple of things about the servants in this chapter. First of all:

#### **A. Be a passionate servant**

1. I want you to look back at the king's address to the priests and Levites at the beginning of this chapter. Look again at verse 11. The king said, "*My sons, be not now negligent: for the LORD hath chosen you to stand before him, to serve him, and that ye should minister unto him, and burn incense.*"
2. Notice that phrase, "Be not now negligent." The phrase means "to avoid a thing from carelessness or laziness."<sup>iv</sup>
3. In other words, King Hezekiah was warning these men not to be apathetic toward this matter of cleaning up the Temple.
4. If there is one sin that plagues the people of God in this day, it is apathy. Too many Christians simply do not care about the work of God.
5. They are spiritually lazy, and have no passion for serving the Lord and seeing His kingdom advanced. Our churches are powerless because they are passionless.
6. A.W. Tozer was unique voice in American Christianity before his death in 1963. His message was not the fluffy, soft, purely positive pep talks coming out of so many preachers today.
7. I have a little book by Tozer entitled, "God Tells the Man Who Cares". That is also the title of the first chapter. In the opening paragraph I underlined a statement that jumped off the page at me the first time I read it. Tozer said, "God has nothing to say to the frivolous man."<sup>v</sup>
8. We are a generation of flaky, frivolous, flippant Christians, and the condition of our lives, homes, and churches reflects it.

9. Would to God that 2011 would be different because a group of people became passionate about the things of God and about serving Him with their lives.

10. Resolve to be a passionate servant. I would add, resolve to:

### **B. Be a prepared servant**

1. Before the priests and Levites were commanded to clean out the Temple, they were first commanded to clean up themselves.

2. In verse 5, the king's speech began with this command, "*Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves...*"

3. With that in mind, I found something interesting toward the close of this chapter. It says in verse 34, "*But the priests were too few, so that they could not flay all the burnt offerings: wherefore their brethren the Levites did help them, till the work was ended, and until the other priests had sanctified themselves: for the Levites were more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests.*"

4. Did you catch that? It said that the Levites were "more upright in heart" to get themselves clean and ready for service. One translation says that the Levites were more "conscientious" to sanctify themselves.<sup>vi</sup>

5. When the time came for service, the Levites were ready. They had prepared themselves to be used by God in the service of His people.

6. I wonder; if there were something great that God wanted to do in this place, and in this day, would you be ready to be used by God?

7. Are you in a position spiritually that God could call on you to step up and do His work in this world? Are you a prepared servant?

8. In March of 2001, the New England Patriots resigned their quarterback, Drew Bledsoe to a then-record, ten-year, \$103 million contract. By all accounts, he was their franchise player.

9. During the second game of the season, Bledsoe was hit by a linebacker, and suffered a sheared blood vessel in his chest. The star player's season was over.

10. Sitting on the bench as the back-up quarterback was a sixth-round pick from Michigan that the Patriots had taken almost as an afterthought.

11. His name was Tom Brady, and though few knew who he was at the time, *he was ready when his opportunity came*, and Bledsoe never got his job back. Brady has since led his team to three Superbowls.

12. I am not saying that God is going to use you in a Superbowl sort-of way. What I am saying is that if we are going to be used at all, we have got to be ready and prepared when He calls our name.

1. As this New Year begins, I really hope that you lose every pound you plan to, that you save every dollar you need to, and that you quit whatever bad habit it is you are determined to stop.

2. Setting goals is wise, and most resolutions are good, even if only in their intentions.

3. However, there are some resolutions that are more important than others. II Chronicles 29 reminds us of the importance of resolving to do what is right as a child of God.

4. I pray that you will resolve now that in this coming year you will be the kind of saint you should be, living the kind of Christian life that Jesus purchased for you at the cross, and commands you to live in His Word.

5. I pray that you will be the kind of sanctuary you should be; that your life will be a clean and holy place in which the Spirit of God can dwell and work.

6. I pray also that our church will find among its members more people who are passionately determined to be the kind of servants they should be for God's glory.

7. The New Year will not be new for very long. Take this opportunity to start this year right, and resolve to do the right things in it for the glory of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

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<sup>i</sup> Tuttle, Brad, “New Year’s Resolutions: The Good, the Bad, and the Annoying”, 12/29/10, *TIME.com*, accessed 12/29/10, <http://money.blogs.time.com/2010/12/29/new-years-resolutions-the-good-the-bad-and-the-annoying/>

<sup>ii</sup> Phillips, John, Exploring Revelation, (Kregel Publishers, Grand Rapids, MI, 2001), p. 21

<sup>iii</sup> Bourne, F.W., The King’s Son, (Ballantyne Press, London, 1877), p. 31

<sup>iv</sup> Keil, C.F., Commentary on the Old Testament, Vol. 3, (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 1978), p. 449

<sup>v</sup> Tozer, A.W., God Tells the Man Who Cares, (Christian Publications, Harrisburg, PA, 1978), p. 9

<sup>vi</sup> HCSB