

Vision 2017 Decisions and Destiny

Introduction:

1. Each year we have a theme that the Lord is directing us to pursue
2. Some markers or beacons on the road for this year:
 - a. Personal spiritual practices predict Christ-centered living.
 - b. The churches most active evangelists, volunteers, and donors come from the higher steps of the continuum towards Christ
 - c. One-quarter of the respondents were "spiritually stalled" or "dissatisfied" with the church's role in their spiritual growth but the blame is not the church's totally
 - d. The church in general have made the mistake in not telling people that as soon as they became Christians is for us to tell and teach them that they must take responsibility to become 'self-feeders.'
3. We need to make the decision that we want more of God
4. Each of the choices we make – all through our lives – even they may seem inconsequential at the time can have a profound need to effect on our lives
5. Certain decisions can lead to spiritual "turning points"

Background:

1. **2 Chronicles 29:1-36** - the story of Hezekiah
2. What Hezekiah did physically God is challenging us to do spiritually today in our hearts.
3. We see four things happen:
 - a. The *assembly of the priests and Levites* in **29:1-9**;
 - b. The *desire to make a covenant* with the Lord **29:10-11**;
 - c. The *cleansing* of the priests and the temple in **29:12-24**;
 - d. The *celebration* of God's people in worship in **29:25-36**.
4. To understand this story, you should look at the previous chapter and the dismal spiritual situation in Judah under the King Ahaz, Hezekiah's father.
5. His priority is described in **Verse 3** *"In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the Lord and repaired them."*
6. Then he called the priests and Levites to consecrate themselves
7. Then he speaks to them of the covenant
8. The greatest miracle of all – and this applies to each one of us who has accepted Christ as our personal Lord and Savior is a changed life
9. The area we are most like God is in our capacity to love
10. Every time anything else displaces that love relationship with God then that relationship with Him breaks down
11. Each one of us long for deep abiding committed relationships.
12. Every day the world, the flesh, and the devil seek to pull us back into a spiritual lethargy
13. Every day the world bombards us with images and its message that wants to affect our relationships – with God – with those we love – with our relationships.

Hezekiah's Actions:

1. He immediately embarks the nation on a journey towards spiritual renewal, and he wastes no time in dealing with the sins of the previous period in their history.
2. **Verse 5 says they were carrying out rubbish.**

3. Hezekiah guides them into a process of consecration, of cleansing. The Hebrew term here means *"to make free from blemish."*
4. So here we have desperation, community and repentance.
 - a. **They began with Repentance:** *Isaiah 59:1-2* makes the reason clear: ***"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He will not hear."***
 Sin separates us from God and sin must be overcome if access to him is available
 In the OT it was the presenting of offerings. NT - *Eph 2:13* ***"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."***
John 2:2 says, ***And He (Jesus) served as a sacrifice for our sins, and so solved the sin problem for good—not only ours, but the whole world's.***
 In the New Year let us be certain to deal with unforgiveness in our own lives
 - b. **Establish an environment for praise and worship:** ***"One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple" (Ps 27:4).***
 - c. **Present offerings of sacrifice:** All those with a willing heart brought burnt offerings

Application:

1. Definition of Covenant - *a binding agreement between two or more parties expressly for the performance of some action."*
2. Difference between a biblical covenant and a legal contract: - a. Biblical Covenant is eternal b. A biblical Covenant applies to the whole being
3. A biblical covenant is the full giving of self to each other

Three reasons to join with a Hezekiah like spirit and unleash the power of covenant

1. *Covenant moves us beyond what God can do for us: – "beyond the gimmies"*
2. *Covenant moves us beyond verbal commitment to action:*
 - a. *Are you willing to say "Jesus whatever it takes I want you – I want a relationship with you that is far beyond where I am at right now"*
 - b. *Are you willing to pray this "Lord change my heart – and give me the character to become that person You desire for me to become"*
 - c. *Will you pray for the strength of character to repent of whatever is interfering with your relationship?*
 - d. *Will you pray for that if your life is His life, that He will take it back and make it what He wants it to be –*
3. *Covenant moves us further towards our goal of Christlikeness:*
 - a. I believe that covenant relationship with God is the highest, and simultaneously deepest relationship we can enjoy with God.
 - b. ***Ps 50:5, "Gather to me my faithful ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice."***

Questions:

1. What covenant and dedication of my life am I willing to make with God?
2. Who would God have me join in covenant and service to Him?
3. How will that covenant impact my daily life and plans?
4. I encourage you to take time to pray and reflect on these questions as you look to God