

2 Chronicles 30 - The Great Passover

IV. Judah's Kings (2 Chr 10:1—36:23)

(2) Reform and apostasy in Judah (2 Chr 12:1—36:14)

(M) Hezekiah (2 Chr 29:1—32:33)

(a) Hezekiah's reforms (2 Chr 29:1—31:21)

(ii) Passover (30:1-27)

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(ii) Passover (30:1-27)

1 Now Hezekiah sent *word* to all Israel and Judah and also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover to the LORD God of Israel.

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1 Hezekiah also sent word to all of Israel and Judah, and wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh that they should come to the LORD's Temple in Jerusalem to observe the Passover to the LORD God of Israel.

1 And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel.

- In anticipation of what must have been the first Passover of his reign, Hezekiah sent out invitations throughout all Israel and Judah, including even Ephraim and Manasseh, to encourage the faithful to attend

— Some of the people in those two Northern tribes had apparently not been taken captive by Assyria

2 For the king and his princes and all the assembly in Jerusalem had decided to celebrate the Passover in the second month,

2 For the king and his princes and all the assembly in Jerusalem had decided to celebrate the Passover in the second month,

2 The king, his princes, and the entire assembly in Jerusalem had mutually decided to observe the Passover in the second month,

2 For the king had taken counsel, and his princes, and all the congregation in Jerusalem, to keep the passover in the second month.

3 since they could not celebrate it at that time, because the priests had not consecrated themselves in sufficient numbers, nor had the people been gathered to Jerusalem.

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3 but they had been unable to celebrate it then because not enough priests had consecrated themselves and the people had not yet been gathered together in Jerusalem.

3 For they could not keep it at that time, because the priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently, neither had the people gathered themselves together to Jerusalem.

4 So the decision was right in the sight of the king and all the assembly.

4 Thus the thing was right in the sight of the king and all the assembly.

4 This decision seemed to be a good one in the opinion of the king and of the entire assembly,

4 And the thing pleased the king and all the congregation.

- This feast was usually held in the first month (of the religious calendar; Cf. Ex 12:1-2), but Hezekiah had not been able to recruit sufficient priestly personnel that early, nor had the people been able to arrive from distant points

— Authority for observing the Passover in the second month, instead of the first, is given in Num 9:10-11

5 So they established a decree to circulate a proclamation throughout Israel from Beersheba to Dan, that they are to come to celebrate the Passover to the LORD God of Israel in Jerusalem. For they had not celebrated *it* in great numbers as was written.

5 So they established a decree to circulate a proclamation throughout all Israel from Beersheba even to Dan, that they should come to celebrate the Passover to the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem. For they had not celebrated *it* in great numbers as it was prescribed.

5 so they published a decree that was circulated throughout Israel from Beersheba to Dan that they are to come celebrate the Passover to the LORD God of Israel in Jerusalem. The Passover had not been celebrated in great numbers as was being prescribed by the decree.

5 So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem: for they had not done it of a long time in such sort as it was written.

- An announcement was sent out from Beersheba to Dan (the southernmost and northernmost cities in Judah and Israel) with the expectation of great attendance

6 The couriers went throughout Israel and Judah with the letters from the hand of the king and his princes, even according to the command of the king, saying, "Sons of Israel, return to the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, that He may return to those of you who escaped *and* are left from the hand of the kings of Assyria.

6 The couriers went throughout all Israel and Judah with the letters from the hand of the king and his princes, even according to the command of the king, saying, "O sons of Israel, return to the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, that He may return to those of you who escaped *and* are left from the hand of the kings of Assyria.

6 Couriers were sent throughout all of Israel and Judah with letters written by the king and his princes, just as the king had commanded:

"Listen, you descendants of Israel! Come back to the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, so he may come back to those of you who have escaped and survived from domination by the kings of Assyria.

6 So the posts went with the letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah, and according to the commandment of the king, saying, Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and he will return to the remnant of you, that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria.

- Hezekiah's proclamation was to the effect that those Israelites who had escaped Assyrian deportation should repent of their sins and turn to the Lord submit to Him, and serve Him

7 Do not be like your fathers and your brothers, who were untrue to the LORD God of their fathers, so that He made them an object of horror, just as you see.

7 Do not be like your fathers and your brothers, who were unfaithful to the LORD God of their fathers, so that He made them a horror, as you see.

7 Don't be like your ancestors and your relatives, who weren't faithful to the LORD God of their ancestors, who, as a result, made them a desolate horror, as you well know.

7 And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the LORD God of their fathers, who therefore gave them up to desolation, as ye see.

8 Now do not stiffen your neck like your fathers, *but* yield to the LORD and enter His sanctuary which He has consecrated forever, and serve the LORD your God, that His burning anger may turn away from you.

8 Now do not stiffen your neck like your fathers, but yield to the LORD and enter His sanctuary which He has consecrated forever, and serve the LORD your God, that His burning anger may turn away from you.

8 So don't be stiff-necked like your ancestors were. Instead, submit to the LORD, enter his sanctuary that he has sanctified forever, and serve the LORD your God so that he'll stop

being angry with you.

8 Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the LORD, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever: and serve the LORD your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you.

- They should express the genuineness of their contrition by assembling at the temple in Jerusalem (come to the sanctuary) to celebrate the Passover

— This was one of the three annual festivals which every adult male was supposed to attend in Jerusalem (Deut 16:16)

9 For if you return to the LORD, your brothers and your sons *will find* compassion in the presence of those who led them captive, and will return to this land. For the LORD your God is gracious and compassionate, and will not turn *His* face away from you if you return to Him."

9 For if you return to the LORD, your brothers and your sons *will find* compassion before those who led them captive and will return to this land. For the LORD your God is gracious and compassionate, and will not turn *His* face away from you if you return to Him."

9 If you return to the LORD, your relatives and children will receive compassion from those who took them away captive, and they'll return to this land, because the LORD is both gracious and compassionate—he will not turn away from you if you return to him."

9 For if ye turn again unto the LORD, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that lead them captive, so that they shall come again into this land: for the LORD your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him.

- By assembling for the Passover, they would bring God's forgiveness and could even expect the return of their captured loved ones

— Their repentance would divert God's fierce anger, for He is gracious and compassionate

— The complete repentance of the Israelites in the north may have resulted in God setting free many of the captive exiles

10 So the couriers passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, and as far as Zebulun, but they laughed at them with scorn and mocked them.

10 So the couriers passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, and as far as Zebulun, but they laughed them to scorn and mocked them.

10 Couriers crossed from city to city throughout the territories of Ephraim and Manasseh as far as Zebulun, but those people just mocked them and laughed at them.

10 So the posts passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh even unto Zebulun: but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them.

- Many in the northern kingdom had no interest in returning to the Lord and attending the Passover feast

11 Nevertheless, some men of Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem.

11 Nevertheless some men of Asher, Manasseh and Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem.

11 Nevertheless, a few men from Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humbled themselves and traveled to Jerusalem.

11 Nevertheless divers of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem.

- The message was spurned except for a few who came from Asher, Manasseh, Zebulun (& Ephraim, and Issachar)

12 The hand of God was also on Judah to give them one heart to do what the king and the princes commanded by the word of the LORD.

12 The hand of God was also on Judah to give them one heart to do what the king and the princes commanded by the word of the LORD.

12 God also poured out his grace throughout Judah, giving them a dedicated heart to do what the king and princes had decreed according to the message from the LORD.

12 Also in Judah the hand of God was to give them one heart to do the commandment of the king and of the princes, by the word of the LORD.

The Celebration of Passover

13 Now many people were gathered at Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month, a very large assembly.

13 Now many people were gathered at Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month, a very large assembly.

13 Many of the people gathered together in Jerusalem to observe the Festival of Unleavened Bread during the second month. It was a very large assembly.

13 And there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the second month, a very great congregation.

- In addition, of course, the people of Judah came with united purpose and commitment to celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread

— This seven-day festival followed immediately after the Passover (Cf. Ex 12:11-20; Lev 23:4-8)

14 They got up and removed the altars which *were* in Jerusalem; they also removed all the incense altars and threw *them* into the brook Kidron.

14 They arose and removed the altars which *were* in Jerusalem; they also removed all the incense altars and cast *them* into the brook Kidron.

14 They all got to work and removed the idolatrous altars that were throughout Jerusalem. They also removed all the incense altars and threw them into the Kidron Brook.

14 And they arose and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem, and all the altars for incense took they away, and cast them into the brook Kidron.

- Indicative of the people's dedication was their disavowal once more of heathen altars, discarding them into the Kidron Valley (Cf. 15:16; 29:16)

15 Then they slaughtered the Passover *lambs* on the fourteenth of the second month. And the priests and Levites were ashamed of themselves, and consecrated themselves and brought burnt offerings to the house of the LORD.

15 Then they slaughtered the Passover *lambs* on the fourteenth of the second month. And the priests and Levites were ashamed of themselves, and consecrated themselves and brought burnt offerings to the house of the LORD.

15 Then they slaughtered the Passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the second month. The priests and descendants of Levi felt ashamed of themselves, so they consecrated themselves and brought burnt offerings to the LORD's Temple.

15 Then they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the second month: and the priests and the Levites were ashamed, and sanctified themselves, and brought in the burnt offerings into the house of the LORD.

- When the priests and the Levites saw the dedication of the throngs of people, they were ashamed of themselves and quickly consecrated themselves (by burnt offerings) for the service of Passover

16 They stood at their stations following their custom, according to the Law of Moses the man of God; the priests sprinkled the blood *which they received* from the hand of the Levites.

16 They stood at their stations after their custom, according to the law of Moses the man of God; the priests sprinkled the blood *which they received* from the hand of the Levites.

16 Then they took their customary places, as the Law of Moses the man of God prescribes, and the priests sprinkled the blood that they were given by the descendants of Levi.

16 And they stood in their place after their manner, according to the law of Moses the man of God: the priests sprinkled the blood, which they received of the hand of the Levites.

17 For *there were* many in the assembly who had not consecrated themselves; therefore, the Levites *were* in charge of the slaughter of the Passover *lambs* for everyone who *was* unclean, in order to consecrate *them* to the LORD.

17 For *there were* many in the assembly who had not consecrated themselves; therefore, the Levites *were* over the slaughter of the Passover *lambs* for everyone who *was* unclean, in order to consecrate *them* to the LORD.

17 Because there were so many in the assembly that had not consecrated themselves, therefore the descendants of Levi supervised the slaughter of the Passover sacrifices on behalf of everyone who remained unclean, so they could be consecrated to the LORD.

17 For there were many in the congregation that were not sanctified: therefore the Levites had the charge of the killing of the passovers for every one that was not clean, to sanctify them unto the LORD.

- Ordinarily the laity could offer their own Passover lambs in sacrifice (Cf. Ex 12:3), but because of the laxity of many of the Israelites in those apostate days, especially in the Northern Kingdom, they were ceremonially unclean and thus could not slaughter their own Passover lambs

18 For a multitude of the people, many from Ephraim and Manasseh, *and* Issachar and Zebulun, had not purified themselves, yet they ate the Passover contrary to *what was* written. For Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, "May the good LORD pardon

18 For a multitude of the people, *even* many from Ephraim and Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun, had not purified themselves, yet they ate the Passover otherwise than prescribed. For Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, "May the good LORD pardon

18 Even though a large crowd of people from as far away as Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun had not completed consecrating themselves, they still ate the Passover in a manner not proscribed by the Law, because Hezekiah had prayed like this for them: "May the good LORD extend a pardon on behalf of

18 For a multitude of the people, even many of Ephraim, and Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good LORD pardon every one

19 everyone who prepares his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though not according to the purification *rules* of the sanctuary."

19 everyone who prepares his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though not according to the purification *rules* of the sanctuary."

19 everyone who prepares his own heart to seek God, the LORD God of his ancestors, even though he does so inconsistent with the laws of consecration."

19 That prepareth his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.

- Nonetheless they did eat of the Passover even though they were ritually disqualified

— When Hezekiah realized this, he prayed on their behalf that God might be more impressed with the sincerity of their hearts and motives than with matters of mere ceremonialism

— This revelation shows how the people had disregarded the Law. God pardoned ritual uncleanness if the worshipper's heart was right (v18-20; Cf. John 7:22-23; 9:14-16). The heart attitude is more important than ritual cleanliness (Cf. 1 Sam 21:1-6; Matt 12:3-4).

20 So the LORD heard Hezekiah and healed the people.

20 So the LORD heard Hezekiah and healed the people.

20 The LORD listened to Hezekiah and healed the people.

20 And the LORD hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people.

The Festival of Unleavened Bread is Observed

21 The sons of Israel present in Jerusalem celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days with great joy, and the Levites and the priests were praising the LORD day after day with loud instruments to the LORD.

21 The sons of Israel present in Jerusalem celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread *for* seven days with great joy, and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day after day with loud instruments to the LORD.

21 The Israelis who were present in Jerusalem observed the Festival of Unleavened Bread for seven days with immense gladness, and the descendants of Levi and priests praised the LORD throughout each day, singing mightily to the LORD.

21 And the children of Israel that 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 with loud instruments unto the LORD.

- The essence of God's grace is seen in His favorable response to the king's prayer

— During the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread, which followed the Passover, the people praised the Lord with joy

22 Then Hezekiah spoke encouragingly to all the Levites who showed good insight *in the things* of the LORD. So they ate for the appointed seven days, sacrificing peace offerings and giving thanks to the LORD God of their fathers.

22 Then Hezekiah spoke encouragingly to all the Levites who showed good insight *in the things* of the LORD. So they ate for the appointed seven days, sacrificing peace offerings and giving thanks to the LORD God of their fathers.

22 Hezekiah encouraged all the descendants of Levi who demonstrated significant insight in their service to the LORD, so they all participated in the festival meals for seven days, all the while sacrificing peace offerings and giving thanks to the LORD God of their ancestors.

22 And Hezekiah spoke comfortably unto all the Levites that taught the good knowledge of the LORD: and they did eat throughout the feast seven days, offering peace offerings, and making confession to the LORD God of their fathers.

23 Then the whole assembly decided to celebrate *the feast* another seven days, so they celebrated the seven days with joy.

23 Then the whole assembly decided to celebrate *the feast* another seven days, so they celebrated the seven days with joy.

23 After this, the whole assembly agreed to celebrate for another seven days, and so they did—and they were very happy to do so!

23 And the whole assembly took counsel to keep other seven days: and they kept other seven days with gladness.

- The people were so caught up in their devotion to and joy in the Lord that they decided to extend the festivities for another week

24 For Hezekiah king of Judah had contributed to the assembly a thousand bulls and seven thousand sheep, and the princes had contributed to the assembly a thousand bulls and ten thousand sheep; and a large number of priests consecrated themselves.

24 For Hezekiah king of Judah had contributed to the assembly 1,000 bulls and 7,000 sheep, and the princes had contributed to the assembly 1,000 bulls and 10,000 sheep; and a large number of priests consecrated themselves.

24 King Hezekiah of Judah gave the assembly 1,000 bulls and 7,000 sheep for offerings, and the princes contributed 1,000 bulls and 10,000 sheep, and a large number of priests consecrated themselves.

24 For Hezekiah king of Judah did give to the congregation a thousand bullocks and seven thousand sheep; and the princes gave to the congregation a thousand bullocks and ten thousand sheep: and a great number of priests sanctified themselves.

- This impressed the king and his officials, so he provided at his own expense 1,000 bulls and 7,000 sheep and goats for sacrifice by the people, and the officials provided 1,000 bulls and 10,000 sheep and goats.

25 All the assembly of Judah rejoiced, with the priests and the Levites and all the assembly that came from Israel, both the strangers who came from the land of Israel and those living in Judah.

25 All the assembly of Judah rejoiced, with the priests and the Levites and all the assembly that came from Israel, both the sojourners who came from the land of Israel and those living in Judah.

25 Everyone in the assembly of Judah rejoiced, as did the priests, the descendants of Levi, and the people who gathered together from throughout Israel, including those who came from the land of Israel and those who lived in Judah.

25 And all the congregation of Judah, with the priests and the Levites, and all the congregation that came out of Israel, and the strangers that came out of the land of Israel, and that dwelt in Judah, rejoiced.

26 So there was great joy in Jerusalem, because there was nothing like this in Jerusalem since the days of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel.

26 So there was great joy in Jerusalem, because there was nothing like this in Jerusalem since the days of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel.

26 There was great joy throughout Jerusalem, because nothing had happened like this in Jerusalem since the days of David's son Solomon, king of Israel.

26 So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel there was not the like in Jerusalem.

- Since the days of Solomon, the chronicler related, there had never been anything like this — There was great joy for those who returned to the Lord and His temple, and God paid attention to the prayers of the rededicated Israelites (v27)

27 Then the Levitical priests stood and blessed the people; and their voice was heard and their prayer came to His holy dwelling place, to heaven.

27 Then the Levitical priests arose and blessed the people; and their voice was heard and their prayer came to His holy dwelling place, to heaven.

27 After this, the priests arose, blessed the people, and their voices were heard in prayer all the way to heaven, where God resides in holiness.

27 Then the priests the Levites arose and blessed the people: and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to his holy dwelling place, even unto heaven.

- God heard from heaven, His dwelling place (Cf. 2 Chr 6:21,30,33,39; Ps 11:4; Hab 2:20), and blessed their outpouring of praise and consecration