

# 2 Chronicles 31 - Reforms of Hezekiah; Temple Worship Re-Established

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)

(iii) Idols (31:1)

(iv) Priest and Levitical roles (31:2-19)

(v) Summary (31:20-21)

## 2 Chronicles 31

(iii) Idols (31:1) (Cf. 2 Kings 18:4)

**1** Now when all this was finished, all Israel who were present went out to the cities of Judah, broke the memorial stones in pieces, cut down the Asherim and pulled down the high places and the altars throughout Judah and Benjamin, as well as in Ephraim and Manasseh, until they had destroyed them all. Then all the sons of Israel returned to their cities, each to his possession.

**1** Now when all this was finished, all Israel who were present went out to the cities of Judah, broke the pillars in pieces, cut down the Asherim and pulled down the high places and the altars throughout all Judah and Benjamin, as well as in Ephraim and Manasseh, until they had destroyed them all. Then all the sons of Israel returned to their cities, each to his possession.

**1** At the conclusion of all of these activities, everybody in Israel who was in attendance traveled throughout the cities of Judah, broke down the sacred pillars, cut down the Asherim, and broke down the high places and altars throughout the territories of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh until they had eliminated all of them. Then the people of Israel went back to their cities and back to their work.

**1** Now when all this was finished, all Israel that were present went out to the cities of Judah, and brake the images in pieces, and cut down the groves, and threw down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim also and Manasseh, until they had utterly destroyed them all. Then all the children of Israel returned, every man to his possession, into their own cities.

- The most reasonable follow-up of the great 15-day festival ensued: the Israelites (and probably the Judeans) went through Judah and Benjamin destroying all remaining

remnants of Baal's sacred places

— They then did the same in Ephraim and Manasseh, and returned to their homes

(iv) Priest and Levitical roles (31:2-19)

**2** And Hezekiah appointed the divisions of the priests and the Levites by their divisions, each according to his service, *both* the priests and the Levites, for burnt offerings and for peace offerings, to serve and to give thanks and to praise in the gates of the camp of the LORD.

**2** And Hezekiah appointed the divisions of the priests and the Levites by their divisions, each according to his service, *both* the priests and the Levites, for burnt offerings and for peace offerings, to minister and to give thanks and to praise in the gates of the camp of the LORD.

**2** Hezekiah appointed the priestly divisions and the divisions of the descendants of Levi, each according to their service duties, including both priests and descendants of Levi who offered morning and evening burnt offerings, peace offerings, general ministry, thanksgiving, and praise in the gateways to the LORD's campgrounds.

**2** And Hezekiah appointed the courses of the priests and the Levites after their courses, every man according to his service, the priests and Levites for burnt offerings and for peace offerings, to minister, and to give thanks, and to praise in the gates of the tents of the LORD.

- Based on the requirements and guidelines of the Law, Hezekiah next proceeded to reestablish proper temple worship

— He gave instruction concerning the service of the priests and Levites, assigning them to their 24 divisions (Cf. 1 Chr 24) that David had originally specified

**3** *He also appointed* the king's portion of his property for the burnt offerings, *namely*, for the morning and evening burnt offerings, and the burnt offerings for the Sabbaths and for the new moons and for the appointed festivals, as it is written in the Law of the LORD.

**3** *He also appointed* the king's portion of his goods for the burnt offerings, *namely*, for the morning and evening burnt offerings, and the burnt offerings for the sabbaths and for the new moons and for the fixed festivals, as it is written in the law of the LORD.

**3** He also gave a portion of his own income for both morning and evening burnt offerings, for burnt offerings on the Sabbath, New Moons, and for the scheduled festivals, as is recorded in the LORD's Law.

**3** He appointed also the king's portion of his substance for the burnt offerings, to wit, for the morning and evening burnt offerings, and the burnt offerings for the sabbaths, and for the new moons, and for the set feasts, as it is written in the law of the LORD.

4 Also he told the people who lived in Jerusalem to give the portion due to the priests and the Levites, so that they might devote themselves to the Law of the LORD.

4 Also he commanded the people who lived in Jerusalem to give the portion due to the priests and the Levites, that they might devote themselves to the law of the LORD.

4 Hezekiah also directed the people who lived in Jerusalem to give what was due to the priests and descendants of Levi, so they could be strengthened in the LORD's Law.

**4** Moreover he commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the Levites, that they might be encouraged in the law of the LORD.

- He also instituted tithing again, as the Mosaic Law commanded (Cf. Lev 27:30; Num 18:8; Deut 14:28)

5 As soon as the order spread, the sons of Israel abundantly provided the first fruits of grain, new wine, oil, honey, and of all the produce of the field; and they brought in abundantly the tithe of everything.

5 As soon as the order spread, the sons of Israel provided in abundance the first fruits of grain, new wine, oil, honey and of all the produce of the field; and they brought in abundantly the tithe of all.

5 As the word spread around, the people of Israel gave generously for the first fruits of grain, wine, oil, honey, and all of the produce of the fields. They generously gave a tithe of everything.

**5** And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance the firstfruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the field; and the tithe of all things brought they in abundantly.

6 The sons of Israel and Judah who lived in the cities of Judah also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep, and the tithe of sacred gifts which were consecrated to the LORD their God, and placed *them* in heaps.

6 The sons of Israel and Judah who lived in the cities of Judah also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep, and the tithe of sacred gifts which were consecrated to the LORD their God, and placed *them* in heaps.

6 The descendants of Israel and Judah who lived throughout the cities of Judah also brought tithes of cattle and sheep, as well as tithes of gifts that had been dedicated to the LORD their God.

As these gifts were given, they were laid in piles.

6 And concerning the children of Israel and Judah, that dwelt in the cities of Judah, they also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep, and the tithe of holy things which were consecrated unto the LORD their God, and laid them by heaps.

7 In the third month they began to make the heaps, and they finished *them* by the seventh month.

7 In the third month they began to make the heaps, and finished *them* by the seventh month.

7 They began to make these piles of gifts during the third month, and it took them until the seventh month to finish.

7 In the third month they began to lay the foundation of the heaps, and finished them in the seventh month.

- For four months they continued bringing their gifts to the temple

— The third month was May-June, the beginning of grain harvesting, and the seventh month was September-October, the time of vine and fruit harvesting

8 When Hezekiah and the rulers came and saw the heaps, they blessed the LORD and His people Israel.

8 When Hezekiah and the rulers came and saw the heaps, they blessed the LORD and His people Israel.

8 When Hezekiah and the officials arrived and saw the piles of gifts, they blessed the LORD and his people Israel,

8 And when Hezekiah and the princes came and saw the heaps, they blessed the LORD, and his people Israel.

9 Then Hezekiah questioned the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps.

9 Then Hezekiah questioned the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps.

9 and Hezekiah quizzed the priests and the descendants of Levi about the piles of gifts.

9 Then Hezekiah questioned with the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps.

10 Azariah, the chief priest of the house of Zadok, said to him, "Since the contributions started coming into the house of the LORD, we have had enough to eat with plenty left over, for the LORD has blessed His people, and this great quantity is left over."

10 Azariah the chief priest of the house of Zadok said to him, "Since the contributions began to be brought into the house of the LORD, we have had enough to eat with plenty left over, for the LORD has blessed His people, and this great quantity is left over."

10 Azariah replied, "Since they began to bring their gifts into the LORD's Temple, we have eaten and have been satisfied. Now we still have plenty left, because the LORD has blessed his people so that we have all of this left over."

10 And Azariah the chief priest of the house of Zadok answered him, and said, Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the LORD, we have had enough to

eat, and have left plenty: for the LORD hath blessed his people; and that which is left is this great store.

- Azariah the chief priest said that the quantities Hezekiah saw represented a surplus beyond what the priests and Levites needed, so the king ordered that storerooms be prepared in the temple to accommodate the excess

### **The Priests and Descendants of Levi Reorganized**

**11** Then Hezekiah commanded *them* to prepare rooms in the house of the LORD, and they prepared *them*.

**11** Then Hezekiah commanded *them* to prepare rooms in the house of the LORD, and they prepared *them*.

**11** Hezekiah gave an order to prepare storerooms in the LORD's Temple, and so they did.

**11** Then Hezekiah commanded to prepare chambers in the house of the LORD; and they prepared them,

**12** They faithfully brought in the contributions, the tithes, and the consecrated things; and Conaniah the Levite *was* the officer in charge of them, and his brother Shimei *was* second.

**12** They faithfully brought in the contributions and the tithes and the consecrated things; and Conaniah the Levite *was* the officer in charge of them and his brother Shimei *was* second.

**12** They faithfully brought in the gifts, tithes, and consecrated materials, and Conaniah the descendant of Levi was placed in charge of them. His brother Shimei was second in command,

**12** And brought in the offerings and the tithes and the dedicated things faithfully: over which Conaniah the Levite was ruler, and Shimei his brother was the next.

- Conaniah with his brother Shimei were placed over 10 supervisors whose ministry was to oversee the collection and distribution of all these gifts

**13** Jehiel, Azariah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismachiah, Mahath, and Benaiah *were* overseers under the authority of Conaniah and his brother Shimei by the appointment of King Hezekiah, and Azariah *was* the *chief* officer of the house of God.

**13** Jehiel, Azariah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismachiah, Mahath and Benaiah *were* overseers under the authority of Conaniah and Shimei his brother by the appointment of King Hezekiah, and Azariah *was* the *chief* officer of the house of God.

**13** Jehiel, Azariah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismachiah, Mahath, and Benaiah served as supervisors under Conaniah and his brother Shimei, who had been appointed by King Hezekiah. Azariah served as senior officer of God's Temple.

13 And Jehiel, and Azariah, and Nahath, and Asahel, and Jerimoth, and Jozabad, and Eliel, and Ismachiah, and Mahath, and Benaiah, were overseers under the hand of Cononiah and Shimei his brother, at the commandment of Hezekiah the king, and Azariah the ruler of the house of God.

14 Kore the son of Imnah the Levite, the keeper of the eastern *gate*, was in charge of the voluntary offerings for God, to distribute the contributions for the LORD and the most holy things.

14 Kore the son of Imnah the Levite, the keeper of the eastern *gate*, was over the freewill offerings of God, to apportion the contributions for the LORD and the most holy things.

14 Imnah the descendant of Levi's son Kore, keeper of the eastern gate, was in charge of voluntary offerings to God, apportioning contributions for the LORD and the most holy things.

14 And Kore the son of Imnah the Levite, the porter toward the east, was over the freewill offerings of God, to distribute the oblations of the LORD, and the most holy things.

15 Under his authority were Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah, in the cities of the priests, to distribute *their portions* faithfully to their brothers by divisions, whether great or small,

15 Under his authority were Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah and Shecaniah in the cities of the priests, to distribute faithfully *their portions* to their brothers by divisions, whether great or small,

15 Under his authority, Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah served in the priestly cities, making sure contributions were distributed faithfully to their relatives division by division, no matter how large or how small,

15 And next him were Eden, and Miniamin, and Jeshua, and Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah, in the cities of the priests, in their set office, to give to their brethren by courses, as well to the great as to the small:

- As for the gifts made to the Lord Himself—a way of describing freewill (voluntary) offerings (Cf. Lev 7:11-21), these were the responsibility of Kore and his six associates — It was their duty to distribute them to the priests who lived in 13 towns outside Jerusalem (Cf. Joshua 21:13-19)

16 without regard to their genealogical enrollment, to the males from **thirty** years old and upward—everyone who entered the house of the LORD for his daily obligations—for their work in their duties according to their divisions;

16 without regard to their genealogical enrollment, to the males from thirty years old and upward—everyone who entered the house of the LORD for his daily obligations—for their

work in their duties according to their divisions;

16 without regard to genealogical enrollment, to every male 30 years old and older—that is, to everyone who entered the LORD's Temple as their duty obligations required—for their work and duties according to their divisions

**16** Beside their genealogy of males, from three years old and upward, even unto every one that entereth into the house of the LORD, his daily portion for their service in their charges according to their courses;

- "...thirty" - the Hebrew text has "three" instead of "thirty" (see KJV)

— These were probably young apprentice priests who had been dedicated to temple service by their parents

17 as well as the priests who were enrolled genealogically according to their fathers' households, and the Levites from twenty years old and upward, by their duties *and* their divisions.

17 as well as the priests who were enrolled genealogically according to their fathers' households, and the Levites from twenty years old and upwards, by their duties *and* their divisions.

17 as well as the priests who were enrolled in the genealogies according to their ancestral households.

17 Both to the genealogy of the priests by the house of their fathers, and the Levites from twenty years old and upward, in their charges by their courses;

18 The genealogical enrollment *included* all their little children, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, for the whole assembly, for they consecrated themselves faithfully in holiness.

18 The genealogical enrollment *included* all their little children, their wives, their sons and their daughters, for the whole assembly, for they consecrated themselves faithfully in holiness.

18 These genealogical enrollments also included all of their little children, their wives, and their sons and daughters for the entire assembly, because they were being faithful to consecrating themselves in holiness.

18 And to the genealogy of all their little ones, their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, through all the congregation: for in their set office they sanctified themselves in holiness:

- Obviously there were many more Levites than priests. The families of both the priests and the Levites were, of course, supported similarly (2 Chr 31:17-18) since the Law of Moses forbade the clergy from engaging in secular work to provide for themselves (Cf. Num 18:21-24).

19 Also for the sons of Aaron, the priests, *who were* in the pasture lands of their cities, or in each and every city, *there were* men who were designated by name to distribute portions to every male among the priests and to everyone genealogically enrolled among the Levites.

19 Also for the sons of Aaron the priests *who were* in the pasture lands of their cities, or in each and every city, *there were* men who were designated by name to distribute portions to every male among the priests and to everyone genealogically enrolled among the Levites.

19 Furthermore, with respect to the descendants of Aaron, that is, the priests who lived out in the country away from the cities, or who lived in each and every city, men were designated by name to distribute portions to every male among the priests and to everyone who had been enrolled by genealogy among the descendants of Levi.

**19** Also of the sons of Aaron the priests, which were in the fields of the suburbs of their cities, in every several city, the men that were expressed by name, to give portions to all the males among the priests, and to all that were reckoned by genealogies among the Levites.

- Finally, any priests or Levites who did not live in either Jerusalem or a designated priestly town were not to be overlooked

(v) Summary (31:20-21)

**20** Hezekiah did this throughout Judah; and he did what *was* good, right, and true before the LORD his God.

**20** Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah; and he did what *was* good, right and true before the LORD his God.

**20** Hezekiah did this throughout all of Judah, and he acted well, doing what the LORD his God considered to be right and true.

**20** And thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah, and wrought that which was good and right and truth before the LORD his God.

21 Every work which he began in the service of the house of God in the Law and in the commandment, seeking his God, he did **with all his heart** and prospered.

21 Every work which he began in the service of the house of God in law and in commandment, seeking his God, he did with all his heart and prospered.

21 Everything that Hezekiah began in the service of God's Temple was done according to the Law and to the commandments as he sought his God, worked with all of his heart, and became successful.

21 And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered.

- "...with all his heart" - all these things, the chronicler wrote, Hezekiah did wholeheartedly (a word used by the chronicler 6x: 1 Chr 29:9; 2 Chr 6:14; 15:15; 19:9; 25:2; 31:21) and in strict compliance with the Lord's commands.