

SECOND CHRONICLES

Chapter 35

Josiah Celebrates the Passover

Josiah celebrated the Passover to the LORD in Jerusalem, and the Passover lamb was slaughtered on the fourteenth day of the first month. ² He appointed the priests to their duties and encouraged them in the service of the LORD's temple. ³ He said to the Levites, who instructed all Israel and who had been consecrated to the LORD: "Put the sacred ark in the temple that Solomon son of David king of Israel built. It is not to be carried about on your shoulders. Now serve the LORD your God and his people Israel. ⁴ Prepare yourselves by families in your divisions, according to the directions written by David king of Israel and by his son Solomon. ⁵ "Stand in the holy place with a group of Levites for each subdivision of the families of your fellow countrymen, the lay people. ⁶ Slaughter the Passover lambs, consecrate yourselves and prepare the lambs for your fellow countrymen, doing what the LORD commanded through Moses." ⁷ Josiah provided for all the lay people who were there a total of thirty thousand sheep and goats for the Passover offerings, and also three thousand cattle—all from the king's own possessions. ⁸ His officials also contributed voluntarily to the people and the priests and Levites. Hilkiah, Zechariah and Jehiel, the administrators of God's temple, gave the priests twenty-six hundred Passover offerings and three hundred cattle. ⁹ Also Conaniah along with Shemaiah and Nethanel, his brothers, and Hashabiah, Jeiel and Jozabad, the leaders of the Levites, provided five thousand Passover offerings and five hundred head of cattle for the Levites. ¹⁰ The service was arranged and the priests stood in their places with the Levites in their divisions as the king had ordered. ¹¹ The Passover lambs were slaughtered, and the priests sprinkled the blood handed to them, while the Levites skinned the animals. ¹² They set aside the burnt offerings to give them to the subdivisions of the families of the people to offer to the LORD, as is written in the Book of Moses. They did the same with the cattle. ¹³ They roasted the Passover animals over the fire as prescribed, and boiled the holy offerings in pots, caldrons and pans and served them quickly to all the people. ¹⁴ After this, they made preparations for themselves and for the priests, because the priests, the descendants of Aaron, were sacrificing the burnt offerings and the fat portions until nightfall. So the Levites made preparations for themselves and for the Aaronic priests. ¹⁵ The musicians, the descendants of Asaph, were in the places prescribed by David, Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun the king's seer. The gatekeepers at each gate did not need to leave their posts, because their fellow Levites made the preparations for them. ¹⁶ So at that time the entire service of the LORD was carried out for the celebration of the

Passover and the offering of burnt offerings on the altar of the LORD, as King Josiah had ordered. ¹⁷ The Israelites who were present celebrated the Passover at that time and observed the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days. ¹⁸ The Passover had not been observed like this in Israel since the days of the prophet Samuel; and none of the kings of Israel had ever celebrated such a Passover as did Josiah, with the priests, the Levites and all Judah and Israel who were there with the people of Jerusalem. ¹⁹ This Passover was celebrated in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign.

35:1–19 The Chronicler gives much more extensive coverage to Josiah's Passover celebration than is found in the brief allusion in Kings (2Ki 23:21–23). (CSB)

35:1 *first month*. The traditional month; contrast the Passover of Hezekiah. (CSB)

Passover. One of the highlights of Hezekiah's reformation was a memorable observance of the Passover, described at length in 30:1–27. Josiah did more than merely issue the order to celebrate; he provided sacrificial animals in great numbers (vv 7–9). The Chronicler notes that the Passover was kept at the proper time. This is in accord with Lv 23:5, not according to Hezekiah's exception. (TLSB)

35:2–3 Like Hezekiah, Josiah is concerned that the proper ministry be in place for the Passover (cf 29:34; 30:3). (TLSB)

35:3 *Put the sacred ark in the temple*. Implies that it had been removed, perhaps for protection during the evil reigns of Manasseh and Amon, who preceded Josiah. (CSB)

need not carry it. Apparently the ark would be moved (perhaps from storage) for ceremonial observances, since it had lost its place in the temple. (TLSB)

35:4–17 Josiah reinstates the Davidic organization and divisions of the Levites (1Ch 23, 25–26). The Chronicler emphasizes the command of the king (vv 10, 16), the roles of David and Solomon (vv 4, 15), and the authority of Moses (vv 6, 12). (TLSB)

35:4 *David ... Solomon*. The Chronicler specifically parallels David and Solomon in three cases: 7:10 (contrast 1Ki 8:66, where only David is mentioned); 11:17; and here. This tendency reflects his glorification and idealization of both. (CSB)

writing ... document. May refer to an official document that is now lost. (TLSB)

35:7–9 The emphasis in Chronicles on voluntary and joyful giving (24:8–14; 29:31–36; 31:3–21; 1Ch 29:3–9) presumably had direct relevance to the postexilic readers for whom the Chronicler wrote. (CSB)

35:7 *lay people*. Lit, "sons of the people." (TLSB)

bulls. Not a typical part of the Passover celebration (cf Ex 12). Such sacrifices were given not only to honor God but also to feed the people who had traveled to the ceremony. The oxen were “holy offerings” (v 13), or peace offerings, that were partly burned on the altar and partly eaten by the worshipers (cf Lv 3) (TLSB)

35:13 *roasted.* After its wool was removed by boiling the animal. (TLSB)

35:14 *prepared for themselves.* Priests and Levites had focused on the needs of the people to their own neglect. They now enacted better management. (TLSB)

35:15 Service rendered in various ways by the Levites receives special mention, a characteristic touch of Chronicles. (TLSB)

singers. Cf 1Ch 25 for the three divisions of singers. (TLSB)

35:18 *since the days of the prophet Samuel.* Instead of “since the days of the judges” (2Ki 23:22). (CSB)

35:19 *eighteenth year.* The same year as the discovery of the Book of the Law (34:8, 14). (CSB)

35:1–19 Josiah leads the people in an exceptional celebration of the Lord’s Passover. At times, the Church’s observances may seem routine, even dull, to our hardened hearts. Bring praise to your Lord by commemorating His love through renewed observance of the sacred festivals. Through the word of His mercy, He will consecrate you anew. • We praise Your name this day, O Lord, commemorating the works of Your love and receiving anew the testimonies of Your gracious deliverance. Amen. (TLSB)

The Death of Josiah

²⁰ After all this, when Josiah had set the temple in order, Neco king of Egypt went up to fight at Carchemish on the Euphrates, and Josiah marched out to meet him in battle. ²¹ But Neco sent messengers to him, saying, “What quarrel is there between you and me, O king of Judah? It is not you I am attacking at this time, but the house with which I am at war. God has told me to hurry; so stop opposing God, who is with me, or he will destroy you.” ²² Josiah, however, would not turn away from him, but disguised himself to engage him in battle. He would not listen to what Neco had said at God’s command but went to fight him on the plain of Megiddo. ²³ Archers shot King Josiah, and he told his officers, “Take me away; I am badly wounded.” ²⁴ So they took him out of his chariot, put him in the other chariot he had and brought him to Jerusalem, where he died. He was buried in the tombs of his fathers, and all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for him. ²⁵ Jeremiah composed laments for Josiah, and to this day all the men and women singers commemorate Josiah in the laments. These became a tradition in Israel and are written in the Laments. ²⁶ The other events of Josiah’s reign and his acts of devotion, according to what is

written in the Law of the LORD—²⁷ all the events, from beginning to end, are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. ¹ And the people of the land took Jehoahaz son of Josiah and made him king in Jerusalem in place of his father.

35:20–27 See 2Ki 23:28–30. In 609 B.C. Pharaoh Neco “went up to the Euphrates River to help the king of Assyria” (2Ki 23:29) against the Babylonians. (CSB)

35:20 *at Carchemish.* Not found in Kings. (CSB)

35:21–23 Unique to 2Ch. Account in 2Ki 23:29–30a raises a serious theological question: how could a good king such as Josiah die in defeat? Here the Chronicler provides material not found in Kings, to answer that question. 2Ki and 2Ch give different perspectives on Josiah’s defeat and death. According to Kings, the death of Josiah is attributable to the Lord’s wrath against Manasseh (2Ki 23:26–27). According to the Chronicler, it is attributable to Josiah’s failure to heed the Word of the Lord (35:21–22). (TLSB)

35:21–22 Unique to the Chronicler, showing his view on retribution once again: Josiah’s death in battle comes as a result of his disobedience to the word of God as heard even in the mouth of the pagan pharaoh. (CSB)

35:21 *house with which I am at war.* A reference to the Babylonians; Nabopolassar was on the throne of Babylon, while his son Nebuchadnezzar was commanding the armies in the field. Nebuchadnezzar would succeed his father after another battle at Carchemish against Egypt in 605 B.C. Josiah may have been an ally of Babylon. (CSB)

35:22 *disguised himself.* Cf. Ahab and Jehoshaphat. (CSB)

words of Neco. Neco claimed divine sanction for his campaign, no doubt referring to an oracle that he ascribed to his own god. However, in this instance the oracle also expressed the will of the true God concerning Judah. In effect, Josiah was “opposing God” (v 21) in his attempt to deflect the threatened judgment on the apostate nation (34:24). It is common in the Chronicler’s history for speeches to announce divine blessing or warning (11:1–4; 13:4–12; 16:7–9; 18:16–22; 25:17–19). In this case, it is spoken by the foreign king Neco. Despite Josiah’s auspicious beginning, he did not always heed God’s Word. This passage illustrates how difficult it can be to recognize God’s will in earthly matters. The Lord has given us the Word to guide us in matters of faith. He has given us counsel for discerning true prophets from false prophets (Dt 18:22). However, He has not promised to reveal His will in all matters. (The kings and priests of Israel could consult the Lord using the Urim and Thummim. The Lord calls us to live freely before Him according to the wisdom He provides. Luth: “All of them, even the greatest kings from the beginning of the world, have not governed their realms without great errors and injustices. This is intended to make you realize that it is

impossible to govern an earthly commonwealth without sin—something that is unknown to certain raving preachers and to the mob, who are quick to pick up the errors of princes and kings. It is also a special fraud of Satan that we so quickly notice and pay attention to the errors of princes. Some peasant who has lived like a pig for twenty years or more and has never paid any attention to any of his sins is most eloquent regarding some slight sin of his prince, and meanwhile he swallows whole seas and forests of his own private sins” (AE 12:240). (TLSB)

35:24 *second chariot*. Lit, “the chariot of the second,” which may mean the second in command or “next in authority” (28:7). Josiah died on the way to Jerusalem (2Ki 23:30). Luth: “We see God at work as Judge in the outcome of almost all wars, so that those who first stir up war and forsake the peace are always defeated. So also king Josiah fell when he despised the peace which had been offered and started the war against the king of Egypt” (AE 9:203). (TLSB)

Tomb of his fathers. To accord with Huldah’s prophecy (34:28; 2Ki 22:20). Cf Zec 14:1.

35:25 *Jeremiah composed laments for Josiah*. Jeremiah held Josiah in high esteem (Jer 22:15–16). The laments he composed are no longer extant. The statement that he composed laments is one of the reasons the book of Lamentations has been traditionally associated with him. (CSB)

Not the Book of Lamentations. Solemn chanting was a typical funeral custom (cf Jer 9:17–18). (TLSB)

to this day. See note on 5:9. (CSB)

35:26–27 Both Joash and Josiah came to the throne as children (24:1; 34:1); both led Judah in renovations of the temple, funded by collections (24:9–14; 34:8–14); both were involved in a national renewal of the covenant (23:16–17; 34:29–32). Josiah would remain faithful to the end (34:2, 33), but Joash remained faithful only during the days of Jehoiada (24:2, 15–18). (TLSB)

35:27 *Book of the Kings*. 1 and 2Ki.