

SECOND CHRONICLES

Chapter 29

Hezekiah Purifies the Temple

Hezekiah was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-nine years. His mother's name was Abijah daughter of Zechariah. ² He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father David had done. ³ In the first month of the first year of his reign, he opened the doors of the temple of the LORD and repaired them. ⁴ He brought in the priests and the Levites, assembled them in the square on the east side ⁵ and said: "Listen to me, Levites! Consecrate yourselves now and consecrate the temple of the LORD, the God of your fathers. Remove all defilement from the sanctuary. ⁶ Our fathers were unfaithful; they did evil in the eyes of the LORD our God and forsook him. They turned their faces away from the LORD's dwelling place and turned their backs on him. ⁷ They also shut the doors of the portico and put out the lamps. They did not burn incense or present any burnt offerings at the sanctuary to the God of Israel. ⁸ Therefore, the anger of the LORD has fallen on Judah and Jerusalem; he has made them an object of dread and horror and scorn, as you can see with your own eyes. ⁹ This is why our fathers have fallen by the sword and why our sons and daughters and our wives are in captivity. ¹⁰ Now I intend to make a covenant with the LORD, the God of Israel, so that his fierce anger will turn away from us. ¹¹ My sons, do not be negligent now, for the LORD has chosen you to stand before him and serve him, to minister before him and to burn incense." ¹² Then these Levites set to work: from the Kohathites, Mahath son of Amasai and Joel son of Azariah; from the Merarites, Kish son of Abdi and Azariah son of Jehallelel; from the Gershonites, Joah son of Zimmah and Eden son of Joah; ¹³ from the descendants of Elizaphan, Shimri and Jeiel; from the descendants of Asaph, Zechariah and Mattaniah; ¹⁴ from the descendants of Heman, Jehiel and Shimei; from the descendants of Jeduthun, Shemaiah and Uzziel. ¹⁵ When they had assembled their brothers and consecrated themselves, they went in to purify the temple of the LORD, as the king had ordered, following the word of the LORD. ¹⁶ The priests went into the sanctuary of the LORD to purify it. They brought out to the courtyard of the LORD's temple everything unclean that they found in the temple of the LORD. The Levites took it and carried it out to the Kidron Valley. ¹⁷ They began the consecration on the first day of the first month, and by the eighth day of the month they reached the portico of the LORD. For eight more days they consecrated the temple of the LORD itself, finishing on the sixteenth day of the first month. ¹⁸ Then they went in to King Hezekiah and reported: "We have purified the entire temple of the LORD, the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the table for setting out the

consecrated bread, with all its articles. ¹⁹ We have prepared and consecrated all the articles that King Ahaz removed in his unfaithfulness while he was king. They are now in front of the LORD's altar." ²⁰ Early the next morning King Hezekiah gathered the city officials together and went up to the temple of the LORD. ²¹ They brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven male lambs and seven male goats as a sin offering for the kingdom, for the sanctuary and for Judah. The king commanded the priests, the descendants of Aaron, to offer these on the altar of the LORD. ²² So they slaughtered the bulls, and the priests took the blood and sprinkled it on the altar; next they slaughtered the rams and sprinkled their blood on the altar; then they slaughtered the lambs and sprinkled their blood on the altar. ²³ The goats for the sin offering were brought before the king and the assembly, and they laid their hands on them. ²⁴ The priests then slaughtered the goats and presented their blood on the altar for a sin offering to atone for all Israel, because the king had ordered the burnt offering and the sin offering for all Israel. ²⁵ He stationed the Levites in the temple of the LORD with cymbals, harps and lyres in the way prescribed by David and Gad the king's seer and Nathan the prophet; this was commanded by the LORD through his prophets. ²⁶ So the Levites stood ready with David's instruments, and the priests with their trumpets. ²⁷ Hezekiah gave the order to sacrifice the burnt offering on the altar. As the offering began, singing to the LORD began also, accompanied by trumpets and the instruments of David king of Israel. ²⁸ The whole assembly bowed in worship, while the singers sang and the trumpeters played. All this continued until the sacrifice of the burnt offering was completed. ²⁹ When the offerings were finished, the king and everyone present with him knelt down and worshiped. ³⁰ King Hezekiah and his officials ordered the Levites to praise the LORD with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with gladness and bowed their heads and worshiped. ³¹ Then Hezekiah said, "You have now dedicated yourselves to the LORD. Come and bring sacrifices and thank offerings to the temple of the LORD." So the assembly brought sacrifices and thank offerings, and all whose hearts were willing brought burnt offerings. ³² The number of burnt offerings the assembly brought was seventy bulls, a hundred rams and two hundred male lambs—all of them for burnt offerings to the LORD. ³³ The animals consecrated as sacrifices amounted to six hundred bulls and three thousand sheep and goats. ³⁴ The priests, however, were too few to skin all the burnt offerings; so their kinsmen the Levites helped them until the task was finished and until other priests had been consecrated, for the Levites had been more conscientious in consecrating themselves than the priests had been. ³⁵ There were burnt offerings in abundance, together with the fat of the fellowship offerings ^a and the drink offerings that accompanied the burnt offerings. So the service of the temple of the LORD was reestablished. ³⁶ Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced at what God had brought about for his people, because it was done so quickly.

29:1–32:33 The Chronicler devotes more attention to Hezekiah than to any other post-Solomonic king. Although the parallel text (2Ki 18–20) has about the same amount of material, only about a fourth of the total relates the same or similar material; only a few verses are strict literary parallels (29:1–2; 32:32–33). In Kings preeminence among the post-Solomonic kings is given to Josiah (2Ki 22–23; cf. 1Ki 13:2), and the record of Hezekiah is primarily devoted to his confrontation with Sennacherib of Assyria. By contrast, the Chronicler highlights almost exclusively Hezekiah’s religious reform and his devotion to matters of ceremony and ritual. The parallel passage (2Ki 18:1–6) touches the religious reform only briefly. The numerous parallels in these chapters with the account of Solomon’s reign suggest that the Chronicler viewed Hezekiah as a “second Solomon” in his celebration of the Passover (30:2, 5, 23, 25–26), his cultic arrangements (29:7, 18, 35; 31:2–3), his wealth (32:27–29), the honor accorded him by the Gentiles (32:23) and the extent of his dominion (30:25). (CSB)

Reign of Hezekiah, who becomes like a new David. From the ashes of faithlessness and defeat (i.e., Ahaz, who parallels Saul) arises one who leads God’s people to renewed fidelity and glory (i.e., Hezekiah, who parallels David). Still, Hezekiah does not rise to the level of Solomon, of whom the Chronicler records no sin or war. Hezekiah, like David, was a warrior who became proud but repented (32:25–26). The Chronicler’s account of Hezekiah’s reign tells a more complete story of the restoration of true worship than Kings does. Hezekiah (1) cleanses the temple and rededicates it to the Lord’s service (ch 29); (2) restores the observance of the annual festival days by keeping the Passover (ch 30); and (3) reinstates the other services in the temple, also providing for the livelihood of the priests and Levites (ch 31). (TLSB)

29:1 *twenty-nine years*. 715–686 B.C., including a 15-year extension of life granted by God (2Ki 20:6) but not mentioned by the Chronicler. (CSB)

Zechariah. Common name; may be the priest who instructed Uzziah (26:5). (TLSB)

29:3–30:27 Not found in Kings. (CSB)

29:3–4 The temple, desecrated by Ahaz (28:24), was reopened and repaired. Hezekiah’s first acts, like those of David, pertain to the proper worship of the Lord in Jerusalem (1Ch 13; 15–16). (TLSB)

29:3 *first year*. 715 B.C., another example of the Chronicler’s practice of introducing chronological materials into his narrative. (CSB)

opened the doors of the temple. Necessary after the actions of Ahaz (28:24). (CSB)

repaired them. The repairs to the doors included new gold overlay (2Ki 18:16). (CSB)

29:4 *square on the east.* In front of the temple. (TLSB)

29:5–11 Hezekiah's speech demonstrates again the Chronicler's convictions about the coherence of action and effect: The sins of the past brought difficulty and judgment, but renewed fidelity brings relief. (CSB)

Hezekiah addresses the priests and Levites by rehearsing the recent history under Ahaz (vv 6–9), noting that they had been unfaithful and had abandoned the Lord (see note, 12:1). That apostasy, which had focused on the temple (vv 6b–7), and its devastating consequences (vv 8–9) can be reversed only by the restoration of the temple and the proper functioning of the priesthood (vv 5, 10–11). Like David, Hezekiah insists on the divinely mandated and consecrated ministry (cf 1Ch 15:11–15). (TLSB)

29:5 *consecrate yourselves.* Remove all ceremonial defilement. (TLSB)

filth. After years of neglect, the temple needed a thorough housecleaning. Hezekiah assigned the task to the authorized personnel: the priests and the Levites. First, however, both groups had to make themselves ceremonially clean. It took 16 days to make the entire temple complex ready for the dedication ceremonies (v 17). (TLSB)

29:7 Hezekiah reinstates these temple arrangements—following the pattern of Solomon (2:4; 4:7). (CSB)

29:8 *object of dread and horror and scorn.* Echoes the language of the prophets, especially Jeremiah (see Jer 19:8; 25:9, 18; 29:18; 51:37). Reference is to the Assyrian devastation of the northern kingdom and much of Judah. (CSB)

Cf 28:16–21. The destruction of Jerusalem was the climax of disgrace. (TLSB)

hissing. Derision by heathen nations. (TLSB)

29:11 *My sons.* King emphasizes his closeness to the ministers of the temple. He may have been related to them. (TLSB)

29:12–14 List of Levitical families follows the pattern established by David (cf 1Ch 6; 15:4–10; 23:6; 25). (TLSB)

29:12 *Levites.* Levi's sons through Gershon, Kohath, and Merari had special assignments in the transport of the tabernacle (Nu 3:14–37). (TLSB)

Kohathites ... Merarites ... Gershonites. The three clans of Levi (1Ch 6:1). (CSB)

29:13–14 *Asaph ... Heman ... Jeduthun*. Founders of the three families of Levitical musicians (1Ch 6:31–48; 25:1–31). (CSB)

29:13 *Elizaphan*. A leader of the Kohathites (Nu 3:30), whose family had achieved status almost as a sub-clan. (CSB)

29:15–36 Three stages of the restoration of the temple: (1) desecrated house is cleansed (vv 15–19); (2) cleansed temple is rededicated (vv 20–30); (3) people present their offerings (vv 31–36). (TLSB)

29:15 *words of the LORD*. A king's command had divine authority because it was based on God's command laid down in the Law of Moses or because it was directly communicated by a prophet. The Lord and the king made sure these actions were fulfilled (cf 30:12). (TLSB)

29:16 Events of v 16 may have followed those of v 17. (TLSB)

inner part. The Holy Place. *uncleanness*. Ahaz may have introduced articles of false religion. (TLSB)

carried it out to the Kidron Valley. Asa also burned pagan cult objects there (15:16; cf. 30:14). (CSB)

Kidron. Immediately outside the city walls (cf 15:16; 30:14). (TLSB)

29:17 *came to the vestibule*. Describes the progress of the cleansing, which began in the courts of the temple. (TLSB)

29:18 These actions under Hezekiah mirror those of Solomon (2:4). (CSB)

29:1–19 Hezekiah leads the priests and Levites in cleansing the temple and restoring the sacrifices. Renewal is always more than outward cleansing. Through the Word, the Lord cleanses and changes hearts. In Jesus' sacrifice, He atones for all our sins. • Wipe away the filth of my sins, O Savior, and cleanse me by Your precious blood. Amen. (TLSB)

29:20–30 The cleansed temple is rededicated. (TLSB)

29:20 *rose early*. Possibly to attend the morning sacrifice at dawn. (TLSB)

29:21 *sin offering*. See Lev 4:1–5:13. (CSB)

According to Mosaic Law (Lv 4:1–5:13; Nu 18:17) and the examples of David and Solomon (1Ch 15:25–16:3; 21:25–26; 2Ch 1:2–6; 7:7–11). (TLSB)

commanded. The king exercised considerable authority over the priests. (TLSB)

29:22 *sprinkled their blood*. See Lev 17:6; Nu 18:17. (CSB)

received the blood and threw it. Caught in basins and thrown against the altar, as prescribed in Lv 1:3–5. (TLSB)

29:23 *laid their hands on them.* See Lev 4:13–15; 8:14–15; Nu 8:12. (CSB)

Symbolically transferring their guilt to the sacrificial animal (cf Lv 4:13–15; 8:14–15; Nu 8:12). (TLSB)

29:25 *David and Gad ... and Nathan ... prophets.* The Chronicler considers David among the prophets. (CSB)

29:26 *David's instruments.* See 1Ch 23:5. (CSB)

The Levites played “cymbals, harps, and lyres” (v 25; cf 1Ch 23:5). (TLSB)

trumpets. At the dedication of the temple, 120 priests sounded the trumpets (5:12). (TLSB)

29:30 *Asaph.* A psalmist. (TLSB)

29:31–36 The people present their offerings. With the sin offering complete, burnt offerings, peace offerings, and drink offerings in abundance were brought (cf Ex 29:40; 7:11–12; Nu 15:1–10). These offerings reestablished the proper temple service (v 35b), causing both king and people to rejoice (v 36; cf 1Ch 12:38–40; 29:21–22; 2Ch 20:26–28). (TLSB)

29:31 *assembly.* The dedicatory service, conducted by the priests and Levites, resulted in a surge of popular enthusiasm for worship. (TLSB)

29:34 *flay.* Sacrifices were butchered; tough, physical work. (TLSB)

Levites were more upright. They had not come under the influence of the renegade high priest Uriah (2Ki 16:10–16). (TLSB)

29:35 *burnt offerings in abundance ... fellowship offerings ... drink offerings.* Reminiscent of the dedication of the temple under Solomon (7:4–6). For the laws regarding the fellowship offerings see Lev 3; 7:11–21; for the drink offerings see Nu 15:1–12. (CSB)

service of the temple of the LORD was reestablished. Similar to the formula used in 8:16 with reference to Solomon’s work. (CSB)

29:20–36 Hezekiah fully restores the temple services according to God’s Word and the examples of David and Solomon. The bloody sacrifices cleanse God’s repentant people from their sins, anticipating Christ’s perfect sacrifice on the cross. Today, the Lord

cleanses and consecrates us through Holy Baptism, for in Baptism we are joined to Christ's atoning death and resurrection. • O Lord, consecrate Your servants, that we may offer sincere worship in Your name. Amen. (TLSB)