

SECOND CHRONICLES

Chapter 29

Hezekiah Reigns in Judah

Hezekiah began to reign when he was twenty-five years old, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abijah the daughter of Zechariah. 2 And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done.

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) reinstitutes 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)

Hezekiah Cleanses the Temple

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. 4 He brought in the priests and the Levites and assembled them in the square on the east 5 and said to them, "Hear me, Levites! Now consecrate yourselves, and consecrate the house of the LORD, the God of your fathers, and carry out the filth from the Holy Place. 6 For our fathers have been unfaithful and have done what was evil in the sight of the LORD our God. They have forsaken him and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the LORD and turned their backs. 7 They also shut the doors of the vestibule and put out the lamps and have not burned incense or offered burnt offerings in the Holy Place to the God of Israel. 8 Therefore the wrath of the LORD came on Judah and Jerusalem, and he has made them an object of horror, of astonishment, and of hissing, as you see with your own eyes. 9 For behold, our fathers have fallen by the sword,

and our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity for this. 10 Now it is in my heart to make a covenant with the LORD, the God of Israel, in order that his fierce anger may turn away from us. 11 My sons, do not now be negligent, for the LORD has chosen you to stand in his presence, to minister to him and to be his ministers and make offerings to him.” 12 Then the Levites arose, Mahath the son of Amasai, and Joel the son of Azariah, of the sons of the Kohathites; and of the sons of Merari, Kish the son of Abdi, and Azariah the son of Jehallelel; and of the Gershonites, Joah the son of Zimmah, and Eden the son of Joah; 13 and of the sons of Elizaphan, Shimri and Jeuel; and of the sons of Asaph, Zechariah and Mattaniah; 14 and of the sons of Heman, Jehuel and Shimei; and of the sons of Jeduthun, Shemaiah and Uzziel. 15 They gathered their brothers and consecrated themselves and went in as the king had commanded, by the words of the LORD, to cleanse the house of the LORD. 16 The priests went into the inner part of the house of the LORD to cleanse it, and they brought out all the uncleanness that they found in the temple of the LORD into the court of the house of the LORD. And the Levites took it and carried it out to the brook Kidron. 17 They began to consecrate on the first day of the first month, and on the eighth day of the month they came to the vestibule of the LORD. Then for eight days they consecrated the house of the LORD, and on the sixteenth day of the first month they finished. 18 Then they went in to Hezekiah the king and said, “We have cleansed all the house of the LORD, the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and the table for the showbread and all its utensils. 19 All the utensils that King Ahaz discarded in his reign when he was faithless, we have made ready and consecrated, and behold, they are before the altar of the LORD.”

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 house of the Lord. 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 horror.* 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)

Hezekiah Restores Temple Worship

20 Then Hezekiah the king rose early and gathered the officials of the city and went up to the house of the LORD. **21** And they brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven male goats for a sin offering for the kingdom and for the sanctuary and for Judah. And he commanded the priests, the sons of Aaron, to offer them on the altar of the LORD. **22** So they slaughtered the bulls, and the priests received the blood and threw it against the altar. And they slaughtered the rams, and their blood was thrown against the altar. And they slaughtered the lambs, and their blood was thrown against the altar. **23** Then the goats for the sin offering were brought to the king and the assembly, and they laid their hands on them, **24** and the priests slaughtered them and made a sin offering with their blood on the altar, to make atonement for all Israel. For the king commanded that the burnt offering and the sin offering should be made for all Israel. **25** And he stationed the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, harps, and lyres, according to the commandment of David and of Gad the king's seer and of Nathan the prophet, for the commandment was from the LORD through his prophets. **26** The Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets. **27** Then Hezekiah commanded that the burnt offering be offered on the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song to the LORD began also, and the trumpets, accompanied by the instruments of David king of Israel. **28** The whole assembly worshiped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded. All this continued until the burnt offering was finished. **29** When the offering was finished, the king and all who were present with him bowed themselves and worshiped. **30** And Hezekiah the king and the officials commanded the Levites to sing praises to the LORD with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed down and worshiped. **31** Then Hezekiah said, "You have now consecrated yourselves to the LORD. Come near; bring sacrifices and thank offerings to the house of the LORD." And the assembly brought sacrifices and thank offerings, and all who were of a willing heart brought burnt offerings. **32** The number of the burnt offerings that the assembly brought was 70 bulls, 100 rams, and 200 lambs; all these were for a burnt offering to the LORD. **33** And the consecrated offerings were 600 bulls and 3,000 sheep. **34** But the priests were too few and could not flay all the burnt offerings, so until other priests had consecrated themselves, their brothers the Levites helped them, until the work was finished—for the Levites were more upright in heart than the priests in consecrating themselves. **35** Besides the great number of burnt offerings, there was the fat of the peace offerings, and there were the drink offerings for the burnt offerings. Thus the service of the house of the LORD was restored. **36** And Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced because God had provided for the people, for the thing came about suddenly.

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 *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 *instruments of David*. 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 house 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)