

# SECOND CHRONICLES

## Chapter 31

**When all this had ended, the Israelites who were there went out to the towns of Judah, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles. They destroyed the high places and the altars throughout Judah and Benjamin and in Ephraim and Manasseh. After they had destroyed all of them, the Israelites returned to their own towns and to their own property.**

**31:1–21** Apart from the first verse, which parallels 2Ki 18:4, the material of this chapter is unique to the Chronicler, whose interest in the Levites and the temple predominates. Hezekiah's efforts to ensure the material support of the Levites (v. 4) probably had relevance to the postexilic audience for whom the Chronicler wrote. (CSB)

Intimate relationship between faithful Hezekiah and the priesthood prompts the Chronicler to include this information about the king's provisions for the priesthood. (TLSB)

**31:1** *the Israelites ... the Israelites*. Lit. "all Israel ... all the Israelites." The Chronicler's interest in "all Israel" as united under Hezekiah is again apparent. (CSB)

Eradication of idolatry spread from the temple (29:3–19) to the city (30:14) and from Jerusalem to the outlying districts, even to cities of the Northern Kingdom, of which Ephraim and Manasseh were the representative tribes. (TLSB)

*sacred stones*. See note on 1Ki 14:23. (CSB)

*Asherah poles*. See NIV text note on 14:3. (CSB)

### *Contributions for Worship*

<sup>2</sup> Hezekiah assigned the priests and Levites to divisions—each of them according to their duties as priests or Levites—to offer burnt offerings and fellowship offerings,<sup>a</sup> to minister, to give thanks and to sing praises at the gates of the LORD's dwelling.<sup>3</sup> The king contributed from his own possessions for the morning and evening burnt offerings and for the burnt offerings on the Sabbaths, New Moons and appointed feasts as written in the Law of the LORD.<sup>4</sup> He ordered the people living in Jerusalem to give the portion due the priests and Levites so they could devote themselves to the Law of the LORD.<sup>5</sup> As soon as the order went out, the Israelites generously gave the firstfruits of their grain, new wine, oil and honey and all that the fields produced. They brought a great amount, a tithe of

everything. <sup>6</sup> The men of Israel and Judah who lived in the towns of Judah also brought a tithe of their herds and flocks and a tithe of the holy things dedicated to the LORD their God, and they piled them in heaps. <sup>7</sup> They began doing this in the third month and finished in the seventh month. <sup>8</sup> When Hezekiah and his officials came and saw the heaps, they praised the LORD and blessed his people Israel. <sup>9</sup> Hezekiah asked the priests and Levites about the heaps; <sup>10</sup> and Azariah the chief priest, from the family of Zadok, answered, “Since the people began to bring their contributions to the temple of the LORD, we have had enough to eat and plenty to spare, because the LORD has blessed his people, and this great amount is left over.” <sup>11</sup> Hezekiah gave orders to prepare storerooms in the temple of the LORD, and this was done. <sup>12</sup> Then they faithfully brought in the contributions, tithes and dedicated gifts. Conaniah, a Levite, was in charge of these things, and his brother Shimei was next in rank. <sup>13</sup> Jehiel, Azariah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismakiah, Mahath and Benaiah were supervisors under Conaniah and Shimei his brother, by appointment of King Hezekiah and Azariah the official in charge of the temple of God. <sup>14</sup> Kore son of Imnah the Levite, keeper of the East Gate, was in charge of the freewill offerings given to God, distributing the contributions made to the LORD and also the consecrated gifts. <sup>15</sup> Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah and Shecaniah assisted him faithfully in the towns of the priests, distributing to their fellow priests according to their divisions, old and young alike. <sup>16</sup> In addition, they distributed to the males three years old or more whose names were in the genealogical records—all who would enter the temple of the LORD to perform the daily duties of their various tasks, according to their responsibilities and their divisions. <sup>17</sup> And they distributed to the priests enrolled by their families in the genealogical records and likewise to the Levites twenty years old or more, according to their responsibilities and their divisions. <sup>18</sup> They included all the little ones, the wives, and the sons and daughters of the whole community listed in these genealogical records. For they were faithful in consecrating themselves. <sup>19</sup> As for the priests, the descendants of Aaron, who lived on the farm lands around their towns or in any other towns, men were designated by name to distribute portions to every male among them and to all who were recorded in the genealogies of the Levites. <sup>20</sup> This is what Hezekiah did throughout Judah, doing what was good and right and faithful before the LORD his God. <sup>21</sup> In everything that he undertook in the service of God’s temple and in obedience to the law and the commands, he sought his God and worked wholeheartedly. And so he prospered.

**31:2** Echoes 8:14. The Chronicler continues to model Hezekiah as a “second Solomon.” (CSB)

After Hezekiah rededicated the temple (29:20–30), he restored regular worship services, which had been suspended by his father (29:7). (TLSB)

*divisions.* Like David and Solomon, Hezekiah brought order to the priests and Levites by structuring them into divisions at the altar, as musicians and as gatekeepers (cf 1Ch 23–26; 2Ch 8:14). (TLSB)

*gates of the camp.* The temple courts were likely filled with tents or booths during the festivals of ch 30. The returning exiles of the Chronicler's day likewise would have camped when they first returned to the destroyed city of Jerusalem. (TLSB)

**31:3** *king contributed.* The king's giving from his own wealth prompted a generous response from the people, as it had also under David (1Ch 29:3–9). (CSB)

*Law.* Legislation regarding sacrifices for various occasions is written in Nu 28–29. As David gave of his own possessions to endow the temple (1Ch 29:3–5), so does Hezekiah. Judah again attains regularity in divinely established worship practices (cf 13:11). (TLSB)

**31:4–7** People of Judah, both in Jerusalem (v 4) and throughout the land (v 6), respond by bringing in their tithes (cf Dt 12:5–19; 14:22–27). (TLSB)

**31:4** *portion due to the priests.* Cf Nu 18. (TLSB)

*give themselves to the Law.* By restoring the offerings, the priests would be able to return to full-time service at the temple. (TLSB)

**31:5–6** See Dt 12:5–19; 14:22–27. The grain, new wine and oil had to be brought to the temple (Dt 12:17). Those coming from a distance, however, could bring the value of their offerings and purchase them on arrival (Dt 14:24). Only those who actually lived in Judah brought the tithe of their herds and flocks, a difficult procedure for those who lived farther away. For the restored community's commitment to bring their firstfruits, tithes and offerings see Ne 10:35–39. For their failure to do so see Ne 13:10–13; Mal 3:8–10. (CSB)

**31:5** *honey.* Though this could not be used in burnt offerings (Lv 2:11), it might have been used in grain offerings. (TLSB)

*tithe.* Cf Lv 27:30. (TLSB)

**31:6** Mosaic Law prescribes no tithe of cattle, sheep, and dedicated things. Nu 18:8–20 provides the firstfruits for the priests; Nu 18:21–32 provides the tithe for the Levites. (TLSB)

**31:7** *third month.* May-June, the time of the Feast of Pentecost and the grain harvest. (CSB)

*seventh month.* September-October, the time of the Feast of Tabernacles and the fruit and vine harvest (see Ex 23:16). (CSB)

*third ... seventh month.* Contributions of various kinds of produce came in during the harvesting season, which began in the third month. The Feast of Booths, also called the Feast of Ingathering, in the seventh month marked its end. (TLSB)

**31:8** *heaps.* People gave enthusiastically. (TLSB)

**31:10** *Azariah.* Person by the same name was “the chief officer of the house of God” (v 13). Another Azariah was high priest during the reign of a king who himself bore that name (26:17; 2Ki 15:1) (TLSB)

**31:11** *chambers.* Solomon built side chambers into the walls of the temple. (TLSB)

**31:15–19** To make sure no one was overlooked, an enrollment of the priests and the Levites was made in the Levitical cities as well as outside the cities. Vv 17–18 tell how the two groups were registered. (TLSB)

**31:16** *three years.* Although no ancient versions or manuscripts disagree with this figure, it may represent a copyist’s mistake for “30 years,” the age at which duties were assigned in the temple (1Ch 23:3). (CSB)

Weaned and able to partake of the sacrifices (cf 1Sm 1:23). (TLSB)

**31:20–21** Another brief indication of the Chronicler’s emphasis on immediate retribution: Not only does disobedience bring immediate chastening, but obedience and seeking God bring prosperity. (CSB)

**Ch 31** The Lord blesses Judah under Hezekiah’s rule, and Hezekiah reestablishes the support of the priests and Levites. Today, the Lord’s people must take account of the need to support their pastors, teachers, and all who are dedicated to the Lord’s work. Pray for wisdom in managing the offerings presented at God’s house. Bless the Lord for the ministry of the Word, which brings comfort, peace, and hope through Christ, our great High Priest. • Bless all servants of the Word, O Lord, and make me a blessing to them. Amen. (TLSB)