

2CHRONICLES 29: 1 Hezekiah began to reign when he was twenty-five years old; and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah.

Hezekiah's good reign, 2Chr 29:1, 2Chr 29:2. He opens and repairs the doors of the temple, 2Chr 29:3. He assembles and exhorts the priests and Levites, and proposes to renew the covenant with the Lord, 2Chr 29:4-11. They all sanctify themselves and cleanse the temple, 2Chr 29:12-17. They inform the king of their progress, 2Chr 29:18, 2Chr 29:19. He collects the rulers of the people: and they offer abundance of sin-offerings, and burnt-offerings, and worship the Lord, 2Chr 29:20-30. Every part of the Divine service is arranged, and Hezekiah and all the people rejoice, 2Chr 29:31-36.

2CHRONICLES 29: 2 He did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done.

Verse 2

He did that which was right - See the note on 2Kgs 18:3.

2CHRONICLES 29: 3 He in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the LORD's house, and repaired them.

2CHRONICLES 29: 4 He brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them together into the broad place on the east,

2CHRONICLES 29: 5 and said to them, "Listen to me, you Levites! Now sanctify yourselves, and sanctify the LORD's house, the God of your fathers, and carry out the filthiness out of the holy place.

2CHRONICLES 29: 6 For our fathers have trespassed, and done that which was evil in the sight of the LORD our God, and have forsaken him, and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the LORD, and turned their backs.

2CHRONICLES 29: 7 Also they have shut up the doors of the porch, and put out the lamps, and have not burned incense nor offered burnt offerings in the holy place to the God of Israel.

2CHRONICLES 29: 8 Therefore the wrath of the LORD was on Judah and Jerusalem, and he has delivered them to be tossed back and forth, to be an astonishment, and a hissing, as you see with your eyes.

Verse 8

He hath delivered them to trouble, to astonishment - He probably refers here chiefly to that dreadful defeat by the Israelites in which a hundred and twenty thousand were slain, and two hundred thousand taken prisoners; see the preceding chapter, 2Chr 28:6-8 (note).

2CHRONICLES 29: 9 For, behold, our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity for this.

2CHRONICLES 29: 10 Now it is in my heart to make a covenant with the LORD, the God of Israel, that his fierce anger may turn away from us.

Verse 10

To make a covenant - To renew the covenant under which the whole people were constantly considered, and of which circumcision was the sign; and the spirit of which was, I will be your God: Ye shall be my people.

2CHRONICLES 29: 11 My sons, don't be negligent now; for the LORD has chosen you to stand before him, to minister to him, and that you should be his ministers, and burn incense."

2CHRONICLES 29: 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;

2CHRONICLES 29: 13 and of the sons of Elizaphan, Shimri and Jeuel; and of the sons of Asaph, Zechariah and Mattaniah;

2CHRONICLES 29: 14 and of the sons of Heman, Jehuel and Shimei; and of the sons of Jeduthun, Shemaiah and Uzziel.

2CHRONICLES 29: 15 They gathered their brothers, and sanctified themselves, and went in, according to the commandment of the king by the LORD's words, to cleanse the LORD's house.

2CHRONICLES 29: 16 The priests went in to the inner part of the LORD's house, to cleanse it, and brought out all the uncleanness that they found in the LORD's temple into the court of the LORD's house. The Levites took it, to carry it out abroad to the brook Kidron.

Verse 16

And the priests went - The priests and Levites cleansed first the courts both of the priests and of the people. On this labor they spent eight days. Then they cleansed the interior of the temple; but as the Levites had no right to enter the temple, the priests carried all the dirt and rubbish to the porch, whence they were collected by the Levites, carried away, and cast into the brook Kidron; in this work eight days more were occupied, and thus the temple was purified in sixteen days.

2CHRONICLES 29: 17 Now they began on the first day of the first month to sanctify, and on the eighth day of the month came they to the porch of the LORD; and they sanctified the LORD's house in eight days: and on the sixteenth day of the first month they made an end.

Verse 17

On the first day - "They began on the first day of the first month Nisan." - Targum.

2CHRONICLES 29: 18 Then they went in to Hezekiah the king within the palace, and said, "We have cleansed all the LORD's house, and the altar of burnt offering, with all its vessels, and the table of show bread, with all its vessels.

2CHRONICLES 29: 19 Moreover all the vessels, which king Ahaz in his reign threw away when he trespassed, have we prepared and sanctified; and behold, they are before the altar of the LORD."

Verse 19

All the vessels, which King Ahaz - The Targum says, "All the vessels which King Ahaz had polluted and rendered abominable by strange idols, when he reigned in his transgression against the Word of the Lord, we have collected and hidden; and others have we prepared to replace them; and they are now before the Lord."

2CHRONICLES 29: 20 Then Hezekiah the king arose early, and gathered the princes of the city, and went up to the LORD's house.

2CHRONICLES 29: 21 They brought seven bulls, and seven rams, and seven lambs, and seven male goats, for a sin offering for the kingdom and for the sanctuary and for Judah. He commanded the priests the sons of Aaron to offer them on the altar of the LORD.

Verse 21

They brought seven bullocks, etc. - This was more than the law required; see Lev 4:13, etc. It ordered one calf or ox for the sins of the people, and one he-goat for the sins of the prince; but Hezekiah here offers many more. And the reason appears sufficiently evident: the law speaks only of sins of ignorance; but here were sins of every kind and every die - idolatry, apostasy from the Divine worship, profanation of the temple, etc., etc. The sin-offerings, we are informed, were offered, first for the Kingdom - for the transgressions of the king and his family; secondly, for the Sanctuary, which had been defiled and polluted, and for the priests who had been profane, negligent, and unholy; and, finally, for Judah - for the whole mass of the people, who had been led away into every kind of abomination by the above examples.

2CHRONICLES 29: 22 So they killed the bulls, and the priests received the blood, and sprinkled it on the altar: and they killed the rams, and sprinkled the blood on the altar: they killed also the lambs, and sprinkled the blood on the altar.

2CHRONICLES 29: 23 They brought near the male goats for the sin offering before the king and the assembly; and they laid their hands on them:

Verse 23

They laid their hands upon them - That is, they confessed their sin; and as they had by their transgression forfeited their lives, they now offer these animals to die as vicarious offerings, their life being taken for the life of their owners.

2CHRONICLES 29: 24 and the priests killed them, and they 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.

2CHRONICLES 29: 25 He set the Levites in the LORD's house with cymbals, with stringed instruments, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet; for the commandment was of the LORD by his prophets.

Verse 25

With cymbals, with psalteries - Moses had not appointed any musical instruments to be used in the divine worship; there was nothing of the kind under the first tabernacle. The trumpets or horns then used were not for song nor for praise, but as we use bells, i.e., to give notice to the congregation of what they were called to perform, etc. But David did certainly introduce many instruments of music into God's worship, for which we have already seen he was solemnly reprov'd by the prophet Amos, Amo 6:1-6. Here, however, the author of this book states he had the commandment of the prophet Nathan, and Gad the king's seer; and this is stated to have been the commandment of the Lord by his prophets: but the Syriac and Arabic give this a different turn - "Hezekiah appointed the Levites in the house of the Lord, with instruments of music, and the sound of harps, and with the Hymns of David, and the Hymns of Gad, the king's prophet, and of Nathan, the king's prophet: for David sang the praises of the Lord his God, as from the mouth of the prophets." It was by the hand or commandment of the Lord and his prophets that the Levites should praise the Lord; for so the Hebrew text may be understood: and it was by the order of David that so many instruments of music should be introduced into the Divine service. But were it even evident, which it is not, either from this or any other place in the sacred writings, that instruments of music were prescribed by Divine authority under the law, could this be adduced with any semblance of reason, that they ought to be used in Christian worship? No: the whole spirit, soul, and genius of the Christian religion are against this: and those who know the Church of God best, and what constitutes its genuine spiritual state, know that these things have been introduced as a substitute for the life and power of religion; and that where they prevail most, there is least of the power of Christianity. Away with such portentous baubles from the worship of that infinite Spirit who requires his followers to worship him in spirit and in truth, for to no such worship are those instruments friendly. See the use of the trumpets in the sanctuary, Num 10:2 (note), etc., and the notes there.

2CHRONICLES 29: 26 The Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets.

2CHRONICLES 29: 27 Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt offering on the altar. When the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD began also, and the trumpets, together with the instruments of David king of Israel.

2CHRONICLES 29: 28 All the assembly worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded; all this continued until the burnt offering was finished.

2CHRONICLES 29: 29 When they had made an end of offering, the king and all who were present with him bowed themselves and worshipped.

2CHRONICLES 29: 30 Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praises to the LORD with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. They sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped.

2CHRONICLES 29: 31 Then Hezekiah answered, "Now you have consecrated yourselves to the LORD; come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the LORD's house." The assembly brought in sacrifices and thank offerings; and as many as were of a willing heart brought burnt offerings.

2CHRONICLES 29: 32 The number of the burnt offerings which the assembly brought was seventy bulls, one hundred rams, and two hundred lambs: all these were for a burnt offering to the LORD.

2CHRONICLES 29: 33 The consecrated things were six hundred head of cattle and three thousand sheep.

2CHRONICLES 29: 34 But the priests were too few, so that they could not flay all the burnt offerings: therefore their brothers the Levites helped them, until the work was ended, and until the priests had sanctified themselves; for the Levites were more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests.

Verse 34

They could not flay all the burnt-offerings - Peace-offerings, and such like, the Levites might flay and dress; but the whole burnt-offerings, that is, those which were entirely consumed on the altar, could be touched only by the priests, unless in a case of necessity, such as is mentioned here.

The Levites were more upright in heart - The priests seem to have been very backward in this good work; the Levites were more ready to help forward this glorious reformation. Why the former should have been so backward is not easy to tell; but it appears to have been the fact. Indeed, it often happens that the higher orders of the priesthood are less concerned for the prosperity of true religion than the lower. Why is this? They are generally too busy about worldly things, or too much satisfied with secular emoluments. A rich priesthood is not favorable either to the spread or depth of religion. Earthly gratifications are often put in the place of Divine influences: it is almost a miracle to see a very rich man deeply interested in behalf either of his own soul, or the souls of others.

2CHRONICLES 29: 35 Also the burnt offerings were in abundance, with the fat of the peace offerings, and with the drink offerings for every burnt offering. So the service of the LORD's house was set in order.

2CHRONICLES 29: 36 Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, because of that which God had prepared for the people: for the thing was done suddenly.

Verse 36

And Hezekiah rejoiced - Both he and the people rejoiced that God had prepared their hearts to bring about so great a reformation in so short a time; for, it is added, the thing was done suddenly. The king's example and influence were here, under God, the grand spring of all those mighty and effectual movements. What amazing power and influence has God lodged with kings! They can sway a whole empire nearly as they please; and when they declare themselves in behalf of religion, they have the people uniformly on their side. Kings, on this very ground, are no indifferent beings; they must be either a great curse or a great blessing to the people whom they govern.