

CHAPTER 29

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 29

This chapter begins with the good reign of Hezekiah, who upon his accession to the throne opened the doors of the temple, (~~1491~~ 2 Chronicles 29:1-3), summoned the priests and Levites, and exhorted them to purge the temple, and restore the worship of it, (~~1494~~ 2 Chronicles 29:4-11), who accordingly set about the work immediately, and cleansed the temple, and, when they had done, reported it to the king, (~~1497~~ 2 Chronicles 29:12-19) upon which he, with the princes, went into the temple and offered sacrifices, (~~1499~~ 2 Chronicles 29:20-24) and ordered singers to sing at the offering of burnt offerings, (~~1495~~ 2 Chronicles 29:25-30) when he and his people offered burnt offerings and peace offerings in great abundance, (~~1498~~ 2 Chronicles 29:31-36).

Ver. 1,2. *Hezekiah began to reign*, etc.] Of these two verses, (see Gill on “~~1282~~ 2 Kings 18:2”), (see Gill on “~~1283~~ 2 Kings 18:3”).

Ver. 3. *He in the first year of his reign, in the first month*, etc.] And, as appears from (~~1497~~ 2 Chronicles 29:17), on the first day of the month:

opened the doors of the house of the Lord; which his father had shut, (~~1494~~ 2 Chronicles 28:24)

and repaired them; or strengthened them, the hinges, and other parts of them, being loosened and weakened; and ornamented them by overlaying them with gold, the plates of which very probably his father had taken off; for, certain it is, Hezekiah overlaid them, and very probably at this time, (see ~~1286~~ 2 Kings 18:16).

Ver. 4. *And he brought in the priests and Levites*, etc.] The persons that officiated in the service of the temple:

and gathered them together into the east street; which led to the eastern gate of the temple.

Ver. 5. *And said unto them, hear me, ye Levites; sanctify yourselves,* etc.] By washing their bodies and their garments, that no pollution might attend them in their service, (see ^{<2811>}Isaiah 52:11)

and sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers; by carrying out of it all manner of uncleanness, as they did, (^{<4916>}2 Chronicles 29:16),

and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place; or the abomination; the altar, like that at Damascus, which Ahaz, removing the altar of the Lord, had placed in the court of the priests; or, as Kimchi thinks, an idol, which he had set upon that altar.

Ver. 6. *For our fathers have transgressed, and done that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord our God,* etc.] Meaning their more immediate ancestors, his father and theirs, who had committed idolatry; which is a great trespass, and than which there is not a greater evil in the sight of God, nor more provoking to him:

and have forsaken him; his word, worship, and ordinances:

and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the Lord; the temple, by neglecting that, and the service of it, and attending the high places: and turned their backs; upon it; though some think this refers to a rite or custom, introduced by Ahaz before he shut up the temple, that instead of looking to the west, when they worshipped, where was the ark of the Lord, he ordered them to turn their faces to the east, where his altar stood.

Ver. 7. *Also they have shut up the doors of the porch,* etc.] So that there was no entering into the temple, (^{<4924>}2 Chronicles 28:24)

and put out the lamps; for the priests not being able to go in morning and evening to light them, and dress them, they in course went out; the Jews say ^{f123}, that on the eighteenth of Ab, which answers to part of July and August, the western lamp was extinct in the days of Ahaz, for which a fast was kept on that day:

and have not burnt incense, nor offered burnt offerings in the holy place unto the God of Israel; but had done these in the high places to idols, (^{<4925>}2 Chronicles 28:3,4,24,25).

Ver. 8. *Wherefore the wrath of the Lord was upon Judah and Jerusalem,* etc.] As appeared, by suffering the Syrians, and Israelites, and Edomites,

and Philistines, to come upon them, and distress them, as the history of the preceding chapter shows:

and he hath delivered them to trouble, to astonishment, and to hissing, as ye see with your eyes; such desolation and destruction were made among them, as not only threw them into a stupor, that they knew not what to do, but were amazing to all their neighbours, and caused them to hiss at them, which they could not but be sensible of.

Ver. 9. *For, lo, our fathers have fallen by the sword*, etc.] Of the kings of Syria and Israel, even great numbers of them, (⁴⁰⁸2 Chronicles 28:5:6)

and our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity for this; for this idolatry; or they were, though afterwards dismissed, (⁴⁰⁸2 Chronicles 28:8,15) and some of them were still in captivity, perhaps such as were carried captive by the Edomites, (⁴⁰⁷2 Chronicles 28:17).

Ver. 10. *Now it is in mine heart to make a covenant with the Lord God of Israel*, etc.] To renew one, as Asa and Jehoiada had done, promising to serve the Lord, and worship him according to his will:

that his fierce wrath might be turned from us; under the tokens of which they still continued, and might expect it to break forth in other instances, unless a reformation was made.

Ver. 11. *My sons*, etc.] So, as the father of his people, he speaks of them in the most tender and affectionate manner:

be not now negligent; backward to this good work, slothful, sluggish, and remiss in it; according to Jarchi and Kimchi, the word has the signification of error, and the sense may be, do not continue in the error in which you have been, in neglecting the service of God:

for the Lord hath chosen you to stand before him, to serve him, and that ye should minister unto him, and burn incense; on the altar of incense, which was the work of the priests, and for which they were selected from the rest of their brethren; and Hezekiah's discourse was directed to them, as well as to the Levites, (⁴⁰⁴2 Chronicles 29:4,5).

Ver. 12-14. *Then the Levites arose*, etc.] Whose names are mentioned; of the Kohathites two, Mahath the son of Amashai, and Joel the son of Azariah; of the Merarites two, Kish the son of Abdi, and Azariah the son of Jehalelel; of the Gershonites two, Joah the son of Zimmah, and Eden the

son of Joah; and of the family of Elizaphan, a Kohathite, two, Shimri and Jehiel; and of the family of Asaph, one of the chief singers in the times of David, two, Zechariah and Mattaniah; and of the family of Heman, another principal singer in the same times, two, Jehiel and Shimei; and of the family of Jeduthun, the third principal singer, the same with Ethan, two, Shemaiah and Uzziel, in all fourteen.

Ver. 15. *And they gathered their brethren, and sanctified themselves,* etc.] As they were bid, (see ^{<4915>}2 Chronicles 29:5),

and came, according to the commandment of the king, by the word of the Lord, to cleanse the house of the Lord; for this, which the king commanded, was by the Lord, and they came to do this work, in obedience to both.

Ver. 16. *And the priests went into the inner part of the house of the Lord, to cleanse it,* etc.] Into the holy place, where the candlesticks and shewbread tables stood, into which none but priests might enter, but not into the most holy place, the innermost of all; for none but the high priest might go into that, and only on the day of atonement; though in case of necessity, as for repairs, others might go into it, and so perhaps now to cleanse it, if any pollution was there:

and brought out all the uncleanness that they found in the temple of the Lord into the court of the house of the Lord; into the court of the priests, where the Levites might be, and were:

and the Levites took it, to carry it out abroad into the brook Kidron; which ran through the valley of the son of Hinnom, into which all unclean things, and the filth of the temple and sacrifices, were usually carried and cast, (see ^{<2182>}2 Kings 18:12).

Ver. 17. *Now they began on the first day of the first month to sanctify,* etc.] Either of the reign of King Hezekiah, or rather of the year; the month Ab or Nisan, as the Targum expresses it:

and on the eighth of the month came they to the porch of the Lord; they seem to have begun cleansing the inner part of the temple first, and so came forward until they came to the porch which led into it:

so they sanctified the house of the Lord in eight days; the holy place, and it may be the most holy place, and the court of the priests:

and on the sixteenth day of the first month they made an end; it took them eight days more to cleanse the outward porch, and the buildings and chambers belonging to the temple; according to Jarchi, it required so much time, because Ahaz had framed pictures of idols upon the walls of the temple, which could not be defaced sooner.

Ver. 18. *Then they went in to Hezekiah the king*, etc.] In his palace:

and said, we have cleansed all the house of the Lord; the several parts of it, and apartments belonging to it:

and the altar of burnt offering, with all the vessels thereof; which they cleansed and scoured, and put in their proper place, and which Ahaz had removed:

and the shewbread table, with all the vessels thereof; which had lain neglected and profaned, but were now put in order.

Ver. 19. *Moreover, all the vessels which King Ahaz in his reign did cast away in his transgression*, etc.] Not that he threw them away, being valuable, as made of gold and silver; but, as Kimchi interprets it, he removed them, and converted them to idolatrous uses; or, as the Targum, he defiled or profaned them, and made them abominable by strange idols:

have we prepared and sanctified, and, behold, they are before the altar of the Lord; they had cleaned them, and fitted them for service, and had put them where they were ready for use; though the Targum is,

“we have laid them aside, and hid them, and prepared others in their room,”

as unfit for divine service; and which is the sense of other Jewish writers
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Ver. 20. *Then Hezekiah the king rose early*, etc.] Took the first opportunity to attend the worship of God, and set an example to his people:

and gathered the rulers of the city; the elders of the people, the chief magistrates in Jerusalem:

and went up to the house of the Lord; the temple, to worship there.

Ver. 21. *And they brought seven bullocks, and seven rams, and seven lambs, and seven he goats, for a sin offering for the kingdom, and for the sanctuary, and for Judah,* etc.] To make atonement in a typical way, having respect to the sacrifice of the Messiah, for the sins of the king, his family and court, among whom idolatry had prevailed in the times of his father; and for the cleansing of the temple, which had been polluted by the idolatries of Ahaz; and for the expiation of the whole land; seven of each sort are ordered, though only one goat was required for a sin offering by the law, because of the multitude of transgressions that had been committed, and because of the length of time in which sacrifices had been neglected:

and he commanded the priests the sons of Aaron to offer them on the altar of the Lord: the altar of burnt offerings, whose business it was to do it.

Ver. 22. *So they killed the bullocks,* etc.] The seven bullocks, that is, the priests killed them:

and the priests received the blood; into basins provided for that purpose:

and sprinkled it on the altar; according to the law of Moses, (^{<BROW>}Leviticus 1:5) and so they did with the rams and lambs.

Ver. 23. *And they brought forth the he goats for the sin offering before the king and the congregation,* etc.] Which were to make atonement for the sins of both:

and they laid their hands on them; signifying thereby that they were vicarious sacrifices to be offered up in their own room and stead, and that they deserved to die, as these creatures would: transferring as it were hereby their sins unto them, for which they were to be sacrificed, and to make atonement, as an emblem of the imputation of the sins of the Lord's people to Christ, sacrificed in their stead.

Ver. 24. *And the priests killed them,* etc.] The seven he goats; for of the killing of the bullocks, rams, and lambs, mention is made before, (^{<LEVD>}2 Chronicles 29:2)

and they made reconciliation with their blood upon the altar, to make atonement for all Israel; typical of the reconciliation and atonement made for the whole spiritual Israel of God by the sacrifice of Christ:

for the king commanded that the burnt offering, and the sin offering, should be made

for all Israel; not only for the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and for as many of the rest of the tribes as were come over to them, and dwelt among them; but even for the ten tribes also, sadly guilty of idolatry, and for whose reformation and good this pious prince was concerned, (see ^{<400>}2 Chronicles 30:1).

Ver. 25. *And he set the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps,* etc.] To play upon, which were the three principal instruments of music used in religious worship, and what had been disused in the times of Ahaz:

according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet; this sort of music was not commanded by the law of Moses, but was directed to by David under a divine influence, and was approved of by the prophets of the Lord here mentioned:

for so was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets; the Targum is,

“for by the Word of the Lord was the commandment by the hand of the prophets.”

Ver. 26. *And the Levites stood with the instruments of David,* etc.] Which were invented, directed, and ordered to be used by him, and are the same as in the preceding verse:

and the priests with the trumpets; which were made by the direction of Moses, according to the order of God, (^{<000>}Numbers 10:2).

Ver. 27. *And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt offering upon the altar,* etc.] Which was wholly devoted to the Lord, and was an acknowledgment of his sovereignty over them, and of his goodness to them:

and when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also with trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David king of Israel; and this was done at the time of the pouring out of the drink offering, which always attended the burnt offering; for this is a rule with the Jews, that they do not say the song but over the drink offering ^{f125}.

Ver. 28. *And all the congregation worshipped*, etc.] Bowed their heads as a token of divine adoration:

and the singers sang; both with vocal and instrumental music, who were the Levites:

and the trumpeters sounded; their silver trumpets; these were the priests: and all this continued

until the burnt offering was finished; with all appertaining to it, the meat and drink offerings.

Ver. 29. *And when they had made an end of offering*, etc.] Both the sin offering and the burnt offering:

the king and all that were with him bowed themselves and worshipped; towards the place where the ark was, giving thanks for the purging of the temple, and restoring the worship of it.

Ver. 30. *Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord, with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer*, etc.] Making use of psalms composed by the one and the other; Jarchi takes it to be the one hundred and fifth psalm, which begins, "O give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name"; as in (~~13167~~ 1 Chronicles 16:7,8)

and they sang praises with gladness; the king and all the people:

and they bowed their heads and worshipped; made another adoration of the Divine Being, as deeply impressed with a sense of his greatness and goodness.

Ver. 31. *Then Hezekiah answered and said*, etc.] Or proceeded to say, as follows:

now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the Lord; having entered anew on the performance of their office, filling their hands with sacrifices, as the words signify:

come near, and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the Lord; which the people were to put into their hands to offer for them:

and the congregation brought in sacrifices and thank offerings; peace offerings, part of which the offerers had to feast on with their friends so expressing their joy and thankfulness on this occasion:

and as many as were of a free heart burnt offerings; of which they had no share, but were wholly the Lord's; and which was a greater proof of their liberality, and so of their sincere and cordial thankfulness.

Ver. 32. *And the number of the burnt offerings which the congregation brought were seventy bullocks, one hundred rams, and two hundred lambs; all these were for a burnt offering to the Lord.*] Of which they had no part to feast but were wholly devoted to the Lord, by way of thankfulness to him.

Ver. 33. *And the consecrated things,* etc.] Which were devoted for peace offerings, of which the owners had a part: were six hundred oxen, and three thousand sheep; which was a much lesser number than what were offered upon occasion in the times of David and Solomon, the nation being poorer; and besides, these were only the oblation of two tribes, they of all Israel.

Ver. 34. *But the priests were too few, so that they could not flay all the burnt offerings,* etc.] Take off the skins of them, which used to be done by the priests, (^{CH006}Leviticus 1:6),

wherefore their brethren the Levites did help them till the work was ended; assisted in the flaying of the sacrifices, until they had gone through the service of this time, and the skins of all the sacrifices were flayed off:

and until the other priests had sanctified themselves; who had been negligent of it, or had defiled themselves by idolatry:

for the Levites were more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests; were more ready to do it, and did it with greater cheerfulness and good will; were not backward to do it, but did it at once.

Ver. 35. *And also the burnt offerings were in abundance, with the fat of the peace offerings, and the drink offerings, for every burnt offering,* etc.]. Besides the abundance of burnt offerings, whose skins were to be taken off, there were meat offerings and drink offerings to each, which required many hands to prepare them; and also the fat of the peace offerings was to be burnt; which, all together, occasioned a great deal of business:

so the service of the house of the Lord was set in order: both for sacrifice and singing; a good beginning was made, and there was a good foundation laid to proceed on.

Ver. 36. *And Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people*, etc.] To see things go on so well, which foreboded good unto them: and particularly

that God had prepared the people; disposed and directed their hearts in such a manner as to yield such a cheerful obedience to the will of God, and show such a hearty regard to his worship and service, and the restoration of it:

for the thing was done suddenly; whereby it the more appeared that they were under a divine influence, which so quickly and powerfully wrought upon them to engage in this work, and needed not arguments and persuasions to bring them to it.