

CHAPTER 34

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 34

This chapter begins with the good reign of Josiah, the reformation he made in the land, purging it from idolatry, (^{<1430E>}2 Chronicles 34:1-7), relates the orders he gave to repair the house of the Lord, which was accordingly done, (^{<1430E>}2 Chronicles 34:8-13), when the book of the law was found and brought to him, which greatly affected him, (^{<1430E>}2 Chronicles 34:12-19), upon which he deputed some persons to inquire of the Lord, who did of Huldah the prophetess, to whom she gave an answer, which they returned to the king, (^{<1430E>}2 Chronicles 34:20-28) and the chapter is concluded with an account of reading the book in the ears of all the people, and of the king, and then making a covenant with the Lord to serve him, (^{<1430E>}2 Chronicles 34:27-33).

Ver. 1, 2. *Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign*, etc.] Of these two verses, (see Gill on "^{<1221E>}2 Kings 22:1"), (see Gill on "^{<1221E>}2 Kings 22:2").

Ver. 3. *For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young*, etc.] Being in the sixteenth year of his age; though Kimchi thinks it was the very year he began to reign, which was the eighth of his age; and Jarchi observes, it may be interpreted, "though he was young, he began to seek after the God of David his father"; to pray unto him, to seek after the knowledge of him, and the true manner of worshipping him, what were his will, commands, and ordinances; the Targum is,

"to seek instruction or doctrine of the Lord God of David his father,"

to be taught his ways, such as David his great ancestor walked in, and whom he chose to follow:

and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves and the carved images, and the molten images; which were made in the times of Manasseh; and though removed by him when humbled, were restored in the reign of Amon. Now Josiah

purged the land from these, by putting them down, and destroying them; and this he did when he was twenty years of age, having now more authority, being out of his minority, and from under guardians, and one year before Jeremiah began to prophesy, (^{<2001>}Jeremiah 1:1-2:37).

Ver. 4. *And they broke down the altars of Baalim in his presence*, etc.] He not only ordered them to be broke down, but he went in person, and saw it done; these were the altars Manasseh had reared up to the idols; and though upon his humiliation he cast them out, they were rebuilt by Amon his son, (see ^{<497B>}2 Chronicles 33:3,15,22),

and the images that were above them he cut down; sun images, as the word signifies; these Chamanim might be representatives of Cham or Ham, the son of Noah, the same with Jupiter Ammon; and there was another Heathen deity, Amanus, Strabo ^{f156} speaks of, supposed to be the sun, (See Gill on “^{<137D>}Leviticus 26:30”), these, as Jarchi says, were in the form of the sun, and were set above the altars, over against the sun, to whom worship was paid; though some think this respects not place, but time, and that these were images in times past; in the preceding age, as the Tigurine version:

and the groves, and the carved images and the molten images, he brake in pieces; ordered them to be broken; the groves were statues, or images in groves, and thereby distinguished from those made of wood, and were carved, and from those that were of molten metal, and were placed elsewhere:

and made dust of them, and strewed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them, (see ^{<12316>}2 Kings 23:6).

Ver. 5. *And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars*, etc.] On which they sacrificed, in detestation of their idolatry, and to deter from it; and this he did according to the prophecy of him, above three hundred and fifty years before:

and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem; from idolatry, and all the monuments of it.

Ver. 6. *And so did he in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali*, etc.] Which though they belonged to the ten tribes, yet these being carried captive by the king of Assyria, they that were

left became subject to the kings of Judah, (See Gill on “~~<1236>~~2 Kings 23:19”),

with their mattocks round about; or hammers or mauls, as Kimchi, or pick axes, such sort of instruments as were used in demolishing altars and images: the Targum is,

“in the house of their desolation;”

and so other versions, “in their desolate places”^{f157}, which were become such, the inhabitants being carried captive, and few left behind.

Ver. 7. *And when he had broken down the altars and the groves*, etc.] The statues or images in them:

and had beaten the graven images into powder; and strewed it on the graves of the idolaters:

and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel; the sun images as in (~~<1404>~~2 Chronicles 34:4),

he returned to Jerusalem; this tour of his throughout the whole land, and the things done by him, which are represented as done before the repairs of the temple were made, and the book of the law found and read, and the covenant he and his people made with the Lord, are spoken of in (~~<1234>~~2 Kings 23:4-20), as if done after.

Ver. 8. *Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land and the house*, etc.] The temple; this was in the twenty sixth year of his age, six years this work had been doing before it was finished:

he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah: who only is mentioned in (~~<1228>~~2 Kings 22:3) two more are added here, as follow:

and Maaseiah the governor of the city; the city of Jerusalem, a deputy governor under the king, a sort of mayor or provost:

and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder; who was over the book of memorials, as the Targum; the word may be rendered “the remembrances”; and, according to Jarchi, as every king of Judah had a scribe to write down the memorable things that happened in his reign, good or bad, so the scribe had one by him, to put him in mind of every transaction, from whom he wrote it down:

to repair the house of the Lord his God; that is, to give orders for the doing of it, to prepare for it, provide workmen, and appoint overseers of them: it had not been repaired since the times of Joash, which, according to the Jewish chronology^{f158}, was a space of two hundred and eighteen years.

Ver. 9. *And when they came to Hilkiah the high priest*, etc.] To whom they were sent to advise with about the repair of the temple:

they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God; that is, the high priest, and the Levites the doorkeepers, gave it to the king's ministers; which money was either brought to the temple voluntarily, as the free gifts of the people, for the repairs; or rather what was collected by the Levites, sent throughout the land for that purpose, or it may be both:

which the Levites that kept the doors; of the temple; and received the money as the people brought it:

and also had gathered of the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, and of all the remnant of Israel, and of all Judah, and Benjamin; they went throughout all the land of Israel and Judah, and collected money for the above purpose:

and they returned to Jerusalem; with it, which the high priest took the sum of, (see ¹²²⁰⁴2 Kings 22:4) of whom the king's ministers now received it.

Ver. 10. *And they put it*, etc.] The king's ministers did:

in the hand of the workmen that had the oversight of the house of the Lord; whose business it was to inspect the temple, and see what repairs were necessary, and to overlook the workmen in making those repairs; the names of these overseers are in (¹⁴⁸⁴²2 Chronicles 34:12),

and they gave it to the workmen that wrought in the house of the Lord, to repair and mend the house; that is, the overseers gave the money they received to the labourers, as the hire of their labour, and the reward of their work, and to buy materials with, as follows.

Ver. 11. *Even to the artificers and builders gave they it*, etc.] To the masons and carpenters:

to buy hewn stone; to put in the room of that which was decayed or fallen down:

and timber for couplings; of boards, beams, and rafters:

and to floor the houses; the chambers, the apartments in the temple, which belonged to the priests and Levites:

which the kings of Judah had destroyed; the idolatrous ones, who had let them go to decay and ruin, taking no care of them.

Ver. 12. *And the men did that work faithfully*, etc.] The labouring men, as also their inspectors, (see ⁴²²¹⁷2 Kings 22:7)

and the overseers of them were Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites, of the sons of Merari; the third son of Levi:

and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites; who had their name from Kohath, the second son of Levi:

to set it forward; to urge and animate the men to their work, to keep them constant to it, and see that they did it well:

and other of the Levites, all that could skill of instruments of music; these, when they were not employed in singing in the temple, attended this service, to look after the workmen at the repairs of it; and perhaps they might play, as some think, on their instruments of music, while the men were at work, that they might go on in it the more pleasantly and cheerfully.

Ver. 13. *Also they were over the bearers of burdens*, etc.] Who carried the timber and stones to the workmen, to look after them, that they were not dilatory, and that the workmen might not stand still for want of materials being brought to them to work with:

and were overseers over all that wrought in any manner of service; whether in the way of masonry, or in that of carpenters, or of such that served them, or in whatsoever way:

and of the Levites there were scribes, and officers, and porters; some to take the account of the money carried in and paid, who were the

scribes, according to Jarchi; and others who looked after the men, and kept them to work, who were the

officers; and others that let them in and out, called

porters.

Ver. 14-28. *And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the Lord,* etc.] The Levites, who brought it out of the country into the temple, and from thence brought it to the high priest, who delivering it to the king's ministers, and they to the overseers, the repairs were begun:

and then Hilkiah the high priest found a book of the law of the Lord given by Moses house of the Lord, etc.] The Levites, who brought it out of the country into the temple, and from thence brought it to the high priest, who delivering it to the king's ministers, and they to the overseers, the repairs were begun: (See Gill on "^{<1228>}2 Kings 22:8"). From hence, to the end of (^{<1448>}2 Chronicles 34:28), is the same as (^{<1228>}2 Kings 22:8-20).

Ver. 29-32. *Then the king sent and gathered,* etc.] From hence, to the end of (^{<1442>}2 Chronicles 34:32), the same account is given of the reading of the law to the people, and of the covenant the king and they made to serve the Lord, as in (^{<1231>}2 Kings 23:1-3).

Ver. 33. *And Josiah took away all the abominations out of all the countries that [pertained] to the children of Israel,* etc.] All their idols, as related in (^{<1234>}2 Kings 23:4), etc.

and made all that were present in Israel to serve, even to serve the Lord their God; by his edicts, and by his example:

and all his days they departed not from following the Lord God of their fathers; not publicly and universally; otherwise there were great declensions and corruptions among them, as the prophecies of Jeremiah and Zephaniah show.