

2 Chronicles Chapter 35

Verses 1-19: The chronicler, probably Ezra, gave much more attention to this Passover celebration than does (2 Kings 23:21-23).

Verses 1-2: Obviously, the temple's contents had been disturbed and the sacrifices/festivals interrupted by lack of attention, idolatrous practices, and foreign intervention. As Hezekiah had restored the Passover in his time (30:1), so did Josiah. This was the central feast in devotion to the Lord (Exodus chapters 12 and 13).

2 Chronicles 35:1 "Moreover Josiah kept a passover unto the LORD in Jerusalem: and they killed the passover on the fourteenth [day] of the first month."

Where Jerusalem was the only it was to be kept.

"And they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month": The month Nisan, as the Targum, which was the exact time of killing the passover lamb, according to the law of Moses (Exodus 12:6).

In the last lesson, we found that Josiah heard the reading of the law. He would be desirous to keep the Passover, since it was to be kept for all generations. We see in this first verse that he was trying to be careful about it being on the correct day as well. The 14th day of Nisan was when it was to be kept. Hezekiah had kept the Passover. He had to have it in the second month, since they were not ready the first month. The preferred time was the 14th day of the first month.

2 Chronicles 35:2 "And he set the priests in their charges, and encouraged them to the service of the house of the LORD,"

In their offices, and in their proper places, to execute them.

"And encouraged them to the service of the house of the Lord": To attend it with cheerfulness and constancy, and do it according to the will of God, promising his favor and protection.

They had not been keeping Passover, and the priests were inexperienced. Josiah encouraged them. It was very important to keep Passover and it was almost impossible to do without the cooperation of the priests.

2 Chronicles 35:3 "And said unto the Levites that taught all Israel, which were holy unto the LORD, Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David king of Israel did build; [it shall] not [be] a burden upon [your] shoulders: serve now the LORD your God, and his people Israel,"

"The holy Ark": The Ark of the Covenant which was to remain in the Most Holy Place had been removed, probably by Manasseh who set a carved image in its place (compare 33:7). The law for the carrying of the Ark during the tabernacle days, when it was portable, called for poles to be

placed through rings on the sides and Levites (Kohathites), to carry it by the poles without touching it (compare Exodus 25:14-15). Uzza died for touching the Ark while he was improperly transporting the Ark on a cart (1 Chron. 13:6-10). Now that the temple was built and the Ark had a permanent place, it no longer needed to be transported in the old way.

Until the temple was built as a house for God, "the Holy Ark" served as the most direct symbol of God's presence (Exodus 25:10-22). The Ark was captured by the Philistines (1 Sam. chapter 4), and likely displaced frequently other times during the reigns of the many evil kings in Judah. Josiah wanted God to have His rightful, permanent place among His people.

This is a very unusual statement. The key to this Scripture perhaps is "burden upon your shoulders". There had been so much evil in the land with several of the kings of Judah that perhaps, the High Priest and the priests had hidden the Ark in their quarters for safety. They had been responsible for its safety. Now that Josiah had re-established worship in the temple, it was time to put the Ark in its rightful place in the Holy of Holies. The only other reason for it not being in the Holy of Holies, would have been during the restoration of the temple it had been moved. Of course in either case, the High Priest and the priests would have been responsible for moving it. Anyone else who might have touched it, would have been killed. They will now bring it into its rightful place, not to be moved again.

2 Chronicles 35:4 "And prepare [yourselves] by the houses of your fathers, after your courses, according to the writing of David king of Israel, and according to the writing of Solomon his son."

To do their work in this service of the sanctuary, the Passover. That they be ready to do it, and diligent in it, and perform it according to the law of God.

"By the houses of your fathers, after your courses": Such of them whose turn in course it was to officiate.

"According to the writing of David king of Israel, and according to the writing of Solomon his son": Who had given in writing directions in what manner their courses should be observed (see 1 Chron. 23:1).

It is very unusual to me that the king would have to remind the Levites of their duties in the temple. Each of them had been specified for a particular ministry. They must now prepare themselves, and be ready to conduct the services in the temple. David and Solomon had told in detail what each of them were to do. Now they must do what they were called to do.

2 Chronicles 35:5 "And stand in the holy [place] according to the divisions of the families of the fathers of your brethren the people, and [after] the division of the families of the Levites."

The court of the priests, where their ministrations were.

According to the divisions of the families of your brethren the people": Of the other tribes, who were according to their families to provide a lamb for the Passover.

"And after the division of the families of the Levites": Who were obliged to observe the same ordinance in their respective families. And for whom, as well as for the other families of Israel, they were to slay the lamb.

There were actually three divisions of the Levitical tribe. The Gershonites, the Kohathites, and the Merarites.

2 Chronicles 35:6 "So kill the passover, and sanctify yourselves, and prepare your brethren, that [they] may do according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses."

In the manner, time, place, and for the persons it should be killed for.

"And sanctify yourselves": By washing themselves and garments, that they might be fit for this service.

"And prepare your brethren": Prepare a lamb for your brethren, or instruct them how to perform their office that needed instruction.

"That they may do according to the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses": Celebrate the ordinance of the Passover in all its rites, according to the law of Moses. At least in every rite in which they were more peculiarly concerned. "Moses" (see notes on Exodus chapters 12 and 13). The prescribed pattern for the Passover in the temple was followed (verses 7-17).

Not only were they to purify themselves for the killing of the passover, but they were to instruct the people in the details of the Passover to be kept.

2 Chronicles 35:7 "And Josiah gave to the people, of the flock, lambs and kids, all for the passover offerings, for all that were present, to the number of thirty thousand, and three thousand bullocks: these [were] of the king's substance."

Which be either lambs or kids of the goats (Exodus 12:5). For all that were present, to the number of 30,000. That is, 30,000 lambs or kids, which would serve 30,000 families.

"And three thousand bullocks": These were for the "chagigah" or feast, kept on the day following the Passover.

"These were of the king's substance": Taken out of his flocks and herds, or bought with his money, and liberally given to the people. To such poor families as could not afford well to be at the expense of such a festival.

Those who came were furnished sacrifices for this particular feast by Josiah. The people had not practiced Passover in so long they had forgotten the details of the feast, even if they had ever been taught. Josiah was very serious about this. The lambs and the kids were given for the

Passover, and the bullocks were for sin and peace offerings. Josiah gave thousands of animals for this purpose.

2 Chronicles 35:8 "And his princes gave willingly unto the people, to the priests, and to the Levites: Hilkiah and Zechariah and Jehiel, rulers of the house of God, gave unto the priests for the passover offerings two thousand and six hundred [small cattle], and three hundred oxen."

Besides, to some other families. They gave also to poor priests and Levites, which the king's bounty did not extend to. And these princes were not secular, but ecclesiastical princes, as follows.

"Hilkiah, and Zechariah, and Jehiel, rulers of the house of God": Of the temple; Hilkiah was High Priest, and the other two were chief priests. The one of the line of Eleazar, and the other of the line of Ithamar.

"Gave unto the priests for the Passover offerings two thousand and six hundred [small cattle]": which were lambs, or kids, or both.

"And three hundred oxen": For Peace Offerings on the seven days of Unleavened Bread, to feast upon.

The princes here were speaking of the heads of families. Those who understood Passover, gave willingly of their animals for the feast. These were animals that had belonged to the High Priests.

2 Chronicles 35:9 "Conaniah also, and Shemaiah and Nethaneel, his brethren, and Hashabiah and Jeiel and Jozabad, chief of the Levites, gave unto the Levites for passover offerings five thousand [small cattle], and five hundred oxen."

(See 2 Chron. 31:12).

"And Hashabiah, and Jehiel, and Jozabad, chief of the Levites": Men of considerable substance, and in good posts and offices.

"Gave unto the Levites": Their poor brethren of that order.

"For Passover offerings five thousand small cattle": Lambs, or kids, or both.

"And five hundred oxen": For the feast that followed the Passover.

These were heads of the families of the Levites. They furnished the Passover feast for the Levitical tribe.

Verses 10-13: Josiah reinstated the celebration of "Passover" as it had been explained in "the Book of Moses" (Exodus chapter 12). God's people after the chronicle was written would have two occasions of divine deliverance to remember: the exodus from Egypt and the return from exile.

2 Chronicles 35:10 "So the service was prepared, and the priests stood in their place, and the Levites in their courses, according to the king's commandment."

Everything was gotten ready both for the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For all sorts of people, rich and poor.

"And the priests stood in their place": In their court near the altar. To sprinkle the blood of the sacrifices about it, as in the following verse.

"And the Levites in their courses": Whose turn it was to officiate.

"According to the king's commandment (2 Chron. 35:4).

The king had commanded that the Passover be done exactly as prescribed in the law. Josiah was determined that the Passover feast would take place exactly as God planned.

2 Chronicles 35:11 "And they killed the passover, and the priests sprinkled [the blood] from their hands, and the Levites flayed [them]."

The lambs for the Passover, which was done by the Levites.

"And the priests sprinkled the blood from their hands": Which they received from the Levites (see 2 Chron. 30:16).

"And the Levites flayed them": They took off the skins of the passover lambs.

There were so many animals, that the Levites had to help with the flaying of the animals. Only the priests touched the blood. The sprinkling of the blood must be done by the High Priest.

2 Chronicles 35:12 "And they removed the burnt offerings, that they might give according to the divisions of the families of the people, to offer unto the LORD, as [it is] written in the book of Moses. And so [did they] with the oxen."

Either such of the lambs and kids as were designed for burnt offerings for the people. These they separated from those that were for the Passover. Or they removed from them what was to be burnt, the fat of the inwards, of the kidneys, and the caul on the liver.

"That they might give": The rest for the Passover.

"According to the divisions of the families of the people, to offer unto the Lord": According to the number of them.

"As it is written in the book of Moses": (see Lev. 3:3).

"And so did they with the oxen": Such of them as were appointed for burnt offerings were set apart by themselves. And such as were for Peace Offerings. What of them were to be burnt, as those before mentioned, were taken from them.

The families participating in the Passover feast must eat the animal sacrificed for their family. The entire family ate of the Passover feast.

2 Chronicles 35:13 "And they roasted the passover with fire according to the ordinance: but the [other] holy [offerings] sod they in pots, and in caldrons, and in pans, and divided [them] speedily among all the people."

Of the Lord by Moses (Exodus 12:8).

"But the other holy offerings": Which were the Peace Offerings.

"Sod they in pots, and in cauldrons, and pans": Which was forbid to be done with the passover lamb, but might with the other sacrifices, which were to be eaten (Exodus 12:9).

"And divided them speedily among all the people": The parts which belonged to the offeror, who was the king. But he gave his part to the people, and therefore the Levites delivered them to them as soon as they could.

This just means that they prepared it, as quickly as they could to feed all of the people.

2 Chronicles 35:14 "And afterward they made ready for themselves, and for the priests: because the priests the sons of Aaron [were busied] in offering of burnt offerings and the fat until night; therefore the Levites prepared for themselves, and for the priests the sons of Aaron."

The passover lambs, and such parts of the Peace Offerings that belonged to them.

"Because the priests the sons of Aaron were busied in offering of burnt offerings": Such as are before said to be removed or separated for that purpose.

"And the fat until night": Of the Peace Offerings that was to be burnt. And this employed them until night. So that they could not prepare the passover for themselves.

"Therefore the Levites prepared for themselves, and for the priests the sons of Aaron": Who were otherwise engaged in the service of the day

We can see that the priests served the people first, and then took care of their own. There is a good lesson in this for all believers. We should serve others first, and then ourselves. It took all day long for the priests to prepare for all the people even until night. By necessity, the Levites prepared for themselves and for the priests.

2 Chronicles 35:15 "And the singers the sons of Asaph [were] in their place, according to the commandment of David, and Asaph, and Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer; and the porters [waited] at every gate; they might not depart from their service; for their brethren the Levites prepared for them."

In the court of the priests, singing and playing on their instruments while the sacrifices were offering.

"According to the commandment of David, and Asaph, and Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer": The same with Ethan. And everyone were seers, as Jarchi interprets it. That is, the three last.

"And the porters waited at every gate": Such of the Levites as were in that post and office.

"They might not depart from their service": To let people in and out, that came for their passover lamb, and share in their other offerings.

"For their brethren the Levites prepared for them": Because they were not at leisure to prepare for themselves.

We see that the singers, the keepers of the gates, and all of the others in service to the LORD stayed at their tasks until all was finished. The Levites prepared for all of those who served.

2 Chronicles 35:16 "So all the service of the LORD was prepared the same day, to keep the passover, and to offer burnt offerings upon the altar of the LORD, according to the commandment of king Josiah."

With every sacrifice, and for all sorts of persons.

"To keep the Passover": And to offer burnt offerings upon the altar of the Lord. Which were required to be done on that day.

"According to the commandment of King Josiah": Which was, that everything be provided, prepared, and done, as the law required.

All of them serving in the capacity the LORD had called them to, prepared the entire thing in the one day as prescribed by the law, and commanded of Josiah.

2 Chronicles 35:17 "And the children of Israel that were present kept the passover at that time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days."

In its proper time, on the fourteenth day of Nisan.

"And the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days": The seven days following the Passover, as the Lord by Moses appointed.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread and Passover actually overlap. The eating of the Unleavened Bread symbolizes the sinless body of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verses 18-19: "From ... Samuel" (ca. 1100 – 1015 B.C.), it had been over 400 years, since before all the kings of Israel and Judah.

2 Chronicles 35:18 "And there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept, and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem."

"No Passover like to that": Hezekiah's Passover (compare 2 Chron. Chapter 30), differed. It was not celebrated strictly according to Mosaic law in that:

- (1) It was celebrated in the second month (2 Chron. 30:2);
- (2) Not all the people were purified (2 Chron. 30:18); and
- (3) Not all of the people came (2 Chron. 30:10).

"Josiah's" observance of the "Passover" flowed the strict regulations laid down in the law of Moses. Even the faithful Hezekiah had not been able to enjoy such a Passover (compare 30:1-20).

During the many years of ungodly leadership in all Israel, the celebration of the "Passover" (Exodus chapter 12), had faded in importance. Josiah made sure that changed. Like David and Solomon, Josiah unified the tribes of Israel, and he did it by gathering them to worship.

The Passover had been grossly neglected. The last time the Passover had truly been kept, was in the time of Samuel. It appears, that even Hezekiah had not seen to the Passover being kept properly. It was kept during his time, but not in its fullest extent.

2 Chronicles 35:19 "In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah was this passover kept."

The date is stamped as ever-memorable, ever-honorable landmark in Josiah's reign.

The eighteenth year of his reign would have made him 26 years old. At any rate, this was an important event in Josiah's life.

Verses 20-27: The details of Josiah's tragic death are given. When compared with the account (in 2 Kings 23:28-30), the events become clearer. Toward the end of Josiah's reign, the Egyptian Pharaoh Necho (ca. 609 – 594 B.C.) set out on a military expedition to aid the king of Assyria in a war at Carchemish, Assyria's latest capital, 250 miles northeast of Damascus on the bank of the Euphrates River. Fearing such an alliance would present future danger to Israel, Josiah decided

to intercept Pharaoh Necho's army and fight to protect his nation. Coming from Egypt, likely by ship to Acco, a northern seaport in Israel, and by land up the coastal plain of Israel, the Egyptian army had landed and proceeded east to the plain of Megiddo (verse 22), i.e., Jezreel on the plain of Esdraelon. This was the most direct way to Carchemish. There Josiah met him for battle and was wounded by an arrow. He made it back to Jerusalem (60 miles south), where he died.

For the historical background that caused the battle in the "valley of Megiddo" and the godly Josiah's death (see the note on 2 Kings 23:28-29).

2 Chronicles 35:20 "After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Carchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him."

Purified it, and cleansed it from the filth in it, and from all idolatry. And had repaired it, and put the service of it in good order, and on a good footing. After which great prosperity in church and state might have been expected.

"Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Carchemish by Euphrates": Now called Querquisia, supposed by some to be the same with the Cadytis of Herodotus, which that historian calls a great city of Syria. Where he says Necho went after the battle with the Syrians. Of which see (Isa. 10:9). And of this king of Egypt (see 2 Kings 23:29, Jer. 46:2).

"And Josiah went out against him": Or to meet him, and stop him from going through his land, which lay between Egypt and Syria. Egypt being on the south of Israel, and Euphrates on the north of it, as Jarchi observes.

We do not know how much after the Passover, just that this happened later. It could have been as much as 13 years later. It seems, there was a time of peace and good times for Josiah and his people. This battle seemed to be between Necho of Egypt and Carchemish. There was a Hittite city by this name on the Euphrates. Josiah went against Necho.

Verses 21-24: Like so many kings before him, Josiah could not "forbear thee from [meddling with] God" and took military matters into his own hands. God did not use a typical prophet to deliver His word. In this case, he used a foreign king. This is not the only time that a foreign king recognized the Lord and His work (36:23; Dan. 4:37).

2 Chronicles 35:21 "But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? [I come] not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from [meddling with] God, who [is] with me, that he destroy thee not."

"God commanded me": He is referring to the true God; whether he had a true revelation or not is unknown. Josiah had no way to know either, and it is apparent he did not believe that Necho spoke the Word of God. There is no reason to assume his death was punishment for refusing to

believe. He probably thought Necho was lying and, once victorious with Assyria over Babylon, they would together be back to assault Israel.

This is an unusual statement coming from an Egyptian. We do know however that God used heathen kings to punish Israel and Judah. This possibly would mean to Josiah, that God was with this Egyptian, and not with him. He would not listen to the Egyptian.

2 Chronicles 35:22 "Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo."

Or withdraw his forces, and go back.

"But disguised himself that he might fight with him": Without being personally known, and aimed at (see 1 Kings 22:30).

"And hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God": Not believing that what he said came from the Lord, though it might. And his infirmity was, that he did not inquire of the Lord about it.

"And came to fight in the valley of Megiddo": Which was in the tribe of Manasseh, thought to be the Magdolum of Herodotus, where he says Necho fought the battle (see 2 Kings 23:29).

In this particular place, this Egyptian was speaking the Words God had put into his mouth. Josiah did not realize it, but he was disobeying the will of God to come against Necho. This valley of Megiddo has been the sight of many battles. The battle of Armageddon is believed will happen in this spot.

2 Chronicles 35:23 "And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore wounded."

For, though disguised, he appeared to be a general officer, and indeed chief commander. And therefore aimed at him, and pressed him hard.

"And the king said to his servants, have me away, for I am sore wounded": As Ahab said, when in the like case (1 Kings 22:34).

The archers were not deliberately trying to kill Josiah. He was disguised and they did not know this was him. They were just shooting at someone who was advancing toward them. The archer shot Josiah. He asked his servant to take him home, because he was severely wounded.

2 Chronicles 35:24 "His servants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had; and they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in [one of] the sepulchers of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah."

“And his servants therefore took him out of that chariot” Dead. And took him to Jerusalem and buried him (see notes on 2 Kings 23:30).

"And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah": He having been so good a king, so tender of them. And such a happy instrument in restoring the true religion and the service of God. This was the sense of the generality of them, who were sincere in their mourning. But it is not improbable that those who were inclined to idolatry were secretly glad, though they pretended mourning with the rest.

Josiah had been a good king, as well as being a man after God's own heart. He was greatly loved by the people. At his death, there was much mourning. He died, and was given an honorable burial with his fathers in Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles 35:25 "And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they [are] written in the lamentations."

There is no record of Jeremiah's elegy. The people continued to mourn the loss of Josiah up to the writing of the Chronicles (in 450-430 B.C.), nearly 200 years after the event. In fact, the location of the battle, the town of Hadad-rimmon in the plain of Megiddo, was part of a proverb lamenting Josiah's death even in Zechariah's day (Zech. 12:11), 90 years later.

Jeremiah was the prophet in the land at the time of Josiah's death. Jeremiah loved Josiah, because he did right in the sight of God. It is not in the Bible in the book of Lamentations. This is speaking of an unknown writing somewhere.

2 Chronicles 35:26 "Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and his goodness, according to [that which was] written in the law of the LORD,"

For abolishing idolatry, and restoring the true worship of God.

"According to that which was written in the law of the LORD": And also of Israel, in which an account was kept of the transactions of their reign.

2 Chronicles 35:27 "And his deeds, first and last, behold, they [are] written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah."

Many other of the acts of Josiah are recorded in the canonical book of Chronicles (2 Chron. 34:1).

Josiah was a keeper of the law of God. He studied God's law to show himself approved of God a workman who needeth not to be ashamed. There is some writing of him in the book of Kings in the Bible. He was possibly recorded in some historical writings as well.

2 Chronicles Chapter 35 Questions

1. When was the correct day for Passover?
2. Why did Josiah have to encourage the priests?
3. Where does the author believe the Ark had been?
4. Why had it been there?
5. Where did Josiah tell them to put it?
6. What was another possible reason why the Ark had been moved?
7. The priests were to prepare themselves according to the writing of _____.
8. What is strange about Josiah telling the priests their duties?
9. What were the three divisions of the Levitical tribe?
10. What are they instructed to do in verse 6?
11. What did Josiah give for the Passover and the offerings?
12. Who are the princes in verse 8?
13. These animals had belonged to the _____.
14. What did the heads of the families of the Levites give?
15. The priests stood in their place, and the Levites in their courses, according to whose commandments?
16. Who sprinkled the blood?
17. Who ate the animals?
18. Why did the Levites prepare for the priests?
19. Over what period of time did Passover take place?
20. What overlaps with Passover?
21. When was the last time Passover had been done this thoroughly?
22. How many years, approximately after this special Passover, was it until Necho attacked Carchemish?
23. What did Necho tell Josiah?
24. Did he listen?

25. What happened to Josiah?
26. Where was he buried?
27. He was greatly _____ by the people.
28. Who was a prophet in the land, at the time of Josiah's death?
29. Josiah was a keeper of the _____ of God.