

**The Reunited Kingdom, part 13  
(2 Chronicles 29:1–36:23)**

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**The Reign of Josiah, part 2: Josiah's Fidelity in Worship Reforms, part 2:  
Josiah's Later Reforms, part 1: Josiah Repairs the Temple  
(2 Chronicles 34:8-13)**

*Josiah's Later Reforms (34:8-35:19)*

The Chronicler continued his focus on Josiah's reforms by moving to his renewal of the temple services. During the reign of Amon, Manasseh's reforms were reversed and the temple was filled with foreign gods once again (see 33:22). Josiah brought the temple back to his proper order and celebrated a national Passover much like that of Hezekiah (see 30:1-31:1). The Chronicler separated this material from its surrounding context by several chronological notes. He began by stating that these events took place **in the eighteenth year** (34:8) and closed with the reminder that Josiah's celebration was **in the eighteenth year** (35:19).

*Comparison of 34:8-35:19 with 2 Kgs 22:3-20; 23:1-5; 23:21-27*

As we noted above (see figure 60), the Chronicler has shifted the order of the record of Kings to arrange events along a chronological framework. For the most part, the Chronicler's record of these events follows the parallels in Kings. As we will see, however, at a number of points significant variations occur in each section.

*Structure of 34:8-35:19*

This material divides into three symmetrical sections (see figure 61). Josiah began repairing the temple only to encounter the threat of curses in the book discovered in the temple (34:8-13). This difficulty was corrected by Josiah's covenant renewal in which he reaffirmed his determination to obey the Law of God (34:14-33). As a result of this recommitment, Josiah was able to complete the renewal of the temple and led the nation in a grand celebration of Passover (35:1-19).

### *Josiah Repairs the Temple (34:8-13)*

Having established general reforms throughout the land from his twelfth year, Josiah began major repairs on the temple. This effort took the king's reforms to new heights.

#### *Comparison of 34:8-13 with 2 Kgs 22:3-7*

A cursory comparison of Chronicles and Kings indicates that the Chronicler depended heavily on 2 Kgs 22:3-7. A number of small variations, however, bring the Chronicler's distinctive emphases into view.

First, the Chronicler added some details to provide more information than Kings. 1) In 34:8a ( // 2 Kgs 22:3) he added that the temple renovations took place "when he had purged the land and the house" (i.e. the temple). The Chronicler had already given account of these reforms (34:3b-7). 2) In 34:8b ( // 2 Kgs 22:3) he mentioned the names of more people leading temple renovations.

Second, the Chronicler omitted the comment that no auditing was required of those in charge of purchases (2 Kgs 34:7). This omission may have been motivated by contemporary concerns about the need for auditing those in charge of such matters in the post-exilic community.

Third, in three places the Chronicler varied from Kings in order to stress his characteristic concerns. 1) He gave the Levites a more important role in these events. For instance, he stated explicitly that those who collected funds for the temple were **Levites** (34:9 // 2 Kgs 22:4). Moreover, he added the names of Levites who worked in the renovation effort (34:12-13). 2) The Chronicler emphasized the breadth of support for Josiah's efforts by shifting from "the people" (2 Kgs 22:4) to an enumeration of various tribes including northern Israelites who were involved (34:9b). 3) In 34:11b the Chronicler demonstrated his interest in the broader temple complex by reporting that funds were not simply used "to repair the temple" (2 Kgs 22:6). They also paid for materials used **for the buildings that the kings of Judah had allowed to fall into ruin** (34:11b). 4) Josiah's role in temple renovations is emphasized. In 2 Kgs 22:4, Josiah's men were to have Hilkiah "get ready the money that has been brought into the temple." The Chronicler, however, made it clear that these representatives of the throne virtually **gave him the money that had been brought into the temple** (34:9). In this way the text highlights royal support for the temple.

#### *Structure of 34:8-13*

The Chronicler's record of these events divides into five symmetrical steps followed by an afterword (see figure 61). This episode begins with Josiah sending men to supervise the repair of the temple (34:8) and ends with the repairs being completed (34:12a). The middle portions of the story focus on the money used in the effort. The supervisors designate money for repairs (34:9). This money is spent for materials and laborers (34:10b-11). The turning point of the episode consists of the money being given to the supervisors of the work (34:10a). The final scene (34:12a) is expanded by an afterword concerning the names of Levites who supervised the laborers (34:12b-13).

### *Initiation of Temple Repairs (34:8)*

Josiah commissioned supervisors for repair work on the temple (34:8). The Chronicler had a slightly different list of these men than Kings ( // 2 Kgs 22:3), but both texts make it plain that these men were civilian leaders. Both **the ruler of the city** of Jerusalem and **the recorder** or financial accountant were among those who represented the king's interests (34:8). In Judah and other ancient Near Eastern cultures, it was usual for monarchs to be involved in temple building and renovation (see 1 Chr 28:1-29:9; 2 Chr 2:1-5:1; see also *Introduction: 24) Building and Destruction*). From the Chronicler's perspective every ideal king had the temple as a high priority of his reign. For this reason, he noted that Josiah specifically commissioned his representatives **to repair the temple** (34:8).

### *Money Designated for Temple Repairs (34:9-10a)*

The first task of Josiah's representatives was to authorize **Hilkiah the high priest** to use funds for temple renovation (34:9). Hilkiah appears in the Chronicler's genealogies (see 1 Chr 6:13). He played a major role in the events that follow this episode (see 34:9,14-28). As high priest, he had charge of the renovations of the temple.

The record of 2 Kgs 24:4 makes it clear that Josiah's representatives did not actually give money to Hilkiah from the royal treasuries. They gave him permission "to get ready the money" that had already been brought to the temple. As noted above, the Chronicler wrote that these men **gave him money** (34:9), but his words must be understood in the sense of approving or designating the collection. The money in view was not a gift from Josiah; it **had been brought into the temple of God** (34:9).

The Chronicler highlighted the role of Levites in these affairs. He added to 2 Kgs 22:4 that these monies had been collected by **the Levites** (34:9). He described these same Levites as **doorkeepers** (34:9). Thus the text focuses on funds collected at the temple gates (see 2 Kgs 22:4), but other revenue may have been gathered by Levites who traveled outside Jerusalem. Both methods were used to gather funds in Joash's time (see 24:5-6,8-9).

The Chronicler also emphasized the broad base of support for Josiah's efforts. 2 Kgs 22:4 simply reports that the money came "from the people." The Chronicler expanded this statement to include **all the people from Manasseh, Ephraim and the entire remnant of Israel and from all the people of Judah and Benjamin and the inhabitants of Jerusalem** (34:9). Earlier he had noted that Josiah's reforms extended far beyond the boundaries of Jerusalem (34:6-7); now the financial support for temple renovations came from all of these tribes.

By expanding his record in this manner the Chronicler highlighted the ideal nature of Josiah's temple renovation. The entire nation supported the effort just as all the tribes should support the post-exilic re-establishment of the temple and its services (see *Introduction: 1) All Israel*; see also *Introduction: 9) Temple Contributions*).

*Money Given to Supervisors (34:10a)*

Once Hilkiah had designated money for the work, he distributed it to **the men appointed to supervise the work** (34:10a). We learn later that these men were Levites (see 34:12b-13). They served under the direction of Hilkiah and dealt with the practical matters related to temple renovation.

This detail which the Chronicler derived from 2 Kgs 22:5 fit well with his interest in the diversity of duties among priests and Levites. As in many passages, he made it clear that the Levites were to serve under the direction of the Zadokite priesthood (see *Introduction: Appendix A: The Families of Levi*).

*Money Paid for Temple Repairs (34:10b-11)*

The supervisors of the laborers **paid the workers** (34:10b). The monies were used precisely as Josiah had ordered. The Chronicler omitted 2 Kgs 22:7 which indicates that no auditing was necessary because of the honesty of these supervisors. While accounting may not have been necessary at that time, the Chronicler apparently did not want to suggest that this practice be imitated in his day.

In 34:11 the Chronicler varied from 2 Kgs 22:6 by focusing on the repairs of **the building that the kings of Judah had allowed to fall into ruin**. Here he probably had in mind the storehouses and treasuries in the temple complex (see 1 Chr 26:20; 2 Chr 5:1; 16:2). Just as he highlighted Hezekiah's focus on these structures (see 31:11-12), this broader concern reveals the Chronicler's encouragement to his post-exilic readers that they should devote themselves to restoring all the buildings and services of the temple.

*Completion of Temple Repairs (34:12a)*

The Chronicler added a new ending to this episode. He simply stated that **the men did the work faithfully** (34:12a). No disputes interrupted the work. Josiah's desire to see the temple repaired was accomplished by the full cooperation of priests, Levites, and workers. This simple statement raised yet another element in the Chronicler's desire for his readers. They must be eager to cooperate in completing their temple efforts as well.

*Afterword Concerning Levitical Supervisors (34:12b-13)*

The Chronicler added an afterword to this episode. In this material he named a number of Levites who supervised the renovations of the temple. Interestingly enough, he noted that the Levites in charge were **all who were skilled in playing musical instruments** (34:12b see 1 Chr 15:22; 25:7; see also *Introduction: 8) Music*) and others were **secretaries, scribes and doorkeepers** (34:13).

Levites supervised renovation projects in other settings as well (see 1 Chr 26:20; 2 Chr 24:5; 29:4-5). In the ancient Near East musicians often played for construction workers, but here they have more of a supervisory role. It is likely that these details addressed particular questions rising from controversies among the Levites in the post-exilic community. By appealing to this example, the Chronicler insisted that certain divisions of Levites were to have supervisory roles in temple service in his own day.