

## Adam Clarke:

## Introduction

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

## Verse 2

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

## 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, 2 Chronicles 28:6-8 (note).

## 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.

## 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.

## Verse 17

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

## 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."

## Verse 21

They brought seven bullocks, etc. - This was more than the law required; see Leviticus 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.

## 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.

## 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, Amos 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, Numbers 10:2 (note), etc., and the notes there.

#### 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.

#### 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.