

### Josiah's National Religious Reform (629t BC)

2 Kings 23:4–20

2 Chronicles 34:3b–7

4 And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven:

and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto Bethel.

5 And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven.

6 And he brought out the grove from the house of the LORD, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and stamped *it* small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people.

7 And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that *were* by the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the grove.

8 And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beersheba, and brake down the high places of the gates that *were* in the entering in of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which *were* on a man's left hand at the gate of the city.

9 Nevertheless the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren.

10 And he defiled Topheth, which *is* in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech.

11 And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathanmelech the chamberlain, which *was* in the suburbs, and burned the chariots of the sun with fire.

12 And the altars that *were* on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, did the king beat down, and brake *them* down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron.

13 And the high places that *were* before Jerusalem, which *were* on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile.

14 And he brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men.

15 Moreover the altar that *was* at Bethel, *and* the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, *and* stamped *it* small to powder, and

3b 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.

4 And they

brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence; and the images, that *were* on high above them, he cut down;

and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust *of them*, and strowed *it* upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them.

<p>burned the grove.  16 And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchers that <i>were</i> there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchers, and burned <i>them</i> upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words. [<a href="#">1 Kgs 13:1–3</a>]  17 Then he said, What title <i>is</i> that that I see? And the men of the city told him, <i>It is</i> the sepulcher of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Bethel.  18 And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria.  19 And all the houses also of the high places that <i>were</i> in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke <i>the LORD</i> to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Bethel.    20 And he slew all the priests of the high places that <i>were</i> there upon the altars, and burned men’s bones upon them,    and returned to Jerusalem.</p>	<p>6 And <i>so did he</i> in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, with their mattocks round about.  7a And when he had broken down the altars and the groves, and had beaten the graven images into powder, and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel,  5 And he  burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem.  7b he returned to Jerusalem.</p>
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### Josiah Orders Repairs to the Temple (Tishri [October] 623 – Nisan [April] 622 BC)

2 Kings 22:3–7	2 Chronicles 34:8–14
<p>3 And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah,  <i>that</i> the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe,    to the house of the LORD, saying,  4 Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may sum the silver which is brought into the house of the LORD, which the keepers of the door have gathered of the people:  5 And let them deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD: and let them give it to the doers of the work which <i>is</i> in the house of the LORD, to repair the breaches of the house,  6 Unto carpenters, and builders, and masons, and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house.  7 Howbeit there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand, because they dealt faithfully.</p>	<p>8 Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land, and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah,    and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God.    9 And when they came to Hilkiah the high priest, they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites that kept the doors had gathered of the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, and of all the remnant of Israel, and of all Judah and Benjamin; and they returned to Jerusalem.  10 And they put <i>it</i> in the hand of the workmen that had the oversight of the house of the LORD, and they gave it to the workmen that wrought in the house of the LORD, to repair and amend the house:  11 Even to the artificers and builders gave they <i>it</i>, to buy hewn</p>

	<p>stone, and timber for couplings, and to floor the houses which the kings of Judah had destroyed.</p> <p>12 And the men did the work faithfully: and the overseers of them <i>were</i> Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites, of the sons of Merari; and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to set <i>it</i> forward; and <i>other of</i> the Levites, all that could skill of instruments of music.</p> <p>13 Also <i>they were</i> over the bearers of burdens, and <i>were</i> overseers of all that wrought the work in any manner of service: and of the Levites <i>there were</i> scribes, and officers, and porters.</p> <p>14 And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiyah the priest found a book of the law of the LORD <i>given</i> by Moses.</p>
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### Hilkiyah the High Priest Discovers a Copy of the Torah (c. Nisan [April] 622 BC)

2 Kings 22:8–20	2 Chronicles 34:15–28
<p>8 And Hilkiyah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.</p> <p>9 And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said,</p> <p>Thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD.</p> <p>10 And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiyah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king.</p> <p>11 And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes.</p> <p>12 And the king commanded Hilkiyah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah a servant of the king's, saying,</p> <p>13 Go ye, enquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great <i>is</i> the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us.</p> <p>14 So Hilkiyah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they communed with her.</p> <p>15 And she said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me,</p> <p>16 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, <i>even</i> all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read: [cf. <a href="#">Deut 28:15–68</a>]</p> <p>17 Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched.</p> <p>18 But to the king of Judah which sent you to enquire of the</p>	<p>15 And Hilkiyah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiyah delivered the book to Shaphan.</p> <p>16 And Shaphan carried the book to the king, and brought the king word back again, saying, All that was committed to thy servants, they do <i>it</i>.</p> <p>17 And they have gathered together the money that was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers, and to the hand of the workmen.</p> <p>18 Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiyah the priest hath given me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king.</p> <p>19 And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes.</p> <p>20 And the king commanded Hilkiyah, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Abdon the son of Micah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king's, saying,</p> <p>21 Go, enquire of the LORD for me, and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found: for great <i>is</i> the wrath of the LORD that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do after all that is written in this book.</p> <p>22 And Hilkiyah, and <i>they</i> that the king <i>had appointed</i>, went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvath, the son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they spake to her to that <i>effect</i>.</p> <p>23 And she answered them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell ye the man that sent you to me,</p> <p>24 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, <i>even</i> all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah:</p> <p>25 Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be poured out upon this place, and shall not be quenched.</p> <p>26 And as for the king of Judah, who sent you to enquire of the</p>

<p>LORD, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, <i>As touching</i> the words which thou hast heard;  19 Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse,    and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me;  I also have heard <i>thee</i>, saith the LORD.  20 Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place.  And they brought the king word again.</p>	<p>LORD, so shall ye say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel <i>concerning</i> the words which thou hast heard;  27 Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof,    and humbledst thyself before me,  and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me;  I have even heard <i>thee</i> also, saith the LORD.  28 Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of the same.  So they brought the king word again.</p>
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*Scripture quotations are from The King James Version (KJV). The KJV is in the public domain.*

### **Chronological Notes**

- 1) The account of Josiah's religious reforms in Chronicles differs from that found in Kings. According to 2 Kings 22:3ff., the reform is a one-time, all-embracing event, which took place at Josiah's eighteenth year as a result of the discovery of the Book of the Law. In Chronicles, the reform is seen as a prolonged process, beginning in the eighth year of Josiah's reign, with the main phase of the purge of the land belonging to the twelfth year of his reign. These stages of the reform predated the finding of the Law and may be seen, along with Jeremiah's preaching, as its cause. The reform is concluded by the events of the eighteenth year: the renewing of the covenant and the celebration of the Passover.<sup>1</sup> My opinion at this time is that Kings contains a compressed account of Josiah's reforms and that Chronicles expands that account giving the hidden chronology. Thus I have re-ordered Kings and harmonized it with Chronicles.

<sup>1</sup> Sara Japhet, "I & II Chronicles," *The Old Testament Library*, pp. 1017-1018.