

Josiah's National Religious Reform (629t BC)

2 Kings 23:4–20

4 Then the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest and the priests of the second order and the doorkeepers, to bring out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven;

and he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel.

5 He did away with the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had appointed to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah and in the surrounding area of Jerusalem, also those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun and to the moon and to the constellations and to all the host of heaven.

6 He brought out the Asherah from the house of the LORD outside Jerusalem to the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and ground *it* to dust, and threw its dust on the graves of the common people.

7 He also broke down the houses of the *male* cult prostitutes which *were* in the house of the LORD, where the women were weaving hangings for the Asherah.

8 Then he brought all the priests from the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beersheba; and he broke down the high places of the gates which *were* at the entrance of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which *were* on one's left at the city gate.

9 Nevertheless the priests of the high places did not go up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they ate unleavened bread among their brothers.

10 He also defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire for Molech.

11 He did away with the horses which the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entrance of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-melech the official, which *was* in the precincts; and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire.

12 The altars which *were* on the roof, 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, the king broke down; and he smashed them there and threw their dust into the brook Kidron.

13 The high places which *were* before Jerusalem, which *were* on the right of the mount of destruction which Solomon the king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Milcom the abomination of the sons of Ammon, the king defiled.

14 He broke in pieces the *sacred* pillars and cut down the Asherim and filled their places with human bones.

15 Furthermore, the altar that *was* at Bethel *and* the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, had made, even that altar and the high place he broke down. Then he demolished its stones, ground them to dust, and burned the Asherah.

16 Now when Josiah turned, he saw the graves that *were* there

2 Chronicles 34:3b–7

3b and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the Asherim, the carved images and the molten images.

4 They

tore down the altars of the Baals in his presence, and the incense altars that were high above them he chopped down;

also the Asherim, the carved images and the molten images he broke in pieces and ground to powder and scattered *it* on the graves of those who had sacrificed to them.

on the mountain, and he sent and took the bones from the graves and burned *them* on the altar and defiled it according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these things. [[1 Kgs 13:1-3](#)]

17 Then he said, “What is this monument that I see?” And the men of the city told him, “It is the grave of the man of God who came from Judah and proclaimed these things which you have done against the altar of Bethel.”

18 He said, “Let him alone; let no one disturb his bones.” So they left his bones undisturbed with the bones of the prophet who came from Samaria.

19 Josiah also removed all the houses of the high places which *were* in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made provoking the LORD; and he did to them just as he had done in Bethel.

20 All the priests of the high places who *were* there he slaughtered on the altars and burned human bones on them;

then he returned to Jerusalem.

6 In the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon, even as far as Naphtali, in their surrounding ruins,
7a he also tore down the altars and beat the Asherim and the carved images into powder, and chopped down all the incense altars throughout the land of Israel.

5 Then he burned the bones of the priests on their altars and purged Judah and Jerusalem.

7b Then he returned to Jerusalem.

Josiah Orders Repairs to the Temple (Tishri [October] 623 – Nisan [April] 622 BC)

2 Kings 22:3-7

3 Now in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, 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 count the money brought in to the house of the LORD which the doorkeepers have gathered from the people.

5 Let them deliver it into the hand of the workmen who have the oversight of the house of the LORD, and let them give it to the workmen who are in the house of the LORD to repair the damages of the house,

6 to the carpenters and the builders and the masons and for buying timber and hewn stone to repair the house.

7 Only no accounting shall be made with them for the money delivered into their hands, for they deal faithfully.”

2 Chronicles 34:8-14

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 an official of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God.

9 They came to Hilkiah the high priest and delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites, the doorkeepers, had collected from Manasseh and Ephraim, and from all the remnant of Israel, and from all Judah and Benjamin and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

10 Then they gave *it* into the hands of the workmen who had the oversight of the house of the LORD, and the workmen who were working in the house of the LORD used it to restore and repair the house.

11 They in turn gave *it* to the carpenters and to the builders to buy quarried stone and timber for couplings and to make beams for the houses which the kings of Judah had let go to ruin.

	<p>12 The men did the work faithfully with foremen over them to supervise: Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites of the sons of Merari, Zechariah and Meshullam of the sons of the Kohathites, and the Levites, all who were skillful with musical instruments.</p> <p>13 <i>They were</i> also over the burden bearers, and supervised all the workmen from job to job; and <i>some</i> of the Levites <i>were</i> scribes and officials and gatekeepers.</p> <p>14 When they were bringing out the money which had been brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiyah the priest found the 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 Then Hilkiyah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD." And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan who read it.</p> <p>9 Shaphan the scribe came to the king and brought back word to the king and said, "Your servants have emptied out the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of the workmen who have the oversight of the house of the LORD."</p> <p>10 Moreover, Shaphan the scribe told the king saying, "Hilkiyah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it in the presence of the king.</p> <p>11 When the king heard the words of the book of the law, he tore his clothes.</p> <p>12 Then the king commanded Hilkiyah the priest, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Achbor the son of Micaiah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah the king's servant saying,</p> <p>13 "Go, inquire of the LORD for me and the people and all Judah concerning the words of this book that has been found, for great is the wrath of the LORD that burns against us, because our fathers have not listened to the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us."</p> <p>14 So Hilkiyah the priest, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe (now she lived in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter); and they spoke to her.</p> <p>15 She said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Tell the man who sent you to me,</p> <p>16 thus says the LORD, "Behold, I bring evil on this place and on its inhabitants, <i>even</i> all the words of the book which the king of Judah has read. [cf. Deut 28:15–68]</p> <p>17 Because they have forsaken Me and have burned incense to other gods that they might provoke Me to anger with all the work of their hands, therefore My wrath burns against this place, and it shall not be quenched.'"</p> <p>18 "But to the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus shall you say to him, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel, "<i>Regarding</i> the words which you have heard,</p> <p>19 because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants</p> <p>that they should become a desolation and a curse,</p>	<p>15 Hilkiyah responded and said to Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD." And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan.</p> <p>16 Then Shaphan brought the book to the king and reported further word to the king, saying, "Everything that was entrusted to your servants they are doing.</p> <p>17 "They have also emptied out the money which was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hands of the supervisors and the workmen."</p> <p>18 Moreover, Shaphan the scribe told the king saying, "Hilkiyah the priest gave me a book." And Shaphan read from it in the presence of the king.</p> <p>19 When the king heard the words of the law, he tore his clothes.</p> <p>20 Then the king commanded Hilkiyah, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Abdon the son of Micah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah the king's servant, saying,</p> <p>21 "Go, inquire of the LORD for me and for those who are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book which has been found; for great is the wrath of the LORD which is poured out on us because our fathers have not observed the word of the LORD, to do according to all that is written in this book."</p> <p>22 So Hilkiyah and <i>those</i> whom the king had told went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tokhath, the son of Hasrah, the keeper of the wardrobe (now she lived in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter); and they spoke to her regarding this.</p> <p>23 She said to them, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Tell the man who sent you to Me,</p> <p>24 thus says the LORD, "Behold, I am bringing evil on this place and on its inhabitants, <i>even</i> all the curses written in the book which they have read in the presence of the king of Judah.</p> <p>25 Because they have forsaken Me and have burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke Me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore My wrath will be poured out on this place and it shall not be quenched.'"</p> <p>26 "But to the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus you will say to him, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel <i>regarding</i> the words which you have heard,</p> <p>27 Because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before God when you heard His words against this place and against its inhabitants,</p>

<p>and you have torn your clothes and wept before Me, I truly have heard you," declares the LORD. 20 Therefore, behold, I will gather you to your fathers, and you will be gathered to your grave in peace, and your eyes will not see all the evil which I will bring on this place.""" So they brought back word to the king.</p>	<p>and <i>because</i> you humbled yourself before Me, tore your clothes and wept before Me, I truly have heard you," declares the LORD. 28 Behold, I will gather you to your fathers and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace, so your eyes will not see all the evil which I will bring on this place and on its inhabitants.""" And they brought back word to the king.</p>
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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.¹ My opinion at this time is that Kings contains a compressed account of Josiah's reforms and that Chronicles expands that account revealing the hidden chronology. Thus I have re-ordered Kings and harmonized it with Chronicles.

¹ Sara Japhet, "I & II Chronicles," *The Old Testament Library*, pp. 1017–1018.