



Sunday School Lesson
2 Kings 23:1-28
 by Lorin L. Cranford
 All rights reserved ©

Reforming a Nation



A copy of this lesson is posted in Adobe pdf format at
<http://cranfordville.com> under Bible Studies in the [Bible Study](#) section

A note about the [blue, underlined](#) material: These are hyperlinks that allow you to click them on and bring up the specified scripture passage automatically while working inside the pdf file connected to the internet. Just use your web browser's back arrow or the taskbar to return to the lesson material.

Quick Links to the Study

- I. Context*
- a. *Historical*
 - b. *Literary*

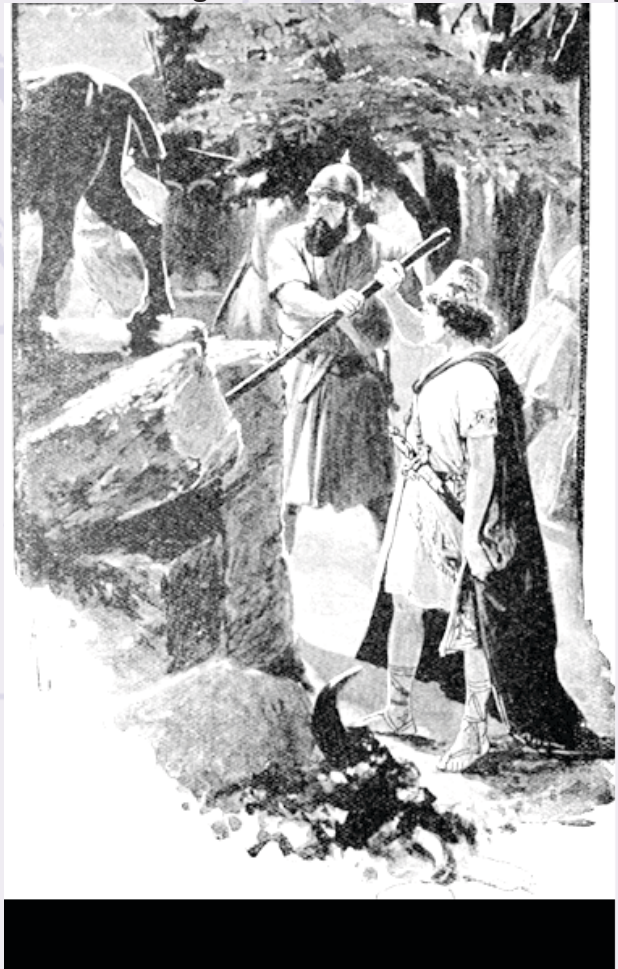
- II. Message*
- a. *The Book, vv. 1-3*
 - b. *The Reforms, vv. 4-25*
 - c. *God's Wrath, vv. 26-28*

How do you change a nation? Especially, change it religiously? Does it work today the same as it did in ancient Israel? Most Christians in the US today would say that our country desperately needs spiritual renewal and a return to the ways of God. The reforms of Josiah are the focus of 2 Kings 23. Do his methods of reforming ancient Judah set forth any kind of a model that we can use in our country today?

Here is where one has to follow well defined principles of Bible interpretation. Without such an approach, passages like ours can become the basis of distorted and outright dangerous interpretation. Clearly, the many details in Josiah's reforming methods would be illegal in the US and the violent aspects of executing large numbers of people without any legal procedure would bring severe legal punishment on any US leader attempting such methods. So how do we make legitimate application of passages like this to our day?

The time proven principles of historical - critical interpretive methods are the foundation of correct understanding of this text. They provide the only legitimate source for making solid, relevant application of the text to our day.

So the challenge of this Bible study is to carefully understand the text in its historical setting. Then we can find some possible applications and insights that will help us serve God better.



I. Context

Context here becomes particularly important for correct interpretation of the text. So we will give particular attention to these background issues. Much material will be drawn from previous studies in [2 Kings](#).

a. Historical

External History. The compositional history of 1 & 2 Kings is significant. In the early stages of the Hebrew Bible, 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings were one document. Only with the translation of the Hebrew text into Greek as the [Septuagint](#) (LXX) in 176 BCE was this one long document divided into four separate shorter documents. Thus the compositional history at its earliest stage includes the four documents of Samuel and Kings that came out of the single original Hebrew document.

This means tracing the development of the [Deuteronomic history](#) of the nation of Israel, since these four documents comprise the heart of that history, along with Joshua. The origins of this history lie hidden from certain understanding, but enough signals are present to point to the contours of this process of history writing, as is pointed out on the [MyJewishLearning](#) web site:

It seems clear that the nucleus of the Deuteronomic Code goes back to a time centuries earlier than Josiah, as it preserves many ancient laws and customs from the days before the monarchy and reflects traditions of the priesthood and cult center at Shechem. However, there are other portions that are clearly late, such as the call for centralization of worship in a single sanctuary, a principle of exclusiveness that is unlikely to predate the time of Hezekiah.

It is unclear whether these portions of the code were added by the Josianic editors or were already present in the code when it was found in 622 B.C.E. Since we are unable to identify the author or authors, we refer to the composer simply as the “Deuteronomist”. For the Judahites of Josiah’s day, the author was unquestionably Moses.

Josiah’s great reformation of Judah’s religious and national life is well-known and well-documented in the Bible (2 Kings. 22:3-23:25; 2 Chronicles 34:8-35:19). Included in this reform was the publication of a series of writings promoting the revival, no doubt royally-sanctioned texts, including the prophetic writings of Jeremiah and Zephaniah, who were loyal supporters of Josiah.

For the Deuteronomist, history is a cycle with a four fold prong: 1) the covenant people sin against



God; 2) He punishes them for their sin; 3) they repent of their sin; and 4) God forgives and restores them. Thus history is the history of God’s relationship to His covenant people Israel. And that relationship is defined by the Law of God around the fourfold pattern above.

The origins of this writing are less certain, as the [Wikipedia article](#) notes:

Martin Noth argued that there was an underlying unity in language and cultural content of the books from Deuteronomy to 2 Kings (Noth 1943). He presented the persona of “The Deuteronomist” as a single author who was using pre-Exilic material but was editing and writing in the age of Babylonian exile, the mid-sixth century BCE. The majority of scholars follow Noth’s opinion, that the Deuteronomist also wrote the Deuteronomistic history (Joshua, Judges,

1 & 2 Samuel, and 1 & 2 Kings). Some suggest that the same source may also have written the account of Jeremiah. Others suggest that “the Deuteronomist” is a close-knit group of Temple scholars rather than a sole individual.

It is thought that the Deuteronomic part of the Torah, and the Deuteronomistic history were originally composed as a single work, ever since the investigation of Martin Noth. Since Noth’s work, some scholars attribute two separate stages to the text, a first (referred to as Dtr1) and second (referred to as Dtr2) edition of the text, although most still consider that both editions were the result of the same author.

The actual identity of the Deuteronomist is less secure than the body of his editing work: scholars postulate that the author was Baruch (Neriyah’s son), Jeremiah’s scribe, or possibly Jeremiah, due to the similarities in style between Jeremiah, and the inclusion in Jeremiah of direct quotes of D, as well as the affiliation of Jeremiah to the Shiloh priests, the time period at which Jeremiah lived.

However the material came into its finalized form, it represents a very theological understanding of God’s relationship with Israel. The history underscores the central role of the Law of God to the life and welfare of ancient Israel.

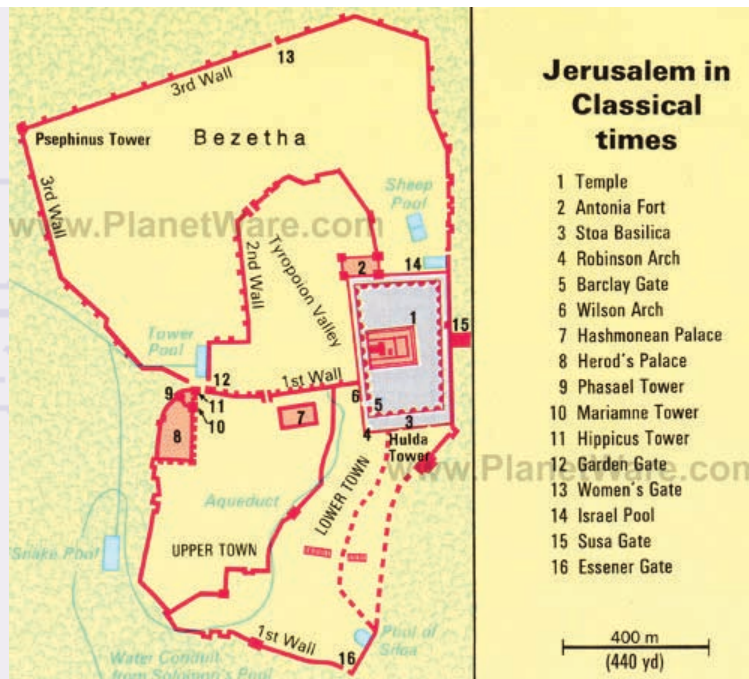
Internal History. The time and place markers, especially the latter, are numerous throughout the text. The time frame for this episode is the eighteen year of Josiah’s reign, that is, 622 BCE. This is es-

b. Literary

Genre. The basic literary form used in 2 Kings 23 is narrative. It was written in prose format as an episodic narrative. Also, to be noted is that the historical methodology is that of the Deuteronomic Historians, as discussed above under [External History](#). The literary implications of this is to underscore that the compilers of this narrative had a theological agenda they were promoting. Thus, the text must not be seen as a modern objectively written history of these events. Likewise the parallel account in 2 Chronicles 34:38-35:19, 26-27 must be viewed in the same way, since the Chronicler had a slightly different theological agenda in mind. Thus the differences between the two accounts.

Literary Setting. S. Szikszai (“Kings, I and II,” *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, iPreach) summarizes the broad setting in I and II Kings this way:

The contents of the books can be divided into three parts: (a) Solomon’s ascension to the throne and



established by the contextual reference in 22:3 which covers the time of the episode in chapter twenty three, as 23:23 makes clear.

The place markers focus on Jerusalem, then Judea, and ultimately to Samaria, the old northern kingdom. Very specific references in and around Jerusalem are given, and are not always identifiable today. Specific place markers will be discussed in the exegesis of the passage below.

his reign (I Kings 1:1-11); (b) the vicissitudes of the two kingdoms (I Kings 1:1; Kings 17:1); and (c) the surviving kingdom of Judah (II Kings 18:1-25).

The immediate context of the Josiah narrative is given by Szikszai as

The evil reigns of Manasseh (21:1-18) and his son, Amon (vss. 19-26), precede King Josiah, under whose reign the Book of the Law was found in the temple (ch. 22); after this discovery a reform was completed in accord with the regulations of the Book of the Law (23:1-25). Josiah’s untimely death at Megiddo (23:26-30) was the prelude to the short reign of Jehoahaz (vss. 31-35) and that of Jehoiakim (23:36-24:7).

The story of Josiah’s reign is told in chapters 22 and 23 of 2 Kings. Choon Leong Seow (1-2 Kings, *New Interpreter’s Bible*, iPreach) outlines the Josiah period as follows:

- C. 22:1–23:30, The Josianic Reformation
 - 22:1-2, Introduction to Josiah’s Reign
 - 22:3-11, Rediscovery of the Book of the Law
 - 22:12-20, A Prophetic Oracle
 - 23:1-25, Josiah’s Reforms**

23:26-30, The Failure of Josiah to Stem the Tide of Destruction

Clearly from the outline one can sense the pivotal role that the discovery of the book of the Law had on the reforms instituted by Josiah -- in the narrative of the Deuteronomist's view. All of Josiah's reforms stem from this discovery, and include the celebration of the Passover. The Chronicler has a different angle on the significance of these events, as is evidenced in the comments of Sara Japhet (1&2 Chronicles, *Old Testament Library*, iPreach):

As in many other cases, the Chronicler encapsulates his own story within the Deuteronomistic framework, thereby pointing to his source and the overall context; he structures his own narrative, however, along different paths — literary, chronological and theological. The broader lines of the synopsis may be sketched as follows:

- (a) 34.1–2 Introduction
cf. 2 Kings 22:1–2
- (b) 34.3–7 Josiah's eighth and twelfth years —
- (c) 34.8–33 The eighteenth year: repairs of the house, finding of the book, covenant and reform
cf. 2 Kings 22:3–23.23
- (d) 35.1–19 Passover**
cf. 2 Kings 23:24–27
- (e) 35.20–25 The battle of Megiddo and Josiah's death
- (f) 35.26–36.1 Conclusion
cf. 2 Kings 23:28–30
(including Josiah's death)

2. The restructuring of the Chronicler's story mainly affects the chronology and scope of Josiah's reform and its relationship to the celebration of the Passover. 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 'finding of the book'. In Chronicles, the reform is seen as a

prolonged process, beginning in the eighth year of the king'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 book and may have been seen as its cause. The reform is concluded by the events of the eighteenth year: the making of a covenant and the celebration of Passover.

This restructuring of the narrative also gives different weight to two rather secondary elements in the Deuteronomistic story, by placing them in a more prominent position in our narrative: the celebration of the Passover, and the circumstances of Josiah's death.

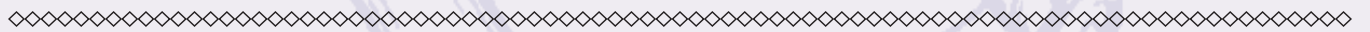
The Passover is narrated in Kings in three verses, mostly of an evaluative nature (2 Kings 23:21–23), while the story of Josiah's death is included as a note within the Deuteronomistic conclusion (2 Kings 23:29–30a); both are dealt with in Chronicles on their own, in much greater detail and elaboration (35.1–19; 20–25).

For the Chronicler the reforms began in the twelfth year of Josiah's, six years before the discovery of the book of the Law. But for the Deuteronomist, the reforms begin after the discovery of the Law in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign.

The major differences between Kings and Chronicles at this point is the detailed narratives about the reforms in their different contextual settings of after / before the discovery of the book of the Law. Additionally, the emphasis on the Passover celebration in Chronicles is significantly greater (35:1-19) than it is in Kings (23:21-23). This despite both indicating that their common source was the "Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah" (2 Kings 23:38) and the "Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah" (2 Chron. 35:27). Their different theological agendas are greatly highlighted by this.

II. Message

Literary Structure. The internal thought flow of the passage moves from (1) the reading of the book of the Law (now called the book of the covenant), vv. 1-3, to (2) the reforms instituted, vv. 4-25, to (3) God not turning away His wrath, vv. 26-28.



a. The Book, vv. 1-3

LXX	NASB	NRSV	NLT
<p>¹ καὶ ἀπέστειλεν ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ συνήγαγεν πρὸς ἑαυτὸν πάντας τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους Ἰουδα καὶ Ἱερουσαλὴμ ² καὶ ἀνέβη ὁ βασιλεὺς εἰς οἶκον κυρίου καὶ πᾶς ἀνὴρ Ἰουδα καὶ</p>	<p>1 Then the king sent, and they gathered to him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. 2 The king went up to the house of the LORD and all the men of Judah and all</p>	<p>1 Then the king directed that all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem should be gathered to him. 2 The king went up to the house of the Lord, and with him went</p>	<p>1 Then the king summoned all the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem. 2 And the king went up to the Temple of the LORD with all the people of Judah and Jerusalem, and the priests, and the</p>

πάντες οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐν Ἱερουσαλημ μετ' αὐτοῦ καὶ οἱ ἱερεῖς καὶ οἱ προφῆται καὶ πᾶς ὁ λαὸς ἀπὸ μικροῦ καὶ ἕως μεγάλου καὶ ἀνέγνω ἐν ὧσιν αὐτῶν πάντας τοὺς λόγους τοῦ βιβλίου τῆς διαθήκης τοῦ εὐρεθέντος ἐν οἴκῳ κυρίου.³ καὶ ἔστη ὁ βασιλεὺς πρὸς τὸν στῦλον καὶ διέθετο διαθήκην ἐνώπιον κυρίου τοῦ πορεύεσθαι ὀπίσω κυρίου καὶ τοῦ φυλάσσειν τὰς ἐντολάς αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ μαρτύρια αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ δικαιώματα αὐτοῦ ἐν πάσῃ καρδίᾳ καὶ ἐν πάσῃ ψυχῇ τοῦ ἀναστήσαι τοὺς λόγους τῆς διαθήκης ταύτης τὰ γεγραμμένα ἐπὶ τὸ βιβλίον τοῦτο καὶ ἔστη πᾶς ὁ λαὸς ἐν τῇ διαθήκῃ

Notes:

For the Deuteronomist the reforms of Josiah are based on the public reading of the scripture before the people. The Chronicler doesn't deny this but de-emphasizes it rather dramatically in his narrative found in [2 Chron. 34:29-33](#). He has already discussed the reforms and placed them prior to the discovery of the book of the Law ([2 Chron. 34:3-7](#)). For him the more important event was the celebration of the Passover ([2 Chron. 35:1-19](#)), which 2 Kings only mentions in passing (2 Kings 23:21-23).

A close comparison of the public reading of the scripture in both Kings and Chronicles is helpful:

2 Kings 23:1-3, NRSV

1 Then the king directed that all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem should be gathered to him. 2 The king went up to the house of the Lord, and with him went all the people of Judah, all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests, the prophets, and all the people, both small and great; he read in their hearing all the words of the book of the covenant that had

the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests and the prophets and all the people, both small and great; and he read in their hearing all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD. 3 The king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all *his* heart and all *his* soul, to carry out the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people entered into the covenant.

2 Chron. 34:29-32, NRSV

29 Then the king sent word and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. 30 The king went up to the house of the Lord, with all the people of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests and the Levites, all the people both great and small; he read in their hearing all the words of the book of the covenant that had been

all the people of Judah, all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests, the prophets, and all the people, both small and great; he read in their hearing all the words of the book of the covenant that had been found in the house of the Lord. 3 The king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the Lord, to follow the Lord, keeping his commandments, his decrees, and his statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. All the people joined in the covenant.

been found in the house of the Lord. 3 The king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the Lord, to follow the Lord, keeping his commandments, his decrees, and his statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. All the people joined in the covenant.

prophets – all the people from the least to the greatest. There the king read to them the entire Book of the Covenant that had been found in the LORD's Temple. 3 The king took his place of authority beside the pillar and renewed the covenant in the LORD's presence. He pledged to obey the LORD by keeping all his commands, regulations, and laws with all his heart and soul. In this way, he confirmed all the terms of the covenant that were written in the scroll, and all the people pledged themselves to the covenant.

found in the house of the Lord. 31 The king stood in his place and made a covenant before the Lord, to follow the Lord, keeping his commandments, his decrees, and his statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book. 32 Then he made all who were present in Jerusalem and in Benjamin pledge themselves to it. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem acted according to the covenant of God, the God of their ancestors.

The two narratives follow one another very closely, but diverge from each other at certain points.



The scene movements can be charted out as follows:

1. The king gathered the elders of Jerusalem

and Judah together. The Hebrew text indicates that Josiah sent out messengers to go to the homes of the leaders all over the land with instructions for them to come to Jerusalem and the temple for an important meeting: וַיִּשְׁלַח הַמֶּלֶךְ .

The significance of the “elders” is underscored in the *IVP Bible Background Commentary* (Logos Systems):

The elders (patriarchal family heads) played a major role in the early tribal organization of Israel and evidently still had a function during the monarchy. Elders had been given authority in their local communities and may still have played a limited role in the political leadership during the monarchy. City elders also played a limited role in preserving stability and enacting laws in their communities in Babylonia. However, they did not initiate policy, as the central monarchy controlled the power source of the state, the economy and the armed forces.

2. In solemn procession, the gathered people marched to the temple led by the king. The listing of the people in the group is virtually the same between the two accounts, except that Kings says “the priests, the prophets,” Chronicles states “the priests and the Levites.” Differing viewpoints over this variance between the two narratives exists. Possibly the Kings accounts reflects an enhanced role and standing for the prophets. But very likely the Kings reference to prophets should be understood as a functional designation of the Levites mentioned in Chronicles, as Keil and Delitzsch note,

“Instead of the prophets, the Levites are mentioned in the Chronicles, probably only because the Levites are mentioned along with the priests in other cases

of a similar kind.”

The emphasis is upon the all inclusiveness of the gathering of people. All the civil and religious leadership, along with the people, march to the temple for the program.

3. The king read in their presence all the words of the “book of the covenant.” What earlier was labeled the “book of the Law” (cf. 22:8) is now called the “book of the covenant.” The Hebrew word וַיִּקְרָא for “read” connotes reading that calls for response, rather than mere reading to gain information. Thus Josiah’s reading -- or perhaps his having the priests read it -- was intended to prompt a commitment from the audience to what was read.

The book of the Law, that is, segments from the present book of Deuteronomy, is now relabeled the book of the covenant as a way of emphasizing the nature of the divine regulations contained in it. Hobbs (*WBC*, Logos Systems) notes:

“book of the covenant.” Now a different term is used for the book found in the temple.

Although the terms תִּירַב “covenant” and הַרְוֹת “law” are not to be equated, in Deuteronomy they are closely related. The English translation of הַרְוֹת as “law” often confuses the issue.

4. The king set the example by pledging before the assembly to completely obey these words of scripture. He did this while he was standing “by the pillar,” although the Chronicler simply says he was standing “in his place” when he made this covenant with God. Again Hobbs (*WBC*) observes

“The king stands at a spot דֹמְעָה לְעַמּוּד ‘by the column’ in the temple signifying his authority. See the similar narrative in 11:14.”

The tone of the ceremony and the extent of his promise “with all his heart and all his soul” underscore the solemnity of the occasion.

5. The people follow his lead and make their pledge of loyalty. Kings simply declares that “All the people joined in the covenant.” But the Chronicler goes into greater detail with his depiction:

Then he made all who were present in Jerusalem and in Benjamin pledge themselves to it. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem acted according to the covenant of God, the God of their ances-



χοῦν αὐτῶν εἰς Βαιθηλ ⁵
καὶ κατέπαυσεν τοὺς χωμά-
ριμ οὓς ἔδωκαν βασιλεῖς
Ιουδα καὶ ἔθυμίων ἐν
τοῖς ὑψηλοῖς καὶ ἐν ταῖς
πόλεσιν Ιουδα καὶ τοῖς
περικύκλω Ιερουσαλημ
καὶ τοὺς θυμιῶντας τῷ
Βααλ καὶ τῷ ἡλίῳ καὶ τῇ
σελήνῃ καὶ τοῖς μαζουρωθ
καὶ πάσῃ τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ
οὐρανοῦ ⁶ καὶ ἐξήνεγκεν
τὸ ἄλλος ἐξ οἴκου κυρίου
ἕξωθεν Ιερουσαλημ εἰς
τὸν χειμάρρουν Κεδρων
καὶ κατέκαυσεν αὐτὸν ἐν
τῷ χειμάρρῳ Κεδρων καὶ
ἐλέπτυνεν εἰς χοῦν καὶ
ἔρριψεν τὸν χοῦν αὐτοῦ
εἰς τὸν τάφον τῶν υἱῶν
τοῦ λαοῦ ⁷ καὶ καθεῖλεν
τὸν οἶκον τῶν καδησιμ
τῶν ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ κυρίου
οὗ αἱ γυναῖκες ἕφαινον
ἐκεῖ χεττιν τῷ ἄλσει ⁸
καὶ ἀνήγαγεν πάντας τοὺς
ἱερεῖς ἐκ πόλεων Ιουδα
καὶ ἐμίανεν τὰ ὑψηλά οὗ
ἔθυμιάσαν ἐκεῖ οἱ ἱερεῖς
ἀπὸ Γαβαα καὶ ἕως Βηρσα-
βее καὶ καθεῖλεν τὸν οἶκον
τῶν πυλῶν τὸν παρὰ τὴν
θύραν τῆς πύλης Ιησου
ἄρχοντος τῆς πόλεως τῶν
ἐξ ἀριστερῶν ἀνδρὸς ἐν
τῇ πύλῃ τῆς πόλεως ⁹
πλὴν οὐκ ἀνέβησαν οἱ
ἱερεῖς τῶν ὑψηλῶν πρὸς
τὸ θυσιαστήριον κυρίου
ἐν Ιερουσαλημ ὅτι εἰ μὴ
ἕφαγον ἄζυμα ἐν μέσῳ
τῶν ἀδελφῶν αὐτῶν ¹⁰
καὶ ἐμίανεν τὸν Ταφεθ
τὸν ἐν φάραγγι υἱοῦ Εἴ-
νομ τοῦ διάγειν ἄνδρα
τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἄνδρα
τὴν θυγατέρα αὐτοῦ τῷ
Μολοχ ἐν πυρί ¹¹ καὶ
κατέπαυσεν τοὺς ἵππους
οὓς ἔδωκαν βασιλεῖς

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 Jerusa-
lem 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 plac-
es 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 Never-
theless 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

He deposed the idola-
trous priests whom the
kings of Judah had or-
dained to make offer-
ings in the high places
at the cities of Judah
and around Jerusalem;
those also who made
offerings to Baal, to the
sun, the moon, the con-
stellations, and all the
host of the heavens. 6
He brought out the im-
age of Asherah from
the house of the Lord,
outside Jerusalem, to
the Wadi Kidron, burned
it at the Wadi Kidron,
beat it to dust and threw
the dust of it upon the
graves of the common
people. 7 He broke down
the houses of the male
temple prostitutes that
were in the house of the
Lord, where the women
did weaving for Asher-
ah. 8 He brought all the
priests out of the towns
of Judah, and defiled
the high places where
the priests had made
offerings, from Geba to
Beer-sheba; he broke
down the high places of
the gates that were at
the entrance of the gate
of Joshua the governor
of the city, which were
on the left at the gate
of the city. 9 The priests
of the high places, how-
ever, did not come up to
the altar of the Lord in
Jerusalem, but ate un-
leavened bread among
their kindred. 10 He
defiled Topheth, which
is in the valley of Ben-
hinnom, so that no one
would make a son or a
daughter pass through

to Bethel. 5 He did away
with the pagan priests,
who had been appoint-
ed by the previous kings
of Judah, for they had
burned incense at the
pagan shrines through-
out Judah and even in
the vicinity of Jerusalem.
They had also offered
incense to Baal, and to
the sun, the moon, the
constellations, and to all
the forces of heaven. 6
The king removed the
Asherah pole from the
LORD's Temple and
took it outside Jerusa-
lem to the Kidron Val-
ley, where he burned
it. Then he ground the
pole to dust and threw
the dust in the public
cemetery. 7 He also tore
down the houses of the
shrine prostitutes that
were inside the Temple
of the LORD, where the
women wove coverings
for the Asherah pole. 8
Josiah brought back to
Jerusalem all the priests
of the LORD, who were
living in other towns of
Judah. He also defiled
all the pagan shrines,
where they had burned
incense, from Geba
to Beersheba. He de-
stroyed the shrines at
the entrance to the gate
of Joshua, the governor
of Jerusalem. This gate
was located to the left
of the city gate as one
enters the city. 9 The
priests who had served
at the pagan shrines
were not allowed to
serve at the LORD's
altar in Jerusalem, but
they were allowed to
eat unleavened bread
with the other priests. 10
Then the king defiled the
altar of Topheth in the

Ιουδα τῷ ἡλίῳ ἐν τῇ εἰσόδῳ οἴκου κυρίου εἰς τὸ γαζοφυλάκιον Ναθαν βασιλέως τοῦ εὐνούχου ἐν φαρουριμ καὶ τὸ ἄρμα τοῦ ἡλίου κατέκαυσε πυρὶ ¹² καὶ τὰ θυσιαστήρια τὰ ἐπὶ τοῦ δώματος τοῦ ὑπερώου Ἀχαζ ἃ ἐποίησαν βασιλεῖς Ιουδα καὶ τὰ θυσιαστήρια ἃ ἐποίησεν Μανασσης ἐν ταῖς δυσὶν αὐλαῖς οἴκου κυρίου καὶ καθεῖλεν ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ κατέσπασεν ἐκεῖθεν καὶ ἔρριψε τὸν χοῦν αὐτῶν εἰς τὸν χειμάρρουν Κεδρων ¹³ καὶ τὸν οἶκον τὸν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον Ἱερουσαλημ τὸν ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ ὄρους τοῦ Μοσοαθὸν ὠκοδόμησεν Σαλωμων βασιλεὺς Ἰσραηλ τῇ Ἀσάρτη προσοχθίσματι Σιδωνίων καὶ τῷ Χαμωσ προσοχθίσματι Μωαβ καὶ τῷ Μολχολ βδελύγματι υἱῶν Ἀμμων ἐμίανεν ὁ βασιλεὺς ¹⁴ καὶ συνέτριψε τὰς στήλας καὶ ἐξωλέθρευσε τὰ ἄλση καὶ ἐπλησεν τοὺς τόπους αὐτῶν ὀστέων ἀνθρώπων ¹⁵ καὶ γε τὸ θυσιαστήριον τὸ ἐν Βαίθηλ τὸ ὑψηλὸν ὃ ἐποίησεν Ἱεροβοαμ υἱὸς Ναβατ ὃς ἐξήμαρτεν τὸν Ἰσραηλ καὶ γε τὸ θυσιαστήριον ἐκέينو καὶ τὸ ὑψηλὸν κατέσπασεν καὶ συνέτριψε τοὺς λίθους αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐλέπτυνεν εἰς χοῦν καὶ κατέκαυσε τὸ ἄλσος ¹⁶ καὶ ἐξένευσε Ἰωσιας καὶ εἶδεν τοὺς τάφους τοὺς ὄντας ἐκεῖ ἐν τῇ πόλει καὶ ἀπέστειλεν καὶ ἔλαβεν τὰ ὀστᾶ ἐκ τῶν τάφων καὶ κατέκαυσε ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον καὶ

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,

fire as an offering to Molech. 11 He removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun, at the entrance to the house of the Lord, by the chamber of the eunuch Nathan-melech, which was in the precincts; then he burned the chariots of the sun with fire. 12 The altars on the roof of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars that Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the Lord, he pulled down from there and broke in pieces, and threw the rubble into the Wadi Kidron. 13 The king defiled the high places that were east of Jerusalem, to the south of the Mount of Destruction, which King Solomon of Israel had built for Astarte the abomination of the Sidonians, for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. 14 He broke the pillars in pieces, cut down the sacred poles, and covered the sites with human bones.

15 Moreover, the altar at Bethel, the high place erected by Jeroboam son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin — he pulled down that altar along with the high place. He burned the high place, crushing it to dust; he also burned the sacred pole. 16 As Josiah turned, he saw

valley of Ben-hinnom, so no one could ever again use it to sacrifice a son or daughter in the fire as an offering to Molech. 11 He removed from the entrance of the LORD's Temple the horse statues that the former kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun. They were near the quarters of Nathan-melech the eunuch, an officer of the court. The king also burned the chariots dedicated to the sun. 12 Josiah tore down the altars that the kings of Judah had built on the palace roof above the upper room of Ahaz. The king destroyed the altars that Manasseh had built in the two courtyards of the LORD's Temple. He smashed them to bits and scattered the pieces in the Kidron Valley. 13 The king also desecrated the pagan shrines east of Jerusalem and south of the Mount of Corruption, where King Solomon of Israel had built shrines for Ash-toreth, the detestable goddess of the Sidonians; and for Chemosh, the detestable god of the Moabites; and for Molech, F63 the detestable god of the Ammonites. 14 He smashed the sacred pillars and cut down the Asherah poles. Then he desecrated these places by scattering human bones over them.

15 The king also tore down the altar at Bethel, the pagan shrine that Jeroboam son of Nebat had made when he led Israel into sin. Josiah crushed the stones to

ἐμίανεν αὐτὸ κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου ὃ ἐλάλησεν ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ ἐστάναι Ιεροβοαμ ἐν τῇ ἑορτῇ ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον καὶ ἐπιστρέψας ἦρεν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν τάφον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ λαλήσαντος τοὺς λόγους τούτους ¹⁷ καὶ εἶπεν τί τὸ σκόπελον ἐκεῖ νο ὃ ἐγὼ ὀρῶ καὶ εἶπον αὐτῷ οἱ ἄνδρες τῆς πόλεως ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν ὁ ἐξεληλυθὼς ἐξ Ιουδα καὶ ἐπικαλεσάμενος τοὺς λόγους τούτους οὐς ἐπεκαλέσατο ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον Βαιθηλ ¹⁸ καὶ εἶπεν ἄφετε αὐτὸ ἀνὴρ μὴ κινησάτω τὰ ὀστέα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐρρύσθησαν τὰ ὀστέα αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῶν ὀστέων τοῦ προφήτου τοῦ ἦκοντος ἐκ Σαμαρείας ¹⁹ καὶ γε εἰς πάντας τοὺς οἴκους τῶν ὑψηλῶν τοὺς ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν Σαμαρείας οὓς ἐποίησαν βασιλεῖς Ἰδραηλ παροργίζειν κύριον ἀπέστησεν Ἰωσιας καὶ ἐποίησεν ἐν αὐτοῖς πάντα τὰ ἔργα ἃ ἐποίησεν ἐν Βαιθηλ ²⁰ καὶ ἐθυσίασεν πάντας τοὺς ἱερεῖς τῶν ὑψηλῶν τοὺς ὄντας ἐκεῖ ἐπὶ τῶν θυσιαστηρίων καὶ κατέκαυσεν τὰ ὀστέα τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐπ' αὐτά καὶ ἐπεστράφη εἰς Ἱερουσαλημ

²¹ καὶ ἐνετείλατο ὁ βασιλεὺς παντὶ τῷ λαῷ λέγων ποιήσατε τὸ πασχα τῷ κυρίῳ θεῷ ἡμῶν καθὼς γέγραπται ἐπὶ βιβλίου τῆς διαθήκης ταύτης ²² ὅτι οὐκ ἐγενήθη τὸ πασχα τοῦτο ἀφ' ἡμερῶν τῶν κριτῶν οἱ ἔκρινον τὸν

ground them to dust, and burned the Asherah. 16 Now when Josiah turned, he saw the graves that were there 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. 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.

21 Then the king commanded all the people saying, "Celebrate the Passover to the LORD your God as it is written in this book of the covenant." 22 Surely such a Passover had not

the tombs there on the mount; and he sent and took the bones out of the tombs, and burned them on the altar, and defiled it, according to the word of the Lord that the man of God proclaimed, when Jeroboam stood by the altar at the festival; he turned and looked up at the tomb of the man of God who had predicted these things. 17 Then he said, "What is that monument that I see?" The people of the city told him, "It is the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and predicted these things that you have done against the altar at Bethel." 18 He said, "Let him rest; let no one move his bones." So they left his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet who came out of Samaria. 19 Moreover, Josiah removed all the shrines of the high places that were in the towns of Samaria, which kings of Israel had made, provoking the Lord to anger; he did to them just as he had done at Bethel. 20 He slaughtered on the altars all the priests of the high places who were there, and burned human bones on them. Then he returned to Jerusalem.

21 The king commanded all the people, "Keep the passover to the Lord your God as prescribed in this book of the covenant." 22 No such passover had been

dust and burned the Asherah pole. 16 Then as Josiah was looking around, he noticed several tombs in the side of the hill. He ordered that the bones be brought out, and he burned them on the altar at Bethel to desecrate it. This happened just as the LORD had promised through the man of God as Jeroboam stood beside the altar at the festival. Then Josiah turned and looked up at the tomb of the man of God F64 who had predicted these things. 17 "What is that monument over there?" Josiah asked. And the people of the town told him, "It is the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and predicted the very things that you have just done to the altar at Bethel!" 18 Josiah replied, "Leave it alone. Don't disturb his bones." So they did not burn his bones or those of the old prophet from Samaria. 19 Then Josiah demolished all the buildings at the pagan shrines in the towns of Samaria, just as he had done at Bethel. They had been built by the various kings of Israel and had made the LORD very angry. 20 He executed the priests of the pagan shrines on their own altars, and he burned human bones on the altars to desecrate them. Finally, he returned to Jerusalem.

21 King Josiah then issued this order to all the people: "You must celebrate the Passover to the LORD your God,

Ἰσραὴλ καὶ πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας βασιλέων Ἰσραὴλ καὶ βασιλέων Ἰουδα ²³ ὅτι ἀλλ' ἢ τῷ ὀκτωκαιδεκάτῳ ἔτει τοῦ βασιλέως Ἰωσίας ἐγενήθη τὸ πασχα τῷ κυρίῳ ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ

²⁴ καὶ γὰρ τοὺς θελητὰς καὶ τοὺς γνωριστὰς καὶ τὰ θεραφίμ καὶ τὰ εἰδῶλα καὶ πάντα τὰ προσοχθίσματα τὰ γεγονότα ἐν γῆ Ἰουδα καὶ ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἐξῆρεν ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἰωσίας ἵνα στήσῃ τοὺς λόγους τοῦ νόμου τοὺς γεγραμμένους ἐπὶ τοῦ βιβλίου οὗ εὑρεν Χελκίας ὁ ἱερεὺς ἐν οἴκῳ κυρίου ²⁵ ὅμοιος αὐτῷ οὐκ ἐγενήθη ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ βασιλεὺς ὃς ἐπέστρεψεν πρὸς κύριον ἐν ὅλῃ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ ψυχῇ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ ἰσχύϊ αὐτοῦ κατὰ πάντα τὸν νόμον Μωυσῆ καὶ μετ' αὐτὸν οὐκ ἀνέστη ὅμοιος αὐτῷ

been celebrated from the days of the judges who judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel and of the kings of Judah. 23 But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, this Passover was observed to the LORD in Jerusalem.

24 Moreover, Josiah removed the mediums and the spiritists and the teraphim and the idols and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might confirm the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD. 25 Before him there was no king like him who turned to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him.

kept since the days of the judges who judged Israel, even during all the days of the kings of Israel and of the kings of Judah; 23 but in the eighteenth year of King Josiah this passover was kept to the Lord in Jerusalem.

24 Moreover Josiah put away the mediums, wizards, teraphim, idols, and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, so that he established the words of the law that were written in the book that the priest Hilkiah had found in the house of the Lord. 25 Before him there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him.

as it is written in the Book of the Covenant.” 22 There had not been a Passover celebration like that since the time when the judges ruled in Israel, throughout all the years of the kings of Israel and Judah. 23 This Passover was celebrated to the LORD in Jerusalem during the eighteenth year of King Josiah’s reign.

24 Josiah also exterminated the mediums and psychics, the household gods, and every other kind of idol worship, both in Jerusalem and throughout the land of Judah. He did this in obedience to all the laws written in the scroll that Hilkiah the priest had found in the LORD’s Temple. 25 Never before had there been a king like Josiah, who turned to the LORD with all his heart and soul and strength, obeying all the laws of Moses. And there has never been a king like him since.

Notes:

This next section moves from the renewal ceremony to depict the instituting of sweeping reforms that King Josiah made across the entire country and even into the former northern kingdom. This very detailed portrayal is merely alluded to in [2 Chron. 34:33](#)

Josiah took away all the abominations from all the territory that belonged to the people of Israel, and made all who were in Israel worship the Lord their God. All his days they did not turn away from following the Lord the God of their ancestors.

The extensive reforms of Josiah are cast prior to the discovery of the law and beginning in Josiah’s twelfth year of reign before the law discovery in his eighteenth year. These are described in similar language to the above material in 2 Kings at [2 Chron. 34:3-7](#).

3 For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still a boy, he began to seek the God of his ancestor David, and in the twelfth year he began

to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the sacred poles, and the carved and the cast images. 4 In his presence they pulled down the altars of the Baals; he demolished the incense altars that stood above them. He broke down the sacred poles and the carved and the cast images; he made dust of them and scattered it over the graves of those who had sacrificed to them. 5 He also burned the bones of the priests on their altars, and purged Judah and Jerusalem. 6 In the towns of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, and as far as Naphtali, in their ruins all around, 7 he broke down the altars, beat the sacred poles and the images into powder, and demolished all the incense altars throughout all the land of Israel. Then he returned to Jerusalem.

Thus the Deuteronomist and the Chronicler do not disagree about whether or not Josiah instituted massive reforms in the country. Instead, their disagree-

ment centers over the relationship of the reforms to the discovery of the book of the law in the eighteenth year of his reign.

What exactly were the reforms that Josiah implemented? The description expands from Jerusalem to Judah and then north to Bethel in the old northern kingdom. House (NAC, Logos Systems) summarizes them this way:

23:4-14. Because of their renewed dedication to the Lord, the king and people remove non-Yahwistic worship sites and implements, first from Judah, then from the old Israelite territory.¹¹⁰⁶ N. Lohfink notes that ten separate items/issues are dealt with here.²¹⁰⁷

First, Josiah orders the priests to remove from the temple all cultic vessels used in worship of other gods. When they complete the task, the king burns them all. **Second,** “he causes to cease”³¹⁰⁸ the “pagan priests” who staff the high places where the people worship idols. These individuals may have existed with royal approval

since Solomonic times (cf. 1 Kgs 11:1-8). **Third,** he burns the Asherah pole Manasseh placed in the temple. Fourth, Josiah demolishes the living quarters of “male shrine prostitutes,” literally, “the separate ones” (*haqqēdēšîm*) where materials for Asherah are also made. Since the text mentions both males and females, perhaps all these individuals engage in sacred prostitution, a common element in Baalism.

Next, the narrative recounts Josiah’s efforts outside the temple area. Thus, his **fifth** act is to desecrate high places “from Geba to Beersheba,” Judah’s northern and southern boundaries.⁴¹⁰⁹ **Sixth,**



he demolishes shrines in the city gates.⁵¹¹⁰ **Seventh,** he defiles Topheth, where child sacrifices had been made in honor of Molech.⁶¹¹¹

The three remaining actions occur near the temple and just outside the city. Josiah’s **eighth** reform is to take ornamental horses “dedicated to the sun” from the temple entrance.⁷¹¹² **Ninth,** altars on roofs, probably set aside for worship of astral deities (cf. 20:11; 21:3-5; Zeph 1:5), are removed. **Tenth,** Josiah desecrates, then smashes, the high places Solomon built for his wives. With this last act Josiah rolls back the clock, so to speak, to preidolatry Jerusalem, to the glory days of David when images

were not welcome in the capital city of the Lord’s people. Monotheism is once again at least the official theology, whether or not the people in fact embrace what is, to them, a novel concept.

23:15-20 With Judah cleansed, Josiah moves north to Bethel, which had served as one of the major worship centers in Jeroboam’s maverick cult (cf. 1 Kgs 12:25-13:5). He treats this place like the nonseparatist

Yahwistic cultic shrines in Judah, thereby reclaiming all the promised land for the worship of the Lord. Again the author emphasizes restoration. Both parts of the divided kingdom are reunited spiritually, if not politically. Both sections of the land return to fidelity to the Lord and to an emphasis on worship at a central sanctuary.

In the midst of the Bethel cleansing, Josiah removes bones from priestly graves (2 Chr 34:5) and burns them on the altar to defile it. This desecration fulfills the prophecy made by the unnamed prophet of 1 Kings 13 (cf. 1 Kgs 13:1-13) who lived during

¹¹⁰⁶ For a study of one site Josiah destroys, consult Y. Yadin, “Beer-sheba: The High Place Destroyed by King Josiah,” *BASOR* 222 (1976) 5-17.

²¹⁰⁷ N. Lohfink, “The Cult Reform of Josiah of Judah: 2 Kings 22-23 as a Source for the History of Israelite Religion,” in *Ancient Israelite Religion*, ed. P. D. Miller, P. D. Hanson, and S. D. McBride (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 465.

³¹⁰⁸ This is the literal translation of the verb form (a *hiphil*

of תָּבַשׁ).

⁴¹⁰⁹ Wiseman, *1 and 2 Kings*, 302.

⁵¹¹⁰ Patterson and Austel explain that while priests who had served at the high places were “admitted to the fellowship,” they were not allowed to “officiate in the temple services” (“1, 2 Kings,” 4:286).

⁶¹¹¹ Contra some scholars who believe the text refers to an initiation rite, not actual human sacrifice. Cf. Jones, *1 and 2 Kings*, 2:622, for a discussion of these opposing viewpoints.

⁷¹¹² Wiseman cites “models of horses, some with solar disks on their forehead, found east of Ophel and at Hazor and other sites” (*1 & 2 Kings*, 302-3).

Jeroboam I's reign (ca. 930–909 B.C.). Three centuries have passed, but God's word comes true because it cannot fail. This episode is but the latest example of the author's emphasis on the truthfulness of the prophetic utterances.

Josiah's defiling of northern altars continues with a purging of "all the shrines at the high places that the kings of Israel had built in the towns of Samaria that had provoked the LORD to anger." Part of this purging is the slaying of the priests who facilitate worship in those places. Gray concludes that this account is a "late elaboration" added to the text, since the killings constitute "an enormity which would have reflected no credit to Josiah."⁸¹¹³ One could wonder why they needed to be killed or why they are killed and Judah's priests are not (cf. 2 Kgs 23:8–9). Keil suggests that the punishment's severity results not only because the northern priests are not Levites, "but chiefly from the fact that they were really idolatrous priests."⁹¹¹⁴ In other words, the Judahite priests may have corrupted worship of Yahweh yet not have led in veneration of other gods, while the northern priests may have been polytheists or syncretists. Thus, Josiah does not just use geographical boundaries to determine who will live and who will die.

Still, why inflict the death penalty? The answer may lie in Josiah's interpretation of the Book of the Law. Deuteronomy 13:6–11 and 18:20 counsel Israel to put to death prophets who teach people to follow other gods, an admonition Elijah follows in 1 Kgs 18:40. Perhaps Josiah applies this principle to the priests here because of the seriousness of the consequences of idolatry for the nation (cf. Deut 28:15–68). On the other hand, he may follow the more general command in Exod 22:20. Whatever his motivation, and the author does not pass *direct* judgment on them, the effect of the purge remains clear. All the territory of Israel has been reclaimed for the covenant God. The national part of the spiritual agreement has been kept.¹⁰¹¹⁵...

23:24–25. One last reform remains. Josiah rids the land of "mediums and spiritists," individuals skilled in "the art of alleged communication with the dead. This was, to judge from the condemnatory passages, a common problem in Israel (cf. Lev 19:31; 20:27; Deut 18:11)."¹¹¹²¹ He also expunges idols "used in

the practice of divination."¹²¹²² These actions remove not merely idolators but those who, because of their divination practices, compete with true prophets. The way is now clear for God's Word to flow directly to the people.

Josiah's reason for undertaking these reforms serves as his legacy to all readers of the text. He changes Judah "to fulfill the requirements of the law written in the book," a book that is synonymous with "the Law of Moses." Thus, he provides an example of what Davidic kings should do as the leaders of the Lord's people. He demonstrates proper motivation, proper sensitivity to God's Word, and proper obedience to the Lord.

Tucked away in the depiction is the observance of the Passover, vv. 21–23. In short summary fashion the Deuteronomist depicts what the Chronicler describes in great detail (cf. [2 Chron. 35:1–19](#)). Most significant is the importance attached to the celebration by both writers:

2 Kings 24:22

No such passover had been kept since the days of the judges who judged Israel, even during all the days of the kings of Israel and of the kings of Judah;

2 Chron. 35:18

No passover like it had been kept in Israel since the days of the prophet Samuel; none of the kings of Israel had kept such a passover as was kept by Josiah, by the priests and the Levites, by all Judah and Israel who were present, and by the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

For both historians what Josiah did was monumental in the history of the Israelite people. The different emphasis between the two is secondary. For the Deuteronomist the Passover was the outgrowth and a part of the reform effort by the king. But for the Chronicler, the Passover was the pivotal, direct consequence of the covenant renewal ceremony.

What connection do these reforms have to us today? Actually, very little. Josiah's arbitrary destruc-



⁸¹¹³ Gray, *1 and 2 Kings*, 673.

⁹¹¹⁴ Keil, "I and II Kings," 490.

¹⁰¹¹⁵ This last point is crucial for applying this text to today's world. Those parts of the OT that apply only to Israel's context cannot be repeated today.

¹¹¹²¹ Honeycutt, "2 Kings," 289.

¹²¹²² Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 338.

tion of the non-Yahweh oriented shrines would be illegal today. And certainly his execution of the priests etc. would be condemned by our court system. Did these reforms last in Judah? The observation of the Chronicler is important: “All his days they did not turn away from following the Lord the God of their ancestors.” The reforms lasted only while the king was alive

to enforce them. Once he was dead, his reforms quickly evaporated. Here is perhaps the lesson to be learned. Lasting spiritual renewal must come from within and must profoundly transform individuals and society in general. If imposed from without, spiritual reforms never last and do not really change people.

c. God's Wrath, vv. 26-28

NASB

LXX

26 πλὴν οὐκ ἀπεστράφη κύριος ἀπὸ θυμοῦ ὀργῆς αὐτοῦ τοῦ μεγάλου οὐ ἐθυμώθη ὀργὴ αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ Ιουδα ἐπὶ τοὺς παροργισμοὺς οὓς παρώργισεν αὐτὸν Μανασσης 27 καὶ εἶπεν κύριος καὶ γε τὸν Ιουδαν ἀποστήσω ἀπὸ τοῦ προσώπου μου καθὼς ἀπέστησα τὸν Ἰσραηλ καὶ ἀπόσωμαι τὴν πόλιν ταύτην ἣν ἐξελεξάμην τὴν Ἱερουσαλημ καὶ τὸν οἶκον οὗ εἶπον ἔσται τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐκεῖ 28 καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ τῶν λόγων Ἰωσίου καὶ πάντα ὅσα ἐποίησεν οὐχὶ ταῦτα γεγραμμένα ἐπὶ βιβλίῳ λόγων τῶν ἡμερῶν τοῖς βασιλεῦσιν Ιουδα

26 However, the LORD did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath with which His anger burned against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him. 27 The LORD said, “I will remove Judah also from My sight, as I have removed Israel. And I will cast off Jerusalem, this city which I have chosen, and the temple of which I said, ‘My name shall be there.’” 28 Now the rest of the acts of Josiah and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?

NRSV

26 Still the Lord did not turn from the fierceness of his great wrath, by which his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked him. 27 The Lord said, “I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel; and I will reject this city that I have chosen, Jerusalem, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there.” 28 Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah?

NLT

26 Even so, the LORD’s anger burned against Judah because of all the great evils of King Manasseh, and he did not hold back his fierce anger from them. 27 For the LORD had said, “I will destroy Judah just as I have destroyed Israel. I will banish the people from my presence and reject my chosen city of Jerusalem and the Temple where my name was to be honored.” 28 The rest of the events in Josiah’s reign and all his deeds are recorded in The Book of the History of the Kings of Judah.

Notes:

The Deuteronomist is careful to note that these reforms did not convince God to change His plan of destroying the [southern kingdom](#). The blame for the problem is laid on King Manasseh (686-642 BCE), who is generally labeled the worst king of Judah. The Chronicler completely omits this emphasis in his narrative.

Both the Deuteronomist and the Chronicler indicate their use of possible common sources of information for their narratives. The Deuteronomist calls it the “[Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah](#)” (v. 28), while the Chronicler identifies it as the “[Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah](#)” (2 Chron. 35:27). The precise identify of these materials is difficult since they did not survive the passing of time, but C.F. Kraft (“Books referred to,” *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, iPreach) remarks:

The “[Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah](#),” containing the “rest of the acts of” Rehoboam

(I Kings 14:29), Abijam (15:7), Asa, his might and the cities he built (15:23), Jehoshaphat, his might and how he warred (22:45), Joram II Kings 8:23), Joash (12:19), Amaziah (14:18), Azariah (15:6), Jotham (15:36), Ahaz (16:19), Hezekiah, his might and how he made the pool and the conduit and brought water into the city (20:20), Manasseh and his sin (21:17), Amon (21:25), Josiah (23:28), and Jehoiakim (24:5). This book, mentioned fifteen times, was for the S kingdom similar to d above. Before Josiah only Ahaziah and the usurper Athaliah are not mentioned as referred to in this source; after him only one of the four remaining kings--viz., Jehoiakim--is mentioned.

I and II Chronicles refer to several presumably authentic historians’ source books: the “[Book of the Kings of Israel](#)” (I Chr. 9:1; II Chr. 20:34); the “[Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah](#)” II Chr. 27:7; 35:27; 36:8); the “[Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel](#)” II Chr. 16:11; 25:26; 28:26; 32:32); and the “[Commentary \[or Midrash\] on the Book of the Kings](#)” II Chr. 24:27).

These were obviously not our canonical I and II Kings, but whether they were the same as or similar to d and e above used by the editors of I and II Kings, or whether they were authentic documents based on court record, is not known.

What is most fascinating is how the compilers made use of these sources. Obviously from their own remarks they were very selective in what they used. And they drew upon these records in order to tell the story from their own distinctive theological angle.

Some awareness of this is helpful to remind us to not take these accounts as reflecting modern scientifically based historiography. Also, it focuses our attention on each writer's religious angle, which is where the timeless truths exist that have relevancy

for the people, the reforms were only skin-deep and were unconvincing to God that they had genuinely turned to Him and away from the idolatrous practices that plagued the country. Their immediately turning back into this cesspool of corrupt religion after Josiah's death bears out God's refusal to change His mind about their destruction.

One clear implication of these material is as a warning of how pervasively corrupt religion can become in a society. The murky picture of astounding religious practices described in vv. 4-25 is shocking. Corrupt religion breeds immorality and ultimately the destruction of society. That dynamic remains as true today as it was in the time of Josiah.



to us today, just as for the first readers during the Exilic era and beyond.

What do verses 26-28 have to do with us? In a limited way they remind us that spiritual awakening must go deeper than the surface for it to be real and to be convincing to God. For Josiah, it was real and thus God sparred him having to endure the destruction of Jerusalem, the temple, and his nation. But

We must not ever forget that at some point God's patience runs short with our waywardness. One makes a fatal mistake in taking God's love and grace as weakness and thus freedom to continue on sinning and rebelling against God and His demands. God's wrath is real and certain on the sinner. That is just as true today as it was then.

LXX

¹ καὶ ἀπέστειλεν ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ συνήγαγεν πρὸς ἑαυτὸν πάντας τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους Ἰουδα καὶ Ἱερουσαλημ ² καὶ ἀνέβη ὁ βασιλεὺς εἰς οἶκον κυρίου καὶ πᾶς ἀνὴρ Ἰουδα καὶ πάντες οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐν Ἱερουσαλημ μετ' αὐτοῦ καὶ οἱ ἱερεῖς καὶ οἱ προφῆται καὶ πᾶς ὁ λαὸς ἀπὸ μικροῦ καὶ ἕως μεγάλου καὶ ἀνέγνω ἐν ὧσιν αὐτῶν πάντας τοὺς λόγους τοῦ βιβλίου τῆς διαθήκης τοῦ εὐρεθέντος ἐν οἴκῳ κυρίου ³ καὶ ἔστη ὁ βασιλεὺς πρὸς τὸν στῦλον καὶ διέθετο διαθήκην ἐνώπιον κυρίου τοῦ πορεύεσθαι ὀπίσω κυρίου καὶ τοῦ φυλάσσειν τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ μαρτύρια αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ δικαιώματα αὐτοῦ ἐν πάσῃ καρδίᾳ καὶ ἐν πάσῃ ψυχῇ τοῦ ἀναστήσαι τοὺς λόγους τῆς διαθήκης ταύτης τὰ γεγραμμένα ἐπὶ τὸ βιβλίον τοῦτο καὶ ἔστη πᾶς ὁ λαὸς ἐν τῇ διαθήκῃ ⁴ καὶ ἐνετείλατο ὁ βασιλεὺς τῷ Χελκία τῷ ἱερεὶ τῷ μεγάλῳ καὶ τοῖς ἱερεῦσιν τῆς δευτερώσεως καὶ τοῖς φυλάσσουσιν τὸν σταθμὸν τοῦ ἐξαγαγεῖν ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ κυρίου πάντα τὰ σκεύη τὰ πεποιημένα τῷ Βααλ καὶ τῷ ἄλσει καὶ πάσῃ τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ κατέκαυσεν αὐτὰ ἕξω Ἱερουσαλημ ἐν σαδημῶθ Κεδρων καὶ ἔλαβεν τὸν χοῦν αὐτῶν εἰς Βαιθηλ ⁵ καὶ κατέπαυσεν τοὺς χωμαθίμους οὓς ἔδωκαν βασιλεῖς Ἰουδα καὶ ἔθυμίων ἐν τοῖς ὑψηλοῖς καὶ ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν Ἰουδα καὶ τοῖς

NASB

1 Then the king sent, and they gathered to him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. 2 The king went up to the house of the LORD and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests and the prophets and all the people, both small and great; and he read in their hearing all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD. 3 The king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all *his* heart and all *his* soul, to carry out the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people entered into the covenant. 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

NRSV

1 Then the king directed that all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem should be gathered to him. 2 The king went up to the house of the Lord, and with him went all the people of Judah, all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests, the prophets, and all the people, both small and great; he read in their hearing all the words of the book of the covenant that had been found in the house of the Lord. 3 The king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the Lord, to follow the Lord, keeping his commandments, his decrees, and his statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. All the people joined in the covenant. 4 The king commanded the high priest Hilkiah, the priests of the second order, and the guardians of the threshold, to bring out of the temple of the Lord all the vessels made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven; he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel. 5 He deposed the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had ordained to make offerings in the high places at the cities of Judah and around Jerusalem; those also who

NLT

1 Then the king summoned all the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem. 2 And the king went up to the Temple of the LORD with all the people of Judah and Jerusalem, and the priests, and the prophets – all the people from the least to the greatest. There the king read to them the entire Book of the Covenant that had been found in the LORD's Temple. 3 The king took his place of authority beside the pillar and renewed the covenant in the LORD's presence. He pledged to obey the LORD by keeping all his commands, regulations, and laws with all his heart and soul. In this way, he confirmed all the terms of the covenant that were written in the scroll, and all the people pledged themselves to the covenant. 4 Then the king instructed Hilkiah the high priest and the leading priests and the Temple gatekeepers to remove from the LORD's Temple all the utensils that were used to worship Baal, Asherah, and all the forces of heaven. The king had all these things burned outside Jerusalem on the terraces of the Kidron Valley, and he carried the ashes away to Bethel. 5 He did away with the pagan priests, who had been appointed by the previous kings of Judah, for they had burned incense at the pagan shrines throughout Judah and even in the vicinity of Jerusalem.

περικύκλω Ιερουσαλημ καὶ τοὺς θυμιῶντας τῷ Βααλ καὶ τῷ ἡλίῳ καὶ τῇ σελήνῃ καὶ τοῖς μαζουρωθ καὶ πάσῃ τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ⁶ καὶ ἐξήνεγκεν τὸ ἄλσος ἐξ οἴκου κυρίου ἕξωθεν Ιερουσαλημ εἰς τὸν χειμάρρουν Κεδρων καὶ κατέκαυσεν αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ χειμάρρῳ Κεδρων καὶ ἐλέπτυνεν εἰς χοῦν καὶ ἔρριψεν τὸν χοῦν αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν τάφον τῶν υἰῶν τοῦ λαοῦ ⁷ καὶ καθεῖλεν τὸν οἶκον τῶν καδησιμ τῶν ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ κυρίου οὗ αἱ γυναῖκες ὑφαίνον ἐκεῖ χεττιν τῷ ἄλσει ⁸ καὶ ἀνήγαγεν πάντας τοὺς ἱερεῖς ἐκ πόλεων Ιουδα καὶ ἐμίανεν τὰ ὑψηλά οὗ ἐθυμίασαν ἐκεῖ οἱ ἱερεῖς ἀπὸ Γαβαα καὶ ἕως Βηρσαβεε καὶ καθεῖλεν τὸν οἶκον τῶν πυλῶν τὸν παρὰ τὴν θύραν τῆς πύλης Ἰησου ἄρχοντος τῆς πόλεως τῶν ἐξ ἀριστερῶν ἀνδρὸς ἐν τῇ πύλῃ τῆς πόλεως ⁹ πλὴν οὐκ ἀνέβησαν οἱ ἱερεῖς τῶν ὑψηλῶν πρὸς τὸ θυσιαστήριον κυρίου ἐν Ιερουσαλημ ὅτι εἰ μὴ ἔφαγον ἄζυμα ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ἀδελφῶν αὐτῶν ¹⁰ καὶ ἐμίανεν τὸν Ταφεθ τὸν ἐν φάραγγι υἱοῦ Εἵνομο τοῦ διάγειν ἄνδρα τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἄνδρα τὴν θυγατέρα αὐτοῦ τῷ Μολοχ ἐν πυρὶ ¹¹ καὶ κατέπαυσεν τοὺς ἵππους οὓς ἔδωκαν βασιλεῖς Ιουδα τῷ ἡλίῳ ἐν τῇ εἰσόδῳ οἴκου κυρίου εἰς τὸ γαζοφυλάκιον Ναθαν βασιλέως τοῦ εὐνούχου ἐν φαρουριμ καὶ τὸ ἄρμα τοῦ ἡλίου κατέκαυσεν πυρὶ

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

made offerings to Baal, to the sun, the moon, the constellations, and all the host of the heavens. 6 He brought out the image of Asherah from the house of the Lord, outside Jerusalem, to the Wadi Kidron, burned it at the Wadi Kidron, beat it to dust and threw the dust of it upon the graves of the common people. 7 He broke down the houses of the male temple prostitutes that were in the house of the Lord, where the women did weaving for Asherah. 8 He brought all the priests out of the towns of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had made offerings, from Geba to Beer-sheba; he broke down the high places of the gates that were at the entrance of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which were on the left at the gate of the city. 9 The priests of the high places, however, did not come up to the altar of the Lord in Jerusalem, but ate unleavened bread among their kindred. 10 He defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of Ben-hinnom, so that no one would make a son or a daughter pass through fire as an offering to Molech. 11 He removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun, at the entrance to the house of the Lord, by the cham-

They had also offered incense to Baal, and to the sun, the moon, the constellations, and to all the forces of heaven. 6 The king removed the Asherah pole from the LORD's Temple and took it outside Jerusalem to the Kidron Valley, where he burned it. Then he ground the pole to dust and threw the dust in the public cemetery. 7 He also tore down the houses of the shrine prostitutes that were inside the Temple of the LORD, where the women wove coverings for the Asherah pole. 8 Josiah brought back to Jerusalem all the priests of the LORD, who were living in other towns of Judah. He also defiled all the pagan shrines, where they had burned incense, from Geba to Beersheba. He destroyed the shrines at the entrance to the gate of Joshua, the governor of Jerusalem. This gate was located to the left of the city gate as one enters the city. 9 The priests who had served at the pagan shrines were not allowed to serve at the LORD's altar in Jerusalem, but they were allowed to eat unleavened bread with the other priests. 10 Then the king defiled the altar of Topheth in the valley of Ben-hinnom, so no one could ever again use it to sacrifice a son or daughter in the fire F62 as an offering to Molech. 11 He removed from the entrance of the LORD's Temple the horse statues that the

¹² καὶ τὰ θυσιαστήρια τὰ ἐπὶ τοῦ δώματος τοῦ ὑπερώου Ἀχαζ ἃ ἐποίησαν βασιλεῖς Ἰουδα καὶ τὰ θυσιαστήρια ἃ ἐποίησεν Μανασσῆς ἐν ταῖς δυσὶν αὐλαῖς οἴκου κυρίου καὶ καθεῖλεν ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ κατέσπασεν ἐκεῖθεν καὶ ἔρριψεν τὸν χοῦν αὐτῶν εἰς τὸν χειμάρρου Κεδρων ¹³ καὶ τὸν οἶκον τὸν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον Ἰερουσαλημ τὸν ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ ὄρους τοῦ Μοσοαθὸν ὠκοδόμησεν Σαλωμων βασιλεὺς Ἰσραηλ τῆ Ἀστάρτη προσοχθίσματι Σιδωνίων καὶ τῷ Χαμωσ προσοχθίσματι Μωαβ καὶ τῷ Μολχολ βδελύγματι υἱῶν Ἀμμων ἐμίανεν ὁ βασιλεὺς ¹⁴ καὶ συνέτριψεν τὰς στήλας καὶ ἐξωλέθρευσεν τὰ ἄλλα καὶ ἔπλησεν τοὺς τόπους αὐτῶν ὀστέων ἀνθρώπων ¹⁵ καὶ γε τὸ θυσιαστήριον τὸ ἐν Βαίθηλ τὸ ὑψηλὸν ὃ ἐποίησεν Ἰεροβοαμ υἱὸς Ναβατ ὃς ἐξήμαρτεν τὸν Ἰσραηλ καὶ γε τὸ θυσιαστήριον ἐκεῖνο καὶ τὸ ὑψηλὸν κατέσπασεν καὶ συνέτριψεν τοὺς λίθους αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐλέπτυνεν εἰς χοῦν καὶ κατέκαυσεν τὸ ἄλλοσ ¹⁶ καὶ ἐξένευσεν Ἰωσιας καὶ εἶδεν τοὺς τάφους τοὺς ὄντας ἐκεῖ ἐν τῇ πόλει καὶ ἀπέστειλεν καὶ ἔλαβεν τὰ ὀστᾶ ἐκ τῶν τάφων καὶ κατέκαυσεν ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον καὶ ἐμίανεν αὐτὸ κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου ὃ ἐλάλησεν ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ ἐστάναι Ἰεροβοαμ ἐν τῇ ἑορτῇ ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον καὶ ἐπιστρέψας ἦρεν τοὺς

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 on the mountain, and he sent and took the bones from the

chamber of the eunuch Nathan-melech, which was in the precincts; then he burned the chariots of the sun with fire. 12 The altars on the roof of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars that Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the Lord, he pulled down from there and broke in pieces, and threw the rubble into the Wadi Kidron. 13 The king defiled the high places that were east of Jerusalem, to the south of the Mount of Destruction, which King Solomon of Israel had built for Astarte the abomination of the Sidonians, for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. 14 He broke the pillars in pieces, cut down the sacred poles, and covered the sites with human bones.

15 Moreover, the altar at Bethel, the high place erected by Jeroboam son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin — he pulled down that altar along with the high place. He burned the high place, crushing it to dust; he also burned the sacred pole. 16 As Josiah turned, he saw the tombs there on the mount; and he sent and took the bones out of the tombs, and burned them on the altar, and defiled it, according to the word of the Lord

former kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun. They were near the quarters of Nathan-melech the eunuch, an officer of the court. The king also burned the chariots dedicated to the sun. 12 Josiah tore down the altars that the kings of Judah had built on the palace roof above the upper room of Ahaz. The king destroyed the altars that Manasseh had built in the two courtyards of the LORD's Temple. He smashed them to bits and scattered the pieces in the Kidron Valley. 13 The king also desecrated the pagan shrines east of Jerusalem and south of the Mount of Corruption, where King Solomon of Israel had built shrines for Ash-toreth, the detestable goddess of the Sidonians; and for Chemosh, the detestable god of the Moabites; and for Molech, the detestable god of the Ammonites. 14 He smashed the sacred pillars and cut down the Asherah poles. Then he desecrated these places by scattering human bones over them.

15 The king also tore down the altar at Bethel, the pagan shrine that Jeroboam son of Nebat had made when he led Israel into sin. Josiah crushed the stones to dust and burned the Asherah pole. 16 Then as Josiah was looking around, he noticed several tombs in the side of the hill. He ordered that the bones be brought out, and he burned them

ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν τάφον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ λαλήσαντος τοὺς λόγους τούτους ¹⁷ καὶ εἶπεν τί τὸ σκόπελον ἐκεῖ νο ὃ ἐγὼ ὄρω καὶ εἶπον αὐτῷ οἱ ἄνδρες τῆς πόλεως ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστὶν ὁ ἐξεληλυθὼς ἐξ Ἰουδα καὶ ἐπικαλεσάμενος τοὺς λόγους τούτους οὐκ ἐπεκαλέσατο ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον Βαιθηλ ¹⁸ καὶ εἶπεν ἄφετε αὐτὸ ἀνὴρ μὴ κινήσῃ τὰ ὀστέα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐρρύσθησαν τὰ ὀστέα αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῶν ὀστέων τοῦ προφήτου τοῦ ἦκοντος ἐκ Σαμαρείας ¹⁹ καὶ γε εἰς πάντας τοὺς οἴκους τῶν ὑψηλῶν τοὺς ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν Σαμαρείας οὓς ἐποίησαν βασιλεῖς Ἰσραηλ παροργίζειν κύριον ἀπέστησεν Ἰωσίας καὶ ἐποίησεν ἐν αὐτοῖς πάντα τὰ ἔργα ἃ ἐποίησεν ἐν Βαιθηλ ²⁰ καὶ ἐθυσίασεν πάντας τοὺς ἱερεῖς τῶν ὑψηλῶν τοὺς ὄντας ἐκεῖ ἐπὶ τῶν θυσιαστηρίων καὶ κατέκαυσεν τὰ ὀστέα τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐπ' αὐτά καὶ ἐπεστράφη εἰς Ἱερουσαλημ

²¹ καὶ ἐνετείλατο ὁ βασιλεὺς παντὶ τῷ λαῷ λέγων ποιήσατε τὸ πασχα τῷ κυρίῳ θεῷ ἡμῶν καθὼς γέγραπται ἐπὶ βιβλίου τῆς διαθήκης ταύτης ²² ὅτι οὐκ ἐγενήθη τὸ πασχα τοῦτο ἀφ' ἡμερῶν τῶν κριτῶν οὐκ ἔκρινον τὸν Ἰσραηλ καὶ πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας βασιλέων Ἰσραηλ καὶ βασιλέων Ἰουδα ²³ ὅτι ἀλλ' ἢ τῷ ὀκτωκαιδεκάτῳ ἔτει τοῦ βασιλέως Ἰωσία ἐγενήθη τὸ πασχα τῷ

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. 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.

21 Then the king commanded all the people saying, "Celebrate the Passover to the LORD your God as it is written in this book of the covenant." 22 Surely such a Passover had not been celebrated from the days of the judges who judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel and of the kings of Judah. 23 But in the eighteenth year of King

that the man of God proclaimed, when Jeroboam stood by the altar at the festival; he turned and looked up at the tomb of the man of God who had predicted these things. 17 Then he said, "What is that monument that I see?" The people of the city told him, "It is the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and predicted these things that you have done against the altar at Bethel." 18 He said, "Let him rest; let no one move his bones." So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet who came out of Samaria. 19 Moreover, Josiah removed all the shrines of the high places that were in the towns of Samaria, which kings of Israel had made, provoking the Lord to anger; he did to them just as he had done at Bethel. 20 He slaughtered on the altars all the priests of the high places who were there, and burned human bones on them. Then he returned to Jerusalem.

21 The king commanded all the people, "Keep the passover to the Lord your God as prescribed in this book of the covenant." 22 No such passover had been kept since the days of the judges who judged Israel, even during all the days of the kings of Israel and of the kings of Judah; 23 but in the eighteenth year of King

on the altar at Bethel to desecrate it. This happened just as the LORD had promised through the man of God as Jeroboam stood beside the altar at the festival. Then Josiah turned and looked up at the tomb of the man of God F64 who had predicted these things. 17 "What is that monument over there?" Josiah asked. And the people of the town told him, "It is the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and predicted the very things that you have just done to the altar at Bethel!" 18 Josiah replied, "Leave it alone. Don't disturb his bones." So they did not burn his bones or those of the old prophet from Samaria. 19 Then Josiah demolished all the buildings at the pagan shrines in the towns of Samaria, just as he had done at Bethel. They had been built by the various kings of Israel and had made the LORD very angry. 20 He executed the priests of the pagan shrines on their own altars, and he burned human bones on the altars to desecrate them. Finally, he returned to Jerusalem.

21 King Josiah then issued this order to all the people: "You must celebrate the Passover to the LORD your God, as it is written in the Book of the Covenant." 22 There had not been a Passover celebration like that since the time when the judges ruled in Israel, throughout all the years of the kings

κυρίῳ ἐν Ἱερουσαλημ
²⁴ καὶ γε τοὺς θελητὰς
καὶ τοὺς γνωριστὰς καὶ τὰ
θεραφιν καὶ τὰ εἶδωλα καὶ
πάντα τὰ προσοχθίσματα
τὰ γεγονότα ἐν γῆ Ἰουδα
καὶ ἐν Ἱερουσαλημ ἐξῆρεν
ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἰωσίας ἵνα
στήσῃ τοὺς λόγους τοῦ
νόμου τοὺς γεγραμμένους
ἐπὶ τοῦ βιβλίου οὗ εὔρεν
Χελκίας ὁ ἱερεὺς ἐν οἴκῳ
κυρίου ²⁵ ὅμοιος αὐτῷ
οὐκ ἐγενήθη ἔμπροσθεν
αὐτοῦ βασιλεὺς ὅς
ἐπέστρεψεν πρὸς κύριον
ἐν ὅλῃ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ καὶ
ἐν ὅλῃ ψυχῇ αὐτοῦ καὶ
ἐν ὅλῃ ἰσχύι αὐτοῦ κατὰ
πάντα τὸν νόμον Μωυσῆ
καὶ μετ' αὐτὸν οὐκ ἀνέστη
ὅμοιος αὐτῷ
²⁶ πλὴν οὐκ
ἀπεστράφη κύριος ἀπὸ
θυμοῦ ὀργῆς αὐτοῦ τοῦ
μεγάλου οὗ ἐθυμώθη
ὀργῇ αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ Ἰουδα
ἐπὶ τοὺς παροργισμοὺς
οἷς παρώργισεν αὐτὸν
Μανασσῆς ²⁷ καὶ εἶπεν
κύριος καὶ γε τὸν Ἰουδα
ἀποστήσω ἀπὸ τοῦ
προσώπου μου καθὼς
ἀπέστησα τὸν Ἰσραηλ
καὶ ἀπόσωμαι τὴν πόλιν
ταύτην ἣν ἐξελεξάμην τὴν
Ἱερουσαλημ καὶ τὸν οἶκον
οὗ εἶπον ἔσται τὸ ὄνομά
μου ἐκεῖ ²⁸ καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ
τῶν λόγων Ἰωσίου καὶ
πάντα ὅσα ἐποίησεν οὗ
ἧλ' ταῦτα γεγραμμένα ἐπὶ
βιβλίῳ λόγων τῶν ἡμερῶν
τοῖς βασιλεῦσιν Ἰουδα

Josiah, this Passover was observed to the LORD in Jerusalem.

24 Moreover, Josiah removed the mediums and the spiritists and the teraphim and the idols and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might confirm the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiyah the priest found in the house of the LORD. 25 Before him there was no king like him who turned to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him.

26 However, the LORD did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath with which His anger burned against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him. 27 The LORD said, "I will remove Judah also from My sight, as I have removed Israel. And I will cast off Jerusalem, this city which I have chosen, and the temple of which I said, 'My name shall be there.'" 28 Now the rest of the acts of Josiah and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?

Josiah this passover was kept to the Lord in Jerusalem.

24 Moreover Josiah put away the mediums, wizards, teraphim, idols, and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, so that he established the words of the law that were written in the book that the priest Hilkiyah had found in the house of the Lord. 25 Before him there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him.

26 Still the Lord did not turn from the fierceness of his great wrath, by which his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked him. 27 The Lord said, "I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel; and I will reject this city that I have chosen, Jerusalem, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there." 28 Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah?

of Israel and Judah. 23 This Passover was celebrated to the LORD in Jerusalem during the eighteenth year of King Josiah's reign.

24 Josiah also exterminated the mediums and psychics, the household gods, and every other kind of idol worship, both in Jerusalem and throughout the land of Judah. He did this in obedience to all the laws written in the scroll that Hilkiyah the priest had found in the LORD's Temple. 25 Never before had there been a king like Josiah, who turned to the LORD with all his heart and soul and strength, obeying all the laws of Moses. And there has never been a king like him since.

26 Even so, the LORD's anger burned against Judah because of all the great evils of King Manasseh, and he did not hold back his fierce anger from them. 27 For the LORD had said, "I will destroy Judah just as I have destroyed Israel. I will banish the people from my presence and reject my chosen city of Jerusalem and the Temple where my name was to be honored." 28 The rest of the events in Josiah's reign and all his deeds are recorded in The Book of the History of the Kings of Judah.

2 Kings 23:1-28

וַיִּשְׁלַח הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֹּאסְפוּ אֵלָיו כָּל-זִקְנֵי יְהוּדָה וִירוּשָׁלַם:

וַיַּעַל הַמֶּלֶךְ בֵּית-יְהוָה וְכָל-אִישׁ יְהוּדָה וְכָל-יֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם אִתּוֹ וְהַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַנְּבִיאִים וְכָל-הָעָם לְמִקְטָן וְעַד-גָּדוֹל וַיִּקְרָא בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם אֶת-כָּל-דְּבָרֵי סֵפֶר הַבְּרִית הַנִּמְצָא בְּבֵית יְהוָה:

וַיַּעֲמֵד הַמֶּלֶךְ עַל-הָעֲמֹוד וַיִּכְרַת אֶת-הַבְּרִית לִפְנֵי יְהוָה לְלֶכֶת אַחֵר יְהוָה וְלִשְׁמֹר מִצְוֹתָיו וְאֶת-עֲדוּתָיו וְאֶת-חֻקֹּתָיו בְּכָל-לֵב וּבְכָל-נֶפֶשׁ לְהִקְיָם אֶת-דְּבָרֵי הַבְּרִית הַזֹּאת הַכְּתוּבִים עַל-הַסֵּפֶר הַזֶּה וַיַּעֲמֵד כָּל-הָעָם בְּבְרִית:

וַיִּצַו הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת-חֲלָקִיָּהוּ הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל וְאֶת-כֹּהֲנֵי הַמִּשְׁנָה וְאֶת-שְׂמָרְיָה הַסֹּפֵר לְהוֹצִיא מֵהִיכָל יְהוָה אֶת כָּל-הַפְּלִיִם הַעֲשׂוּיִם לַבַּעַל וְלִאֲשֵׁרָה וְלִכָּל צֶבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיִּשְׂרַפֵם מִחוּץ לִירוּשָׁלַם בְּשַׂדְמֹת קָדְרוֹן וַנִּשָּׂא אֶת-עַפְרָם בֵּית-אֵל:

וְהַשְּׁבִית אֶת-הַכְּמָרִים אֲשֶׁר נָתְנוּ מַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה וַיִּקְטַר בַּבַּמֹּת בְּעָרֵי יְהוּדָה וּמִסְבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם וְאֶת-הַמִּקְטָרִים לַבַּעַל לְשִׁמְשׁ וּלְיִרְחָ וּלְמִזְלוֹת וְלִכָּל צֶבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם:

וַיִּצַא אֶת-הָאֲשֵׁרָה מִבֵּית יְהוָה מִחוּץ לִירוּשָׁלַם אֶל-נַחַל קָדְרוֹן וַיִּשְׂרַף אֹתָהּ בְּנַחַל קָדְרוֹן וַיִּדַק לְעַפֵּר וַיִּשְׁלַךְ אֶת-עַפְרָה עַל-קִבְרֵי בְנֵי הָעָם:

וַיִּתֵּן אֶת-בְּתֵי הַקְּדוּשִׁים אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵית יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר הַנָּשִׁים אֲרָגוֹת שָׁם בְּתִים לְאֲשֵׁרָה:

וַיָּבֵא אֶת-כָּל-הַכֹּהֲנִים מִעָרֵי יְהוּדָה וַיִּטְמֵא אֶת-הַבַּמֹּת אֲשֶׁר קִטְרוּ-שְׁמָה הַכֹּהֲנִים מִגִּבְעַ עַד-בְּאֵר שֶׁבַע וַנִּתְּן אֶת-בַּמֹּת הַשְּׂעָרִים אֲשֶׁר-פָּתַח שַׁעַר יְהוֹשֻׁעַ שַׁר-הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר-עַל-שְׂמֹאֵל אִישׁ בְּשַׁעַר הָעִיר:

אֲךָ לֹא יָעִלוּ כֹהֲנֵי הַבַּמֹּת אֶל-מִזְבֵּחַ יְהוָה בִּירוּשָׁלַם כִּי אִם-אָכְלוּ מִצֹּת בְּתוֹךְ אַחֵיהֶם:

וַיִּטְמֵא אֶת-הַתֶּפֶת אֲשֶׁר (בְּגִי בְנֵי-הַנֹּס) [בְּגִי בְן-הַנֹּס] לְבַלְתִּי לְהַעֲבִיר אִישׁ אֶת-בְּנוֹ וְאֶת-בֵּיתוֹ בְּאֵשׁ לְמַלְךְ:

וַיִּשְׁבֹּת אֶת-הַסּוּסִים אֲשֶׁר נָתְנוּ מַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה לְשִׁמְשׁ מִבְּאֵר

בית־יהוה אל־לשכת נתן־מלך הסרים אשר בפרורים
ואת־מרפבות השמש שרף באש:

¹² ואת־המזבחות אשר על־הנג עליית אחז אשר־עשו מלכי
יהודה ואת־המזבחות אשר־עשה מנשה בשתי חצרות
בית־יהוה נתן המלך וירץ משם והשליך את־עפרם
אל־נחל קדרון:

¹³ ואת־הבמות אשרו על־פני ירושלים אשר מימין
להר־המשחית אשר בנה שלמה מלך־ישראל לעשתרתו
שקץ צידנים ולכמוש שקץ מואב ולמלכם תועבת
בני־עמון טמא המלך:

¹⁴ ושבר את־המצבות ויכרת את־האשרים וימלא
את־מקומם עצמות אדם:

¹⁵ וגם את־המזבח אשר בבית־אל הבמה אשר עשה ירבעם
בן־נבט אשר החטיא את־ישראל גם את־המזבח ההוא
ואת־הבמה נתן וישרף את־הבמה הדק לעפר ושרף אשרה:
¹⁶ ויפן יאשיהו וירא את־הקברים אשר־שם בהר וישלח
ויקח את־העצמות מן־הקברים וישרף על־המזבח ויטמאהו
כדבר יהוה אשר קרא איש האלהים אשר קרא
את־הקברים האלה:

¹⁷ ויאמר מה הציון הלז אשר אני ראה ויאמרו אליו אנשי
העיר הקבר איש־האלהים אשר־בא מיהודה ויקרא
את־הקברים האלה אשר עשית על המזבח בית־אל:
¹⁸ ויאמר הניחו לו איש אל־ינע עצמתיו וימלטו עצמתיו
את עצמות הנביא אשר־בא משמרון:

¹⁹ וגם את־כל־בתי הבמות אשרו בערי שמרון אשר עשו
מלכי ישראל להכעיס הסיר יאשיהו ויעש להם
ככל־המעשים אשר עשה בבית־אל:

²⁰ ויזבח את־כל־כהני הבמות אשר־שם על־המזבחות
וישרף את־עצמות אדם עליהם וישב ירושלים:

²¹ ויצו המלך את־כל־העם לאמר עשו פסח ליהוה
אלהיכם ככתוב על ספר הברית הזוה:

²² כי לא נעשה כפסח הזה מימי השפטים אשר שפטו

אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְכָל יְמֵי מַלְכֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וּמַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה:
23 כִּי אִם־בְּשִׁמְנֵה עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה לְמַלְךְ יֵאֲשִׁיחֻ וְנַעֲשֶׂה הַפֶּסַח
הַזֶּה לַיהוָה בִּירוּשָׁלַם:

24 וְגַם אֶת־הָאֲבוֹת וְאֶת־הַיָּדְעָנִים וְאֶת־הַתָּרְפִים וְאֶת־הַגְּלָלִים
וְאֶת כָּל־הַשִּׁקְצִים אֲשֶׁר נִרְאוּ בָאָרֶץ יְהוּדָה וּבִירוּשָׁלַם
בְּעַר יֵאֲשִׁיחֻ לְמַעַן הַקִּים אֶת־דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַכְּתוּבִים
עַל־הַסֵּפֶר אֲשֶׁר מִצָּא חִלְקִיהוּ הַכֹּהֵן בֵּית יְהוָה:
25 וְכִמְהוּ לֹא־הָיָה לְפָנָיו מַלְךְ אֲשֶׁר־שָׁב אֶל־יְהוָה
בְּכָל־לִבּוֹ וּבְכָל־נַפְשׁוֹ וּבְכָל־מְאֹדוֹ כְּכֹל תּוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה
וְאַחֲרָיו לְאֶקָם כְּמֵהוּ:

26 אַךְ לֹא־שָׁב יְהוָה מִחֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ הַגָּדוֹל אֲשֶׁר־חָרָה אַפּוֹ
בִּיהוּדָה עַל כָּל־הַכְּעָסִים אֲשֶׁר הִכְעִיסוּ מִנְּשָׂה:

27 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה גַּם אֶת־יְהוּדָה אֲסִיר מֵעַל פָּנָי כַּאֲשֶׁר
הִסְלַחְתִּי אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל וּמֵאֲסַחְתִּי אֶת־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר־בְּחִרְתִּי
אֶת־יְרוּשָׁלַם וְאֶת־הַבַּיִת אֲשֶׁר אֲמַרְתִּי יְהִיָה שְׁמִי שָׁם:
28 וַיִּתֵּר דְּבָרֵי יֵאֲשִׁיחֻ וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה הֲלֹא־הֵם כְּתוּבִים
עַל־סֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים לְמַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה: