

**2Chronicles 31:1** ¶ Now when all this was finished, all Israel that were present went out to the cities of Judah, and brake the images in pieces, and cut down the groves, and threw down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim also and Manasseh, until they had utterly destroyed them all. Then all the children of Israel returned, every man to his possession, into their own cities.

Continuing in context from the previous chapter...

When the Passover and two-week feast had ended and in the throes of a spiritual revival, all the people that had attended went throughout the whole of Israel and destroyed all the idols, groves and altars that were used in the worship of false gods. After accomplishing this task, they all returned to their homes.

**2Chronicles 31:2** And Hezekiah appointed the courses of the priests and the Levites after their courses, every man according to his service, the priests and Levites for burnt offerings and for peace offerings, to minister, and to give thanks, and to praise in the gates of the tents of the LORD.

**2Chronicles 31:3** He appointed also the king's portion of his substance for the burnt offerings, to wit, for the morning and evening burnt offerings, and the burnt offerings for the sabbaths, and for the new moons, and for the set feasts, as it is written in the law of the LORD.

**2Chronicles 31:4** Moreover he commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the Levites, that they might be encouraged in the law of the LORD.

King Hezekiah reappointed the courses of the priests and Levites in their service at the temple, including making burnt and peace offerings, to serve as needed and to give thanks and praise in the temple precincts. He also designated a portion of his own possessions to provide for the morning and evening sacrifices, the Sabbath sacrifices, and for the new moons and designated feasts as written in God's law. He then commanded the people that lived in Jerusalem to give a portion of their own possessions to provide for the priests and Levites as they served in full time ministry before the LORD.

**2Chronicles 31:5** And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance the firstfruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the field; and the tithe of all things brought they in abundantly.

People throughout the kingdom heard about the king's command and responded by bringing an abundance of the firstfruits of their corn, wine, oil, honey and all other produce from their fields. It is noted that they brought in the tithe and much more.

The NIV Commentary provides this informative note: "Though the other commodities listed among the dedicated "firstfruits" could be used in Israel's offerings, the "honey" could not, even in the grain offerings that accompanied the other (animal) sacrifices (Lev 2:11). But it was still an acceptable gift for

supporting the priests.”

**2Chronicles 31:6** And concerning the children of Israel and Judah, that dwelt in the cities of Judah, they also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep, and the tithe of holy things which were consecrated unto the LORD their God, and laid *them* by heaps.

**2Chronicles 31:7** In the third month they began to lay the foundation of the heaps, and finished *them* in the seventh month.

People from other cities throughout the whole of Israel also brought in tithes of oxen and sheep as well as other “holy things” that were consecrated to the LORD. I believe these “holy things” are a reference to the firstfruits of their harvest as indicated by the word “heaps,” defined in the Hebrew as “sheaves.” They began receiving these tithes in the 3<sup>rd</sup> month (at Pentecost, the grain harvest) and finished the collection in the 7<sup>th</sup> month (during Feast of Tabernacles/Ingathering marking the end of the fruit and vineyard harvest).

The giving of tithes and offerings to support the priests and Levites was in accordance with God’s law as recorded by Moses.

*Deuteronomy 18:1–4* “The priests the Levites, and all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel: they shall eat the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and his inheritance. Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren: the LORD is their inheritance, as he hath said unto them. And this shall be the priest’s due from the people, from them that offer a sacrifice, whether it be ox or sheep; and they shall give unto the priest the shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the maw. The firstfruit also of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep, shalt thou give him.”

I liked David Guzik’s comments on tithing: “Since the New Testament doesn’t emphasize tithing, one might not be strict on it for Christians (though some Christians do argue against tithing on the basis of self-interest); but since giving is to be proportional, we should be giving *some* percentage - and ten percent is a good benchmark - and starting place! For some to give ten percent is nowhere near enough; for others, at their present time, five percent may be a massive step of faith.”

**2Chronicles 31:8** And when Hezekiah and the princes came and saw the heaps, they blessed the LORD, and his people Israel.

**2Chronicles 31:9** Then Hezekiah questioned with the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps.

**2Chronicles 31:10** And Azariah the chief priest of the house of Zadok answered him, and said, Since *the people* began to bring the offerings into the house of the LORD, we have had enough to eat, and have left plenty: for the LORD hath blessed his people; and that which is left *is* this great store.

When King Hezekiah and his officials saw the abundance of the collection, they praised the LORD and His people of Israel. The king questioned the priests and Levites about the heaps—probably something like, How are you using it all? or, Is it enough? or, Why is all of this just lying around?

Azariah, the chief priest of the house of Zadok, told him that the people had provided enough to feed the priests and Levites and their families with plenty left over. There was so much left over because the LORD had blessed His people abundantly.

**2Chronicles 31:11** ¶ Then Hezekiah commanded to prepare chambers in the house of the LORD; and they prepared *them*,

**2Chronicles 31:12** And brought in the offerings and the tithes and the dedicated *things* faithfully: over which Cononiah the Levite *was* ruler, and Shimei his brother *was* the next.

**2Chronicles 31:13** And Jehiel, and Azaziah, and Nahath, and Asahel, and Jerimoth, and Jozabad, and Eliel, and Ismachiah, and Mahath, and Benaiah, *were* overseers under the hand of Cononiah and Shimei his brother, at the commandment of Hezekiah the king, and Azariah the ruler of the house of God.

King Hezekiah ordered that storage rooms be made ready in the temple to hold the tithes and offerings. Cononiah, a Levite, was appointed to oversee the donated goods; his brother Shimei was designated as his top assistant. Ten other men as identified in verse 13 served with them.

**2Chronicles 31:14** And Kore the son of Imnah the Levite, the porter toward the east, *was* over the freewill offerings of God, to distribute the oblations of the LORD, and the most holy things.

**2Chronicles 31:15** And next him *were* Eden, and Miniamin, and Jeshua, and Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah, in the cities of the priests, in *their* set office, to give to their brethren by courses, as well to the great as to the small:

The son of Imnah the Levite, Kore, gatekeeper at the East Gate (the main access to the temple grounds), was appointed to oversee the freewill offerings and distribution of offerings given to the LORD. He was assisted by six men—Eden, Mimiamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah and Shecaniah—in making distributions to the priests in the towns where they lived. Distribution was to be made by courses without partiality.

**2Chronicles 31:16** Beside their genealogy of males, from three years old and upward, *even* unto every one that entereth into the house of the LORD, his daily portion for their service in their charges according to their courses;

**2Chronicles 31:17** Both to the genealogy of the priests by the house of their fathers, and the Levites from twenty years old and upward, in their charges by their courses;

**2Chronicles 31:18** And to the genealogy of all their little ones, their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, through all the congregation: for in their set office they sanctified themselves in holiness:

**2Chronicles 31:19** Also of the sons of Aaron the priests, *which were* in the fields of the suburbs of their cities, in every several city, the men that were expressed by name, to give portions to all the males among the priests, and to all that were reckoned by genealogies among the Levites.

The CJB is a bit clearer with this section: *“Every male three years and older entitled to enter the house of ADONAI was given his daily share for performing his duties according to his division, regardless of how he was recorded in the genealogies. Likewise, those recorded in the genealogies of the cohanim by clans received shares, as did the L’vi’im twenty years and older who were performing their duties in their assigned divisions. When shares were assigned, all their little ones, wives, sons and daughters were also recorded in the genealogies, throughout the entire community; for in their faithfulness to this task they consecrated themselves. Finally, shares were assigned to the descendants of Aharon, the cohanim, who lived in the pasture-lands surrounding their cities — in each city they were mentioned by name. Thus portions were distributed to all the males among the cohanim and to all whose genealogies showed that they belonged to the L’vi’im.”*

**2Chronicles 31:20 And thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah, and wrought that which was good and right and truth before the LORD his God.**

**2Chronicles 31:21 And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered.**

King Hezekiah didn’t just set things right in Jerusalem; he did all that was good (kind and loving) and right (equitable and righteous) and truth (trustworthy and faithful) before the LORD “his” God throughout all of Judah. The historian notes that everything the king did, whether at the temple or in obedience to God’s law and the commandments, he did with all his heart and prospered. This reminds me of the words of Jesus and of the prophet Malachi.

*Matthew 6:33 “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”*

*Malachi 3:10 “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”*