

JOSIAH FINDS THE BOOK OF THE LAW (II Kings 22-23)

Parts: **Narrator**
 Josiah
 Shaphan
 Hilkiah
 Huldah,
 men of Bethel

Narrator:

Now it came to pass, in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, that the king sent Shaphan the scribe, the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, to the house of Yehowah.

Josiah:

"Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may count the money which has been brought into the house of Yehowah.... Let them give it to those who are in the house of Yehowah doing the work, to repair the damages of the house...."

Shaphan:

"Yes, my Lord." *(goes to Hilkiah)*

"Thus says the king, count the money which has been brought into the house of Yehowah, which the doorkeepers have gathered from the people. And let them deliver it into the hand of those doing the work... to repair the damages of the house...."

Hilkiah:

"We will do as the king has commanded."

***** ***some time later*** *****

Hilkiah (to Shaphan):

"I have found the Book of the Law in the house of Yehowah." *(gives the book to Shaphan, and he reads it)*

Shaphan (brings back word to the king):

"Your servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of those who do the work, who oversee the house of Yehowah.... [My Lord,] Hilkiah the priest has given me a book."

Narrator:

And Shaphan read it before the king.... Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, that he tore his clothes. Then the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Achbor the son of Michaiah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king.

Josiah:

"Go, inquire of Yehowah... concerning the words of this book that has been found; for great is the wrath of Yehowah that is aroused against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book...."

Narrator:

So Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe. [She dwelt in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter.] And they spoke with her.

Hilkiah:

"The king asks if you would inquire of Yehowah for him, for the people, and for all Judah."

Huldah:

"Thus says Yehowah of Israel, 'Tell the man who sent you to me: "Thus says Yehowah: 'Behold, I will bring calamity on this place and on its inhabitants—all the words of the book which the king of Judah has read—because they have forsaken Me and burned incense to other gods.... Therefore My wrath shall be aroused against this place and shall not be quenched.'"

'But to the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of Yehowah, in this manner you shall speak to him:

"Thus says Yehowah....'Concerning the words which you have heard—because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before Yehowah...and you tore your clothes and wept before Me, I also have heard you.... Surely, I will gather you to your...grave in peace; and your eyes shall not see all the calamity which I will bring on this place.' " "

Narrator:

So they brought word to the king.

Shaphan:

"O King, Huldah the prophetess says, 'Tell the man who sent you to me, "Thus says Yehowah: 'Behold, I will bring calamity on this place and on its inhabitants... because they have forsaken Me. But because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before Yehowah, I will gather you to your grave in peace, and your eyes shall not see all the calamity which I will bring on this place.' " " "

Josiah:

"Gather all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem to me."

Narrator:

And the king went up to the house of Yehowah with all the men of Judah, and with him all the inhabitants of Jerusalem—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 had been found in the house of Yehowah.... Then the king stood by a pillar and made a covenant before Yehowah:

Josiah:

"Yehowah God of our fathers, I promise to follow You and to keep Your commandments and Your testimonies and Your statutes, with all my heart and all my soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book."

Narrator:

And all the people took their stand for the covenant. And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, the priests of the second order, and the doorkeepers:

Josiah:

"Bring out of the temple of Yehowah all the articles that were made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven. Burn them outside Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carry their ashes to Bethel."

Narrator:

And they brought out the wooden image from the house of Yehowah, to the Brook Kidron outside Jerusalem, burned it at the Brook Kidron and ground it to ashes, and threw its ashes on the graves of the common people. Then he tore down the ritual booths of the perverted persons that were in the house of Yehowah, where the women wove hangings for the wooden image. Then he removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun, at the entrance to the house of Yehowah, by the chamber of Nathan-Melech, the officer who was in the court; and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire. The altars that 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 Yehowah, the king broke down and pulverized there, and threw their dust into the Brook Kidron.

Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he broke down; and he burned the high place and crushed it to powder, and burned the wooden image. As Josiah turned, he saw the tombs that were there on the mountain.

Josiah:

"Go, get the bones out of those tombs and burn them on the altar, and defile it according to the word of Yehowah which the man of God proclaimed."

"What gravestone is this that I see?"

Men of Bethel:

"It is the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and proclaimed these things which you have done against the altar of Bethel."

Josiah:

"Let him alone; let no one move his bones."

Narrator:

So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet who came from Samaria. Then Josiah also took away all the shrines of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke Yehowah to anger... and he returned to Jerusalem.

Then the king commanded all the people:

Josiah:

"Keep the Passover to Yehowah your God, as it is written in this Book of the Covenant."

Narrator:

Surely such a Passover had never been held since the days of the judges who judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah.... Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to Yehowah with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; nor after him did any arise like him.

(The End)