

Episode: One-Hit Wonders No. 14

Narrator: Hilkiyah

Primary Scriptures: 2 Kings 22:1-23:30

Story Summary: Josiah becomes one of the best kings of Judah

Location: Jerusalem, Israel

Time: Circa 615 BC

Suggested Memory Scriptures: 2 Kings 23:25

King Solomon has acquired the reputation for being a good king because he built the Temple and because his first request of God resulted in God making him wise, but a close reading of the Scriptures may lead to a different conclusion.

Solomon married 700 wives and had 300 concubines who led him into a worshipping all kinds of false gods of different countries, and he did not worship them ambivalently—he plunged headlong into idolatry. Hundreds of years after his death, the people of Judah were still worshipping false gods at the buildings and altars Solomon built!

Among the kings of Judah, possibly only one king surpassed Solomon in leading the people into idolatry. King Manasseh was so evil that God decided to allow the kingdom of Judah to cease to exist and the reign of the House of David to come to an end after four centuries. This end would not occur for about a century after the beginning of the reign of Manasseh.

Despite Manasseh's evil behavior, his grandson became the most God-fearing and best king of Judah. Josiah was only eight years old when he became king, replacing his evil grandmother who had been the only ruling queen of Judah. Josiah had been secretly saved from his grandmother's murderous intentions and had been raised by the priest Hilkiyah.

Under Hilkiyah's raising, Josiah acquired a love of God and began to lead the people of Judah back to the Lord. Unfortunately, he had a giant handicap: the previous kings and people of Judah had seemingly destroyed all copies of the Law of Moses. Despite his best efforts, Josiah knew he was falling short of pleasing God.

Miraculously, Hilkiyah found a last, lost copy of the Law of Moses in the Temple. When Josiah had the Law read to him, he reacted quickly and wholeheartedly. He led the people in completing the destruction of all false gods and altars and had them commit to following the Law. By following God so completely, Josiah could be considered the best or second best king of Judah/Israel.

Some of the saddest scriptures are found when reading about the end of Josiah's reign. God was pleased with Josiah, but was so thoroughly offended by Manasseh that he passed final judgement on Judah. God's patience and mercy did run out.