

## *Norwood's Notes: Brief Summaries of Bible Stories*

These "notes" are intended to provide a general overview of the basic stories of the Bible in the hope of building greater biblical knowledge and encouraging Bible reading and study. For more information, visit [www.UjimaChurch.org](http://www.UjimaChurch.org)

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### **29 - Highlights from 2Kgs 21-23; 2Chr 33-36, "Josiah's Reforms"**

King Amon was only 22 years old when he became king but he only reigned for two years. Sadly, Amon's heart was less influenced by the repentance and conversion of his father Manasseh than it was by his father's prior wickedness. Amon was an idol worshiper. His servants conspired against him and assassinated him (2Kgs 21; 2Chr 33). The people rose up and killed the assassins, then they made his son, Josiah, king in his place.

Josiah was only eight years old when he became king and he reigned for 31 years. He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord after the example of his ancestor King David. When King Josiah was 16 years old, he ordered that the temple of the Lord be repaired. All who labored to repair the house of the Lord did so honorably and honestly. During the repairs, the High Priest Hilkiah excitedly reported that he had discovered the Book of the Law of the Lord in the Temple (2Chr 34). Overjoyed that such a long lost and forgotten holy book had been rediscovered, King Josiah ordered that it be read before him. However, when the king heard the Word of God read, he was filled with grief and tore his clothes for he realized that the people had not been obeying the will of God. King Josiah urgently commanded the high priest and several of his officials to *"Go inquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found. For great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us"* (2Kgs 22:13 ESV). The high priest and the king's officials sought out the Prophetess Huldah who informed them that the punishments for breaking the law would indeed fall upon Judah, but because the heart of King Josiah was humbled before the Lord and sought to follow him, the punishment that was to come would not occur during his reign.

King Josiah summoned the people to the Temple and had all of the words of the Book of the Law read before them. The king then made a covenant before the Lord to walk in accordance with His words and to keep His commands (2Kgs 23). Josiah then ordered that all of the items used to worship idols would be gathered up and burned outside of Jerusalem. He got rid of all of those who had been appointed by his predecessors to lead the worship of idols and he destroyed the houses

of the cult prostitutes. He defiled the place where people had their sons and daughters as offerings in idol worship and ordered that such an abomination no longer take place. Josiah destroyed the places of idolatrous worship that had been set up all the way back to the days of Solomon his ancestor, and he broke the items used in such worship into pieces. King Josiah ordered the altar at Bethel, which had been erected generations before by King Jeroboam of Israel, to be torn down and burned to dust. In doing so, Josiah fulfilled the prophecy that had been spoken about him, even naming him, generations before he was born...

*1 And behold, a man of God came out of Judah by the word of the LORD to Bethel. Jeroboam was standing by the altar to make offerings. 2 And the man cried against the altar by the word of the LORD and said, "O altar, altar, thus says the LORD: 'Behold, a son shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name, and he shall sacrifice on you the priests of the high places who make offerings on you, and human bones shall be burned on you.'" 3 And he gave a sign the same day, saying, "This is the sign that the LORD has spoken: 'Behold, the altar shall be torn down, and the ashes that are on it shall be poured out'"* (1Kgs 13:1-3 ESV).

King Josiah then commanded the people that they had to keep the Passover of the Lord their God just as it was written (2Chr 35). The Passover was kept with such strictness and joy that none had been camped like it since the days of the judges even before the birth of King David. The king even did away with all of the mediums and those who practiced witchcraft. *"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"* (2Kgs 23:24 ESV).

Pharaoh Neco of Egypt was on his way to make war against the king of Assyria, but King Josiah intercepted him with the intention to attack the Pharaoh's forces. Pharaoh Neco warned Josiah that he was on a mission from God and told Josiah to depart. But Josiah refused to turn away, and he was killed in the battle by the arrows of Egyptian archers. His servants carried his body in a chariot back to Jerusalem where he was buried. All the people mourned for King Josiah. It is written that, *"[the Prophet] Jeremiah also uttered a lament for Josiah; and all the singing men and singing women have spoken of Josiah in their laments to this day"* (2Chr 35:25 ESV).

After the death of King Josiah, his son Jehoahaz became king. But, Jehoahaz only reigned three months. He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. Pharaoh Neco put him in bonds and made his brother, Josiah's other son Eliakim, King in his place. Neco changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. King Jehoiakim, who was 25 years old when he began to reign, reigned 11 years and was made to pay tribute according to the command of the Pharaoh. He, too, did what was evil in the sight of the Lord (2Chr 36).