

Pathfinders

How We Got the Bible

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An incident in 2 Kings attests to the role of *sacred Scripture* in ancient Israel. Following the infamous reign of Manasseh in Judah (687-642 BC), “the book of the law” is discovered in the temple during the reign of Josiah (640-609 BC). On the basis of its discovery, Josiah undertakes a wholesale reform unequaled in the history of Israel. Unlike earlier revelations and reforms in Israel, which were justified by the authorities of *prophets, priests, or kings*, Josiah’s reform is justified by the authority of *Scripture*.

I. Infamies of the Reign of Manasseh (2 Kings 21:1-9)

Abominations of Manasseh include erection of altars of Baal in the Jerusalem Temple, sacrifice of his sons as burnt offerings, sacred prostitution in the temple, the practices of soothsaying, augury, mediums, and wizards.

II. Discovery of the Book of the Law under Josiah (2 Kings 22:8-13; 23:1-4). The high priest Hilkiah discovers “the book of the law” during repairs in the temple. Hilkiah reads the book to Josiah, the king, who undertakes a massive reform of Judah.

III. Josiah’s Exhaustive Reformation

Destruction of the vessels and idols of Baal; expulsion of male temple prostitutes and priests of Baal; defiling of pagan holy places into latrines; destruction of altars to pagan gods; burning bones from sacred tombs and dumping their ashes into the Gihon spring; reinstating Passover (which had not been celebrated since the time of the Judges!); banning mediums, wizards, idols, and pagan abominations.

“Before Josiah, 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. Nevertheless, the Lord did not turn from the fierceness of his great wrath . . . because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked him” (2 Kings 23:25-26).