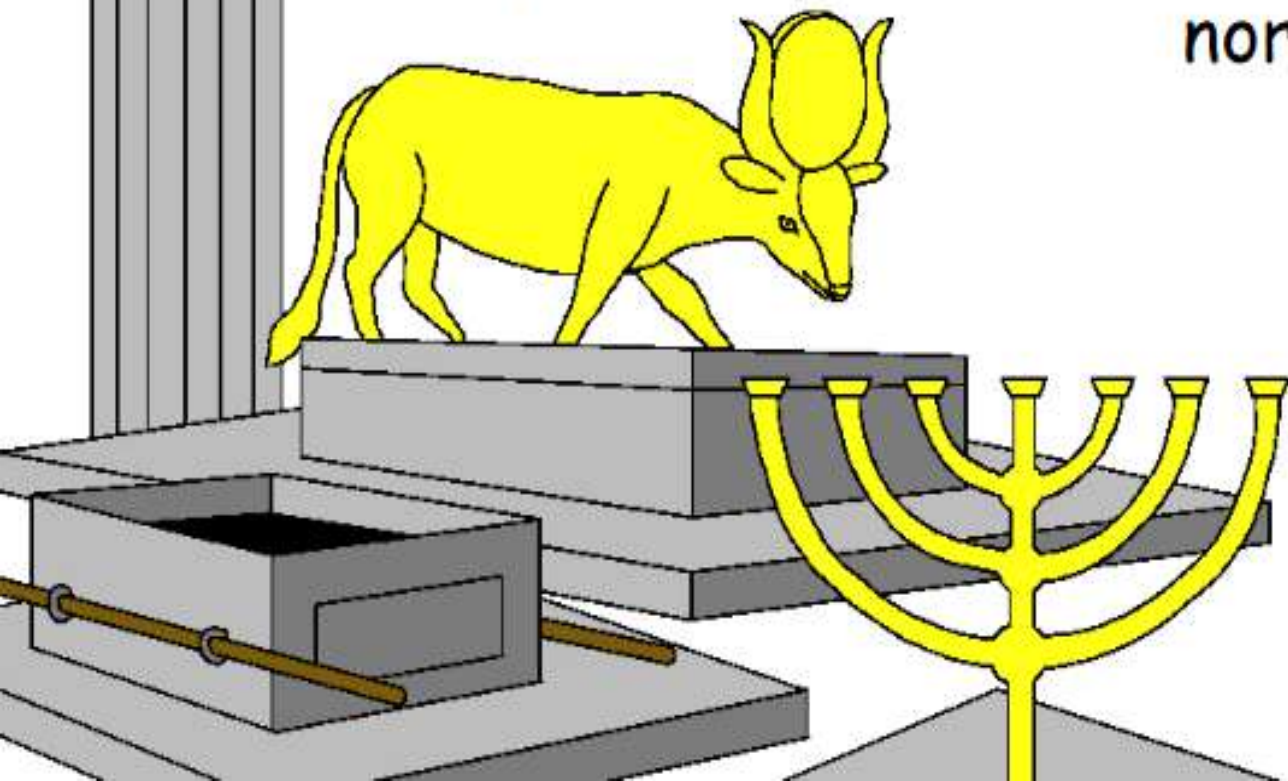


Good and
bad Kings

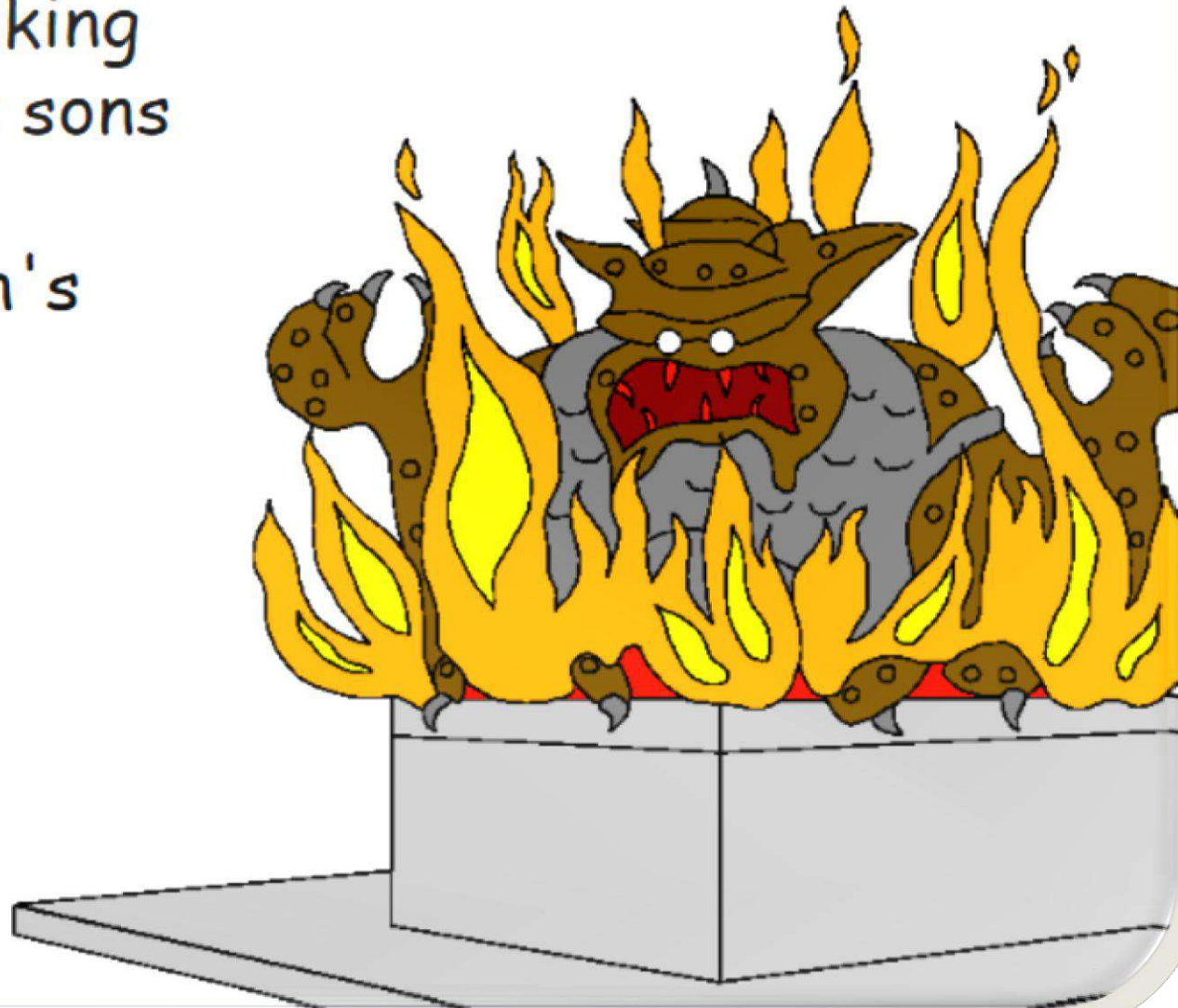
It was a sad day for Manasseh. His dad, King Hezekiah had just died. Now, only twelve years old, Manasseh was the new king over God's people in Judah. He didn't know it then, but Manasseh would be king for 55 years. Manasseh needed God's help to be a good king.



But Manasseh ignored God and did evil. Manasseh rebuilt altars for idol worship. He even made a carved image and set it in God's holy Temple! God had said through Moses, "You shall not make any carved images. You shall not bow down to them nor serve them."



Manasseh practiced witchcraft and sorcery. He led the people away from God. The king even burned his sons as sacrifices to idols. Manasseh's disobedience angered God greatly.



When His people disobey, God allows them to be punished. That's what happened to Manasseh and the people he ruled. The LORD brought the Assyrian army upon them. Manasseh was taken away in chains to Babylon.



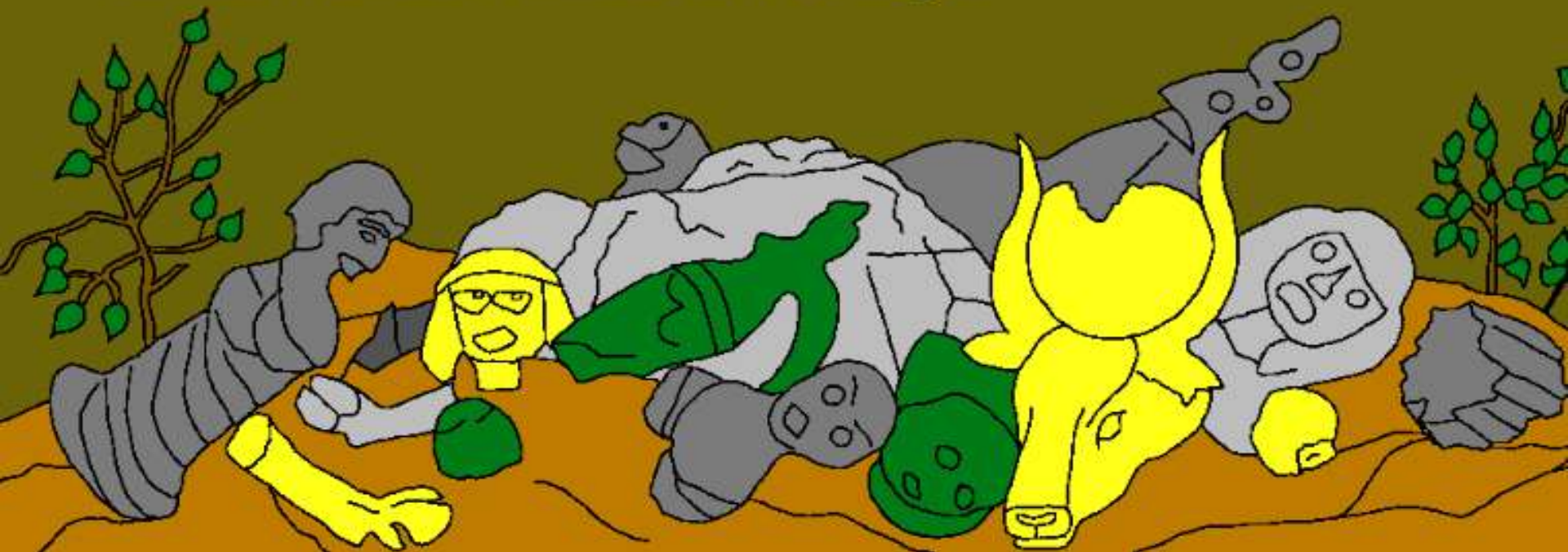


Suffering in Babylon, Manasseh pleaded with the LORD, his God. He humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed to Him. No more praying to dead idols! But, would the living God answer Manasseh after all his wickedness?

Yes! God heard the king's prayer and brought him back to Jerusalem, back to the throne, back to being king over the people. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God.



King Manasseh was a new person. He took the image out of God's temple and gathered up all the foreign gods in Jerusalem. He threw them all away. He repaired the altar of the LORD and offered thank offerings.



Then he commanded his people to serve the LORD God of Israel. What a change in Manasseh!



When Manasseh died, his own son, Amon, returned to idol worship. But he did not humble himself before the Lord like Manasseh. As Amon sinned more and more, his servants finally murdered him, in his own house. He reigned only two years.

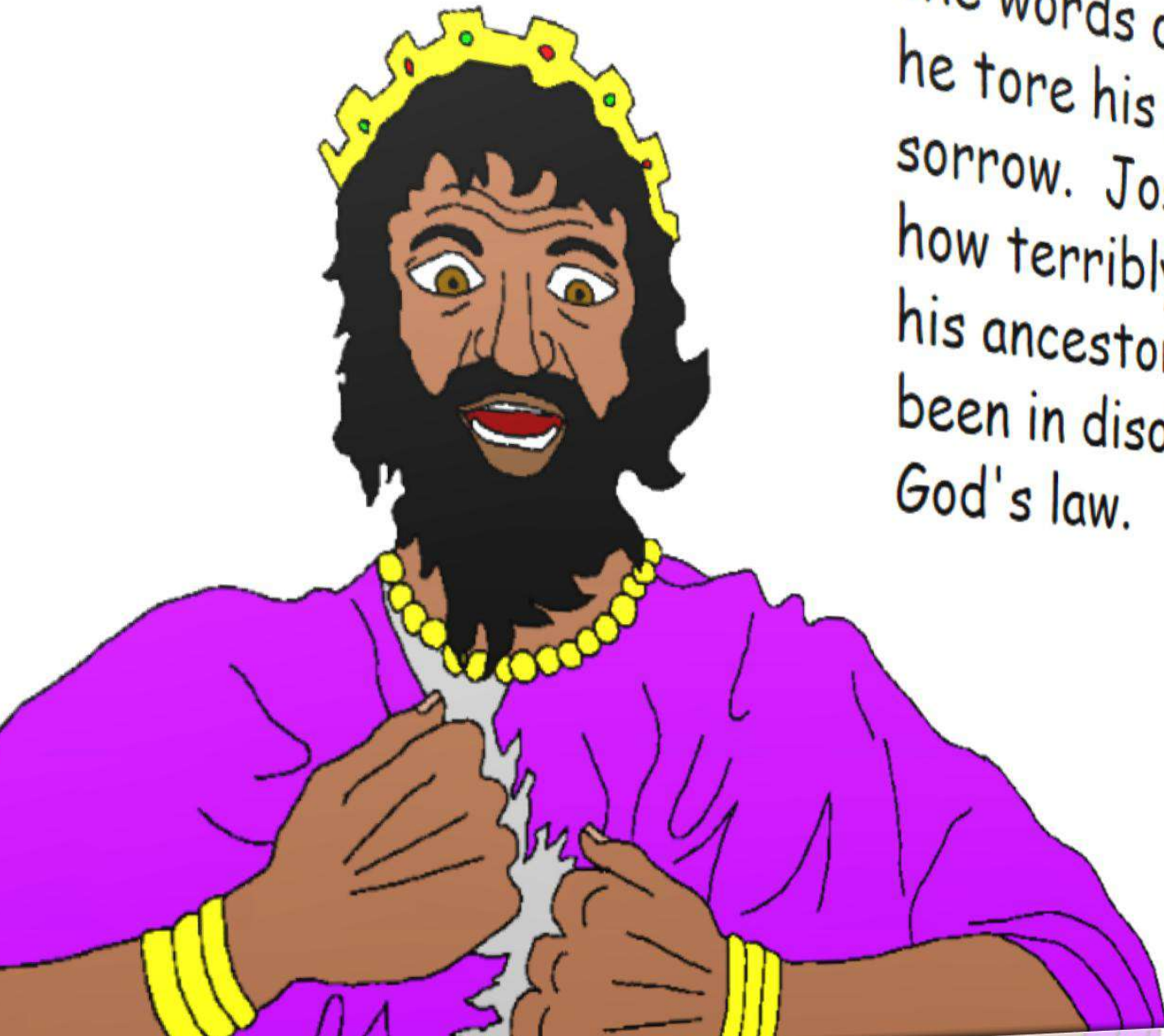


The next king, Josiah, was only eight years old. He reigned 31 years and did what was right in God's sight. He destroyed all false worship and all false gods. In fact, Josiah ground all the idols to powder.



Good king Josiah also cleaned and repaired the Temple of God. Among the rubbish a priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD given by Moses.





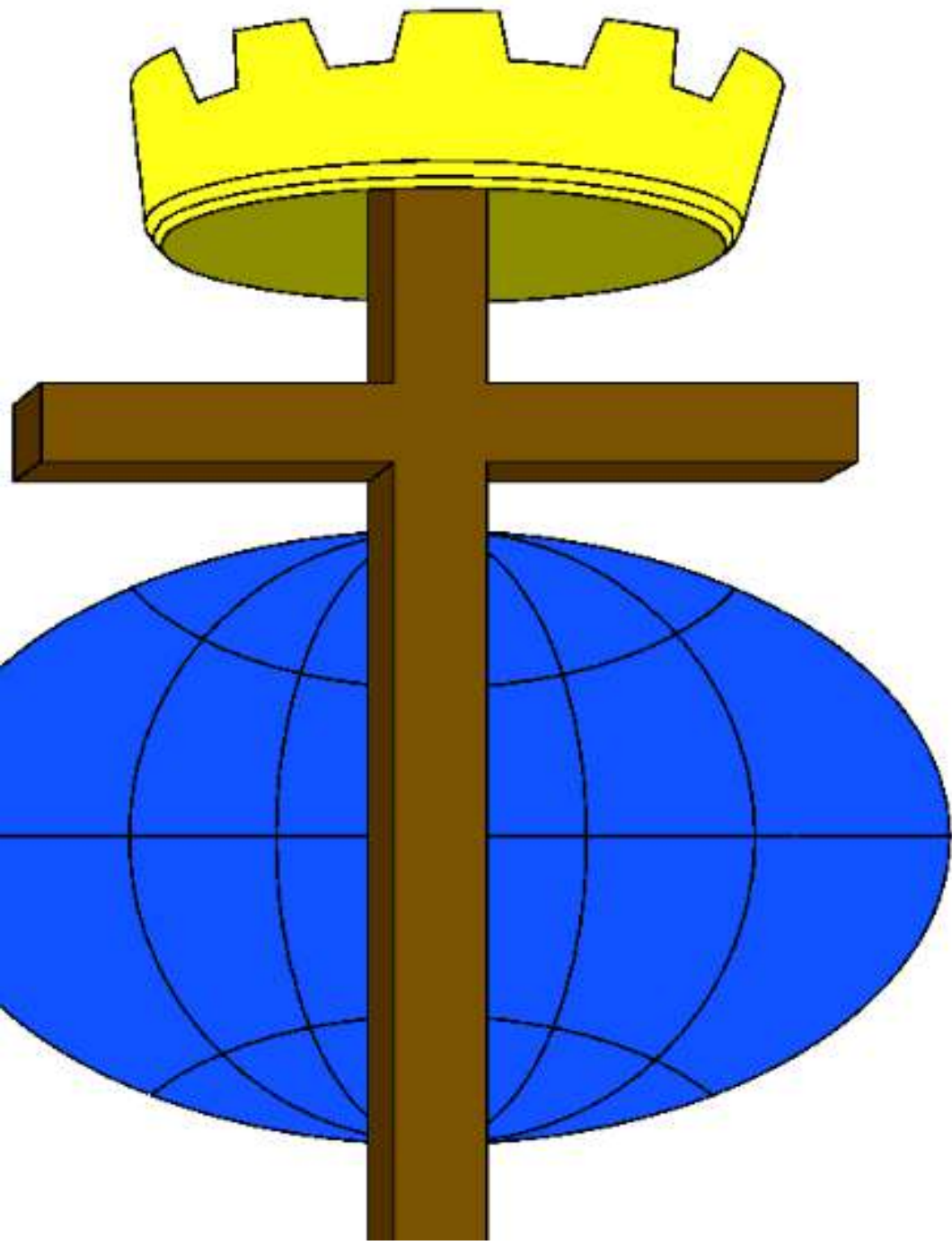
When the king heard the words of the Law, he tore his clothes in sorrow. Josiah knew how terribly wicked his ancestors had been in disobeying God's law.

A prophetess named Huldah gave God's message to Josiah. "Thus says the LORD, 'Behold, I will bring all the curses in the book upon this place because they have forsaken Me.'" But because Josiah was humble and obedient, this would not happen until after he died.



God helped Josiah to lead his people back to the LORD. One day, while leading his army in battle, Josiah was badly wounded by an enemy archer. His servants took him home in a chariot to Jerusalem where he died. All his people mourned, and made up songs about good King Josiah.





Soon after, the kingdom ended. But someday, a king will reign again over Israel. His name is KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. When Jesus Christ came the first time, He was rejected and crucified. When Jesus Christ comes again, He will not only be king over Israel, but over the whole earth.