

# Who was Hilkipah in the Bible?

The name Hilkipah literally means “portion of YHWH” or “YHWH is my portion.” This name would be especially fitting for a priest because, in Deuteronomy 18:1-2, God says that the tribe of Levi will not receive an allotment of land, but “the Lord himself is their inheritance.” The Levites’ identity would not be found in a physical territory in Israel but in their service to the God of Israel. Likewise, the Lord took the Levites as a special offering to Himself, instead of the firstborn from all the other tribes (Numbers 3:12). So, the Lord was the inheritance of the Levites, and the Levites were a special offering to the Lord. Of course, all of the priests came from the tribe of Levi.

The name Hilkipah is used 31 times in the Old Testament to refer to several different individuals.

In Nehemiah 12:7, Hilkipah is listed as one of the priests during the time of Joshua the high priest after the exile.

In 1 Chronicles 26:11 Hilkipah is listed as one of the gatekeepers in the temple.

The palace administrator under Hezekiah is Eliakim, son of Hilkipah (2 Kings 18:18, 26, 37; Isaiah 22:20; 36:3, 22). Eliakim figures into the story somewhat prominently, but we know little about Hilkipah other than he was the father of the palace administrator.

The most prominent of the Bible’s Hilkipahs is the priest who served under King Josiah. He is the one who found the Book of the Law when the temple was being restored. He helped Josiah in collecting money to repair the temple and to enact the reforms that were necessary (2 Kings 22:4, 8, 10, 12, 14; 23:4, 24; 2 Chronicles 34:9, 1, 15, 18, 20,

22; 35:8).

We are told that Jeremiah is the son of Hilkiah (Jeremiah 1:1). We do not know if he is the same Hilkiah that found the Book of the Law. Based on the fact that Jeremiah began his ministry during the reign of Josiah (Jeremiah 1:1-3), that link is possible. However, since Hilkiah is such a prominent figure, and Jeremiah's father is simply described as "one of the priests at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin" instead of "a priest in Jerusalem" or "the one who found the Book of the Law," it is perhaps unlikely.

In the final analysis, the men named Hilkiah in the Old Testament all play supporting roles in the unfolding of God's story. Some seem to be minor players, and some are known simply as the father of a more prominent son. Even Hilkiah the priest who served under Josiah, the most prominent Hilkiah in the Old Testament, still had a supporting role. This is entirely appropriate for someone named Hilkiah, "the Lord is my portion-my inheritance."

In a sense, every Christian should be a Hilkiah. It is the Lord, not an earthly inheritance or a great name for ourselves (even if the great name is built in ministry) that we should be pursuing. Saul the Pharisee was a man who was making a name for himself. He had a stellar religious pedigree and was zealous in service and obedience to the law (Philippians 3:4-6). Yet, compared to Christ, none of that meant anything to him. "But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes

from God on the basis of faith” (Philippians 3:7-9).