

2 Kings Lesson 22

2 Kings Chapter 22

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Memory verses for this week: *Job 13:13 Hold your peace, let me alone, that I may speak, and let come on me what will.*

Introduction: In chapter 21, we covered the reigns of both Manasseh and Amon as the end drew near of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Both kings were wicked, unlike Hezekiah which was Manasseh's father.

In this chapter, notwithstanding the wickedness of his father and grandfather before him, Josiah turned out to be one of the greatest kings of Judah. During his reign, a great revival broke out in the land. The Law of God was recognized and God granted a stay of judgment against Judah in recognition of the righteousness of King Josiah.

I. Josiah Begins to Reign at 8 Years of Age

2Ki 22:1 Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath.

2Ki 22:2 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.

As a little boy of eight, Josiah ascended to the throne of Israel. His reign would come to an end by his ill advised expedition against the Egyptians. His mother (Jedidah) is noted who evidently was a wife of Amon. She was the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath. Nothing more is known of her. Amon was only 16 years old when he fathered Josiah by Jedidah.

It is apparent that young Josiah had godly influence throughout his youth. Whether that was through his mother or others is not recorded.

His godly character is summarized in that:

- (1) He did that which was right,
- (2) He walked in the way of David his forefather.
- (3) He did not deviate in the least from so ordering his life.

Josiah focused his life in the center of God's will on a constant basis and departed not there from.

2Ki 22:3 And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, that the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe, to the house of the LORD, saying,

When Josiah was 26 years old, he sent Shaphan, his secretary of state, to the Temple which had fallen into disrepair after more than a half-century of disregard by Manasseh and Amon.

2Ki 22:4 Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may sum the silver which is brought into the house of the LORD, which the keepers of the door have gathered of the people:

2Ki 22:5 And let them deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD: and let them give it to the doers of the work which is in the house of the LORD, to repair the breaches of the house,

2Ki 22:6 Unto carpenters, and builders, and masons, and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house.

Shaphan was to direct the high priest (Hilkiah) to count and account of the funds which had been received at the Temple from the people of Judah. The treasurers of the Temple were then to present these funds to contractors for the repair of the Temple. It is apparent that the Temple had fallen into disrepair. Josiah therefore directed that immediate steps be taken in hiring contractors to begin repairs thereon.

2Ki 22:7 Howbeit there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand, because they dealt faithfully.

2Ki 22:8 And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.

2Ki 22:9 And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said, Thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD.

2Ki 22:10 And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king.

Because of the urgency of the need and the reputation of those hired, there wasn't any negotiation of cost. The funds were simply delivered to their hands. The integrity of the contractors and the nature of the work was such that they trusted them in the over disbursement of funds. Any funds that were left when the work was completed would be returned to the temple. These were clearly very faithful men—men of integrity and honor. There are still folk today who strive to live to that level of faith. Their reputation precedes them just as the repairmen mentioned here.

Verse 8 records the work progressing in the renovation of the Temple. Hilkiah the

high priest and found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. He told Shaphan the scribe and then gave him the book and he read it. It is apparent that the Word of God had fallen into disuse. Though not lost, it was no longer read. Shaphan reported back to the king regarding the progress of the Temple restoration project. Almost as an afterthought, he also reported to Josiah that Hilkiah the priest had given him a book. Shaphan read the book before the king.

II. Josiah is Moved When He Hears the Word of God

2Ki 22:11 And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes.

2Ki 22:12 And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah a servant of the king's, saying,

2Ki 22:13 Go ye, enquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us.

As Josiah heard the Law of God, he was convicted of the sin of the nation and of his forefathers. He ripped his royal clothing as a demonstration of his despair and sorrow. “By the law is the knowledge of sin” the bible tells us. It is apparent that even godly Josiah had never been directly exposed to the Word of God.

Heb 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Heb 4:13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Upon hearing God’s Law and warning against Israel if they forsook God’s Law, Josiah sent a delegation of high officials to enquire of the Lord regarding Judah. He realized, for the first time in his life, the impending wrath of God against his kingdom.

2Ki 22:14 So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they communed with her.

2Ki 22:15 And she said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me,

2Ki 22:16 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read:

2Ki 22:17 Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched.

Huldah the prophetess was keeper of the wardrobe in the college at Jerusalem. The fact that the royal delegation went to a female prophet indicates there was no other prophet or priest in the land which had any power with God.

Apparently, Huldah was the only such godly person in the realm. The Lord who honors His Word concerning a remnant of righteousness often preserves a remnant of righteousness for His own purpose. When Christ returns, there will still be a few serving him in the church no matter how evil this world becomes.

In verse 15, God had a message for Judah and Josiah. Huldah clearly spoke on behalf of God with the declaration, "Thus saith the LORD." She had a message from God to be delivered to the king. That message was, "Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read."

It may be that Josiah had heard or read Leviticus 26:14-45 or Deuteronomy 28:15-68. There, God warned of the curses He would bring against the people for their disobedience to His Word.

Specifically and on behalf of God, Huldah warned it was "because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched".

Judah had forsaken their God by turning to other idols and gods, provoking Him to anger. His wrath was impending against Jerusalem. Moreover, nothing they could do would prevent God's wrath from falling upon them.

2Ki 22:18 But to the king of Judah which sent you to enquire of the LORD, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, As touching the words which thou hast heard;

F. B. Meyer in his commentary speaks this of Josiah.

Josiah's fears were deeply stirred by the evils which the Law of the Lord clearly indicated as imminent, and he immediately sent for advice to the prophetess Huldah, who was held in great veneration. Her answer was full of gentle kindness. Though the king's punishment could not be averted, it should nevertheless be postponed. How quick is God to notice the tears of genuine contrition and to meet the soul that seeks to do His will! If only the whole nation had been equally repentant, its fate would have doubtless been altered.

It is remarkable, however, that even in Josiah's case the prediction of the prophetess was not realized. He died in battle, and his dead body was brought to Jerusalem amid mourning that became proverbial, 2Ki 23:30; Zec 12:2. Why this apparent breach of promise? The answer is suggested by our Lord's temptation. He refused to make

bread of stones, because of His absolute faith in God, and when Satan tempted him still further to manifest that faith by casting Himself from the beetling Temple crag, he again refused because such an act was not in the scope of the Father's plan. On the other hand, Josiah, disregarding all counsels to the contrary, needlessly flung himself into the fray between Egypt and Babylon and there lost his life. "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God!"

2Ki 22:19 Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith the LORD.

John Gill said this about how humility is greatly respected by God:

Because thine heart was tender,.... Soft like wax, and susceptible of impressions; or was "moved", or "trembled", as the Targum; for God has respect to such as are of contrite hearts, and tremble at his word, Isa 66:2,

and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord; external humiliation, such as in Ahab, was regarded by the Lord, much more internal and cordial humiliation is regarded by him, see 1Ki 21:29,

when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse; as in Lev 26:1.

and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; as expressive of the inward contrition, sorrow, and grief of his heart:

2Ki 22:20 Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word again.

However, the LORD by the mouth of Huldah offered this reprieve for Josiah.

"But to the king of Judah which sent you to enquire of the LORD, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, As touching the words which thou hast heard".

God was well aware of the character of Josiah and his attempts to restore righteousness to the kingdom. God noticed how that Josiah had a tender heart and humbled himself before the LORD. Because of his godly sorrow over the sin of his kingdom, The Lord informed Josiah that He had heard his prayer.

God finds humility and a contrite spirit to be of great value in a man or a woman.

***Psa 51:17** The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*

Isa 57:15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Isa 57:16 For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.

The wrath of God would not be turned away from Judah. However, because of the righteous heart, humility, and godly sorrow of Josiah, God promised that His wrath would not come in Josiah's lifetime. It would be postponed. Though Josiah would die an untimely death, it would not be connected with God's wrath against Judah. His righteous spirit had deferred the judgment of God. It would still come, but not in Josiah's lifetime.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.