

Because they have forsaken me and burned incense to other gods and aroused my anger by all the idols their hands have made, my anger will burn against this place and will not be quenched.' Tell the king of Judah, Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before the Lord you will be buried in peace. Your eyes will not see all the disaster I am going to bring on this place." (2 Kings 22:16-20)

2.4 REPENT

- Having read Deuteronomy Josiah recognises that his people need to get themselves back into a right relationship with God. They have as a result of extremely poor leadership from Josiah's father, Ahaz and his grand father Manasseh, wandered far away from God worshipping all kinds of other gods and idols.
- Josiah calls the people together, he reads the word of God to them and their collective response is to repent: *'Then all the people pledged themselves to the covenant.'* (2 Kings 23:3). The people promise with their lips to turn away from their idols and return to God. The problem is, that like many of us, we too profess with our lips, but fail to change our lives or hearts.

2.5 Conclusion

- So where does the Bible stand in our lives? Do we **read** it? Do we genuinely **respond** to what it says. Are we prepared to **repent**? Do we regard the Bible as daily spiritual food that nourishes our souls? Do we believe that the Bible is God's word, relevant to our lives today? Do we treasure it as God's operating instructions? Do we view the Bible as God's love letter written to us? Is the Bible a map that we use to navigate our lives?

3. Questions to consider at home

- 3.1 *'All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.'* (2 Timothy 3:15-17) Do you agree?
- 3.2 Why was Josiah so shocked, frightened, and humbled by what he read in the Book of Deuteronomy?
- 3.3 How would you describe the Bible to a trusted friend?
- 3.4 A close friend is finding it difficult to read the Bible. What suggestions do you have to make this easier?
- 3.5 A fellow Christian shares with you her frustration with the Bible: "It is such a useless book," she says, "especially when it comes to issues like euthanasia and abortion." How would you respond?

Matthew Street 19th September 2021



The Parish of Peasedown St John

2 Kings 22:1-20, 23:1-3 - Josiah - God consistently responds to those with repentant and humble hearts.

Passage, Talk Notes and Questions

Please feel free to take these talk notes home with you and you may wish to find some time during this week to consider the questions below.

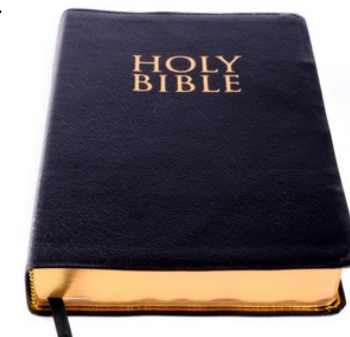
1. Talk Passage - 2 Kings 22:1-20, 23:1-5

1 The Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one years. His mother's name was Jedidah daughter of Adaiah; she was from Bozkath. 2 He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and followed completely the ways of his father David, not turning aside to the right or to the left. 3 In the eighteenth year of his reign, King Josiah sent the secretary, Shaphan son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, to the temple of the Lord. He said: 4 "Go up to Hilkiyah the high priest and have him get ready the money that has been brought into the temple of the Lord, which the doorkeepers have collected from the people. 5 Have them entrust it to the men appointed to supervise the work on the temple. And have these men pay the workers who repair the temple of the Lord— 6 the carpenters, the builders and the masons. Also have them purchase timber and dressed stone to repair the temple. 7 But they need not account for the money entrusted to them, because they are honest in their dealings." 8 Hilkiyah the high priest said to Shaphan the secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in the temple of the Lord." He gave it to Shaphan, who read it. 9 Then Shaphan the secretary went to the king and reported to him: "Your officials have paid out the money that was in the temple of the Lord and have entrusted it to the workers and supervisors at the temple." 10 Then Shaphan the secretary informed the king, "Hilkiyah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read from it in the presence of the king.

11 When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his robes. 12 He gave these orders to Hilkiyah the priest, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Akbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan the secretary and Asaiah the king's attendant: 13 "Go and inquire of the Lord for me and for the people and for all Judah about what is written in this book that has been found. Great is the Lord's anger that burns against us because those who have gone before us have not obeyed the words of this book; they have not acted in accordance with all that is written there concerning us."

14 Hilkiyah the priest, Ahikam, Akbor, Shaphan and Asaiah went to speak to the prophet Huldah, who was the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe. She lived in Jerusalem, in the New Quarter.

15 She said to them, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Tell the man who sent you to me, 16 "This is what the Lord says: I am going to bring disaster on this place and its people, according to everything written in the book the king of Judah has read. 17 Because they have forsaken me and burned incense to other gods and aroused my anger by all the idols their hands have made, my anger will burn against this place and will not be quenched.' 18 Tell the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the Lord, 'This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says concerning the words you heard: 19 Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before the Lord when you heard what I have spoken against this place and its people—that they would become a curse and be laid waste—and



because you tore your robes and wept in my presence, I also have heard you, declares the Lord. **20** Therefore I will gather you to your ancestors, and you will be buried in peace. Your eyes will not see all the disaster I am going to bring on this place.”

So they took her answer back to the king.

1 Then the king called together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. **2** He went up to the temple of the Lord with the people of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests and the prophets—all the people from the least to the greatest. He read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant, which had been found in the temple of the Lord. **3** The king stood by the pillar and renewed the covenant in the presence of the Lord—to follow the Lord and keep his commands, statutes and decrees with all his heart and all his soul, thus confirming the words of the covenant written in this book. Then all the people pledged themselves to the covenant.

2. Talk Notes

2.1 Background

- It is 622b.c. Josiah has been on the throne of Judah (the southern kingdom) for 18 years. (*In the eighteenth year of his reign*’ 2 Kings 22:3) He is 26 years old having come to the throne aged only 8 in 640b.c.
- In the eighteenth year of his reign Josiah commissions a renovation of the Temple so that the proper worship of God can be restored once again: *“Go up to Hilkiah the high priest and have him get ready the money that has been brought into the temple of the Lord, which the doorkeepers have collected from the people. Have them entrust it to the men appointed to supervise the work on the temple. And have these men pay the workers who repair the temple of the Lord— the carpenters, the builders and the masons. Also have them purchase timber and dressed stone to repair the temple.”* (2 Kings 22:4-6)
- During the renovation works Hilkiah, the high priest, comes across the book of the law: *“Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the secretary, “I have found the Book of the Law in the temple of the Lord.”* (2 Kings 22:8) which has been unread and collecting dust somewhere for many years.
- It is highly likely that the book Hilkiah has discovered is Deuteronomy the last book of the *Torah* (the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy)
- According to google the average American household contains no less than seven copies of the Bible. How many copies do you own? How many copies are collecting dust, unread, somewhere in your house?
- In 2 Kings chapters 22 and 23 we see three ‘R’s at work:
 - i) READ - The Bible is read for the first time for many years.
 - ii) RESPOND - Different people respond to what it says in different ways.
 - iii) REPENT - Lives are changed as a result of reading it.

2.2 READ

- The first person to read the dusty forgotten Book of Deuteronomy was Hilkiah the priest. He then hands on the book to Shaphan the secretary who then reads it to Josiah, the king: *Then Shaphan the secretary informed the king, “Hilkiah the priest has given me a book.” And Shaphan read from it in the presence of the king.* (2 Kings 22:10)
- Josiah then has the book read to all the people: *“Then the king called together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. He went up to the temple of the Lord with the people of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests and the prophets—all the people from the least to the greatest. He read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant, which had been found in the temple of the Lord.”* (2 Kings 23:1-2)
- How do we view the Bible? If we came across a copy would we open it up with interest

or just cast it away as a rather dull, outdated rulebook, full of contradictions, that is irrelevant to the lives of 21st Century people or do you believe that the Bible is the word of God.

- Over the last 2000 years people have come to find that the Bible is:
 - **Popular:** Homer has been translated into forty languages, Shakespeare into sixty, the Bible into well over two thousand—ten times more than any other book. It’s every publisher’s dream. It’s the world’s bestseller— approximately 50 million copies of the Bible sell every year.
 - **Powerful:** Throughout history the Bible has demonstrated that it has the power to change individuals and it has the power to change societies.
 - **Precious:** The Queen at her coronation was handed a Bible with these words: ‘We present you with this book, the most valuable thing that this world affords.’ Now, why is that? - The Bible has been described as:
 - a) The **operating instructions** for life - God created us *“God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”* (Genesis 1:26-27) The Bible is often referred to as the operating instructions for humankind written by God to us. Paul writing to Timothy states that *‘All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.’* (2 Timothy 3:15-17)
 - b) A **love letter** - *You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me’* (John 5:39-40). God who desires to be in relationship with his creation has written us a ‘love-letter’.
 - c) A **Map** - *“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.”* (Psalm 119:105) The Bible gives us guidance for life.
 - d) As **Food** - *My son, pay attention to what I say; listen closely to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to a man’s whole body.* (Proverbs 4:20-22) As we pray to God, he responds through his word. The Bible is the spiritual food or the oxygen of our relationship with God
- But is this how we view the Bible? How often do we look at it? Do we see the Bible as God’s inspired word? Do we see it as God’s operating instructions for our life? Do we see it as God’s ‘love letter’ written to us? Do we turn it when we need guidance, seeking God’s will rather than our own? Do we see the Bible as vital spiritual food?

2.3 RESPOND

- Having read *‘the Book of the Law’* Hilkiah’s response is to share it with Shaphan. Shaphan’s response is to share it with Josiah the king. How often do we encourage others to read God’s word?
- Josiah’s response to hearing God’s word was to tear his robes: *When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his robes.*’ (2 Kings 22:11). He was shocked, frightened, and humbled by what he read. He realised what a great gap existed between his efforts to lead his people to God and God’s expectations for his chosen nation.
- Josiah then sends court officials off to inquire of Huldah, the prophetess, what God was going to do: *Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Akbor, Shaphan and Asaiah went to speak to the prophet Huldah, who was the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe. She lived in Jerusalem, in the New Quarter.* (2 Kings 22:12)
- Huldah responds by telling Josiah that judgement is coming to the southern kingdom of Judah because of their disobedience but not to Josiah because of his response to reading the word of God: *“This is what the Lord says: I am going to bring disaster on this place and its people, according to everything written in the book the king of Judah has read.*