

September 21, 2025

“Hilkiah’s Discovery”
Lesson 3

2 Chronicles 34:15-22, 26-27

Intro

Following Hezekiah’s reign (see lesson 2), the temple in Jerusalem fell into disrepair and neglect. Much of this occurred during the reign of Manasseh, who ruled for over 50 years. He “did evil in the sight of the Lord” (2 Chr. 21:2); he reestablished the practices of idolatry that Hezekiah got rid of. Scripture says that Manasseh’s actions were a reason Judah faced disaster, destruction, and exile.

Manasseh’s son Amon succeeded him. He also was evil, worshipping idols like his father. Two years into his reign, he was assassinated and his 8-year old son Josiah replaced him as king. Josiah’s reign of roughly 30 years was the opposite of his father’s and grandfather’s. At age 16, he began to seek after God. Four years later, he made efforts to cleanse both Judah and Jerusalem of idolatry. At age 26, he took steps to repair the temple. In the year’s preceding this work, almost no faithful worship had occurred in the temple. Restoring the temple was the highlight reform of Josiah’s reign. It also produced an unexpected find, which is what today’s lesson is all about.

Read 2 Chronicles 34:15-22

1. vs. 15: Hilkiah was the high priest during Josiah’s reign

He is also the great-grandfather of Ezra

Saphan worked with the group overseeing repairs to the temple

His work as secretary seems to focus on protecting and maintaining royal documents

The renovation uncovered many buried items, including money (34:17)

They find the Book of the Law, which had been given to Moses and passed down

The book is most likely scrolls, since bookbinding had not been used at this time

Nothing is said about how or why the Book of the Law was lost

It could be it was hidden from Manasseh and Amon for protection

It could have been put in a secure place during Hezekiah’s restorations

2. vs. 16: Saphan tells Josiah that the work is proceeding as it was ordered

This work would include carpenters, stone masons, as well as other laborers

3. vs. 17: The money that was found in the temple was used to pay the workers

4. vs. 18: Saphan tells the king of the found Book of the Law and reads some of it to Josiah

First, Saphan tells Josiah how he came to have the book

A “chain of custody” is established, giving the book credibility

Saphan is the secretary over government documents, so it was given to him

Many scholars believe the book found was Deuteronomy

Two verses in Deuteronomy would have weight at this moment

Deut. 17:19 says the king should read the law “all the days of his life”

Deut. 31:9-13 prescribes public reading of the law before the whole nation

These words have not been read publicly for many decades

The king and all with him are hearing these things for the first time

5. vs. 19: Josiah reacts to hearing these words by tearing his robes
 - This is a sign of remorse, humiliation, and repentance
 - This reaction shows Josiah is responding God's word sincerely
 - He may also be seeing how far Judah has fallen from a complete worship of God
 6. vs. 20: Josiah gives orders to a small, select group of his court
 - Hilkiah and Saphan are both there
 - Saphan's son Ahikam is there
 - He protected Jeremiah at one point (Jer. 26:24)
 - Abdon is mentioned in the parallel account in 2 Kings 22
 - His name there is spelled Akbor, and his father's name is changed to Micaiah
 - This is the only Scripture mention of Asiah, the king's attendant
 7. vs. 21: Josiah seeks to know the full meaning and significance of what is written in the Book
 - He sends the five in vs. 20 to "inquire of the Lord" to get the fuller understanding
 - This is not for himself alone
 - He knows what is found affects Israel and Judah both
 - Josiah recognizes the sufferings of Judah and Israel are a result of disobedience
 - They have not been doing the things written in the Book
 - Instead, they have been worshipping false idols
 8. vs. 22: To fulfill the king's request in vs. 20, the group consults the prophet Huldah
 - She is one of several female prophets mentioned in Scripture
 - These include Miriam (Ex. 15:20), Deborah (Judges 4:4), Noadiah (Neh. 6:14), and Anna (Luke 2:36)
 - Huldah's husband Shallum is the "keeper of the wardrobe"
 - He likely takes care of the priestly garments
 - They likely would have lived somewhere reasonably close to the temple
 - Since Shallum works in the temple, and Huldah is a known prophet, they know the law
 - Huldah is an ideal person to ask about the Book of the Law
- Read 2 Chronicles 34:26-27
9. vs. 26: Huldah calls Josiah "the king of Judah"
 - This is verification that he is rightfully king, and therefore the responsible party
 - Josiah has taken the right action in asking qualified people to inform him of God's desires
 - Huldah gives this information in the next verse
 10. vs. 27: Huldah says God is pleased with Josiah's response
 - Josiah humbled himself and tore his robes and wept
 - Josiah's showed what kind of heart he had by his response to hearing the words read
 - Because of this response, God says through Huldah "I have heard you"
 - In the rest of the chapter, Huldah reveals God's directions
 - In vs. 28, He says Josiah will be "buried in peace"

God also says that Josiah will not see the disasters that will come on the people
Because of his humility and desire to obey God, He was spared

Application: Josiah's attitude and response serve as a model for us. He listened attentively to the word, which is an attitude of being receptive to what the Word says. He was open to hearing what was said. For us, this might include setting aside any defensive tendencies, or desires to soften the words, or and self-justification. We are to set aside our expectations, and let God's Word speak to us and transform us.

After listening to the Word, we submit to it and choose to obey it. We commit ourselves to follow it. Our hearts need to be as receptive and prepared to hear as Josiah's was. If we follow Josiah's pattern, we will hear, obey, and be changed.

Prayer: Father God, soften our hearts so we might obey Your Word quickly and readily. Help us to seek You and to listen for Your voice. We desire to submit to Your guidance for our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.