

March 21, 2021

“Prophet of Wisdom”  
Lesson 3 of Unit

2 Kings 22:14-20

### **Intro**

Some historical background is needed to fully understand and appreciate this week's passage. The King of Judah in our passage is Josiah, who reigned from 640-609 BC. He was a godly king who was tireless in his attempts to purify Judah's worship as well as the temple.

His great-grandfather was Hezekiah (reigned 724-695 BC). He also instituted religious reforms toward having proper worship. Hezekiah's son was Manasseh (reigned 694-642 BC). Manasseh rebuilt the pagan worship shrines his father had torn down, and he encouraged worship of the Baals, the sun, the moon, and the stars. He sacrificed his own son in child sacrifice and built pagan altars inside the temple. Later in his reign, he repented of his sin. But the evil he did was a large reason for Judah's later exile.

Manasseh was followed by his son, Amon (reigned 642-640 BC), returned Israel to the idolatry his father has repented of. He was assassinated in his palace after reigning only two years. His son, Josiah, was chosen “by the people of the land” to become king. Josiah was only 8 years old at the time.

In Josiah's 12<sup>th</sup> year as king (about age 20), he begins purging the land of the pagan idols and shines. About six years later, during a temple renovation Josiah ordered, The Book of the Law was found, where it had either been lost or purposefully hidden. Josiah's reaction to hearing the words of the Law are seen in today's text. He realizes Judah is guilty of being unfaithful to God, and sends a delegation to the prophet Huldah about what God's punishment would be, and when.

### **Read 2 Kings 22:14-20**

#### 1. vs. 14: The delegation

Hilkiah is not just a priest, but the High Priest of the Temple

Ahikam is from a family that are devoted followers of the Lord

Akbor is an official in Josiah's court, and will become an official in Jehoiakim's court

Asaiah is the king's attendant (see 22:12)

This group has two devoted followers of God and two people loyal to the king. All these people seek the same thing as Josiah—God's word on what will happen to Judah

#### The prophetess

Huldah only shows up here and in a parallel account in 2 Chronicles 34.

Nothing else is known about her

Jewish tradition says that she was buried in Jerusalem

This is an honor reserved for those in King David's family

If Huldah is related to David, that indicates this delegation feels comfortable going to her, as Josiah is in David's line (2 Chron. 34:3)

Huldah follows other female prophets

Miriam (Exodus 15:20)

Deborah (Judges 4:4)

Wife of Isaiah (Isaiah 8:3)

Her husband Shallum may have been Jeremiah's uncle (see Jer. 32:7)

It is not clear where the New Quarter of Jerusalem was located

2. vs. 15: What Huldah says to the delegation

She starts with a very typical prophetic saying: "This is what the Lord says"

This phrase occurs over 500 times in the OT

The use of this phrase marks her as a true prophet

She also uses the phrase, "The Lord, the God of Israel"

This indicates the message is God's not hers

vs. 16: She says again, "This is what the Lord says"

This tells the delegation again that the words are God's, not hers

She says God is going to "bring disaster on this place and its people"

"This place" is most likely Jerusalem along with the temple

"its people" are then the nation of Judah, again Jerusalem particularly

"According to everything written in the book the king of Judah has read"

Whichever text was found during the temple renovation

Deuteronomy seems likely (see Ch.28)

Moses has warned of people's destruction if they disobey God

The disaster is best understood as a judgment via physical calamity

3. vs. 17: The specific charges are announced by Huldah

The people have forsaken God

Burned incense to other gods

Made idols with the own hands

The result: God's anger will burn and not be quenched

The people have reached the limit of God's mercy

5. vs. 18: God's message for Josiah through Huldah

She specifically mentions "The king of Judah"

In vs.15, she simply referred to him as "the man"

She also specifically mentions Josiah's reason for sending the delegation

"Who sent you to inquire of the Lord"

The original Hebrew phrase translated as this only happens 6x in the OT

It always occurs in times of great seriousness

Other references: Gen. 25:22, I Ki 22:8, Ezek. 20:1, 2 Chr 16:12, 22:9

She says for the third time, "This is what the Lord says"

This stresses both that it is God's word, and the reality of what will happen

She uses the phrase, “The Lord, the God of Israel” , not just the God of Judah  
This shows that God is connected to all of Israel, not just Judah

6. vs. 19: God’s response to Josiah’s reaction to hearing the words of the Law  
“Your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself”  
Josiah tore his robes, a sign of great grief (2 Kings 22:11)  
God heard Josiah, saw his weeping, saw his heart

Humility before God has altered negative events before this  
God delays the fall of King Ahab’s dynasty (I Kings 21:29)  
Postpones judgment in Hezekiah’s reign (2 Chron. 32:26)  
Restored Manasseh (2 Chron 33:10-13)  
Humility stressed in NT as well as repentance  
Matt. 18:4, James 4:6, 10; I Peter 5:5

7. vs. 20: God’s Promises to Josiah  
Josiah will not have to see the destruction that God is bringing  
He will be given the honor of a righteous person  
Gathered to his ancestors (those faithful to God)  
Buried in peace  
Perhaps a peaceful funeral, but more likely at peace with God

The delegation takes Huldah’s message back to Josiah  
Can have confidence in it because it has been established as God’s message  
Josiah has been confirmed as righteous before God

Application: Josiah dies in battle in 609 BC. A little over 20 years later in 586 BC, the Babylonians destroy Jerusalem and the temple.

This passage reminds us of the value and importance of God’s Word. It may have been lost physically in the temple (sound a little unlikely, doesn’t it), but we know of people who have Bibles that they rarely read. That sounds about the same.

Josiah’s reaction to the Law shows a soft and obedient heart, which God is obviously pleased with. He did several things that we can do as well: showed remorse for the sins of the people, sought godly insight about what God’s Word said, surround himself with faithful and supportive people, and took action upon hearing God’s Word.

Prayer: Father God, thank You for being a God of mercy and grace. Forgive us where we have failed to respond correctly in faith and actions to Your Word. In Jesus’ name, Amen.