

FPFWC Christian Development



Faithful Prophets

March 2021

Spring Quarter

March 20, 2021

Lesson #3 -Prophet of Wisdom

SCRIPTURE TEXT – 2 Kings 22:14-20

ICE BREAKERS-

1. Why is humility an important part of our spiritual life?
2. What is one concrete step you can take to make sure that God's Word is not lost to you and your family?

Key Verse- 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.—2 Kings 22:19

LESSON BACKGROUND – The events recorded in this week's text took place in the days of Josiah, king of Judah (reigned 640–609 BC). He was a godly king known for his tireless attempts to purify Judah's worship and the temple (2 Kings 22:1–23:25; 2 Chronicles 34:1–35:19).

In the years preceding Josiah's rise to the throne, the kings of Judah had vacillated between devotion to the Lord and to idols. Josiah's great-grandfather Hezekiah (reigned 724–695 BC) had instituted a set of religious reforms in Judah that were intended to restore proper worship of the Lord (2 Chronicles 29–31). But gross unfaithfulness to the God of Israel characterized the reign of Hezekiah's son Manasseh (694–642 BC). He rebuilt pagan worship shrines his father had destroyed. Manasseh encouraged worship of the Baals as well as that of the sun, moon, and stars (example: 2 Kings 23:11). Manasseh went so far as to offer his son in child sacrifice and built pagan altars within the Lord's temple itself (2 Kings 21:1–18). Late in his reign, Manasseh repented of his sin (2 Chronicles 33:10–17). But his former evil contributed directly in Judah's ultimate destruction and exile (2 Kings 21:10–16; 23:26; 24:3–4).

Josiah's father, Amon (reigned 642–640 BC), returned to the idolatry that characterized the earlier years of Manasseh. King Amon was assassinated in a palace coup after a two-year reign, and the "people of the land" made his 8-year-old son Josiah king in his place (2 Kings 21:19–26; 2 Chronicles 33:20–25).

Godly advisers among Judah's aristocracy apparently influenced Josiah. Some are named in today's text. Other godly contemporaries included well-known prophets. Zephaniah, a descendant of King Hezekiah, prophesied during the reign of Josiah (Zephaniah 1:1). Jeremiah's prophetic ministry began in the thirteenth year of Josiah (Jeremiah 1:1–2), five years before this event. No doubt their ministries were an impetus in Josiah's reforms leading up to

these events. The result was that when Josiah was 16 years old, “he began to seek after the God of David his father” (2 Chronicles 34:3). In the twelfth year of Josiah’s reign, he began to purge the land of pagan idols and shrines (34:3–7).

About six years later, King Josiah ordered a renovation of the temple (2 Kings 22:3). The Book of the Law was found within the temple in the process (22:8). Scholars disagree regarding the exact identity of the book that was found. Some believe it was a copy of the entire Law of Moses (the first five books of the Old Testament, otherwise known as the Pentateuch). Others believe it was only the book of Deuteronomy or some portion of it. Sometime in the previous decades during the reigns of wicked Manasseh and Amon, the Book of the Law had been lost and forgotten. Or perhaps idolatrous priests intentionally “misplaced” it in order to hide the guilt of their own apostasy.

When Shaphan reported to Josiah on the progress of the repair project, Shaphan also alerted the king to the discovery of the book. Given Josiah’s reaction of distress to what he heard read from that book (see 2 Kings 22:11), Deuteronomy may well have been the book’s identity; it detailed the punishments Israel would suffer if the people failed to keep the covenant.

These curses would culminate in exile from the land (Deuteronomy 29:25–28). Realizing the guilt of Judah, Josiah commissioned a delegation to inquire of the Lord concerning the wrath that the king feared would soon be visited on him and his kingdom (2 Kings 22:12–13). A description of the nature of that delegation is how today’s lesson text opens.

LESSON COMMENTARY –

22:14–20. Four of Josiah’s representatives went to **Huldah the prophetess** to hear how the Lord felt about Israel’s sins and Josiah’s repentance (v. 14). Other prophets, like Jeremiah and Zephaniah, were contemporaries of the king, but a prophetess had Josiah’s ear. Huldah would not give her own opinion, but she clearly gave the king an answer to his request. She began the response by saying, **Thus says the LORD** (v. 15). God’s wrath was still burning against Judah, and it would not **be quenched** (v. 17). However, the heart of God was moved by Josiah’s humility and zeal for God’s honor. God said through the prophetess, **Because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before the LORD ... I will gather you to your fathers, and you will be gathered to your grave in peace, and your eyes will not see the all the evil which I will bring on this place** (vv. 19–20). Josiah would not live to see the destruction of Jerusalem and Judah taken captive to Babylon. Josiah would die in battle (cf. 23:29–30) but at peace with God.

LESSON NUGGET – The delegation in today’s text could have gone to the ancient equivalent of the small-town grocery store to complain about what was happening. Instead, they sought counsel with Huldah, who could give them a word from the Lord. When you face change, do you reinforce your

negative thinking by consulting with cynics of like mind, or do you find wisdom by seeking guidance from the Lord?

Sources: Moody Bible Commentary, Standard Lesson Commentary, The Essential Everyday Bible Commentary and Wiersbe Expository Outlines on the New Testament