

2Kings 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.

2Kings 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.

Josiah was 8 years old when he became king, and his reign lasted for 31 years in Jerusalem. His mother was Jedidah, daughter of Adaiah of Boscath. Josiah followed in the footsteps of King David and did what was right before the LORD; he faithfully chose to obey the LORD.

2Kings 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,

2Kings 22:4 Go up to Hilkiyah 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:

2Kings 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,

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

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

In the 18th year of his reign (over halfway through it), Josiah sent the scribe Shaphan, son of Azaliah, son of Meshullam, to Hilkiyah the priest with a message. He was to determine how much money the doorkeepers of the temple had gathered from the free will offerings of the people. He was then to deliver the money to those that supervised the upkeep of the house of the LORD to hire workers—the carpenters, builders and masons—to make the needed repairs and to purchase the timber and stone that was needed for those repairs.

I think it is significant that the historian noted that no accounting was required from the supervisors or workers because they were all trustworthy men. Wow! I know that are men like that out there today; but relatively speaking, it seems they are few.

The Chronicler fills in some information about the years preceding this time. It is noted that in the 8th year of his reign (age 16) Josiah began to seek after God. This indicates a transition from child to adult and recognizing his accountability to the LORD. In the 12th year he began take significant action to purge Judah of the high places, groves, idols and altars that were dedicated to false gods.

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

2Kings 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.

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

Hilkiyah the high priest told Shaphan the scribe that he had found the book of the law in the temple—probably the book of Deuteronomy. He then gave it to Shaphan to read. Shaphan went to King Josiah and told him that the money had been gathered and given to the supervisors and the workmen to repair the temple. Shaphan then showed the king “the book” that Hilkiyah had found and read it to him.

2Kings 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.

2Kings 22:12 And the king commanded Hilkiyah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiyah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah a servant of the king's, saying,

2Kings 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.

When Josiah heard God's word, he tore his clothes in deep distress. The king then commanded Hilkiyah the high priest, Ahikam, son of Shaphan, Achbor, son of Michaiyah, Shaphan the scribe and Asahiah his servant to go and seek direction from the LORD concerning what he had heard from God's word. Josiah declared that he knew that the LORD was angry with His people because they had disobeyed His word and broken their covenant with Him. The curses recorded in Deuteronomy are very specific.

When our hearts are tender before the LORD, our spirit will always respond appropriately—whether with conviction, motivation, comfort, encouragement, etc.

Commentators note that Ahikam was a friend of Jeremiah's.

Jeremiah 26:24 “Nevertheless the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, that they should not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death.”

2Kings 22:14 So Hilkiyah 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.

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

2Kings 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:

2Kings 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.

The king's delegation went to consult Huldah the prophetess who was married to the grandson of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe—at the temple I presume. It is noted that Huldah lived in Jerusalem “in the college,” or Second Quarter, as stated in some translations, indicating a specific area in Jerusalem.

Commentators make note that the delegation probably went to Huldah because she was the prophet most readily available. Jeremiah lived in Anathoth, and Zephaniah had not yet begun his prophetic ministry.

Huldah proceeded to give them an answer from the LORD to deliver to the king. My paraphrase: I, the LORD God of Israel, am going to judge this land and My people in accordance with all that was written in My law. Because they have broken covenant with Me and have worshipped false gods, My anger cannot be quenched without judgment.

2Kings 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;

2Kings 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.

2Kings 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.

That was the bad news; this is the good news for Josiah. My paraphrase continued: Because your heart was tender and convicted and you humbled yourself before Me after hearing My law, and shown the sincerity of your conviction by tearing your clothes and weeping before Me, I have heard your prayers. I will not bring judgment upon the people of Judah until after your death.

The delegation took this answer back to the king.

As a woman student of God's word, I liked this observation by Clarke: “...a simple woman, possessing the life of God in her soul, may have more knowledge of the Divine testimonies than many of those whose office it is to explain and enforce them.”

Clarke also include this quote from Dr. Priestly: "It pleased God to distinguish several women with the spirit of prophecy, as well as other great attainments, to show that in his sight, and especially in things of a spiritual nature, there is no essential pre-eminence in the male sex, though in some things the female be subject to the male."