

“God’s Word Recovered”
2 Kings 22
(Preached at Trinity, November 6, 2022)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **Chapter 21** we are briefly introduced to Amon after the death of his father, Manasseh. Amon was twenty-two when he became king and his reign was characterized by wickedness. After two years he was assassinated. He was twenty-four. He was succeeded by his son, Josiah.
2. Josiah was only eight years old when he succeeded his father. This means Amon was only 16 years old when Josiah was born. Thankfully, the wickedness of Amon was not followed by Josiah.
 - A. We read of his reign:
2 Kings 22:2 NAU - "He did right in the sight of the LORD and walked in all the way of his father David, nor did he turn aside to the right or to the left."
 - B. We can’t dismiss the possible impact his mother had upon his life. She is called Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiyah of Bozkath. Her name means “Beloved.” Little is known of her, but did her training impact the life of young Josiah? We can only guess. The Bible is silent.
 - C. We also can’t dismiss any possible influence by his grandfather, Manasseh. We know he had a remarkable conversion in his latter years. Apparently, it was too late for Manasseh to have a positive impact upon his son, Amon, but not for his grandson, Josiah. Was Josiah saved by the testimony and righteous example of his grandfather? Again, we can’t be certain.
 - D. Finally, we can’t dismiss influence by the prophets Jeremiah and Zephaniah. God often sends individuals into our lives to teach us in the way of righteousness.
 - E. Ultimately, it was by the sovereign grace of God that Josiah’s heart was changed. At the age of sixteen he began to seek God and was converted.
2 Chronicles 34:3 NAU - "For in the eighth year of his reign while he was still a youth, he began to seek the God of his father David; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the Asherim, the carved images and the molten images."
 1. He began reformation in Judah and Jerusalem. His youth did not deter him from boldly following God. We must not dismiss wickedness as youthful indiscretion. History bears testimony to countless youth who faithfully served God.
 2. He reigned for 31 years. In his eighteenth year (26 years old) he began to focus on repairing and restoring the Temple after years of neglect.

3. There is one event in the reign of Josiah that was of the greatest significance. During the Temple renovations that he sent Shaphan the scribe to Hilkiah, the high priest to arrange the prescribed repairs. Hilkiah gave Shaphan a book which he had found. It would have been in the form of a scroll.
- A. Most likely, due to the great apostasy flooding over the land, the writings had been placed in jars by the priests for protection and closed up in the Temple walls. They were uncovered during the Temple renovations.
- B. When the scribe began reading the writings to Josiah he tore his clothes in anguish. He knew it was the Book of the Law and that it had long been ignored and disregarded. Many commentators believe it was the Book of Deuteronomy.
4. He immediately sent for prophetic validation that the contents of the Book were true and that the curses were valid and what were they to do to turn away God's wrath?
- A. This speaks to just how spiritually dull Israel had become. Hilkiah the priest was first to acquire the Book of the Law. Apparently, it meant nothing to him. He handled it with completely apathy. When Shaphan arrived their greatest attention was placed on the building materials and the progress of the temple renovations. That Hilkiah was in possession of God's Word was of only secondary interest. If he would have had the least degree of discernment he would have sent an alarm to Josiah of the need for repentance. How tragic it is when a people no longer recognize the Word of God or tremble at its commands.
- B. When Shaphan returned to Josiah with the Book of the Law he too saw it as having little importance. He immediately began talking about the Temple repairs. The Book was only of secondary interest. "Oh, by the way, Hilkiah gave me this Book."
- C. This is the same attitude Israel had held for years. They did what was pleasing in their own eyes, completely dismissing the authority of God's Word. Most of the kings gave greater attention to political expedience than seeking the will of God.
- D. Having received the scroll Josiah immediately turned to one of God's prophets.
2 Kings 22:13 NAU - "Go, inquire of the LORD for me and the people and all Judah concerning the words of this book that has been found, for great is the wrath of the LORD that burns against us, because our fathers have not listened to the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us."
5. They went to Huldah the prophetess. This is all we know about her, but we are told her husband was the keeper of the wardrobe. This meant he spent much time within the palace. She was most likely the prophet most available. There were many prophets and she would have been lesser to Jeremiah. She brought them the Word of the Lord. The fires of God's wrath were kindled and would not be extinguished.
2 Kings 22:15-17 NAU - "She said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Tell the man who sent you to me, ¹⁶ thus says the LORD, "Behold, I bring evil on this place and on its inhabitants, *even* all the words of the book which the king of Judah has read. ¹⁷ "Because they have forsaken Me and have burned incense to other gods that they might provoke Me to anger with all the work of their hands, therefore My wrath burns against this place, and it shall not be quenched."

6. But God would show mercy by delaying His judgment until after the reign of Josiah because Josiah humbled himself in repentance.
2 Kings 22:20 NAU - "I will gather you to your fathers, and you will be gathered to your grave in peace, and your eyes will not see all the evil which I will bring on this place."
7. What is remarkable is Josiah's response upon hearing God's Law. It had not been read for generations. It had been long dismissed and forgotten. But when Josiah heard the words he was distraught because he knew this Book had been neglected. He was distraught because he knew that his nation was under the wrath of God. This had long been the problem with God's people. They ignored God's Word.
 Jeremiah wrote:
Jeremiah 6:10 NAU - "To whom shall I speak and give warning That they may hear? Behold, their ears are closed And they cannot listen. Behold, the word of the LORD has become a reproach to them; They have no delight in it."
Jeremiah 6:19 NAU - "Because they have not listened to My words, And as for My law, they have rejected it also."
- I. Josiah sets his heart on bringing about reformation and obedience to the Law
- A. The moment Josiah received he understood what it was.
1. He immediately sought counsel from God's prophet.
 2. The heart of the believer is to hold high God's Word. He sets his heart on obeying God's Word.
 3. He doesn't see the Law as a burden but a delight.
Psalm 119:47 NAU - "I shall delight in Your commandments, Which I love."
Psalm 1:2 NAU - "But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night."
Psalm 119:97 KJV - "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day."
2. The Christian has a high honor for God's Word
- a. You cannot be a Christian and reject the Word of God. Why? Because our faith finds its foundation in God's Word. We believe what God says. We see His Word as having authority over us. We believe it as the truth.
 - b. The Word of God was the means Holy Spirit used to create faith within our heart.
Romans 10:17 NAU - "So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."
3. There are those who are convinced of the authority of the Word of God, but they hate and despise it.
- a. They may even tremble before it, but they see it as a great enemy to their happiness.
 - b. It is a burden, a relentless standard that sets rules they despise and yet they fear to dismiss it. There is no delight in God's Word.
Jeremiah 6:10 NAU - "To whom shall I speak and give warning That they may hear? Behold, their ears are closed And they cannot listen. Behold, the word of the LORD has become a reproach to them; They have no delight in it."
 - c. The Christian loves the Word of God and delights in obeying it.

II. Josiah began by renewing covenant with God - **2 Kings 23:2-3**

- A. Josiah pledged obedience and all the people joined him in the covenant
1. The people of God are in a covenant relationship with God.
 2. We are united to Christ by faith. We have vowed to follow Him.
Romans 10:9-10 NAU - "if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; ¹⁰ for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."
- B. Covenant commitment demands forsaking our past lawlessness. This is called repentance.
1. Josiah immediately affirmed his commitment to reformation.
 - a. He emptied the temple of the vessels of idolatry.
2 Kings 23:4 NAU - "Then the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest and the priests of the second order and the doorkeepers, to bring out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven; and he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel."
 - b. After this he began a campaign to completely purge the land of all that was defiled.
 2. Judah also pledged covenant faithfulness
2 Kings 23:3 NAU - "The king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all *his* heart and all *his* soul, to carry out the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people entered into the covenant."
 3. They had also made covenant promises during the reign of Asa.
2 Chronicles 15:12 NAU - "They entered into the covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and soul;"
 But they did not keep their vows.
 And we know that Judah did not follow through with this promise either but continued their lawlessness. Almost immediately they returned to their previous ways.
 Jeremiah declared their universal corruption
Jeremiah 5:1 NAU - "Roam to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, And look now and take note. And seek in her open squares, If you can find a man, If there is one who does justice, who seeks truth, Then I will pardon her."
 4. Jeremiah was God's prophet during the reigns of Judah's final kings: Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah.
 He pronounced God's judgment upon their covenant unfaithfulness.
 Because of the unpopularity of his message, his life was often in danger.

Jeremiah 11:3-4 NAU - "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, "Cursed is the man who does not heed the words of this covenant⁴ which I commanded your forefathers in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, 'Listen to My voice, and do according to all which I command you; so you shall be My people, and I will be your God,"

5. Their problem was the corruption of their hearts. They continued to pursue their sinful desires. They still had no love for God's Law.
6. Josiah was of a different sort. We should note that Josiah had a heart of obedience even before the Book of the Law was recovered.

2 Kings 22:2 NAU - "He did right in the sight of the LORD and walked in all the way of his father David, nor did he turn aside to the right or to the left."

2 Kings 23:25 NAU - "Before him there was no king like him who turned to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him."

- a. It reminds us that the Law makes demands but does not provide the power to meet the demands.
- b. This is at the heart of the Gospel which brings a new heart.

C. This is the beauty of the New Covenant

1. The Old Covenant was marked by covenant unfaithfulness even as God continued to manifest covenant faithfulness.

Jeremiah 31:31-32 NAU - "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,³² not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD."

2. The New Covenant is a new order. Instead of having the Law written on stone tablets it is written upon our hearts.

Jeremiah 31:33 NAU - "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

3. The Law has not changed, but our disposition to the Law has changed.

Conclusion:

1. This passage is a reminder of our own day. The Word of God has been almost universally ignored. Most American homes own a copy of the Bible, but it has no bearing upon their lives. It is basically and object looked upon as being outdated and only embraced by fanatics who should be held in suspicion.
All manner of moral perversion is declared to be right.
2. But Josiah represents the one whose heart has been changed. The Christian sees God's Word as infallible and having absolute authority which must be obeyed.