

Rediscovery
Harmony M.B.C., July 3, 2011
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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.

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.

This account may be one of the most unusual circumstances in the history recorded in the bible. There are miracles recorded in this grand old Book, and they leave people amazed when we read about them. People are amazed because they tell of the wondrous power and wisdom of God. They tell of His mercies or His judgments, and what He is willing to do for sinful man; or what He is willing to do to capture the attention of wicked men. They often tell of the great things He does for the sake of His people. Among these miracles, who is it that is not awed by the power over nature that God revealed when He called up hordes of locusts to strip the land of Egypt bare in order to get Pharaoh's attention. Or how can we help but be struck with fear as we read about the Great Judge of All The Earth killing all the firstborn of Egypt in order to break through the hard-headed and unrepentant Pharaoh, so that the children of Israel might be released to go on the journey of God. Again, we are awe-struck when God parts the Red Sea to allow His people to pass over as on dry land, while He soon drowns the army of Pharaoh to end the Egyptian pursuit of His people once and for all.

All these things about miracles and the show of God's power are amazing and unusual. But, in our text, we have something of a different kind of strangeness. We have the people of the Bible losing their Bible, for what may have been 50 years. This is the subject of our message, and we want to think about the significance of this fact and trust the Holy Spirit to impress us with the spiritual lessons that this account contains.

I. The fact of this is almost beyond belief, and really inconceivable

- ❖ A nation whose entire culture was originally founded on the word of God is now a culture in which its most dedicated religious officers have not so much as seen the writings of God
 - **See the commitment of the nation of Israel to obedience to God: Exodus 19:5-8** Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine: **6** And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. **8** And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.
 - Here's another sobering thought: If the religious officers were ignorant of what is written

- in the Book, then how far are the common people from any knowledge of it?
- **Hosea 4:6** “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge....”
 - I need to take a moment here and ask the question, “Was there something written or spoken that was passed around in Judah and Israel that had to do with God’s writings? Could there have been some religious material that was a version of God’s writings?” The answer is yes. We see king Josiah before the finding of the book of God (in **vv. 4-7** of our text) tending to the repair of the house of God. Also, **v.2** tells us he did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord.
 - In **2Chronicles 34** we learn that some of Josiah’s purging of wickedness out of Judah and part of Israel took place before the book was found. He used all his officers and tribal elders to get this done. These activities were based on religious principles laid down by the Lord for Israel, so there were biblical rules in play here. But, the book of the law of God was not yet discovered. Yet, there was a “religious” presence in the land.
 - Is there a parallel today in America? Yes. There is more religious activity than ever before. There are dozens of writings about God. In the past few years, new versions of the bible have surpassed the King James version in sales and numbers sold by maybe 10/1. Of the top ten bible versions listed, only one of them is the KJV and 6 of the others are what are called dynamic equivalent translations or just plain erroneous ones. These so-called bibles talk about God...they lay out precepts that are supposedly in line with God, places of worship are being built and kept up. Religious officials are busy about their tasks. Yet, for it all, how well known are the writings of God?
- ❖ (If you want to provide a contrast of the writings of God vs. religious writings passing themselves off as bibles use the language of the KJV in **Romans 8:29-30** contrasted with the language in The Message, a new translation “reading bible”).
 - **KJV - Romans 8:29-30** “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.
 - The Message “bible” - **Romans 8:29-30** “God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son. The Son stands first in the line of humanity he restored. We see the original and intended shape of our lives there in him. After God made that decision of what his children should be like, he followed it up by calling people by name. After he called them by name, he set them on a solid basis with himself. And then, after getting them established, he stayed with them to the end, gloriously completing what he had begun.
 - ❖ We would probably think it impossible for a nation of people who began their career by dedicating themselves to the rules and principles of God to drift so far that they didn’t even have His book in their midst. Didn’t have it in their midst because it was put back on a shelf somewhere, or stuck in a box somewhere...or just laid back on a coffee table...and forgotten...not taken out and read...not referred to.
 - This kind of neglect can only come when people lose interest in the things of God, or when they get locked into ritualism, and just float along with the crowd.
 - When people get in this state it is because they have turned to something else. Which brings us to our next point:

II. Notice the cause of this disappearance of the word of God from the culture of the Jews; a wicked leader and wickedness by the people.

- ❖ **2Kings 21:1-6**; instituted and promoted polytheism (the worship of multiple gods)
 - **v. 6**: studied and practiced super-naturalism and occultism
 - **v. 7**: made a false god to be equivalent to Jehovah; or supplanted Jehovah with a false god
 - (today's equivalent: to say, by deed or word that another god is as good as the true God)
 - **v. 9**: seduced the citizens of the country to be more wicked than even the heathen of the age
 - **v. 16**: a wickedness God saw fit to name separately: shed innocent blood in quantity
- ❖ Any time a nation's leader's encourage and promote lawlessness and wickedness, the whole society will become infected by it.
 - This infection will always lead to a culture forgetting the word of God
 - The word of God will be conveniently hidden and forgotten by the masses

III. Notice that discovery anew of the word of God is what turned Judah around

- ❖ Text **chapter 22: vv. 10-13, 19; Chapter 23 all**.
- ❖ **2Kings, Ch. 22**: If wicked leaders have started a nation on a destructive course, it will have to be repentant leaders that turn a nation from it; and the people will have to want to find their way back to God
 - Repentant and righteous-thinking leaders can change the course of a wayward culture
 - **2Kings, Ch. 23**: Josiah accomplished all the following:
 - **vv. 1-2**: reminded the national leaders about the principles of God
 - **v. 3**: set a godly example
- ❖ In the remaining verses:
 - Abolished idolatry and destroyed its icons
 - Abolished occult practices
 - Abolished the most perverted practices associated with perverted religion
 - Stopped the bloodshed that Manasseh was famous for
- ❖ **Hebrews 4:12** says, "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
 - There is no other force in the world that can do what the Word of God can do with the human heart and soul. If it is stuck back in a closet, a dresser drawer, a box, or laid up on a coffee table, end table, or somewhere and forgotten, it has no influence in the lives of the people who treat it this way. Only when it enters the heart through the eyes or ears can it do what this verse says.