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***In the eighteenth year of the reign of King Josiah (641 - 609 BCE), the king made a discovery that changed not only his life, but that of the nation as well. In the remodeling of the temple in Jerusalem the workers uncovered a copy of the "book of the Law." This was a scripture text evidently lost for many years and unknown to the leaders of the temple, and subsequently by the political leaders as well. The reading of the text moved the king to begin a program of drastic religious and moral reform of the entire nation.***

***For many centuries the interpretation of the reign of King Josiah has centered on the discovery of this book and its impact on the king and then on the nation. Although the Deuteronomist historian in 2 Kings clearly disagrees with the Chronicler in 2 Chronicles 34 over how much impact this discovery made in the reforms of Josiah, both do share the view that this discovery did have a significant impact.***



***The challenge and opportunity of this text for us is to come to understand better the role of divine revelation in written scripture. God's Word is intended to change us for the better. It certainly did in Josiah's case. And can do the same in our lives when we take it seriously, as did Josiah.***

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## I. Context

Again the contextual background to 2 Kings 22 is helpful to a clear understanding of the meaning of the passage. Both the historical and literary aspects are significant. Additionally a comparative analysis of the parallel narrative in 2 Chronicles 34 is essential to this understanding.

### a. Historical

**External History.** The compositional history of 1 / 2 Kings is significant. In the early stages of the Hebrew Bible, 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings were one document. Only with the translation of the Hebrew text into Greek as the [Septuagint](#) (LXX) in 176 BCE was this one long document divided into four separate shorter documents. Thus the compositional history at its earliest stage includes the four documents of Samuel and Kings that came out of the single original Hebrew document.

This means tracing the development of the [Deuteronomistic history](#) of the nation of Israel, since these four documents comprise the heart of that history, along with Joshua. The origins of this history lie hidden from certain understanding, but enough signals are present to point to the contours of this process of history writing, as is pointed out on the [MyJewishLearning](#) web site:

It seems clear that the nucleus of the Deuteronomistic Code goes back to a time centuries earlier than Josiah, as it preserves many ancient laws and customs from the days before the monarchy and reflects traditions of the priesthood and cult center at Shechem. However, there are other portions that are clearly late, such as the call for centralization of worship in a single sanctuary, a principle of exclusiveness that is unlikely to predate the time of Hezekiah.

It is unclear whether these portions of the code were added by the Josianic editors or were already present in the code when it was found in 622 B.C.E. Since we are unable to identify the author or authors, we refer to the composer simply as the "Deuteronomist". For the Judahites of Josiah's day, the author was unquestionably Moses.

Josiah's great reformation of Judah's religious and national life is well-known and well-documented in the Bible (2 Kings. 22:3-23:25; 2 Chronicles 34:8-35:19). Included in this reform was the publication of a series of writings promoting the revival, no doubt royally-sanctioned texts, including the prophetic writings of Jeremiah and Zephaniah, who were loyal supporters of Josiah.

For the Deuteronomist, history is a cycle with a four fold prong: 1) the covenant people sin against God; 2) He punishes them for their sin; 3) they repent of their sin; and 4) God forgives and restores them.



Thus history is the history of God's relationship to His covenant people Israel. And that relationship is defined by the Law of God around the fourfold pattern above.

The origins of this writing are less certain, as the [Wikipedia article](#) notes:

Martin Noth argued that there was an underlying unity in language and cultural content of the books from Deuteronomy to 2 Kings (Noth 1943). He presented the persona of "The Deuteronomist" as a single author who was using pre-Exilic material but was editing and writing in the age of Babylonian exile, the mid-sixth century BCE. The majority of scholars follow Noth's opinion, that the Deuteronomist also wrote the Deuteronomistic history (Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, and 1 & 2 Kings).[citation needed] Some suggest that the same source may also have written the account of Jeremiah. Others suggest that "the Deuteronomist" is a close-knit group of Temple scholars rather than a sole individual.

It is thought that the Deuteronomistic part of the Torah, and the Deuteronomistic history were originally composed as a single work, ever since the investigation of Martin Noth. Since Noth's work, some scholars attribute two separate stages to the text, a first (referred to as Dtr1) and second (referred to as Dtr2) edition of the text, although most still consider that both editions were the result of the same author.

The actual identity of the Deuteronomist is less secure than the body of his editing work: scholars postulate that the author was Baruch (Neriyah's son), Jeremiah's scribe, or possibly Jeremiah, due to the similarities in style between Jeremiah, and the inclusion in Jeremiah of direct (unattributed) quotes of D,



as well as the affiliation of Jeremiah to the Shiloh priests, the time period at which Jeremiah lived.

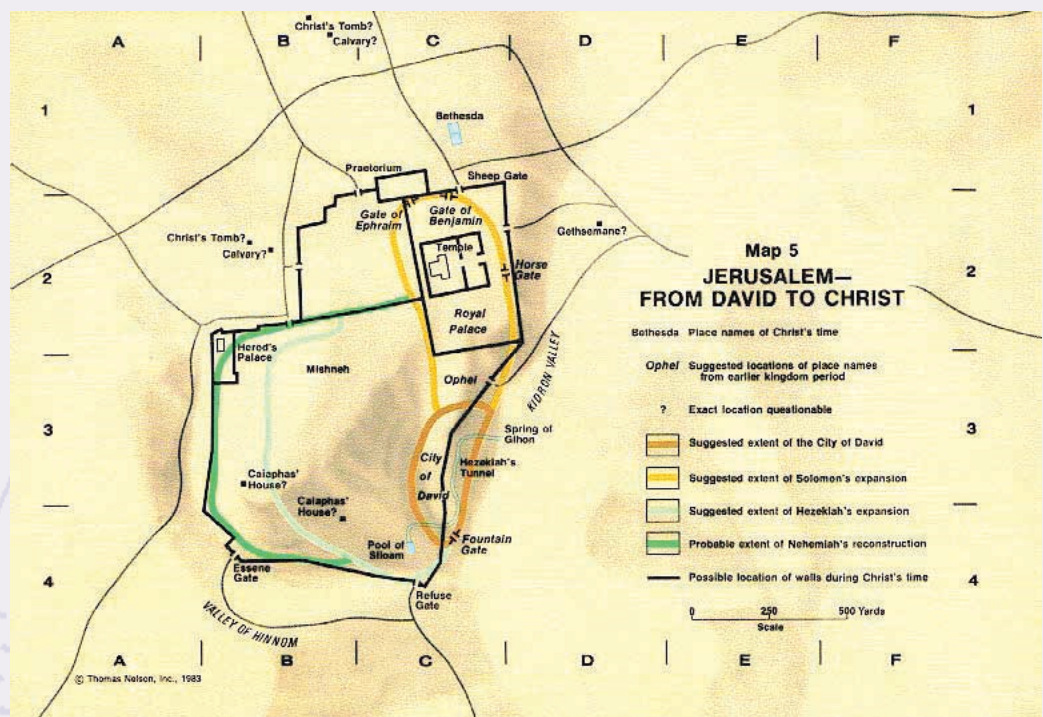
However the material came into its finalized form, it represents a very theological understanding of God's relationship with Israel. The history underscores the central role of the Law of God to the life and welfare of ancient Israel.

### Internal History.

The time and place markers inside the text are reasonably clear. 2 Kings 22:3-20 revolves around the temple and royal palace in Jerusalem during the eighteenth year of King Josiah's reign. Thus during the year of 622 BCE these events took place.

The palace of Solomon, most likely the royal palace used by Josiah, was located very close to the temple just to its south. The most precise reference is to the residence of the prophetess Huldah (v. 14; cr. also 2 Chron. 34:22) who lived "in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter." T.R. Hobbs (2 Kings, *Word Biblical Commentary*, Logos Systems) notes this:

בִּמְשֻׁנָּה "in the Mishneh" is generally taken to be the northern part of the city — the part extended during the monarchy — hence the name "The Second Quarter." Evidence has shown that during the late monarchy the city expanded considerably (see M. Broshi,



"The Expansion of Jerusalem" *IEJ* 24 [1974] 21–26). For the location of the Mishneh, see G. A. Smith, *Jerusalem* 1:201–2. Another area of the extended city was the "Maktesh," the "depression," possibly the area in the central valley (the Tyropean). In postexilic times the Mishneh became an official administrative division of the city (see Zech 1:10; Neh 11:9, 17).

Thus, the narrative covers only the environs of the city of Jerusalem during the time of Josiah. The duration of time for the narrative is unclear. It happened during the eighteen year, and thus lasted less than a year. And most likely we're looking at a series of events covering no more than a week or so at most.

### b. Literary

**Genre.** The basic literary form used in 2 Kings 22 is narrative. It was written in prose format as a episodic narrative. Also, to be noted is that the historical methodology is that of the Deuteronomic Historians, as discussed above under [External History](#). The literary implications of this is to underscore that the compilers of this narrative had a theological agenda they were promoting. Thus, the text must not be seen as a modern objectively written history of these events. Likewise the parallel account in 2 Chronicles 34:8-28 must be viewed in the same way,

since the Chronicler had a slightly different theological agenda in mind. Thus the differences between the two accounts.

**Literary Setting.** S. Szikszai ("Kings, I and II," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, iPreach) summarizes the broad setting in I and II Kings this way:

The contents of the books can be divided into three parts: (a) Solomon's ascension to the throne and his reign (I Kings 1:1-11); (b) the vicissitudes of the two kingdoms (I Kings 1:1; Kings 17:1); and (c) the surviving kingdom of Judah (II Kings 18:1-25).

The evil reigns of Manasseh (21:1-18) and his son, Amon (vss. 19-26), precede King Josiah, under whose reign the Book of the Law was found in the temple (ch. 22); after this discovery a reform was completed in accord with the regulations of the Book of the Law (23:1-25). Josiah's untimely death at Megiddo (23:26-30) was the prelude to the short reign of Jehoahaz (vss. 31-35) and that of Jehoiakim (23:36-24:7).

- C. 22:1–23:30, The Josianic Reformation
  - 22:1-2, Introduction to Josiah's Reign
  - 22:3-11, Rediscovery of the Book of the Law
  - 22:12-20, A Prophetic Oracle
  - 23:1-25, Josiah's Reforms
  - 23:26-30, The Failure of Josiah to Stem the Tide of Destruction

As in many other cases, the Chronicler encapsulates his own story within the Deuteronomistic framework, thereby pointing to his source and the overall context; he structures his own narrative, however, along different paths — literary, chronological and theological. The broader lines of the synopsis may be sketched as follows:

- (a) 34.1–2 Introduction  
cf. 2 Kings 22:1–2
- (b) 34.3–7 Josiah's eighth and twelfth years —
- (c) 34.8–33 The eighteenth year: repairs of the house, finding of the book, covenant and reform

2. The restructuring of the Chronicler's story mainly affects the chronology and scope of Josiah's reform and its relationship to the celebration of the Passover. According to 2 Kings 22:3ff., the reform is a one-time, all-embracing event, which took place at Josiah's eighteenth year as a result of the 'finding of the book'. In Chronicles, the reform is seen as a prolonged process, beginning in the eighth year of the king's reign, with the main phase of the purge of the land belonging to the twelfth year of his reign. These stages of the reform predated the finding of the book and may have been seen as its cause. The reform is concluded by the events of the eighteenth year: the making of a covenant and the celebration of Passover.

This restructuring of the narrative also gives different weight to two rather secondary elements in the Deuteronomistic story, by placing them in a more prominent position in our narrative: the celebration of the Passover, and the circumstances of Josiah's death.

The Passover is narrated in Kings in three verses, mostly of an evaluative nature (2 Kings 23:21–23), while the story of Josiah's death is included as a note within the Deuteronomistic conclusion (2 Kings 23:29–30a); both are dealt with in Chronicles on their own, in much greater detail and elaboration (35.1–19; 20–25).

For the Chronicler the reforms began in the twelfth year of Josiah's, six years before the discovery of the book of the Law. But for the Deuteronomist, the reforms begin after the discovery of the Law in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign.

**Literary Structure.** The thought flow of 22:3-20 moves along the following lines: 1) instructions from Zephaniah to Shaphan (vv. 3-7); 2) Hilkiyah's discovery of the book of the law (vv. 8-10); 3) the king's reaction to the reading of the book (vv. 11-13); and 4) the council of Huldah to the king's representatives (vv. 14-20). These can be grouped together legitimately into two sections: 1) the discovery of the book (vv. 3-13); and 2) the interpretation of the book (vv. 14-20).

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## LXX

3 Καὶ ἐγενήθη ἐν τῷ  
ὀκτωκαιδεκάτῳ ἔτει τῷ  
βασιλεῖ Ἰωσια ἐν τῷ μηνὶ

## NASB

3 Now in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, the king sent

## NRSV

3 In the eighteenth year of King Josiah, the king sent Shaphan son

## NLT

3 In the eighteenth year of his reign, King Josiah sent Shaphan



τῷ ὀγδόῳ ἀπέστειλεν ὁ βασιλεὺς τὸν Σαφφαν υἱὸν Εσελίου υἱοῦ Μεσολλαμ τὸν γραμματέα οἴκου κυρίου λέγων 4 Ἀνάβηθι πρὸς Χελκίαν τὸν ἱερέα τὸν μέγαν καὶ σφράγισον τὸ ἀργύριον τὸ εἰσενεχθὲν ἐν οἴκῳ κυρίου, ὃ συνήγαγον οἱ φυλάσσοντες τὸν σταθμὸν παρὰ τοῦ λαοῦ, 5 καὶ δότωσαν αὐτὸ ἐπὶ χεῖρα ποιοῦντων τὰ ἔργα τῶν καθεσταμένων ἐν οἴκῳ κυρίου. καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτὸ τοῖς ποιοῦσιν τὰ ἔργα τοῖς ἐν οἴκῳ κυρίου τοῦ κατισχύσαι τὸ βεδεκ τοῦ οἴκου, 6 τοῖς τέκτοσιν καὶ τοῖς οἰκοδόμοις καὶ τοῖς τειχισταῖς, καὶ τοῦ κτήσασθαι ξύλα καὶ λίθους λατομητοῦς τοῦ κραταιῶσαι τὸ βεδεκ τοῦ οἴκου, 7 πλὴν οὐκ ἐξελογίζοντο αὐτοὺς τὸ ἀργύριον τὸ διδόμενον αὐτοῖς, ὅτι ἐν πίστει αὐτοὶ ποιοῦσιν.

8 καὶ εἶπεν Χελκίας ὁ ἱερεὺς ὁ μέγας πρὸς Σαφφαν τὸν γραμματέα Βιβλίον τοῦ νόμου εὔρον ἐν οἴκῳ κυρίου, καὶ ἔδωκεν Χελκίας τὸ βιβλίον πρὸς Σαφφαν, καὶ ἀνέγνω αὐτό. 9 καὶ εἰσήνεγκεν πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα Ἰωσιαν καὶ ἐπέστρεψεν τῷ βασιλεῖ ῥῆμα καὶ εἶπεν Ἐχώνευσαν οἱ δοῦλοί σου τὸ ἀργύριον τὸ εὔρεθὲν ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ κυρίου καὶ ἔδωκαν αὐτὸ ἐπὶ χεῖρα ποιοῦντων τὰ ἔργα τῶν καθεσταμένων ἐν οἴκῳ κυρίου. 10 καὶ εἶπεν Σαφφαν ὁ γραμματεὺς πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα λέγων Βιβλίον ἔδωκέν μοι Χελκίας ὁ

Shaphan, the son of Azaliah the son of Meshullam the scribe, to the house of the LORD saying, 4 "Go up to Hilki-ah the high priest that he may count the money brought in to the house of the LORD which the doorkeepers have gathered from the people. 5 Let them deliver it into the hand of the workmen who have the oversight of the house of the LORD, and let them give it to the workmen who are in the house of the LORD to repair the damages of the house, 6 to the carpenters and the builders and the masons and for buying timber and hewn stone to repair the house. 7 Only no accounting shall be made with them for the money delivered into their hands, for they deal faithfully."

8 Then Hilki-ah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD." And Hilki-ah gave the book to Shaphan who read it. 9 Shaphan the scribe came to the king and brought back word to the king and said, "Your servants have emptied out the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of the workmen who have the oversight of the house of the LORD." 10 Moreover, Shaphan the scribe told the king saying, "Hilki-ah

of Azaliah, son of Meshullam, the secretary, to the house of the Lord, saying, 4 "Go up to the high priest Hilki-ah, and have him count the entire sum of the money that has been brought into the house of the Lord, which the keepers of the threshold have collected from the people; 5 let it be given into the hand of the workers who have the oversight of the house of the Lord; let them give it to the workers who are at the house of the Lord, repairing the house, 6 that is, to the carpenters, to the builders, to the masons; and let them use it to buy timber and quarried stone to repair the house. 7 But no accounting shall be asked from them for the money that is delivered into their hand, for they deal honestly."

8 The high priest Hilki-ah said to Shaphan the secretary, "I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord." When Hilki-ah gave the book to Shaphan, he read it. 9 Then Shaphan the secretary came to the king, and reported to the king, "Your servants have emptied out the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of the workers who have oversight of the house of the Lord." 10 Shaphan the secretary informed the king, "The priest Hilki-ah has given me a book." Shaphan then

son of Azaliah and grandson of Meshullam, the court secretary, to the Temple of the LORD. He told him, 4 "Go up to Hilki-ah the high priest and have him count the money the gatekeepers have collected from the people at the LORD's Temple. 5 Entrust this money to the men assigned to supervise the Temple's restoration. Then they can use it to pay workers to repair the Temple of the LORD. 6 They will need to hire carpenters, builders, and masons. Also have them buy the timber and the cut stone needed to repair the Temple. 7 But there will be no need for the construction supervisors to keep account of the money they receive, for they are honest people."

8 Hilki-ah the high priest said to Shaphan the court secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in the LORD's Temple!" Then Hilki-ah gave the scroll to Shaphan, and he read it. 9 Shaphan returned to the king and reported, "Your officials have given the money collected at the Temple of the LORD to the workers and supervisors at the Temple." 10 Shaphan also said to the king, "Hilki-ah the priest has given me a scroll." So Shaphan read it to the king.

11 When the king heard what was written in the Book of the Law,

ιερεύς, καὶ ἀνέγνω αὐτὸ Σαφφαν ἐνώπιον τοῦ βασιλέως.

11 καὶ ἐγένετο ὡς ἤκουσεν ὁ βασιλεὺς τοὺς λόγους τοῦ βιβλίου τοῦ νόμου, καὶ διέρρηξεν τὰ ἱμάτια ἑαυτοῦ. 12 καὶ ἐντείλατο ὁ βασιλεὺς τῷ Χελκία τῷ ἱερεῖ καὶ τῷ Αἰχικὰμ υἱῷ Σαφφαν καὶ τῷ Αἰχοβὼρ υἱῷ Μιχαίου καὶ τῷ Σαφφαν τῷ γραμματεῖ καὶ τῷ Ασαία δούλῳ τοῦ βασιλέως λέγων 13 Δεῦτε ἐκζητήσατε τὸν κύριον περὶ ἐμοῦ καὶ περὶ παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ περὶ παντὸς τοῦ Ιουδα περὶ τῶν λόγων τοῦ βιβλίου τοῦ εὑρεθέντος τούτου, ὅτι μεγάλη ἡ ὀργὴ κυρίου ἡ ἐκκεκαυμένη ἐν ἡμῖν ὑπὲρ οὗ οὐκ ἤκουσαν οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν τῶν λόγων τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου τοῦ ποιεῖν κατὰ πάντα τὰ γεγραμμένα καθ' ἡμῶν.

### Notes:

The contours of this part of the episode bear similarity to the parallel in 2 Chron. 34:8-19, but have some differences as well. T. R. Hobbs (2 Kings, WBC, Logos Systems) has charted out these patterns:

2 Kings	2 Chronicles
a. Josiah born in 648 B.C.	Josiah born in 648 B.C.
b. Began to reign at 8 years (22:1-2)	Began to reign at 8 years (34:1-29)
c.	Began to seek the God of David in 8th year of reign (632) (34:3)
d.	In 12th year (628) he began to purge Jerusalem, Judah, and Naphtali (34:3)
e. Lawbook found in 18th year (622) (22:3-23:3)	Lawbook found in 18th year (622) (34:8-31)
f. Covenant in same year (622) (23:1-3)	Covenant in same year (622) (34:29-31)
g. Widespread reform (622) (23:4-20)	Widespread reform (622) (34:32-33)
h. Passover (622) (23:21-25)	Passover (622) (35:1-17)
i. Additional reform (622) (23:24-27)	
j. Death in 31st year	Death in 31st year

From this the differences and the similarities can be more clearly seen. Each compiler has his own

read it aloud to the king.

11 When the king heard the words of the book of the law, he tore his clothes. 12 Then the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Achbor the son of Micaiah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah the king's servant saying, 13 "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 is kindled against us, because our fathers have not listened to the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us."

he tore his clothes in despair. 12 Then he gave these orders to Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Achbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan the court secretary, and Asaiah the king's personal adviser: 13 "Go to the Temple and speak to the LORD for me and for the people and for all Judah. Ask him about the words written in this scroll that has been found. The LORD's anger is burning against us because our ancestors have not obeyed the words in this scroll. We have not been doing what this scroll says we must do."



theological agenda. Also important is the further observation of Hobbs that the interpreter should examine the patterns of narratives inside 1 - 2 Kings for signals of the Deuteronomist's agenda. He finds abundant signals inside 2 Kings:

It is more sound, methodologically, to look for formal and structural parallels within the complete literary work of 2 Kings than it is to look for them outside, or to create unique forms that cannot be verified. It is with the recognition of important themes and patterns within the book that the results are more fruitful and helpful. Setting the passage under discussion in its literary context and comparing it with known parallels seem eminently more sensible than creating otherwise unknown forms, or comparing the text with supposed but unproven parallels.

Josiah's reign as presented in 2 Kgs 22-23 is dominated by the reform of the king. A preliminary step ought to be the comparison of this account of the reform with other similar accounts in the book. Earlier the writer has presented accounts of the reforms of two Judean and one Samarian king,



Joash (2 Kgs 12), Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18), and Jehu (2 Kgs 9–10), respectively. An examination of all of them reveals several common features. First, all of the previous reformers succeed a predecessor who was characterized by his or her worship of Canaanite deities. With the Omride dynasty that preceded Jehu this is taken for granted. But it is also true of the predecessor of Joash, Queen Athaliah, who not only introduced Baal worship into Judah, but is also noted as a relative of Ahab (8:26). Ahaz of Judah receives a judgment reserved for him alone among the kings of Judah. He did what the Israelite kings had done, including making his son “pass through fire” (16:3–4). Whatever the origin of this practice, it is clearly seen by our writer as a practice connected with the worship of Canaanite deities.

Second, it follows that the reforms of each were specifically anti-Canaanite and were directed against all those practices that were abhorrent to the deuteronomist. Again, with Jehu this is most clear. One of the results of the reforms of Joash was the slaying of the priests of Baal (11:17–20), and Hezekiah set about deliberately to reverse the policies of Ahaz his father (18:1–8). The long-held view that these reforms were anti-Assyrian has been successfully challenged (see *Comment* on 2 Kgs 8–10; 12; 18).

Third, in the south the reforms also involved some form of temple repair and reorganization of the running of the temple. Joash devised a new system of collecting money for the temple repair which involved a lesser role for the priests. Hezekiah's purge is preceded by some extensive repairs on the temple which involved the system established by Joash.

Fourth, none of the reforms concludes with a completely positive note. Even the most enthusiastic northern reformer, Jehu, is finally condemned for his apostasy (10:28–33) and his dynasty cut short therefore. The end of his reign is also accompanied by loss of territory on the eastern side of the Jordan. Joash is attacked by Hazael of Syria and forced to buy off the invader with the very gold and silver he had collected with his reorganization of the temple treasury. He is then assassinated by some of his close associates. In spite of his reform, and in spite of Sennacherib's abortive attack on Jerusalem, Hezekiah finally invites potential disaster by showing off all those same temple and palace treasures to the Babylonian ambassadors. It is at this point in the history of Judah that the real threat of exile is finally made explicit in the prophetic word to the king (20:12–19). Up to this point such a danger had only been hinted at (see 8:19).

On examination it is clear that the account of the reform of Josiah follows the same pattern. Manasseh, his most important predecessor, is explicitly compared to Ahab and is seen by the writer as the southern version of that northern embodiment

of apostasy. Like the reforms of Joash and Hezekiah, Josiah's reform was primarily anti-Canaanite. The items that are so important to the reform are those which the deuteronomist has consistently found so abhorrent (see *Comment* below). The reform is also accompanied by some form of temple reorganization. It began in the context of temple repair and ends with the inauguration of a new Passover celebration in Jerusalem. But like those reformers who preceded him, his reign is not without its shadows. In the midst of the reform Huldah repeats again the word of judgment (22:15–20) against the nation uttered by Isaiah, and Josiah dies an untimely death at Megiddo. In spite of everything, his reign ends with Judah under foreign domination—that of Egypt.

It is clear to see that if any form or pattern is followed in the narrative it is the writer's previously established one. The climax of the reign of each reformer, however good the beginning, is a shadow cast over the country. Two out of three reformers in the south die before their time; the third comes close to death with sickness. We have seen many times in the narrative of 2 Kings how the fate of the king mirrors the fate of the nation. The judgment on both Israel and Judah is delayed only through the intervention of Yahweh. The narrative of Josiah's reign and reform takes its place among the others as finally pointing toward the inevitable fate of Judah. According to 22:18–20 and 23:26–27, judgment is not averted by anything done by Josiah.

Thus what Josiah was doing moved along familiar patterns established by reformer kings who preceded him.

**Temple repairs, vv. 3-7.** Here the instructions given by Josiah to Shaphan, the secretary, move along somewhat similar lines in both narratives:

**2 Kings 22:3-7, NRSV**

3 In the eighteenth year of King Josiah, the king sent Shaphan son of Azaliah, son of Meshullam, the secretary, to the house of the Lord, saying, 4 “Go up to the high priest Hilkiah, and *have him count the entire sum of the money that has been brought into the house of the Lord, which the keepers of the threshold have collected from the people; 5 let it be given into the hand of the workers who have the oversight of the house of the Lord; let them give it to the workers who are at the house of the*

**2 Chron. 34:8-13, NRSV**

8 In the eighteenth year of his reign, *when he had purged the land and the house*, he sent Shaphan son of Azaliah, Maaseiah the governor of the city, and *Joah son of Joahaz, the recorder, to repair the house of the Lord his God.* 9 They came to the high priest Hilkiah and *delivered the money* that had been brought into the house of God, which *the Levites*, the keepers of the threshold, had collected from Manasseh and Ephraim and from all the remnant of Israel and from

Lord, repairing the house, 6 that is, to the carpenters, to the builders, to the masons; and let them use it to buy timber and quarried stone to repair the house. 7 But no accounting shall be asked from them for the money that is delivered into their hand, for they deal honestly.”

ΣΙΝ ΕΤΩΝ ΕΞΑΔΟΜΗΚΤ'  
 ΑΡ' ΙΝΑ ΚΑΙ ΑΕΧΟΝΤΟΣ ΚΥ  
 ΠΕΡΙΣΩΝΕΤΟΥ ΣΠΡΩ  
 ΤΟΥ ΕΙΣΟΥΝΤΕΛΕΙΑΝ  
 ΤΗΜΑΤΟΣ ΚΥΝΕΣΤΟΜΑ  
 ΤΙ ΕΡΕΜΙΟΥ ΗΓΕΙΡΕΝ  
 ΚΕΤΟΠΡΕΟΥ ΜΑΚΥΙΟΥ  
 ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΠΕΡΕΩΘΗ  
 ΕΚΗΛΥΣΕΝ Ο ΑΝΤΙΒΑΝ  
 ΛΕΙΑΛΥΤΟΥ ΚΑΡΚΑΜΑΔΑ  
 ΓΡΑΠΤΩΝ ΑΕΡΩΝ ΤΑ  
 ΔΕ ΛΕΓΕΙ Ο ΙΩΑΚΙΜ ΕΥΣΠΕ  
 ΡΩΝ ΚΥΡΟΣ ΜΕΛΗΝ ΕΛΛ  
 ΣΕΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΤΗΣ ΟΙΚΟΥ  
 ΜΕΝΕΝ Ο ΚΥΡΙΟΣ ΤΩ  
 ΡΑΝΑ ΚΕΤΟΠΡΕΟΥ ΣΤΟ  
 ΣΑΙ ΕΣΗΜΗΝΕΝ ΜΟΙ Ο ΙΩ  
 ΔΟΜΗ ΣΑΙ ΛΥΤΩ Ο ΙΩΝ  
 ΕΝ ΕΡΕΟΥΣ ΑΛΗΜ ΤΗΝ  
 ΤΗ ΟΥ ΑΛΙΕΙΤΙΣ ΕΣΤΙ  
 ΟΥΝ ΜΥΘΟΝ ΕΚΤΩ ΒΕΝ  
 ΛΥΤΩ ΕΣΤΩ Ο ΚΑΛΥ  
 ΜΕΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΑΝΑ  
 ΕΙΣΤΑΝ ΕΡΕΟΥΣ ΑΛΗ  
 ΤΗΝ ΕΝ ΤΗ ΟΥ ΑΛΙΕΙ  
 ΔΟΜΕΙ ΤΩ ΤΩ Ο ΙΩΝ  
 ΚΥ ΤΟΥ ΙΩΑΚΙΜ ΕΥΣΠΕ  
 ΡΩ ΚΕΤΟΠΡΕΟΥ ΣΤΟ  
 ΣΑΙ ΕΡΕΟΥΣ ΑΛΗΜ ΟΣΟΙ  
 ΟΥΝ ΚΕΤΟΠΡΕΟΥ ΣΤΟ  
 ΣΑΙ ΚΟΥΣΙΝ ΕΝ ΟΙΣ  
 ΛΥΤΩ ΟΙ ΕΝ ΤΩ ΤΩ  
 ΛΥΤΩ ΕΝ ΧΡΥΣΩ  
 ΕΝ ΑΥΤΩ ΟΥΚ ΑΙΩΝ  
 ΣΕ ΟΙ ΜΕΘΕΡΕΩΘΗ  
 ΚΤΗΝΩΝ ΕΥΝΤΟΙΟ  
 ΑΙΟΙΣ ΤΟΙΣ ΚΑΤΕΥΧ  
 ΠΡΟΣΤΕΘΕΙΜΕΝΟΙΣ  
 ΤΟΙΣ ΕΡΕΟΥΣ ΑΛΗΜ  
 ΕΡΕΟΥΣ ΑΛΗΜ ΚΑΤΑ  
 ΣΑΝΤΕΣ ΟΙ ΑΡΧΙΕΡΕΙ  
 ΤΩΝ ΤΑΤΡΩΝ ΤΗΣ ΟΥ

Harmonizing the two accounts in the details is impossible because too many differences between them exist. Only with the broad narrative strokes are the two accounts similar. Thus Hobbs wisely turns to the internal patterns in 2 Kings for signals of what Josiah is doing with these instructions to Shaphan:

The account of the first visit to the temple (vv 3–7) is very reminiscent of the visit in 12:10–16 [9–15]. This is understandable because of the nature of the common subject matter and the probable source for the information contained here, namely, the temple archives (see Burney, *Notes*, 355). However, the formal similarities between this and chap. 12 and other narratives of reform should be noted. The present story betrays no sense that the move on the part of the king was an innovation. It appears to be a continuation of the policy for financing temple projects initiated by Joash in 2 Kgs 12. However, in the light of the state of affairs during the reigns of Ahaz and Manasseh, this might be a return to older policies,

all Judah and Benjamin and from the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 10 They delivered it to the workers who had the oversight of the house of the Lord, and the workers who were working in the house of the Lord gave it for repairing and restoring the house. 11 They gave it to the carpenters and the builders to buy quarried stone, and timber for binders, and beams for the buildings that the kings of Judah had let go to ruin. 12 The people did the work faithfully. Over them were appointed the Levites Jahath and Obadiah, of the sons of Merari, along with Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to have oversight. Other Levites, all skillful with instruments of music, 13 were over the burden bearers and directed all who did work in every kind of service; and some of the Levites were scribes, and officials, and gatekeepers.

למל הנש הרשע הנמשב “in the king’s eighteenth year.” In view of the problems of harmonization with Chronicles noted above, it is tempting to read the phrase למל, lit., “to the king,” as a reference to the king’s age. This would then be in the tenth year of his reign, which is not too far removed from the twelfth year of Chronicles. But this is merely juggling with the figures. The term למל is used consistently elsewhere of the reign of a king (12:7; 18:9, 13). The eighteenth year of the reign would have been 622/621 B.C. Whether this move on the part of the king was in reaction to the chaos in Assyria following the death of Assurbanipal is not stated in the text and is in fact unlikely. The temple repairs would have been part of the day-to-day (or year-to-year) responsibilities of the king and not necessarily a symbol of reform. In the narrative the reform begins with the discovery of the lawbook.

The two individuals in the narrative present interesting stories themselves. Hobbs (*WBC*) calls attention to Shaphan:

The name שפן “Shaphan” means “rock badger” and is one of many animal names in this narrative. Such names were popular at this time. Shaphan also figures prominently in other narratives from this period. In Jer 26:24 his son Ahikam aids Jeremiah the prophet; and his other son, Gemariah, was a noble in Jerusalem during the reign of Jehoiakim (Jer 36:12, 25). A grandson, the ill-fated Gedaliah (Jer 40:5–41:10), was an important-enough figure to be named governor of Judah after the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians. The name אצל “Azalyah” is from a semitic root indicating nobility (see Exod 24:11). That Shaphan, רפסא “the scribe,” was involved in this venture is only natural. The system of temple accounting which involved the palace bureaucracy is seen in 12:11[10] and the reason for their involvement is also seen in chap. 12, namely, the lax attitude of the priesthood. It is quite possible too that the detailed record of the events in chap. 12 and here owe their origin to such people. Note the adverbial use of the noun phrase הוהי תיב “(to) the temple,” as in 12:17[16]. This is common deuteronomistic



style.

The high priest was named Hilkiah and Hobbs notes:

It is unlikely that **והיקלח** “Hilkiah” is to be identified with the father of the prophet Jeremiah, who was presumably also a priest (Jer 1:1–2). Jeremiah’s family was not from Jerusalem, but from Anathoth, and therefore of Levitic stock, not Zadokite. Nothing in the book of Jeremiah favors the identification, and the prophet’s deep antipathy to Jerusalem (Jer 24) would speak against it. On the office of **לודגה זכה** “the Great Priest,” see 12:11[10] and the comments there.

The pattern of counting out the money and / or delivering it to the priest began with the reforms of Jehoash who discovered the priests collected the money and then didn’t spend it to repair the temple (2 Kings 12:4–16). Reforms were instituted to make sure that the collected money went to the repairs of the temple as had been designated. Thus the actions of Josiah here do not signal anything highly unusual or arbitrary.

At first the final statement, “But no accounting shall be asked from them for the money that is delivered into their hand, for they deal honestly,” seems a bit peculiar. But it simply repeats a similar statement in 2 Kings 12:15<sup>1</sup>

**Discovery of the book, vv. 8–10.** Again, a comparison of the two accounts is instructive.

**2 Kings 22:8–11, NRSV**

8 The high priest Hilkiah said to Shaphan the secretary, “I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord.” When Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, he read it. 9 Then Shaphan the secretary came to the king, and reported to the king, “Your servants have emptied out the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of the workers who have oversight of the house of the Lord.” 10 Shaphan the secretary

**2 Chron. 34: 14–18**

14 While they were bringing out the money that had been brought into the house of the Lord, the priest Hilkiah found the book of the law of the Lord given through Moses. 15 Hilkiah said to the secretary Shaphan, “I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord”; and Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan. 16 Shaphan brought the book to the king, and further reported to the king, “All that was committed to your ser-

informed the king, “The priest Hilkiah has given me a book.” Shaphan then read it aloud to the king.



vants they are doing. 17 They have emptied out the money that was found in the house of the Lord and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers and the workers.” 18 The secretary Shaphan informed the king, “The priest Hilkiah has given me a book.” Shaphan then read it aloud to the king.

The Deuteronomist is a little more dramatic in his narrative than is the Chronicler who provides more details in his account. In 2 Kings, Shaphan first read the book for himself before taking it to the king. Also the identity of the book was not given to the king before it was read to him.

The precise identity of the scrolls that were found has generated considerable discussion among scholars. Both narratives identify it as “the book of the law.” 2 Chron. 34:14 adds “of the Lord given through Moses” to the identifying label. Hobbs (*WBC*) notes:

The finding of the lawbook has generated a considerable amount of discussion among commentators. The contents of the book and its precise relationship to the reform are the main items of discussion. The date of Deuteronomy has also been calculated from this incident. However, such historical conclusions from what is so clearly a theologically determined picture are less than certain. It is clear in the deuteronomistic history that the ideal standards of Israel’s behavior are enshrined in the deuteronomic law code. It is our belief, argued in the *Introduction*, that the final form of the book of Deuteronomy is late, and the book forms a preface to the greater work of the deuteronomistic history. The laws within the book, however, have ancient roots. That the incentive for reform should come from a document that offers the ideals found in Deuteronomy is thoroughly consistent with what one might expect from our writer.

The term **רפס** designates not a book in the modern sense of the term, a codex, but a written document probably scrolled and written in columns. The earliest examples of such

<sup>1</sup>They did not ask an accounting from those into whose hand they delivered the money to pay out to the workers, for they dealt honestly.

documents are the extant Dead Sea scrolls. **רפס** **הרותה** “the lawbook” is a very common term in the deuteronomistic writings (Deut 17:18; 28:58, 61; 29:20, 21, 27; 30:10; 31:24, 26; Josh 1:8; 8:31, 34; 23:6; 24:6) and is also a term in vogue in the post-exilic period, as reflected in its use in the books of Ezra-Nehemiah. The scroll is found by accident in the story, and the contents of it are not revealed until quite late. The writer’s intention to echo the ideals of Deuteronomy becomes clear. However, this close identification of the lawbook with Deuteronomy has recently been challenged (see J. R. Lundbom, *CBQ* 38[1976] 293–302). To be noted is that the repairs on the temple had already begun before the book was found; therefore to link them to the deuteronomic reform is a mistake. Rather, the reform is directed more to the purging of shrines of Canaanite religious practices. **והארקיו** “and he read it.” This is an important step in the narrative. Certain actors are now aware of the contents of the scroll, and their subsequent actions show that the contents are of a very serious nature. The reader is not yet aware of what the scroll contains.

The lawbook is discovered, and then read to the king. What was his reaction?

**Impact of the reading, vv. 11-13.** Both narrators go out of their way to emphasize the dramatic reaction of Josiah to the reading of the lawbook:

**2 Kings 22:11-13, NRSV**

11 When the king heard the words of the book of the law, he tore his clothes. 12 Then the king commanded the priest Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Achbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan the secretary, and the king’s servant Asaiah, saying, 13 “Go, inquire of the Lord for me, for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found; for great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our ancestors did not obey the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us.”

**2 Chron. 34:19-21, NRSV**

19 When the king heard the words of the law he tore his clothes. 20 Then the king commanded Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Abdon son of Micah, the secretary Shaphan, and the king’s servant Asaiah: 21 “Go, inquire of the Lord for me and for those who are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that has been found; for the wrath of the Lord that is poured out on us is great, because our ancestors did not keep the word of the Lord, to act in accordance with all that is written in this book.”

The essential elements of the narratives are the same, but some differences between the two surface. A delegation was dispatched by the king to go get an interpretation of what was read.

	2 Kings	2 Chronicles
1.	Hilkiah	Hilkiah
2.	Ahikam	Ahikam
3.	Achbor	Abdon
4.	Shaphan	Shaphan
5.	Asaiah	Asaiah

Hobbs (*WBC*) notes this about the names:

**סקיחא** “Ahikam” is the father of the ill-fated Gedaliah (25:22), and the family was obviously an important one in Jerusalem at this time. The name means “my kinsman rises (up)” and is not found outside the OT, although both elements of the name are found in other names. Ahikam’s later aid to Jeremiah (Jer 26:24) saved the prophet from death. **רובבע** “Achbor” means “field mouse,” another of the animal names of the passage. His son Elnathan also figures in Jeremiah’s arrest, trial, and eventual release (Jer 26:22). **דלמה דבע הישע** “Asayah the servant of the king.” The name means “Yahweh makes,” and his rank is that of senior civil servant. The phrase is not a proper name. (For occurrences of the name outside the Bible, see Gibson, *Syrian Semitic Inscriptions* 1:62.)

The difference in the spelling of the third name -- ‘Achbor’ in Kings; ‘Abdon’ in Chronicles -- is explained by ‘Abdon’ being an abbreviated form of ‘Achbor’ in the Hebrew.

The reading “of the book” (Kings) / “from the book” (Chronicles) led Josiah to the symbolic action of tearing his clothes. This was suggestive of great despair and also of repentance, as Hobbs (*WBC*) notes:

In 5:7 the king of Israel tore his clothes as a gesture of despair and anger, but here Josiah, like Hezekiah, acts out of repentance. The numerous parallels with Jer 36 have been noted above in *Form/Structure/Setting*. An additional contrast is the reaction of each king to the written word. One heeds it, another cuts it up and deposits it in the fire. An underlying theme of the chapter is the relationship of king to the word of Yahweh. It is interesting that the prophet who is most critical of the kings of Judah, Jeremiah, should



fail to make any statement directly to Josiah (for a development of the theme in the Book of Jeremiah, see R. P. Carroll, *From Chaos to Covenant*, 136–57).

Whatever was read caused the king great alarm that divine wrath could well be coming to them since the book narrated previous instances of God's punishment for disobeying His Law.

The natural response was to seek out someone who could interpret the significance of these words to the king and the people of Judah in that day (cf. v. 13). Thus he appointed a delegation of men that he trusted to seek out a prophet who could tell them how the words of the book applied to them in their day.

What application of vv. 3-13 can be made to us today? Several aspects come to mind. First, that the temple could function without the Law of God being read and studied for instructions on the rituals is surprising. And yet, if ritual traditions had developed, they could be repeated over and over

without anyone bothering to check to see whether they still conformed to the instructions given to Moses by God on Mt. Sinai. That has a haunting echo for our day. How much would change in our church if we completely forgot about the Bible? How much is practiced in church life that completely ignores the Bible?

Second, the Deuteronomist challenges us with his emphasis on the important role that the book of the Law played in Josiah becoming convinced to change the religious habits of the people of the southern kingdom. When the "Bible" was read to Josiah, it shook him to his core and caused him great concern. How does reading the Bible effect you? Does it instill deep conviction to change the way you live and to promote that different way of living to the people around you? The example of Josiah here pushes us to come back to scripture and again recapture that "[divine breath](#)" (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16) saturating the words and thus giving it the power to change our life and our living.

#### b. Understanding its meaning, vv. 14-20

LXX	NASB	NRSV	NLT
<p>14 καὶ ἐπορεύθη Χελκίας ὁ ἱερεὺς καὶ Ἀχικὰμ καὶ Ἀχοβὼρ καὶ Σαφφὰν καὶ Ἀσαιας πρὸς Ὀλδὰν τὴν προφῆτιν γυναῖκα Σελλήμ υἱοῦ Θεκούε υἱοῦ Ἀραὰς τοῦ ἱματιοφύλακος, καὶ αὕτῃ κατῴκει ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἐν τῇ μασενα, καὶ ἐλάλησαν πρὸς αὐτήν.</p> <p>15 καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς Τάδε λέγει κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραὴλ· Εἶπατε τῷ ἀνδρὶ τῷ ἀποστείλαντι ὑμᾶς πρὸς με</p> <p>16 Τάδε λέγει κύριος Ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἐπάγω κακὰ ἐπὶ τὸν τόπον τοῦτον καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐνοικοῦντας αὐτόν, πάντας τοὺς λόγους τοῦ βιβλίου, οὓς ἀνέγνω βασιλεὺς Ἰουδᾶ,</p> <p>17 ἀνθ' ὧν ἐγκατέλιπόν με καὶ ἐθυμίωσαν θεοῖς ἑτέροις, ὅπως παροργίσωσίν με ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις τῶν χειρῶν αὐτῶν, καὶ</p>	<p>14 So Hilkiyah the priest, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe (now she lived in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter); and they spoke to her. 15 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, <i>even</i> all the words of the book which the king of Judah has read. 17 95 Because they have forsaken Me and have burned incense to other gods that they might provoke Me to anger with all</p>	<p>14 So the priest Hilkiyah, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to the prophetess Huldah the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; she resided in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter, where they consulted her. 15 She declared to them, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Tell the man who sent you to me, 16 Thus says the Lord, I will indeed bring disaster on this place and on its inhabitants—all the words of the book that the king of Judah has read. 17 Because they have abandoned me and have made offerings to other gods, so that they have provoked me to anger with all the work</p>	<p>14 So Hilkiyah the priest, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to the newer Mishneh section of Jerusalem to consult with the prophet Huldah. She was the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah and grandson of Harhas, the keeper of the Temple wardrobe. 15 She said to them, "The LORD, the God of Israel, has spoken! Go and tell the man who sent you, 16 'This is what the LORD says: I will destroy this city and its people, just as I stated in the scroll you read. 17 For my people have abandoned me and worshiped pagan gods, and I am very angry with them for everything they have done. My anger is burning</p>

ἐκκαυθήσεται ὁ θυμός μου ἐν τῷ τόπῳ τούτῳ καὶ οὐ σβεσθήσεται. 18 καὶ πρὸς βασιλέα Ιουδα τὸν ἀποστείλαντα ὑμᾶς ἐπιζητήσαι τὸν κύριον τάδε ἐρεῖτε πρὸς αὐτόν· Τάδε λέγει κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ισραὴλ· Οἱ λόγοι, οὓς ἤκουσας, 19 ἀνθ' ὧν ὅτι ἠπαλύνθη ἡ καρδιά σου καὶ ἐνετράπης ἀπὸ προσώπου κυρίου, ὡς ἤκουσας ὅσα ἐλάλησα ἐπὶ τὸν τόπον τοῦτον καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐνοικοῦντας αὐτόν τοῦ εἶναι εἰς ἀφανισμόν καὶ εἰς κατάραν, καὶ διέρρηξας τὰ ἱμάτιά σου καὶ ἔκλαυσας ἐνώπιον ἐμοῦ, καί γε ἐγὼ ἤκουσα, λέγει κύριος. 20 οὐχ οὕτως, ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ προστίθην σε πρὸς τοὺς πατέρας σου, καὶ συναχθήσῃ εἰς τὸν τάφον σου ἐν εἰρήνῃ, καὶ οὐκ ὀφθήσεται ἐν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς σου ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς κακοῖς, οἷς ἐγὼ εἶμι ἐπάγων ἐπὶ τὸν τόπον τοῦτον. καὶ ἐπέστρεψαν τῷ βασιλεῖ τὸ ῥῆμα.

the work of their hands, therefore My wrath burns against this place, and it shall not be quenched.” 18 But to the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of the LORD thus shall you say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel, “Regarding the words which you have heard, 19 because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants that they should become a desolation and a curse, and you have torn your clothes and wept before Me, I truly have heard you,” declares the LORD. 20 “Therefore, behold, 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.” So they brought back word to the king.

of their hands, therefore my wrath will be kindled against this place, and it will not be quenched. 18 But as to the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the Lord, thus shall you say to him, Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Regarding the words that you have heard, 19 because your heart was penitent, and you humbled yourself before the Lord, when you heard how I spoke against this place, and against its inhabitants, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and because you have torn your clothes and wept before me, I also have heard you, says the Lord. 20 Therefore, I will gather you to your ancestors, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; your eyes shall not see all the disaster that I will bring on this place.” They took the message back to the king.

against this place, and it will not be quenched.’ 18 “But go to the king of Judah who sent you to seek the LORD and tell him: ‘This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says concerning the message you have just heard: 19 You were sorry and humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I said against this city and its people, that this land would be cursed and become desolate. You tore your clothing in despair and wept before me in repentance. So I have indeed heard you, says the LORD. 20 I will not send the promised disaster against this city until after you have died and been buried in peace. You will not see the disaster I am going to bring on this place.’” So they took her message back to the king.

### Notes:

Again the comparative analysis of the two accounts is helpful to understanding the distinctives of each account.

#### 2 Kings 22:14-20, NRSV

14 So the priest Hilkiah, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to the prophetess Huldah the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; she resided in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter, where they consulted her. 15 She declared to them, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Tell the man who

#### 2 Chron 34:22-28, NRSV

22 So Hilkiah and those whom the king had sent went to the prophet Huldah, the wife of Shallum son of Tokhath son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe (who lived in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter) and spoke to her to that effect. 23 She declared to them, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Tell the man who sent you to me, 24

#### 2 Kings 22:14-20 cont.

sent you to me, 16 Thus says the Lord, I will indeed bring disaster on this place and on its inhabitants—all the words of the book that the king of Judah has read. 17 Because they have abandoned me and have made offerings to other gods, so that they have provoked me to anger with all the work of their hands, therefore my wrath will be kindled against this place, and it will not be quenched. 18 But as to the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the Lord, thus shall

#### 2 Chron. 34:22-28 cont.

Thus says the Lord: I will indeed bring disaster upon this place and upon its inhabitants, all the curses that are written in the book that was read before the king of Judah. 25 Because they have forsaken me and have made offerings to other gods, so that they have provoked me to anger with all the works of their hands, my wrath will be poured out on this place and will not be quenched. 26 But as to the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the Lord, thus shall you say to him:



2 Kings 22:14-20 cont.

you say to him, Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Regarding the words that you have heard, 19 because your heart was penitent, and you humbled yourself before the Lord, when you heard how I spoke against this place, and against its inhabitants, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and because you have torn your clothes and wept before me, I also have heard you, says the Lord. 20 Therefore, I will gather you to your ancestors, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; your eyes shall not see all the disaster that I will bring on this place.” They took the message back to the king.

Here the two narratives are closest to one another in the details of any of the Josiah stories.

This episodic narrative describes the delegation from King Josiah going to the prophetess Huldah to seek an interpretation of the book of the Law. She is introduced (v. 14), gives her interpretation (vv. 15-20a), and the delegation takes this message back to the king (v. 20b).

**The prophetess Huldah, v. 14:** “So the priest Hilkiah, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to the prophetess Huldah the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; she resided in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter, where they consulted her.”

Concerning this lady, Hobbs (*WBC*) notes:

Nothing is known about this woman apart from the information offered here, and little is known about the tradition of female prophets in the society of ancient Israel. Huldah joins the ranks of Miriam, Deborah, the wife of Isaiah, and Noadiah. Two other prophets are known to have been active at this time, Jeremiah and Zephaniah, but they are not mentioned nor even involved in the reform. Huldah was related by marriage to a court official, the keeper of the royal wardrobe (see 10:22), and she is, in Wilson’s borrowed terminology, a “central prophet.” (See R. R. Wilson, *Prophet and Society in Ancient Israel*, 219–23;

2 Chron. 34:22-28 cont.

Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Regarding the words that you have heard, 27 because your heart was penitent and you humbled yourself before God when you heard his words against this place and its inhabitants, and you have humbled yourself before me, and have torn your clothes and wept before me, I also have heard you, says the Lord. 28 I will gather you to your ancestors and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; your eyes shall not see all the disaster that I will bring on this place and its inhabitants.” They took the message back to the king.



for an exposition of the meaning of “central” and “peripheral” to describe social roles, see the foundational article by E. Shils, *Center and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology*, 2–16, first published in 1961.) Huldah was part of the “structure of activities, roles and persons” at the center of society. Hence she is quickly consulted by the king and his servants. In the light of Jeremiah’s vicious attacks on Jerusalem and Judean society in general and his origin from the levitic town of Anathoth, his absence from these incidents is not unusual.

The above assumption for turning to Huldah rather than to either Jeremiah or Zephaniah is about as close to a concrete reason as is possible, given the limited data from the two narratives.

Some variation in the spelling of the identifying names are present here. 2 Kings says, “the prophetess Huldah the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, son of Harhas,” while 2 Chronicles says, “the prophet Huldah, the wife of Shallum son of Tokhath son of Hasrah.”

Richard Nelson (1-2 Kings, *Interpretation*, Logos Systems) also notes:

The large size of the committee sent to Huldah signals the seriousness of the situation. Huldah’s careful identification undergirds the authenticity of the message she delivers. It emphasizes that she was a real person in real time. The original readers would have known her neighborhood, if not her husband’s family. It is to be noted that the narrative makes absolutely nothing of her being

a woman. Her status as a prophet of God is not affected by her sex. We get the impression that women prophets were not so uncommon as to require special comment.

So the delegation turned to this woman for an understanding of scripture.

**Her message to the king, vv. 15-20a:** “15 She declared to them, ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Tell *the man who sent you to me*, 16 Thus says the Lord, I will indeed bring disaster on this place and on its inhabitants — all the words of the book that the king of Judah has read. 17 Because they have abandoned me and have made offerings to other gods, so that they have provoked me to anger with all the work of their hands, therefore my wrath will be kindled against this place, and it will not be quenched. 18 *But as to the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the Lord*, thus shall you say to him, Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Regarding the words that you have heard, 19 because your heart was penitent, and you humbled yourself before the Lord, when you heard how I spoke against this place, and against its inhabitants, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and because you have torn your clothes and wept before me, I also have heard you, says the Lord. 20 Therefore, I will gather you to your ancestors, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; your eyes shall not see all the disaster that I will bring on this place.’ “

Huldah’s message to the delegation is directed to Josiah, although he is never called by name. He is “the man who sent you to me” (v. 15) and “the king of Judah” (v. 17). Her message was twofold. The curses contained in the latter chapters of Deuteronomy that so upset Josiah when they were read to him remained in place (vv. 16-17). God’s anger at the rebellion of the people in the southern kingdom would not be turned away, and judgment would come on the city and the country. The book of the law was discovered in 622 BCE, and in 609 BCE the Babylonians began [a series of invasions](#) that eventually led to the destruction of the temple and of Jerusalem in 586 BCE.

But Josiah would be spared having to go through that destruction (vv. 18-20a). Because of his repentance based upon his hearing the words of the Law God would allow him to go to his grave “in peace”

without seeing Jerusalem destroyed. To be sure, Josiah would suffer a violent death in 609 BCE at the hands of the Egyptian pharaoh Neco at [Megiddo](#) (cf. 2 Kings 23:28-30; 2 Chron. 35:20-24). On this Nelson (*Interpretation*) comments:

To die “in peace” usually referred to a natural death at a ripe old age (Gen. 15:15) and certainly not by the sword (Jer. 34:4-5). But the holocaust facing Judah will be so terrible that even normal burial following violent death (23:29-30) must be considered to be “in peace” by comparison.

**Their return to the kings, v. 20b.** The episode closes with the delegation carrying this message from Huldah back to Josiah. This statement really serves to set up the narratives in chapter 23 where Josiah moves to carrying out a series of reforms aimed at purging the country of its idolatrous practices.

What does this passage have to do with us? Some applications come to mind. Because of the disturbing words of the scripture Josiah determined to make sure that what he heard read did indeed apply to him and his day. And exactly how did they apply. In our day flippant and often false applications of scripture can be heard from pulpits and Sunday School classrooms.

Shallow “word association” games are played with the text and become a pre-text for injecting one’s own biases into the sacred text. Josiah’s example teaches us to go cautiously and carefully in applying scripture text to our day.

The message of Huldah affirms two things. First, no one can sneak around God’s principles and demands for holiness and faithfulness. No

feigned ‘repentance’ would give Judah an escape. Second, Josiah’s sincere repentance spared him having to endure this outpouring of divine wrath. God is unquestionably smart enough to know what’s real and what’s false in our reaching out to Him. We can never ever “pull one” on God! Yet, how often do we keep on trying to!

Finally, we never know who will be God’s messenger to us. Huldah was unexpected.





**LXX**

3 Καὶ ἐγενήθη ἐν τῷ ὀκτωκαιδεκάτῳ ἔτει τῷ βασιλεῖ Ἰωσία ἐν τῷ μηνὶ τῷ ὀγδόῳ ἀπέστειλεν ὁ βασιλεὺς τὸν Σαφφαν υἱὸν Εσελίου υἱοῦ Μεσολλαμ τὸν γραμματέα οἴκου κυρίου λέγων  
 4 Ἀνάβηθι πρὸς Χελκίαν τὸν ἱερέα τὸν μέγαν καὶ σφράγισον τὸ ἀργύριον τὸ εἰσενεχθὲν ἐν οἴκῳ κυρίου, ὃ συνήγαγον οἱ φυλάσσοντες τὸν σταθμὸν παρὰ τοῦ λαοῦ,  
 5 καὶ δότωσαν αὐτὸ ἐπὶ χεῖρα ποιούντων τὰ ἔργα τῶν καθεσταμένων ἐν οἴκῳ κυρίου. καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτὸ τοῖς ποιούσιν τὰ ἔργα τοῖς ἐν οἴκῳ κυρίου τοῦ κατισχύσαι τὸ βεδεκ τοῦ οἴκου,  
 6 τοῖς τέκτοσιν καὶ τοῖς οἰκοδόμοις καὶ τοῖς τειχισταῖς, καὶ τοῦ κτήσασθαι ξύλα καὶ λίθους λατομητοῦς τοῦ κραταιῶσαι τὸ βεδεκ τοῦ οἴκου,  
 7 πλὴν οὐκ ἐξελογίζοντο αὐτοὺς τὸ ἀργύριον τὸ διδόμενον αὐτοῖς, ὅτι ἐν πίστει αὐτοὶ ποιούσιν.

8 καὶ εἶπεν Χελκίας ὁ ἱερεὺς ὁ μέγας πρὸς Σαφφαν τὸν γραμματέα Βιβλίον τοῦ νόμου εὔρον ἐν οἴκῳ κυρίου, καὶ ἔδωκεν Χελκίας τὸ βιβλίον πρὸς Σαφφαν, καὶ ἀνέγνω αὐτό.  
 9 καὶ εἰσήνεγκεν πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα Ἰωσιαν καὶ ἐπέστρεψεν τῷ βασιλεῖ ῥῆμα καὶ εἶπεν Ἐχώνευσαν οἱ δοῦλοί σου τὸ ἀργύριον τὸ εὔρεθὲν ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ κυρίου καὶ ἔδωκαν αὐτὸ ἐπὶ χεῖρα ποιούντων τὰ ἔργα τῶν καθεσταμένων ἐν οἴκῳ κυρίου.

**NASB**

3 Now in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, the king sent Shaphan, the son of Azaliah the son of Meshullam the scribe, to the house of the LORD saying, 4 "Go up to Hilki-ah the high priest that he may count the money brought in to the house of the LORD which the doorkeepers have gathered from the people. 5 Let them deliver it into the hand of the workmen who have the oversight of the house of the LORD, and let them give it to the workmen who are in the house of the LORD to repair the damages of the house, 6 to the carpenters and the builders and the masons and for buying timber and hewn stone to repair the house. 7 Only no accounting shall be made with them for the money delivered into their hands, for they deal faithfully."

8 Then Hilki-ah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD." And Hilki-ah gave the book to Shaphan who read it. 9 Shaphan the scribe came to the king and brought back word to the king and said, "Your servants have emptied out the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of the workmen who have the over-

**NRSV**

3 In the eighteenth year of King Josiah, the king sent Shaphan son of Azaliah, son of Meshullam, the secretary, to the house of the Lord, saying, 4 "Go up to the high priest Hilki-ah, and have him count the entire sum of the money that has been brought into the house of the Lord, which the keepers of the threshold have collected from the people; 5 let it be given into the hand of the workers who have the oversight of the house of the Lord; let them give it to the workers who are at the house of the Lord, repairing the house, 6 that is, to the carpenters, to the builders, to the masons; and let them use it to buy timber and quarried stone to repair the house. 7 But no accounting shall be asked from them for the money that is delivered into their hand, for they deal honestly."

8 The high priest Hilki-ah said to Shaphan the secretary, "I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord." When Hilki-ah gave the book to Shaphan, he read it. 9 Then Shaphan the secretary came to the king, and reported to the king, "Your servants have emptied out the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of the workers who have oversight of the house of the Lord." 10 Shaphan

**NLT**

3 In the eighteenth year of his reign, King Josiah sent Shaphan son of Azaliah and grandson of Meshullam, the court secretary, to the Temple of the LORD. He told him, 4 "Go up to Hilki-ah the high priest and have him count the money the gatekeepers have collected from the people at the LORD's Temple. 5 Entrust this money to the men assigned to supervise the Temple's restoration. Then they can use it to pay workers to repair the Temple of the LORD. 6 They will need to hire carpenters, builders, and masons. Also have them buy the timber and the cut stone needed to repair the Temple. 7 But there will be no need for the construction supervisors to keep account of the money they receive, for they are honest people."

8 Hilki-ah the high priest said to Shaphan the court secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in the LORD's Temple!" Then Hilki-ah gave the scroll to Shaphan, and he read it. 9 Shaphan returned to the king and reported, "Your officials have given the money collected at the Temple of the LORD to the workers and supervisors at the Temple." 10 Shaphan also said to the king, "Hilki-ah the priest has given me a scroll." So Shaphan read it to the king.

10 καὶ εἶπεν Σαφφαν ὁ γραμματεὺς πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα λέγων Βιβλίον ἔδωκέν μοι Χελκίας ὁ ἱερεὺς, καὶ ἀνέγνω αὐτὸ Σαφφαν ἐνώπιον τοῦ βασιλέως.

11 καὶ ἐγένετο ὡς ἤκουσεν ὁ βασιλεὺς τοὺς λόγους τοῦ βιβλίου τοῦ νόμου, καὶ διέρρηξεν τὰ ἱμάτια ἐαυτοῦ. 12 καὶ ἐνετείλατο ὁ βασιλεὺς τῷ Χελκίᾳ τῷ ἱереῖ καὶ τῷ Αἰχικὰμ υἱῷ Σαφφαν καὶ τῷ Αἰχὼρ υἱῷ Μιχαίου καὶ τῷ Σαφφαν τῷ γραμματεῖ καὶ τῷ Ασαΐᾳ δούλῳ τοῦ βασιλέως λέγων 13 Δεῦτε ἐκζητήσατε τὸν κύριον περὶ ἐμοῦ καὶ περὶ παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ περὶ παντὸς τοῦ Ἰουδα περὶ τῶν λόγων τοῦ βιβλίου τοῦ εὑρεθέντος τούτου, ὅτι μεγάλη ἡ ὀργὴ κυρίου ἡ ἐκκεκαυμένη ἐν ἡμῖν ὑπὲρ οὗ οὐκ ἤκουσαν οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν τῶν λόγων τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου τοῦ ποιεῖν κατὰ πάντα τὰ γεγραμμένα καθ' ἡμῶν.

14 καὶ ἐπορεύθη Χελκίας ὁ ἱερεὺς καὶ Αἰχικὰμ καὶ Αἰχὼρ καὶ Σαφφαν καὶ Ασαΐας πρὸς Ὀλδαν τὴν προφητὴν γυναικὰ Σελλημ υἱοῦ Θεκουε υἱοῦ Αραας τοῦ ἱματιοφύλακος, καὶ αὕτῃ κατῴκει ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἐν τῇ μασενα, καὶ ἐλάλησαν πρὸς αὐτήν. 15 καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς Τάδε λέγει κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραὴλ Εἴπατε τῷ ἀνδρὶ τῷ ἀποστείλαντι ὑμᾶς πρὸς με 16 Τάδε λέγει κύριος Ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἐπάγω κακὰ ἐπὶ τὸν τόπον τοῦτον καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐνοικοῦντας αὐτόν, πάντας τοὺς

sight of the house of the LORD.” 10 Moreover, Shaphan the scribe told the king saying, “Hilkiah the priest has given me a book.” And Shaphan read it in the presence of the king.

11 When the king heard the words of the book of the law, he tore his clothes. 12 Then the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Achbor the son of Micaiah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah the king’s servant saying, 13 “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.”

14 So Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe (now she lived in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter); and they spoke to her. 15 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

the secretary informed the king, “The priest Hilkiah has given me a book.” Shaphan then read it aloud to the king.

11 When the king heard the words of the book of the law, he tore his clothes. 12 Then the king commanded the priest Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Achbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan the secretary, and the king’s servant Asaiah, saying, 13 “Go, inquire of the Lord for me, for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found; for great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our ancestors did not obey the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us.”

14 So the priest Hilkiah, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to the prophetess Huldah the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; she resided in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter, where they consulted her. 15 She declared to them, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Tell the man who sent you to me, 16 Thus says the Lord, I will indeed bring disaster on this place and on its inhabitants—all the words of the book that the king of Judah has read. 17 Because they have abandoned me and have made offerings

11 When the king heard what was written in the Book of the Law, he tore his clothes in despair. 12 Then he gave these orders to Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Achbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan the court secretary, and Asaiah the king’s personal adviser: 13 “Go to the Temple and speak to the LORD for me and for the people and for all Judah. Ask him about the words written in this scroll that has been found. The LORD’s anger is burning against us because our ancestors have not obeyed the words in this scroll. We have not been doing what this scroll says we must do.”

14 So Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to the newer Mishneh section of Jerusalem to consult with the prophet Huldah. She was the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah and grandson of Harhas, the keeper of the Temple wardrobe. 15 She said to them, “The LORD, the God of Israel, has spoken! Go and tell the man who sent you, 16 ‘This is what the LORD says: I will destroy this city and its people, just as I stated in the scroll you read. 17 For my people have abandoned me and worshiped pagan gods, and I am very angry with them for everything they have done. My anger is burning



λόγους τοῦ βιβλίου, οὓς ἀνέγνω βασιλεὺς Ιουδα, 17 ἀνθ' ὧν ἐγκατέλιπόν με καὶ ἐθυμίων θεοὶς ἑτέροις, ὅπως παροργίσωσίν με ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις τῶν χειρῶν αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐκκαυθήσεται ὁ θυμός μου ἐν τῷ τόπῳ τούτῳ καὶ οὐ σβεσθήσεται. 18 καὶ πρὸς βασιλέα Ιουδα τὸν ἀποστείλαντα ὑμᾶς ἐπιζητήσαι τὸν κύριον τάδε ἐρεῖτε πρὸς αὐτόν· Τάδε λέγει κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ισραὴλ· Οἱ λόγοι, οὓς ἤκουσας, 19 ἀνθ' ὧν ὅτι ἡπαλύνθη ἡ καρδία σου καὶ ἐνετράπης ἀπὸ προσώπου κυρίου, ὡς ἤκουσας ὅσα ἐλάλησα ἐπὶ τὸν τόπον τοῦτον καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐνοικοῦντας αὐτόν· τοῦ εἶναι εἰς ἀφανισμόν καὶ εἰς κατάραν, καὶ διέρρηξας τὰ ἱμάτιά σου καὶ ἐκλαυσας ἐνώπιον ἐμοῦ, καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ἤκουσα, λέγει κύριος. 20 οὐχ οὕτως, ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ προστίθωμί σε πρὸς τοὺς πατέρας σου, καὶ συναχθήσῃ εἰς τὸν τάφον σου ἐν εἰρήνῃ, καὶ οὐκ ὀφθήσεται ἐν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς σου ἐν πάσιν τοῖς κακοῖς, οἷς ἐγὼ εἶμι ἐπάγω ἐπὶ τὸν τόπον τοῦτον. καὶ ἐπέστρεψαν τῷ βασιλεῖ τὸ ῥῆμα.

of Judah has read. 17 95 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.” 18 But to the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of the LORD thus shall you say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel, “Regarding the words which you have heard, 19 because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants that they should become a desolation and a curse, and you have torn your clothes and wept before Me, I truly have heard you,” declares the LORD. 20 “Therefore, behold, 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.” So they brought back word to the king.

to other gods, so that they have provoked me to anger with all the work of their hands, therefore my wrath will be kindled against this place, and it will not be quenched. 18 But as to the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the Lord, thus shall you say to him, Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Regarding the words that you have heard, 19 because your heart was penitent, and you humbled yourself before the Lord, when you heard how I spoke against this place, and against its inhabitants, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and because you have torn your clothes and wept before me, I also have heard you, says the Lord. 20 Therefore, I will gather you to your ancestors, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; your eyes shall not see all the disaster that I will bring on this place.” They took the message back to the king.

against this place, and it will not be quenched.’ 18 “But go to the king of Judah who sent you to seek the LORD and tell him: ‘This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says concerning the message you have just heard: 19 You were sorry and humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I said against this city and its people, that this land would be cursed and become desolate. You tore your clothing in despair and wept before me in repentance. So I have indeed heard you, says the LORD. 20 I will not send the promised disaster against this city until after you have died and been buried in peace. You will not see the disaster I am going to bring on this place.’” So they took her message back to the king.

### Hebrew Text

<sup>3</sup> וַיְהִי בַשְּׁמֹנֶה עָשָׂרָה שָׁנָה לַמֶּלֶךְ יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ שָׁלַח הַמֶּלֶךְ  
אֶת־שָׁפָן בֶּן־אֲצַלְיָהוּ בֶן־מְשֻׁלֵּם הַסֹּפֵר בֵּית יְהוָה לֵאמֹר:  
<sup>4</sup> עֲלֵה אֶל־חִלְקִיָּהוּ הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל וַיִּתֶּם אֶת־הַכֶּסֶף הַמּוֹבֵא  
בֵּית יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר אִסְפוּ שְׁמָרֵי הַסֶּף מֵאֵת הָעָם:  
<sup>5</sup> (וַיִּתְּנָה) [וַיִּתְּנֶהוּ] עַל־יַד עֹשֵׂי הַמִּלְאכָה הַמְּפֻקְדִים (בְּבֵית)  
[בֵּית] יְהוָה וַיִּתְּנוּ אֹתוֹ לַעֲשֵׂי הַמִּלְאכָה אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵית יְהוָה  
לְחֹזֶק בִּדְק הַבָּיִת:  
<sup>6</sup> לְחָרָשִׁים וּלְבָנִים וּלְגֹדְרִים וּלְקִנּוֹת עֲצִים וְאֲבָנֵי מַחְצָב לְחֹזֶק  
אֶת־הַבָּיִת:  
<sup>7</sup> אַךְ לֹא־יִחַשְׁבּ אֹתָם הַכֶּסֶף הַנָּתֵן עַל־יָדָם כִּי בְּאִמּוֹנָה הֵם  
עֹשִׂים:  
<sup>8</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר חִלְקִיָּהוּ הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל עַל־שָׁפָן הַסֹּפֵר סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה  
מִצֵּאתִי בְּבֵית יְהוָה וַיִּתֵּן חִלְקִיָּה אֶת־הַסֹּפֵר אֶל־שָׁפָן וַיִּקְרָאֵהוּ:  
<sup>9</sup> וַיָּבֹא שָׁפָן הַסֹּפֵר אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֵּשֶׁב אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ וַדָּבָר וַיֹּאמֶר  
הַתִּיכּוּ עֲבָדֶיךָ אֶת־הַכֶּסֶף הַנִּמְצָא בְּבֵית יְהוָה וַיִּתְּנֶהוּ עַל־יַד עֹשֵׂי  
הַמִּלְאכָה הַמְּפֻקְדִים בֵּית יְהוָה:  
<sup>10</sup> וַיֵּגֵד שָׁפָן הַסֹּפֵר לַמֶּלֶךְ לֵאמֹר סֵפֶר נָתַן לִי חִלְקִיָּה הַכֹּהֵן  
וַיִּקְרָאֵהוּ שָׁפָן לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ:  
<sup>11</sup> וַיְהִי כַשְּׁמֹעַ הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־דְּבָרֵי סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה וַיִּקְרַע אֶת־בְּגָדָיו:  
<sup>12</sup> וַיֵּצֵא הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־חִלְקִיָּה הַכֹּהֵן וְאֶת־אֲחִיקָם בֶּן־שָׁפָן  
וְאֶת־עֶכְבֹּר בֶּן־מִיכָיָה וְאֶת שָׁפָן הַסֹּפֵר וְאֶת עֲשִׂיָּה  
עֶבֶד־הַמֶּלֶךְ לֵאמֹר:  
<sup>13</sup> לָכוּ דַרְשׁוּ אֶת־יְהוָה בַּעֲדֵי וּבַעֲדֵה־עִם וּבַעֲדֵה פְלִי־הוֹדָה  
עַל־דְּבָרֵי הַסֹּפֵר הַנִּמְצָא הַזֶּה כִּי־גְדוֹלָה חֲמַת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר־הִיא  
נִצָּתָה בָּנוּ עַל אֲשֶׁר לֹא־שָׁמְעוּ אֲבֹתֵינוּ עַל־דְּבָרֵי הַסֹּפֵר הַזֶּה  
לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּכָל־הַכְּתוּב עֲלֵינוּ:  
<sup>14</sup> וַיֵּלֶךְ חִלְקִיָּהוּ הַכֹּהֵן וְאֲחִיקָם וְעֶכְבֹּר וְשָׁפָן וְעֲשִׂיָּה  
אֶל־חִלְדָּה הַנְּבִיאָה אִשְׁתּוֹ שָׁלֵם בֶּן־תְּקוּהָ בֶן־חֲרָחֵס שֹׁמֵר  
הַבְּגָדִים וְהִיא יֹשֶׁבֶת בִּירוּשָׁלַם בַּמִּשְׁנָה וַיְדַבְּרוּ אֵלֶיהָ:  
<sup>15</sup> וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלֵיהֶם כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אָמְרוּ לֹאִישׁ  
אֲשֶׁר־שָׁלַח אֶתְכֶם אֵלַי:



16 כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הִנְנִי מֵבִיא רָעָה אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וְעַל־יֹשְׁבָיו  
אֶת כָּל־דִּבְרֵי הַסֵּפֶר אֲשֶׁר קָרָא מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה:

17 תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר עֲזָבוּנִי וַיִּקְטְרוּ לֵאלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים לְמַעַן הַכְּעִיסֵנִי  
בְּכָל מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיהֶם וְנִצַּתָּה חַמְתִּי בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וְלֹא תִכְבָּה:  
18 וְאֶל־מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה הִשְׁלַח אֶתְכֶם לְדַרְשׁ אֶת־יְהוָה כֹּה  
תֹאמְרוּ אֵלָיו כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר  
שָׁמַעְתָּ:

19 יַעַן רָךְ־לִבְכָּךְ וַתִּפְנַע מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה בְּשִׁמְעֶךָ אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתִּי  
עַל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וְעַל־יֹשְׁבָיו לַהֲיוֹת לְשִׁמָּה וְלִקְלָלָה וַתִּקְרַע  
אֶת־בְּגָדֶיךָ וַתִּבְכֶּה לִפְנֵי וְגַם אָנֹכִי שָׁמַעְתִּי נָא־יְהוָה:  
20 לִכֵּן הִנְנִי אֹסְפֶךָ עַל־אֲבֹתֶיךָ וְנִאֲסַפְתָּ אֶל־קְבָרֹתֶיךָ בְּשָׁלוֹם  
וְלֹא־תִרְאִינָה עֵינֶיךָ בְּכָל הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר־אֲנִי מֵבִיא עַל־הַמָּקוֹם  
הַזֶּה וַיֵּשִׁיבוּ אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ דָּבָר: