

2,600 years ago, a new king began his rule over God’s people. A new king climbed on the throne. It wasn’t that long ago that he had climbed on his father’s lap on that throne. He wasn’t tall, well-built or handsome. He was short, thin and kind of cute. He had very little life-experience, because Josiah, the new king was an 8-year-old child. To make matters worse, there was an absence of male role models in his life. Josiah’s dad, Amon, is described as one who *“did evil in the eyes of the Lord.”* His evil reign didn’t last long. He was assassinated after 2 years. Josiah’s grandpa, Manasseh, is also described as one who *“did evil in the eyes of the Lord.”* Unfortunately, his evil reign ran for 55 years. Josiah’s ancestors were idol-worshipping, God-haters.

Here’s just a sampling of the false gods the people embraced instead of the true God. There was Molech. Molech was a fertility god to which moms brought their first-born babies and offered them on an altar to be burned alive as a thank offering. There was Asherah. Asherah poles were used in a perverted form of worship that included sleeping with temple prostitutes. Asherah poles were all over the hills around Jerusalem. The people exchanged the worship of the Lord God Almighty, with sacrificing their children and sleeping with prostitutes. Josiah’s dad and grandpa approved and encouraged it.

We can all relate to Josiah. Either we had a father who didn’t walk with the Lord, or we’re currently living in a culture that isn’t much different from Josiah’s.

While we live in a culture where the wrong things get praised, Josiah set out to change what he had experienced: **“Josiah did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and walked in the ways of his father David, not turning aside to the right or to the left.”**

David was not Josiah’s real father, but he was one of his ancestors. David had a reputation as a godly leader who was a positive example for who lived in the decades and centuries after him.

Did you think it was strange that an 8-year-old took over as a king? Then how strange is it that the Book of the Law, the first 5 books of the Bible, written by Moses, in discovered in the temple’s lost and found? That sounds strange, doesn’t it? We’re not sure how long it had been lost, but the impression we get, is that Josiah obviously never heard of it, but even Hilkiah, the high priest, and Shaphan, the scribe hadn’t either. This book was something new to them.

How did they discover the missing scroll? After reigning for 18 years, Josiah had his high-ranking officials initiate a renovation project on the temple. An offering was gathered for the work since the temple had been trashed over the past 60 plus years.

Think about what this tells us about the faithlessness of God’s people. God’s Word had been lost. It’s more than people being unwilling to hear what God had to say. They didn’t even know the Book of the Law ever existed.

What also might seem strange is that Josiah was bringing about these changes without much, if any, connection to God’s Word. They were repairing the Temple, giving money for the repairs, offering sacrifices and keeping the Sabbath ... but didn't know what it was all about.

Sounds like many Christians today in our own country. They have their religious traditions. They’re doing the things people who go to church are supposed to do, but they’re not walking with God. They don’t know what it’s all about.

When the Book of the Law was found, the priest and the secretary seem embarrassed. The Scroll was missing and nobody noticed! How could Shaphan be a scribe, or Hilkiah the High Priest of God’s people, but not know God’s Word was missing? How scary ... the people who should know the Word had lost track of it!

Does that happen today? How many churches have set aside the Word and the people are falling into all kinds of unscriptural practices because they've lost the Word. God help us to always stay connected to his Word!

Once Hilkiah found the Book of the Law, he told Shaphan. Shaphan immediately brought it to the king and read it out loud to the king.

In the past, at various times and in various ways, the Lord communicated with his kings. He appeared to them in visions. He made his powerful presence felt in acts of mercy and judgment. He spoke to them directly through a prophet or a priest. Usually, the king's reaction was anger and defiance when told things they didn't want to hear. No prophet came to see Josiah. He simply listened to God's Word as it was read to him by one of God's servants.

What matters is how Josiah reacted to what he heard. He tore his robes – not in anger and defiance, but in sadness and repentance. He knew this scroll was God's Word and immediately applied the message to himself and his people. They had been unfaithful to the God who had remained faithful to them.

In our society, people are measured by what they can make of themselves, what they are and do and have. In the judgment of God, what we are is sinful, what we do is wicked and what we have ... is a gift from God ... that we have failed miserably in thanking him for.

God's Law measures us and finds us not up to his standards. It is through his Law that he teaches us to humble ourselves in sincere repentance. Before God, the ultimate measure of a person is how they hear and heed God's Word.

King Josiah humbly heard God's message, and now, he's going to heed it by gathering together all the religious leaders and all the people – from youngest to oldest – and he's going to personally read out loud the Book of the Law, the missing scroll that had been found.

And when he had finished reading ... in front of them all he pledged **"with all his heart and all his soul,"** to obey the written words he had just read to them. The people pledged to do the same.

There's a missing scroll in many people's homes today. If someone would come to your house and ask: *"Do you have a Bible?"* Could you find it quickly, because you're using it; or would you have to hunt for it because it's been a while since you last read it?

Your Bible is a treasured possession, but it's intended to be read and studied and applied personally and then shared regularly. The Book of Revelation says: **"Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it."** Who would ever say: *"No thanks!"* to God when he comes with an offer to bless? You're only blessed if you read and contemplate it, not just if you own one.

What is the one thing in this world which you and I can touch that has *"eternity"* written all over it? Each time you hold your Bible, you hold something that transcends time and space: **"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my Word shall not pass away."**

It is only in that Word that we get to know God's plan of salvation and how much our Savior Jesus has done for us. He's done more than simply point out the path to right living, and provide us with a good example to follow. He's gone to death and back in one perfect act of obedience and grace that counts for us all. In his blood he has made a new promise, an unconditional one, in which God promises to forgive your wickedness and remember your sins no more.

At a time when people believe in something, nothing, everything – we humbly ask: *"Dear Savior, keep us in your Word and keep our faith alive until you call us home! Amen."*