



Lesson 3 March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021

## Huldah Prophet of Wisdom

Study Scripture – 2 Kings 22:14-20

Background Scripture – 2 Chronicles 36:15-21; Psalm 137

### Key Verse:

*“Since 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 would become an object of horror and a curse, and you have torn your clothes and wept before Me, I have indeed heard you” declared the Lord.*

**2 Kings 22:19**

### INTRODUCTION

In 1 Corinthians 10:1-12 the Apostle Paul made it clear that the experiences of the children of Israel, are examples for us who are living in the ‘end times’.

One of two major Lesson we will hopefully learn from this Study is how God responds to a tender heart. It is suggested that you make sure your heart is tender toward Yahweh.

Another major lesson has many practical but very serious implications. It is that good kings or leaders do not last.

No matter how good our leader or our King is and no matter how he does a lot to bring the nation and the people back to God he dies. He is mortal.

You might try a great deal to ensure that the next generation follow YOU after God, but you can't really be sure that they will follow in your godly footsteps.

One writer recalls that we might do a lot of hard work cooking for the family, serving them and eating and then do a lot of hard work cleaning up in the kitchen but the pots, the pans, and the dishes get dirty, and the mess is everywhere. Once again, the work of cleaning has to start again.

So, it is with our leaders and our King; despite strenuous efforts, they do not last. We can spend a lot of energy working toward our great goals and aims but the next person that comes along or the next children that are born can reverse all of what we have done.

We hope our Study will impress on you the fact that we need an eternal King, an eternal home, an eternal family, an eternal body in which we are placed.

Our King and our leader might be as good as he can possibly be and get everything right and be a perfect model but that is still not good enough. He cannot really save.

We now look at a situation which is a perfect fit in the case of King Josiah which teaches that lesson. He was the best thing you could possibly have for he was quite (almost) "perfect". The Scriptures said of him:

***"Neither before nor after Josiah was there a King like him who turned to the Lord as he did".***

This is absolutely incredible. He was the most faithful king of God's people who ever lived. In extremely strong language we are told that he was better than David, better than Hezekiah and was simply the best.

But as we live in our modern times let us understand that we must -focus on the eternal,  
-recognize that we need a perfect King,  
-an eternal King.

The best that a human being can offer us is not enough. We need grace, we need mercy for that is our only hope.

Maybe that is why God lets us have dark days and we do not have good answers to what confronts us. We are being driven to look at the eternal things.

Mercy can be very humbling, and we should understand that there are right answers and logical answers which make sense when disaster comes.

The answers are in God's character and the nature of sin and the classroom of life should teach us that. So as Jeremiah said in the Book of Lamentations as he cried over Judah in the bitterness of soul, understanding what human beings are like and what God has to do:

***"The LORD has done what he planned;  
he has fulfilled his word,  
which he decreed long ago.  
He has overthrown you without pity,  
he has let the enemy gloat over you,  
he has exalted the horn of your foes".***

Jeremiah understood real life. There was no veil over his eyes. So he teaches us in Lamentations 3:20-24 where our respite is:

***"I will remember them,  
and my soul is downcast within me,  
Yet this I call to mind  
And therefore I have hope:  
Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed  
For his compassions never fail.  
They are new every morning:  
Great is your faithfulness.  
I say to myself, "the LORD is my portion;  
Therefore I will wait for him".***



In your pain therefore make sure you encounter God in a deep and intimate way, advises one writer.

So to make the line of event clearer we give a few dates listed by one writer:

736 B.C.E.-Isaiah is called as a prophet in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, in the city of Jerusalem.

722 B.C.E.-Samaria, capital of the northern kingdom, falls to Assyria. The Northern Kingdom ceases to exist, its people go into exile and disappear at an identity group.

715 B.C.E.-the pious, reforming King Hezekiah begins to reign in Jerusalem.

701 B.C.E.-Assyria besieges Jerusalem, but the city is not conquered. The prophet Isaiah was active until this time, but apparently dies soon after this crisis.

687-642 B.C.E.-Manasseh reigns as king in Judah for more years than any other king. He is remembered in 2 Kings 21 as one of the worst Kings, who **“made his son pass through the fire”** (verse 6, meaning he sacrificed his son) and **“shed very much innocent blood”** (verse 16). His policies are continued by his son Amon, who reigns only two years before he was murdered.

640-609 B.C.E.-Josiah reigns as king of Judah. As is indicated by Josiah’s pious efforts to repair the Temple, he apparently was much more like his great-grandfather Hezekiah than he was like his grandfather Manasseh. As the Temple is being repaired, the royal secretary Shaphan presents to Josiah **“the book of the law in the house of the Lord”**.

Most likely, the scroll that was found had been hidden away in the Temple during the reign of Manasseh, for fear of that King’s anti Yahwistic leanings”.

God was displeased with the behaviour of the people of Israel which had steadily deteriorated. Idolatry, fornication, murmuring and disobedience were widespread, despite continued warnings against these sins. Under strong, godly leadership they enjoyed periods when God was able to bless them; but without this type of godly leadership the people always slipped into apostasy and drifted away from God.

Their recurring slide into sin was a sure and inescapable reason for God to unleash His wrath on them – which we will see in today’s Lesson. We read:

*“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”*

The warnings in the Lesson are extremely relevant for us today, for there are many who act as if salvation is guaranteed to them and therefore behave and do whatever they like. Particular behavior patterns characterize those who think their salvation is guaranteed.

The Books of Kings and Chronicles are essentially about the ‘house of David’ but as it sets out the history of Judah, it gives us amazingly accurate pictures of the issues in the spiritual life of every believer. God in His divine activity wrote this book to show us what will happen when we make God the center of our life and what will happen when this ceases to be the case.



The fate of David's immediate posterity is inextricably linked to the Temple and so we see the importance of the Law and the Temple and its associated activities. Solomon desired this edifice to be glorious and incomparably beautiful; fitting to accommodate the presence of God among the people of Israel. So here then we see the Temple being erected to remind the people that God would be among them, to heal their hearts, hear their cries and keep them in His appointed place.

Israel's conquests and the glory of the kingdom are chronicled, as the work of God was now visibly and gloriously displayed among them in a marvelous way. God had graciously built and blessed a people, a nation and a land, so that word of Him would spread all over the world. People heard about the nation and made pilgrimages from all over to learn the secret of God's activity. This was God's evangelism.

In this glorious time, with the Temple visible, and gold and silver common in the land, the borders of Israel extended from the Euphrates to the rivers of Egypt, fulfilling the promise of extensive land made by God to Abraham.

We read the records of the kings, the nine good kings and the eleven bad ones. The evil kings show the pattern of how wickedness operates in a disobedient heart. It will be instructive to look briefly at the kings.

Decline had set in however, for as early as the reign of Solomon, evil began to infiltrate the kingdom, as idolatry and paganism started to take root. His son, Rehoboam, not only refused to listen to the counsel of the wise old men, but did as 2 Chronicles 12:1 states:  
*"When the rule of Rehoboam was established and was strong, he forsook the law of the Lord."*  
God then allowed the Egyptians to attack him.

So we begin to learn what happens in our lives, when there is a turning away from obedience to God and the imperatives of the Temple to the rule of man. The spiritual life of the nation and its defenses were immediately weakened, and the enemies of Israel went on the offensive.

This will be the case in the lives of believers when we forsake the laws of God for evil.

Abijah, the next king was obedient to God and in his battle with Jeroboam king of Israel who greatly outnumbered him, called on the Lord when he faced imminent defeat and won a great victory.

When we are outnumbered by our enemies, we should follow Abijah's example and call on God vigorously for guidance, protection and leading.

King Asa (chapters 14-16) further reformed the land, did what was right, destroyed the pagan idols and commanded Judah to seek the Lord and follow His commandments. He was then attacked by Zerah the Ethiopian with an army of a million men and three hundred chariots (14:9). God gave Asa a convincing victory. We can expect the enemy to attack when the Lord is sought.

Oded the prophet met Asa and confirmed that the Lord was with him and Asa then led the people into a covenant to seek the Lord. (15:12-15) We are told: *"They took oath to the Lord*



*with a loud voice, and with shouting, and with trumpets, and with horns. And all Judah rejoiced over the oath; for they had sworn with all their hearts, and had sought him with their whole desire, and he was found by them, and the Lord gave them rest round about”.*

Jehoshaphat the next King of Judah, continued to rid the land of idols and established a ministry of teaching, (17:9). The results were: *“The fear of the Lord fell up on all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah, and they made no war against Jehoshaphat.”*

Jehoshaphat did very well but when he foolishly allied himself with disobedient Israel, the Ten Tribes, and faced invasion, God had to deliver him miraculously (20:24).

The next king Jehoram put everything in reverse.

*“He slew all his brothers with the edge of the sword, and also some of the princes of Judah. Moreover he made high places in the hill country of Judah, and led the inhabitants of Jerusalem into unfaithfulness, and made Judah go astray.”* (2 Chron. 12:10-11).

Jehoram was immediately attacked by a Philistine invasion. When we are driven by envy and we worship where our pagan neighbours and friends are worshipping, this is a downgrading of the truth and it will inevitably lead to trouble.

Next came Ahaziah and he followed the behavior of the wicked Ahab king of Israel. His reign was short, and he was executed by Jehu. His wicked mother Athaliah seized the throne and tried to eliminate every prince in the line of David, to thwart the promise of God to David, but was eventually killed without succeeding in her satanic plot.

Joash, the one remaining son in the line of David then reigned. While under the godly influence of the priest Jehoiada, he *did what was right*, repairing the house of the Lord that his ungodly predecessors had wrecked.

When Jehoiada died, he slipped into apostasy and idolatry and despite the warnings of the prophets, the king did not take heed. The armies of Syria then invaded and though the attacking force was small, Joash was delivered by God into the hands of the invaders. He then became very sick and was killed by his servants. Such was his punishment.

His son Amaziah did well with a *‘perfect heart’*. When he finally turned against the Lord, his servants conspired against him and he fled, but they pursued and killed him.

Uzziah then took the throne. He was a good King even though he unfortunately slipped into pride because of this military success and usurped the role of the priests. Because of this transgression, God struck him with leprosy and isolated and alone, he later died.

His son Jotham did what was right and was mighty because *he prepared his ways before the Lord his God*, but he did not enter into the temple of the Lord. We are told however that the people did corruptly.

Then we have the wicked reign of Ahaz. Amazingly he did not follow in the steps of his father.



*“Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And he did not do what was right in the eyes of the Lord, like his father David, but walked in the ways of the kings of Israel. He even made molten images for the Baal; And he burned incense in the valley of the sons of Hinnon, and burned his sons as an offering, according to the abominable practices of the nations whom the Lord drove out before the people of Israel. And he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree.”*

The kings of Syria then invaded (28:5) and many were taken captive. Ahaz reigned for a long time and when he died after being struck with an incurable disease, the people made no mourning for him. We are told, *“he departed without being desired”*.

Despite the wicked behavior of his father, we now see the grace of God in raising up another good king, whose name was Hezekiah. He was so zealous for God, that in the first month of his rule he began the work of cleansing the Temple. When he came to the throne, he found that the Temple was littered with garbage. Sixteen days were spent cleaning out the rubbish and when it was cleaned, they celebrated Passover for the first time since the days of Solomon. He restored the Temple and the worship of God.

Hezekiah’s work in cleansing and opening up the Temple was necessary for the spiritual renewal of the nation. In fact, Scripture seems to indicate that Hezekiah was acting at the express instruction or “word” of the Lord.

Obviously, cleansing is essential for proper worship. We must be cleansed if we expect to stand in the presence of a most holy God. As Psalm 24:3-4 states:

*“Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Our who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully.”*

Then, following the extremely good reign of Hezekiah came the long reign of the wicked Manasseh, who *did evil in the sight of the Lord* in his fifty-five years reign. He introduced all the evils of paganism that we can imagine. Because of the immense wickedness during his reign, which was even worse than that of Ahaz, and the pagan Canaanites, God determined to send Judah into exile.

Manasseh’s son Amon also did evil in his reign and he was murdered by his servants.

The good reign of Josiah followed, but even this was not enough to reverse the determination of God to send the people of Judah into exile.

There is a tradition that Josiah anticipated that when he died his reforms would die with him and the spiritual decline would continue. Since he anticipated what would happen and since he knew that the kingdom of Judah would be invaded and destroyed, he decided to hide the Ark of



the Covenant, so it would not be captured by the enemies of God. There is much speculation about the whereabouts of the Ark.

We have to turn to the book of Jeremiah to understand what had really happened in Judah to understand God's patience with Judah.

Jeremiah 11:1-17 outlines this. We quote from verses 6-17:

*"Then the Lord said unto me, "Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying: "Hear the words of the covenant and do them".*

*For I earnestly exhorted your fathers in the day I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, until this day, rising early and exhorting, saying, "Obey My voice."*

*Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but everyone followed the dictates of his evil heart; therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do, but which they have not done".*

*And the Lord said to me," A conspiracy has been formed among the men of Judah and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem.*

*They have turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers who refused to hear My words, and they have gone after other gods to serve them; the house of Israel and the host of Judah have broken My covenant which I made with their fathers."*

*Therefore thus says the Lord; "Behold, I will surely bring calamity on them which they will not be able to escape; and though they cry out to Me, I will not listen to them.*

*Then the cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will go and cry out to the gods to whom they offer incense, but they will not save them at all in the time of their trouble.*

*For according to the number of your cities were your gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem you have set up altars to that shameful thing, altars to burn incense to Baal.*

*So do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer for them; for I will not hear them in the time that they cry out to Me because of their trouble.*

*What has My beloved to do in My house,*

*Having done lewd deeds with many?*

*And the holy flesh has passed from you.*

*When you do evil, then you rejoice.*

*The Lord called your name,*

*Green Olive Tree, Lovely and of Good Fruit.*

*With the noise of a great tumult*

*He has kindled fire on it,*

*And its branches are broken.*

*For the Lord of hosts, who planted you, has pronounced doom against you for the evil of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah, which they have done against themselves to provoke Me to anger in offering incense to Baal."*

Here we have a set of generally incredibly foolish and 'flesh' dominated kings, priests, leaders, and people. They were given the maximum possible evidence that they were the representatives of and the beloved of the Almighty God. It was made very clear to them that faithfulness to their God was an indispensable requirement for their personal and national



safety and success. Despite the knowledge of the history of their nation, they still insisted on living wickedly, firmly establishing idolatry and mixing this idolatry with the worship of their Lord and God.

Though God had been extremely patient and long suffering with them, it was time for judgment; they had sinned to the point where there was no remedy for them, they had sealed their own doom. They had been given so much, helped so much, shown so much mercy, but they were insistent on following the ways of evil.

In the Northern and Southern Kingdom, there were many prophets. There was Jonah, Isaiah, Micah, (Micah warned of the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions and predicted the fall of both Samaria and Jerusalem, the capital cities of both the northern and Southern Kingdoms), Zephaniah, Huldah, Jeremiah, Nahum, Habbakuk, Ezekiel, Obadiah, as well as others. Our Study now focuses on the prophetic of Huldah. Despite relentless warnings, the rebellion in both nations continued.

One would have thought that the surviving, relatively tiny Southern Kingdom of Judah would have seen and appreciated the misfortunes that befell their brothers and would have repented. Sadly, as we have studied previously, they did not listen. Jeremiah 19 sets the context for our Study and we learn that when people in the Covenant sin and ignore the warnings, the judgment of God moves swiftly and inexorably.

*“Hear the words of the Lord O kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel:*

*“Behold, I will bring such a catastrophe on this place, that whoever hears of it, his ears will tingle.*

*Because they have forsaken Me and made this an alien place, because they have burnt incense in it to other gods neither they, their fathers, nor the kings of Judah have known, and have filled this place with the blood of the innocents.*

*(They have also built the high places of Baal to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings to Baal, which I did not command or speak, nor did it come into My mind), therefore behold, the base are coming”, says the Lord, “that this place shall no more be called Tophet or the Valley of the Son of Hinnon, but the Valley of Slaughter.*

*And I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place, and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies and by the hands of those who seek their lives; their corpses will I give for the birds of the Heaven and for the beasts of the earth.*

*I will make this city desolate and a hissing; everyone who passes by it will be astonished and hiss because of all its plagues.*

*And I will cause them to be the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and everyone shall eat the flesh of his friend in the siege and in the desperation with which their enemies and those who seek their lives shall drive them to despair.” (19:3-9)*

The Apostle Paul has warned professing believers that if they refuse to obey the commandments of God and slip deeper and deeper into idolatry and abominations, there is no



remedy but painful exile and death. He reminded believers that God dealt harshly with the angels that sinned, as well as with unbelieving Israel. He will treat friends in the same way if we reject Him and His word.

The Apostle John also, in Revelation 2 and 3, warned several churches that if they continued in sin, their churches would be destroyed.

So let us cleanse the 'Temple' which is what Christians are and follow the path that God has laid down for us and trust in God for every step of our life. If we do not, our lives will read like the history of Israel, a short but sad account of utter ruin.

## THE TEXT

Our Study Scripture is a somber one, but it also contains great encouragement for believers. To put our Study in context we look at Proverbs 9:10 which states ***"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding"***.

And to make this plain we read Psalm 19:7-9

***"The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul;  
The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;  
The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;  
The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;  
The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;  
The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether"***.

**Verses 3-13.** Note that the problem of the Northern kingdom and Judah did not come all at once. It came bit by bit. God would have preferred that Judah and Jerusalem repent and live, for the prophets still prophesied, exhorting them to repent and to throw themselves on the mercy of God. The punishment came in several stages, with different sieges, tribute demands at different times and deportations at other times.

Remember, so it is with us. When we sin and rebel, after suffering and exile, sifting and selection and the removal of the dross, we will be restored and rejuvenated. Of course, obedience and sanctification are the better way.

It is a sad fact that even with the godliest of parents, sometimes their children turn out to be corrupt – so were the sons of Josiah. They did not walk after their father.

Josiah came to the throne when he was 16 years old but now, he began to align himself with the God of his father David. As a man of 20, he acted to purge Jerusalem and Judah of the ***high places***, the carved images made of molded metal and wooden images that were poles dedicated to the Canaanite fertility goddess Asherah.

It is to be noted that after God disciplined Manasseh and allowed his enemies to take him into exile he had repented when in torment and God allowed him to return to the throne. He then



had tried to remove some of the Assyrian elements of worship that he had established in his wicked reign. But that has failed to have any impact for his son Amon had replaced these idolatrous pagan worship items when he became king.

But Josiah continued what Manasseh had started and reversed what his father had done. In the 12th year of his reign, he seemed to have taken the administration of the government under his control and begun to purge the nation of old elements of idolatry.

So children remember that you do not have to do the bad things your parents have done. You can do the good things that your forbears have done. There is no such thing as a generational curse. You have to make the decision as to whether you want to follow the Law of God or not. You can begin to follow the Laws of God at any time if you so choose.

Not only did Josiah break up the alters of the various local deities called the Baals, but he cut down the incense altars that were all over them, the sun pillars that stood over them, the pillars and trees of Asherah, the wooden images, the carved images and images made of metal and ground them into pieces, turned them to dust and scattered the dust on the graves of those who worshipped the idolatrous emblems.

Then he turned his attention to the bones of the idolatrous priests of the pagan gods, took them up from their graves and burned their bones on their altars, in fulfillment of the word of the 'man of God' spoken to Jeroboam, the first king of the northern kingdom over 300 years previously. This would further add dishonour to the priests of idolatrous sacrifice.

Josiah's eradication of idolatry did not stop in Jerusalem, but he tried to purge idolatry from the entire land of Israel, as well as the land of Judah. He effectively extended his purging from the south to the land of Simeon and to the area previously inhabited by the tribe of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Naphtali. The description indicates that he covered practically the entire area of the northern kingdom.

These cities of Samaria were then inhabited by the many people placed by the Assyrians to occupy the lands formerly inhabited by the deported people of Israel. These people had intermarried with the poor Israelites left in the land. But wherever emblems of idolatry were found, Josiah's servants cut them down and destroyed them, ground the carved images into dust and removed all evidence of pagan worship. Only when the task was finished, he returned to Jerusalem. One writer explains how God had ordered circumstances to allow this great reform:

**"The eighth year. That is 631 B.C. when Josiah was 16 years old. And in the 12th year, or 627. The second date falls within the time of chaos that was caused by an eruption of nomadic horsemen from the north over most of the Near East (628 B.C.-626 B.C.). These Scythian hordes wrought terror in the hearts of complacent Jews (Jeremiah 6: 22-24; Zephaniah 1: 12); and while never raiding much beyond the coastal plain, where they were finally stopped by the Egyptian, they did render Judah a two- fold service; (1) they precipitated the calls of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:2) and Zephaniah the prophet (Zephaniah 1:1), as well as the 627 B.C. stage of Josiah's revival, which went far beyond a mere "foxhole" religion (2 Chronicles 34:3-**



**7); and (2) they swept away the Assyrian imperial domination, that had throttled Judah for the half-century preceding (vs 6).**

Once back in Jerusalem, in the 18th year of his reign, after purging the land and the Temple, Josiah turned his attention to renovating the Temple that Manasseh and Amon had damaged severely. He wanted to properly repair the Temple and get rid of the pollution, so that the proper worship of God could be restored. The scribes and the governors of the city had to undertake to repair the Temple, collect money from the people of Judah and God-fearers in the land of Israel to do the repairs. The Levites were in charge of the Temple and they supervised the repair work and pay the craftsmen and builders.

During their work, the priest Hilkiah found ***“the book of the law” otherwise called “the book of the covenant”***. There is some disagreement about whether or not this was the official scroll of the Pentateuch normally kept by the side of the Ark, but which had been mislaid when the Ark was most frequently moved, or it was a copy of sections or all of the Mosaic law and not necessarily the original autograph written by the hand of Moses.

Hilkiah read the Scroll and gave it to Shaphan the scribe and when he was reporting to the king Josiah on the work that was being done in the Temple, he advised the king that the priest had found a “book of the Law” and had given it to him. The scribe read the Scroll to the king and in astonishment and fear the King tore his clothes when he heard about the wrath of God that would come on the people for disobedience to the words of the “Book of the Law”.

This pious King was dismayed when he heard the contents of the Book of the Law. He had torn his clothes in an act of repentance for he was under the conviction of sin and afraid of divine wrath.

He knew what God had done to David when David had sinned, and he did not want any repetition of that. He had a holy fear of the wrath of God ***“revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men”*** (Romans 1:18)

It is hard to understand how the men and the leaders of Judah could have reached this stage where within two short generations they forgot that a copy of the Law of Moses was in the Temple. Nobody seemed to have paid much attention to it.

Clearly, believers in God have to make sure that their children are taught, because we are shown here that it was only a few short years of neglect and the people became ignorant of the will of God. Moses had warned the people of this in Deuteronomy 6:6-7. And in chapter 17:18, he told the leaders what they should do to ensure they did not fall into ignorance of the law of God and into sin.

The Apostle Paul also reminded us of the importance of passing on the Word of God to faithful men, so that they in turn would do the work of God and keep alive the light of God.

On the other hand, it is easy to understand how people can turn away from the Word of God, for the Word of God is a very powerful and unpleasant thing to those who are inclined to misbehave and who want freedom to do as they wish.



The law of God contains blessings, but it also contains curses. People do not like to think about this aspect of God's commandments. It warns that God is in charge and has authority. It tells that one cannot simply disobey God and expect no consequences. There is always a time of judgment. Men should obey the Law of God, throw themselves at the mercy of God, purify themselves and confess their sins frequently

We should know the terror of the Lord and persuade men (2 Corinthians 5:10,11).

Verse 14. At the command of the king who was deeply concerned at what he had heard Josiah sent a delegation of the top men in the nation so that he would know exactly what God demanded at this stage of his reforms. It is clear that Josiah did not have the required copy of the law that Moses instructed the Kings, the rulers, and all the priests that they should read constantly for guidance. He was obviously not acquainted with every details of the Law and of the Covenant. He certainly knew some, but he did not know all that was necessary.

Now note that this is not a small task that Josiah faced. He was now in the unenviable position of asking for Yahweh's guidance for the sake of his nation. To accomplish this extremely important mission, Josiah sent most of his important and trusted men to an impeccable source. One writer asks a question we should ask ourselves:

**“How should the high priest and his companions inquire of the Lord? Who would be nearer to God than they? Who would be a better interpreter of His mind? There was no priest higher than Hilkiah. Probably Shaphan stood at the head of the scribes. But both Hilkiah and Shaphan were conscious that there was one in Jerusalem who would have a better understanding of the heart of God than they.**

**It is perhaps more especially in times of crisis that God raised up godly women to be His interpreters. He can count upon their weaknesses; they can give Him His Place”.**

It is interesting to note that at this time Jeremiah might have prophesied but the nation had not wanted to hear him. There were also other prophets prophesying at that time.

But this prophetess lived in Jerusalem and she was the wife of Shallum, Keeper of the Wardrobe, an official position.

Some scholars have argued about whether there is a difference between prophets and prophetess who do not have a public ministry and those that did, as if to say there is any inferiority, degree of inspiration, or some difference in status between them. But that of course makes no sense.

The emissaries did not go to Jeremiah who was certainly considered to be a major prophet and a long-suffering and very vocal one, or Zephaniah the prophet, but instead went to Huldah. It appears that maybe Jeremiah was not in Jerusalem but was in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin. His commission to go to cry out his message in Jerusalem might apparently have come sometime after this incident with Josiah and Huldah. But whatever the reason is she was the chosen one. She was a prophetess. She was close to God.



The men of God were very conscious that she was right there and that there was nothing extraordinary about her normal way of life. But the men of God were conscious that the Lord was with her, that Yahweh spoke to her and that she understood Yahweh. Once they were in her presence they knew that they were very close to someone that was nearer to God than they.

So these five men, Hilkiah the priest, Shaphan the scribe, Ahikam the father of the future governor, Achbor the son of a prophet, Asaiah, the King's officer, as well as probably unnamed attendants went straight to Huldah who lived in Jerusalem near the Temple.

Nothing is told of her heritage, but she was obviously married to a high official. But she was clearly a saintly woman and a woman leading a quiet life, but a life which declared the power of God. All those around her knew where her power came from. So the King and the powerful men had no doubt when they sought her advice.

The men would speak on behalf of the king Josiah and the nation, but she was in the position where she would reply on behalf of Yahweh

Verse 15. So she clearly stated whom she received her message from, for that message was from Yahweh. She was a prophetess but she was a messenger with no personal authority but yet there was authority and power in her message. So she told the messengers and the king bluntly what Yahweh had said.

Note carefully that this prophetess was authenticating the scroll of Moses as a document which was God's Word. She validated the Text which is the core of Scripture for Judaism and Christianity. She made it clear that the document was God's Word, and it therefore was to be considered sacred, authoritative, and part of the canon of Scripture. Any revival would therefore have to be based on understanding that.

The position of Huldah is therefore much more important than what many would think, for she was authenticating this document as God's word and so her prophetic words of judgment is based on this document which forms the basis for our belief in Yahweh. There can therefore be no speculation on why God used a woman for God's use of a woman for that has no relevance.

Verse 16. The prophetess therefore addressed them emphasizing that evil was coming to the nation because God had determined to bring evil upon Jerusalem and its inhabitants. All the curses that were written in the book of the Law would now come on them because of their idolatry. The wrath of God was now to be poured out. There was nothing to stop that. The wrath of the Lord would not be quenched. The Covenant terms and the terms of the Law would be validated.

As an advisor to the king like all the prophets she gave warnings of divine judgment and punishment. She was sought out because she was a highly respected prophetess. It is very likely



that she might have prophesied in other locations that has not been recorded and we do not know whether she spoke directly to the people of the nation or in other circumstances. What we know is that she heard from God and spoke for God and gave guidance to men and women and the nation.

Verse 17. The terms of the Law and the Covenant were quite clear. There would be a curse for displeasing and rejecting Yahweh, burning incense to other gods, provoking Him to anger with all of their activities. Once the wrath of God was aroused because of these terrible behaviours it could not be quenched. There was a point of no return.

Verses 18-20. The prophetess Huldah then had a personal message for Josiah. Yahweh had seen that his heart was repentant, that he had humbled himself before God when he heard the words of the Law and realized that God intended to fulfill the terms of the Covenant and act against the inhabitants of Judah. God had seen him tear his clothes and God had heard his prayers. God would be gracious to Him and allow him to die before the calamity was brought on the land and on its inhabitants.

Note that this King had made a commitment to God and he had made a Covenant with God to walk after the Lord and keep His commandments, His testimonies, His statutes, and he was determined to do this with all his heart and with all his soul.

Those who like to believe that they are in a covenant with God should take heed. When under the conviction of sin and understanding that divine wrath will come, it is good to inquire of God what He intends to do. We should always humble ourselves before God and seek Him, just as Josiah and the patriarchs did.

But we should remember that once we do not forsake unfruitful gods and do not change our impenitence, constantly doing what is wrong, obstinately refusing to change, constantly pretending to be pious when we know we are not alone we in effect are lighting the fire of God's wrath, a fire that shall not be quenched.

We often forget that there is such a thing as a holy fear of God. We often come to think that God is our "buddy" and that He will overlook everything that we do. But no responsible father behaves that way and allows his children to keep on misbehaving without doing anything about it. Love requires correction, in fact it demands it. The correction of the divine Father is never pleasant, but it is worth the fruit that it bears.

It is important that the lessons for women be recognized by them. Women have a ministry in the body of Christ even though they might not be prophetesses like Huldah. They are to as the Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 14, pursue love which means that they are to teach the fear of and the wisdom of God.

They have a responsibility to encourage people to desire and develop their spiritual gifts. Their voices need to be heard. But note that their voices must be based on the Word of God as was the voice of the prophetess Huldah.



We should not underestimate the role of this prophetess in the world of Josiah. We should note her commitment to the Word of God. She knew that that was the basis of life, and we pray that all women have such a commitment. The Word of God is all we have. The Holy Spirit has inspired it and the same Holy Spirit must be in your heart encouraging others to understand that Word. One writer therefore commends and prays:

**“Such was the effect of one godly woman's fearless prophecy. Nothing more has told us of Huldah. She gave her a message and retired from the scene. But she had left her mark upon her generation, and if she had never spoken another word to the king, or high priest, or Shaphan the scribe, she had, nevertheless, left her impress upon the lives of each of these distinguished men. She had fulfilled her mission, and she might rest in peace. Blessed are the woman who are willing to be used or set aside just when God wills. O, how powerfully He can use those who have no choice as to the use which He shall make of them, those who are willing to be nothing and nobody. God raise up Huldahs in this generation, for Jesus' sake”.**

This prayer is meaningful for people in those days persisted in this manner until the pool of God's mercy ran dry; the wrath of God was now directed against them. They would not repent, they consistently and persistently fought against God till there was no possible remedy or healing for them. There was no reclaiming or recovering of them, no bringing them to repentance and no pardon.

One must realize that when people reject the prophets and faithful ministers of God, when they scorn, mock and abuse them; they are in fact rejecting the Word of God and provoking God, as if He was impotent and powerless. God's wrath will eventually come.

It is dreadful to read Psalm 137 for this is a Psalm of despair, of deeply felt emotion, of weeping and deep sadness and lamentation. The people of Judah remembered the destruction of Zion and their country and the immense suffering that they had undergone. They could not forgive those that had done these terrible things to them. This then is a Psalm of bitterness and melancholy.

Sin brings desolation. Breaking of the Covenant brings desolation. Refusal to follow the Commandments of God brings desolation.

## **CONCLUSION**

Believers today had better take notice. The God of the Covenant is a very demanding God. This woman, a prophetess of God named Huldah, tells us plainly that it is perilous to disobey Yahweh. If we disobey Him, He will chastise and discipline us.

Why would He do that? Simple! Because He loves His people!



Yet we are commanded to carry on regardless of our difficulties and remain faithful to the same God, for even in the midst of catastrophe, God's promises to His people remain in force. It is never wise to mix the things of God, the commandments of God and the purity of the Sabbath with the things of the world. Let us never forget that. Let us avoid catastrophe. Yet in all this Huldah showed us the mercy of God to those who have a tender heart toward Him. He will do what is good and proper to shield us from the calamity around us.

God is a good God to those that follow him. We thank that feminine side of Huldah for reminding us of that. God loves the tender heart.

