SECOND KINGS

Chapter 22

*The Book of the Law Found*

**Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one years. His mother’s name was Jedidah daughter of Adaiah; she was from Bozkath. 2 He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and walked in all the ways of his father David, not turning aside to the right or to the left. 3 In the eighteenth year of his reign, King Josiah sent the secretary, Shaphan son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, to the temple of the Lord. He said: 4 “Go up to Hilkiah the high priest and have him get ready the money that has been brought into the temple of the Lord, which the doorkeepers have collected from the people. 5 Have them entrust it to the men appointed to supervise the work on the temple. And have these men pay the workers who repair the temple of the Lord— 6 the carpenters, the builders and the masons. Also have them purchase timber and dressed stone to repair the temple. 7 But they need not account for the money entrusted to them, because they are acting faithfully.” 8 Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the secretary, “I have found the Book of the Law in the temple of the Lord.” He gave it to Shaphan, who read it. 9 Then Shaphan the secretary went to the king and reported to him: “Your officials have paid out the money that was in the temple of the Lord and have entrusted it to the workers and supervisors at the temple.” 10 Then Shaphan the secretary informed the king, “Hilkiah the priest has given me a book.” And Shaphan read from it in the presence of the king. 11 When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his robes. 12 He gave these orders to Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Acbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan the secretary and Asaiah the king’s attendant: 13 “Go and inquire of the Lord for me and for the people and for all Judah about what is written in this book that has been found. Great is the Lord’s anger that burns against us because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book; they have not acted in accordance with all that is written there concerning us.” 14 Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Acbor, Shaphan and Asaiah went to speak to the prophetess Huldah, who was the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe. She lived in Jerusalem, in the Second District. 15 She said to them, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Tell the man who sent you to me, 16 ‘This is what the Lord says: I am going to bring disaster on this place and its people, according to everything written in the book the king of Judah has read. 17 Because they have forsaken me and burned incense to other gods and provoked me to anger by all the idols their hands have made, my anger will burn against this place and will not be quenched.’ 18 Tell the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the Lord, ‘This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says concerning the words you heard: 19 Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before the Lord when you heard what I have spoken against this place and its people, that they would become accursed and laid waste, and because you tore your robes and wept in my presence, I have heard you, declares the Lord. 20 Therefore I will gather you to your fathers, and you will be buried in peace. Your eyes will not see all the disaster I am going to bring on this place.’ ” So they took her answer back to the king.**

**22:1** *thirty-one years.* 640–609 b.c. (see note on 21:19). (CSB)

*Bozkath.* Located in Judah in the vicinity of Lachish (see Jos 15:39). (CSB)

**22:2** *ways of his father David.* See note on 18:3. Josiah was the last godly king of the Davidic line prior to the exile. Jeremiah, who prophesied during the time of Josiah (see Jer 1:2), spoke highly of him (Jer 22:15–16). Zephaniah also prophesied in the early days of his reign (Zep 1:1). (CSB)

**22:3** *eighteenth year.* 622 b.c. Josiah was then 26 years old (see v. 1). He had begun to serve the Lord faithfully at the age of 16 (the 8th year of his reign, 2Ch 34:3). When he was 20 years old (the 12th year of his reign, 2Ch 34:3), he had already begun to purge the land of its idolatrous practices. (CSB)

*secretary, Shaphan.* See note on 2Sa 8:17. Two additional individuals are mentioned as accompanying Shaphan in 2Ch 34:8. (CSB)

**22:4** *Hilkiah.* Father of Azariah and grandfather of Seraiah, the high priest executed at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (see 25:18–20). It is unlikely that this Hilkiah was also the father of Jeremiah (see Jer 1:1). (CSB)

*money … the doorkeepers have collected.* Josiah used the method devised by Joash for collecting funds for the restoration of the temple (see 12:1–16; 2Ch 34:9). (CSB)

**22:5** *men appointed to supervise.* See 2Ch 34:12–13. (CSB)

**22:8** *Book of the Law.* Some interpreters hold that this refers to a copy of the entire Pentateuch, while others understand it as a reference to a copy of part or all of Deuteronomy alone (see Dt 31:24, 26; 2Ch 34:14). (CSB)

**22:11** *tore his robes.* See note on 18:37; contrast Josiah’s reaction with that of Jehoiakim to the words of the scroll written by Jeremiah (see Jer 36:24). Perhaps the covenant curses of Lev 26 and/or Dt 28, climaxing with the threat of exile, were the statements that especially disturbed Josiah. (CSB)

**22:12** *Ahikam.* Father of Gedaliah, who was later to be appointed governor of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar (see 25:22; Jer 39:14). He was also the protector of Jeremiah when his life was threatened during the reign of Jehoiakim (see Jer 26:24). *Acbor.* His son Elnathan is mentioned in 24:8; Jer 26:22; 36:12. (CSB)

*Shaphan the secretary.* See note on v. 3. (CSB)

**22:14** *prophetess Huldah.* Why the delegation sought out Huldah rather than Jeremiah or Zephaniah is not known. Perhaps it was merely a matter of her accessibility in Jerusalem. (CSB)

*Shallum … keeper of the wardrobe.* Perhaps the same Shallum who was the uncle of Jeremiah (see Jer 32:7). (CSB)

*Second District.* A section of the city (the Hebrew for this phrase is translated “New Quarter” in Zep 1:10) probably located in a newly developed area between the first and second walls in the northwest part of Jerusalem (see 2Ch 33:14). (CSB)

**22:16** *this place.* Jerusalem. (CSB)

**22:19** *your heart was responsive.* See v. 11. (CSB)

**22:20** *gather you to your fathers.* See note on 1Ki 1:21. (CSB)

*you will be buried in peace.* This prediction refers to Josiah’s death before God’s judgment on Jerusalem through Nebuchadnezzar and so is not contradicted by his death in battle with Pharaoh Neco of Egypt (see 23:29–30). Josiah was assured that the final judgment on Judah and Jerusalem would not come in his own days. (CSB)