

## The Supremacy of the Word, Part 2

### Reading 2 Kings 22:1-8

Last week I talked about the Supremacy of the Word. To review, my conclusion was that the Bible is superior because it is always true. The Bible is always right. We can trust the biblical record completely. So, any time that we are exposed to the Word, we have an opportunity to respond in obedience, which benefits us and glorifies God.

I begin this morning with several questions....

#### SLIDE 01 – WHITE HOUSE

1. Have you ever wondered what it would be like to live in a country where the leaders promote ungodliness?

#### SLIDE 02 – 10 COMMANDMENTS

2. What would you do if you lived in a country where the government refused any act of cooperation with the Word of God?

#### SLIDE 03 – DEMON CLUB

3. What if you lived in a place, where it seems as if every day society was drifting more and more toward evil?

I am not talking about the United States in the 21st century. I am talking about Israel in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. We are not the first to face evil. We are not the first to see government officials completely opposed to God's Word. We are not the first to witness a society that opposes truth. Nor are we the first to see a society that justifies sin and mocks biblical standards.

This morning, I want to present a second reason that I believe in the Supremacy of the Word of God. To do that we will look at the life of Josiah. To understand how extraordinary Josiah was, we first have to consider the environment that he faced as a young boy and a new king.

#### SLIDE 04

##### I. The Mess

- A. The record of his grandfather, Manasseh (from 2 Kings 21)

21:2 "He did evil in the sight of the Lord, according to the abominations of the nations who the Lord dispossessed before the sons of Israel"

1. He rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed
2. He erected altars for Baal
3. He made an Asherah, as Ahab king of Israel had done (a female diety – the moon goddess – presented as consort of Baal – worship noted for sensuality – Priest and priestesses practiced divination and fortune-telling)
4. He worshipped all the hosts of heaven and served them
5. He built altars in the House of the Lord
6. He built altars for the hosts of heaven in the 2 courts of the Temple
7. He made his sons pass through the fire (Sacrificed in fire)
8. He practiced witchcraft
9. He used divination
10. He dealt with mediums and spiritists

11. He set the Asherah in the house of the Lord

B. The record of his father

2 Kings 21: <sup>19</sup> *Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem....* <sup>20</sup> *He did evil in the sight of the Lord, as Manasseh his father had done.* <sup>21</sup> *For he walked in all the way that his father had walked, and served the idols that his father had served and worshiped them.* <sup>22</sup> *So he forsook the Lord, the God of his fathers, and did not walk in the way of the Lord.* <sup>23</sup> *The servants of Amon conspired against him and killed the king in his own house.* <sup>24</sup> *Then the people of the land killed all those who had conspired against King Amon, and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his place.*

What do you think? If you were one of the faithful in those days, would things look bleak?

Evil abounded. Immorality abounded. The Temple was in disrepair. Idols stood in the Temple courts. An Asherah was placed in the Holy Place of the Temple, maybe even in the Holy of Holies. The Temple was in such a mess that no one knew where the Bible was. No one had seen a copy of the scroll which contained The Law of Moses for years. True sacrifices had been abandoned. There was no atonement for sin. The king was assassinated. The people hunted down the conspirators and killed them. The country was in turmoil.

In this environment, an 8 year old boy ascends to the throne in Jerusalem. What hope could there be for God's people ?

Well – there was hope. All they needed were some....

## SLIDE 05

### II. Men of God

Kings 22: 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, <sup>4</sup> “Go up to Hilkiyah the high priest...*

What do you do if you are an 8 year old king and the palace staff has assassinated your father? Trust would be low. Suspicion would be high. So you surround yourself with new advisors.

## SLIDE 06

1 Corinthians 15:33 *Do not be deceived: “Bad company corrupts good morals.”*

The opposite of that would also be true, “Good company helps to build good morals”.

This is a good lesson for everyone. But I think it is a foundational truth for the youth. Be careful who you pick as your friends. There will be many situations in life when you can not choose the people who will surround you: school, the university, work, the military. You have little choice in some situations.

But... Each one of needs a circle of close, reliable, godly friends who we trust – who will build us up – who will encourage us to walk with the Lord. We need friends who will tell us the truth when we are about to make a bad decision.

We are not told how nor when Josiah came to this conclusion. But it is obvious that Josiah had a close, inner circle that was very different from those who had advised his grandfather and father.

The 2 key men in the life of a young king...

#### SLIDE 07

1. Shaphan , the scribe
2. Hilkiah, the high priest

You have to also assume, that there were others who accompanied these two men who also influenced Josiah. There would be a group involved in the restoration of the Temple who shared the same passions and spiritual interests. With these 2 men at his side – teaching him – instructing him – advising him , Josiah came to .....

#### SLIDE 08

III. **The Moment** 2 Kings 22:4-11

Some people refer this as a “crisis moment”. It the moment when the lights come on, you see yourself from God’s perspective, you recognize your need, and you know that God is the only solution for sin. (I will talk about these moments in the lives of some famous people next week).

When he came to his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, Josiah had made several important decisions:

#### SLIDE 09

1. A strong conviction that he had to clean and repair the Temple
2. Verse 4 – He levied a tax for the repair and restoration of the Temple
3. Verse 5 – He laid out a strategy to accomplish the repair
4. Verse 5 – He delegated authority to the competent people to get the job done (with full confidence)

And then it happened. The moment arrived. In all the mess that Manasseh and Amon had created, Hilkiah found a scroll.

2 Kings 22: 8 <sup>8</sup> *Then Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, “I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord.”*

If you are the high priest, what do you do? *And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan who read it.*

What does Shaphan do? <sup>9</sup> *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.”*

That is called accountability.

<sup>10</sup> *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.*

Josiah, the king, was 18 years old. And he had never seen a Bible. He had never heard anyone read a Bible. Up to this point, the priests probably passed along the content of the Law by word-of-mouth, like many cultures in the world that live by oral traditions. Information is memorized and passed on to the next generation in oral form.

This may have been the only copy of the Law. This was probably the last copy left.

Is that a problem? No.. My theme is the Supremacy of the Word God. You can't destroy the Bible. Many have tried. All have failed.

### SLIDE 10

Isaiah 40:6-8 (NASB)

<sup>6</sup> *A voice says, "Call out." Then he answered, "What shall I call out?"*

*All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field.*

<sup>7</sup> *The grass withers, the flower fades, When the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. <sup>8</sup> The grass withers, the flower fades,*

***But the word of our God stands forever.***

### SLIDE 11

1 Peter 1:24-25 (NASB) <sup>24</sup> *For, "All flesh is like grass, And all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, And the flower falls off, <sup>25</sup> **But the word of the Lord endures forever.**" And this is the word which was preached to you.*

We know what Hilkaih did. We know what Shaphan did. What did King Josiah do?

2 Kings 22: <sup>11</sup> *When the king heard the words of the book of the law, he tore his clothes. <sup>12</sup> 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, <sup>13</sup> "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."*

The impact of Scripture was immediate. It was intense. It went deep into his heart and soul.

Is this possible? Can someone really be affected that much the first time they read or hear the Bible?

Example: Paco, Pozoblanco

Example: Brenda

Let's look at 2 verses that show us why the Bible is supreme:

**SLIDE 12**

Isaiah 55:11 (NKJV) *11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.*

**SLIDE 13**

Hebrews 4:12 (NASB) *12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*

Some would argue that modern-day Muslims are affected in this way by the Koran. Yes – they are inspired to hate and to spread chaos, destruction, and death. They show humanity at its lowest. But, they are not transformed to live righteous, godly, God-pleasing lives. Only God's Word can do that.

Read 2 Kings 22:14-20

**SLIDE 14**

Note how the prophetess describes Josiah....

1. your heart was tender
2. you humbled yourself before the Lord
3. you have torn your clothes
4. (you have ) wept before Me

This sounds like the conversion. His heart was accessible. His attitude was one of humility. There was deep grief (he tore his clothes ) and sorrow (he cried).

No other religious book can do that. God sends His Word forth with a purpose. His Word will cause effect. The Word will impact lives – to will transform lives. The purpose of God will not be voided. God will speak and He will accomplish the intended purpose of the message. Josiah's response was key to the next point. God showed....

**SLIDE 15**

IV. Mercy

2 Kings 22: <sup>20</sup> *“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.*

I gave my definition of mercy to you when I shared with you last year. It differs from grace. Grace is God giving us what we do not deserve. Mercy is God withholding what we do deserve.

God had every right to bring judgement on Manasseh. God could have brought judgement on Amon. But God is patient. And in this case – merciful. God withheld judgement for the next generation. Josiah's sons would return to evil. And Nebuchadnezzar and the army of Babylon were only a few years in the distance.

## SLIDE 16

### V. A Movement

I will ask you to finish the story. We don't have time to list everything that Josiah did to correct the situation.

## SLIDE 17 (Just points A-H)

### A. He gathered the people for a public reading of the Word

2 Kings 23:1 *Then the king sent, and they gathered to him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem.* <sup>2</sup> *The king went up to the house of the LORD and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests and the prophets and all the people, both small and great; and he read in their hearing all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD.*

### B. He made a covenant before the people and encouraged the people to join in.

<sup>3</sup> *The king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and all his soul, to carry out the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people entered into the covenant.*

### C. He removed everything idolatrous from the Temple

### D. He defiled pagan places of worship

### E. He broke down idols

### F. He removed altars to false gods on roof tops of Jerusalem

### G. He dug up bones of false priests and burned the bones on pagan altars to defile them

### H. AND, he restored the celebration of the Passover.

And it was no ordinary Passover.

## SLIDE 18

2 Chronicles 35: 7 *Josiah contributed to the lay people, to all who were present, flocks of lambs and*

*young goats, all for the Passover offerings, numbering 30,000 plus 3,000 bulls; these were from the king's possessions.*

Isn't it interesting that the "revival" comes right at the time of the Passover? Can you guess what we'll see next week?

## SLIDE 19

2 Chronicles 35: <sup>16</sup> *So all the service of the LORD was prepared on that day to celebrate the Passover, and to offer burnt offerings on the altar of the LORD according to the command of King Josiah.* <sup>17</sup> *Thus the sons of Israel who were present celebrated the Passover at that time, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days.* <sup>18</sup> *There had not been celebrated a Passover*

*like it in Israel since the days of Samuel the prophet; nor had any of the kings of Israel celebrated such a Passover as Josiah did with the priests, the Levites, all Judah and Israel who were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.*<sup>19</sup> *In the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign this Passover was celebrated.*

Do you believe in the supremacy of the Word? It has the power to transform the lives of individuals. The Word can bring new hope to families broken by years of sin. The Word can bring new life to a nation. And that is where we will head next week.

This should affect the way we prepare to come on Sunday mornings. I began last week by asking, "Why are we here? Why do we do what we do?" A lot of teenagers would answer, "Because my Mom and Dad make me". They don't get it. Their eyes are blind to the glory, the power, and the supremacy of the Word of God.

Josiah had a life-changing experience. Will we have a life-changing experience every Sunday? Probably not. But, I believe we should come with expectation. We should come with open hearts and open minds. We should come ready to hear the Word of the Lord.