

“Finding God’s Word” (2 Chronicles 34:14–33)(8.15.21)

2 Chronicles 34:14–33 (NIV84) *The Book of the Law Found* while the Temple was being repaired.

¹⁴ While they were bringing out the money that had been taken into the temple of the Lord, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the Lord that had been given through Moses. ¹⁵ Hilkiah said to Shaphan the secretary, “I have found the Book of the Law in the temple of the Lord.” He gave it to Shaphan.

¹⁶ Then Shaphan took the book to the king and reported to him: “Your officials are doing everything that has been committed to them. ¹⁷ They have paid out the money that was in the temple of the Lord and have entrusted it to the supervisors and workers.” ¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ When the king heard the words of the Law, he tore his robes. ²⁰ He gave these orders to Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Abdon son of Micah, Shaphan the secretary and Asaiah the king’s attendant: ²¹ “Go and inquire of the Lord for me and for the remnant in Israel and Judah about what is written in this book that has been found. **Great is the Lord’s anger that is poured out on us because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord; they have not acted in accordance with all that is written in this book.”**

²² Hilkiyah and those the king had sent with him went to speak to the prophetess Huldah, who was the wife of Shallum son of Tokhath, the son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe. She lived in Jerusalem, in the Second District.

²³ She said to them, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Tell the man who sent you to me, ²⁴ 'This is what the Lord says: **I am going to bring disaster on this place and its people—all the curses written in the book that has been read in the presence of the king of Judah.** ²⁵ **Because they have forsaken me and burned incense to other gods and provoked me to anger by all that their hands have made, my anger will be poured out on this place and will not be quenched.'** ²⁶ **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: ²⁷ **Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before God when you heard what he spoke against this place and its people, and because you humbled yourself before me and tore your robes and wept in my presence, I have heard you, declares the Lord. ²⁸ Now 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 and on those who live here.'** "**

So they took her answer back to the king.

²⁹ Then the king called together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. ³⁰ He went up to the temple of the Lord with the men of Judah, the people of Jerusalem, the priests and the Levites—all the people from the least to

the greatest. He read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant, which had been found in the temple of the Lord. ³¹ The king stood by his pillar and renewed the covenant in the presence of the Lord—to follow the Lord and keep his commands, regulations and decrees with all his heart and all his soul, and to obey the words of the covenant written in this book.

³² Then he had everyone in Jerusalem and Benjamin pledge themselves to it; the people of Jerusalem did this in accordance with the covenant of God, the God of their fathers.

³³ Josiah removed all the detestable idols from all the territory belonging to the Israelites, and he had all who were present in Israel serve the Lord their God. As long as he lived, they did not fail to follow the Lord, the God of their fathers.

The word of God for the people of God.

LET US PRAY.

Scriptural Prayer for Revival

Precious Father, Your Word is the living Word. Your Word desperately needs to be rediscovered in Your church. Father, I want to walk in Your ways and be a person of God. Show me what that involves. Show me how to pursue You, and how to separate myself from the world (2 Chronicles 34:1–2). Teach me the importance of seeking You, even in my youth as Josiah did, and let me instill that to my children (v. 3).

Father, let me be an instrument of purging my land of false idols. Let me recognize them as they deceive and

pull people away from You. Let me recognize how Your church needs Your purging from complacency and compromise. Purge my sin (v. 8). And let me be able to say, "All that was committed to me, I am doing," just as Josiah did (v. 16).

Enable me to set my heart to seek You. Show me how to seek You through the Bible. Cleanse me, deal with my secret sin, pet sins, and wash me completely in truth. Your Word is life. Show me how I have neglected to obey it and failed to seek You through it. Teach me repentance, as You did Josiah. Let me be broken over my sin and let Your Word move me (v. 19).

Teach me what it means to worship You in spirit and in truth. Teach me humility and how to live humbly every day. Teach me how to maintain a tender heart toward You. Let Your Word become real to me and in me. Oh, Lord, send revival.

Use Your Word to smash any idol. Break my heart with Your Word. Let tears flow freely from my eyes as I humble myself before You (vv. 26–27). Father, may I daily interrupt my life to read Your Word (v. 30). Teach me to be obedient in whatever place of responsibility You have given me. Teach me to follow Your Word, and let me walk in covenant with You (v. 31). Use Your Word to bring strong conviction in me, and break me over my sin. Break me over the sin of my church. Use Your Word as a hammer to crush and to build up. Send revival, oh Lord, I pray (v. 33). In Jesus' name, amen.

Title: **"Finding God's Word"**

INTRODUCTION:

BODY:

Isaiah 66:2 (NIV84)

² Has not my hand made all these things,
and so they came into being?"

declares the Lord.

"This is the one I esteem:

he who is humble and contrite in spirit,
and trembles at my word.

Does that standard of the Lord's esteem describe you and me? – The one who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at the word of God. 2 Peter 3:3 and Jude 18 (NIV84) are identical to each other: "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires." In contrast, Jesus says in Luke 11:28 (NIV84), **"Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it."**

J. Vernon McGee declares, "A return to the Word of God brings revival. Nothing else will bring revival. What is wrong in our day? Why don't we see revival? The reason is simple. The church has neglected the Word of God. Churches have tried **every known gimmick and every kind of method. Nothing happens.** Revival does not come that way. Revival comes when people return to the Word of God and find out what God has to say."

When King Josiah publicly committed, before God and the people, to bring his life into alignment with God's

commandments and God's will, the Lord was greatly pleased. Following his leadership, the people also pledged their obedience to the covenant of God. Because of this national repentance, the Lord withheld His corrective wrath and gave them peace. But then, the godly King Josiah died, and the situation would change for the worse.

2 Chronicles 36:5,8 (GNB) Jehoiakim [one of Josiah's sons] was 25 years old when he became king of Judah, and he ruled in Jerusalem for eleven years. He sinned against the Lord his God. Everything that Jehoiakim did, including his disgusting practices and the evil he committed, is recorded in The History of the Kings of Israel and Judah.

The example of King Josiah was from a positive perspective. The example of his son, King Jehoiakim, is the negative example. Both demonstrate the imperative of fearing God and obeying the Almighty Creator. Here is a summary of summary of Jeremiah 36 (GNB):

¹In the fourth year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was king of Judah, the **Lord** said to me [Jeremiah], ²"Get a scroll and write on it everything that I have told you about Israel and Judah and all the nations. Write everything that I have told you from the time I first spoke to you, when Josiah was king, up to the present. ³Perhaps when the people of Judah hear about all the destruction that I intend to bring on them, they will turn from their evil ways. Then I will forgive their wickedness and their sins."

⁴ So I called Baruch son of Neriah and dictated to him everything that the Lord had said to me. And Baruch

wrote it all down on a scroll. ⁵Then I gave Baruch the following instructions: "I am no longer allowed to go into the Temple. [\[comment on this\]](#) ⁶But I want you to go there the next time the people are fasting. You are to read the scroll aloud, so that they will hear everything that the Lord has said to me and that I have dictated to you. Do this where everyone can hear you, including the people of Judah who have come in from their towns. ⁷Perhaps they will pray to the Lord and turn from their evil ways, because the Lord has threatened this people with his terrible anger and fury." ⁸So Baruch read the Lord's words in the Temple exactly as I had told him to do.

In the ninth month of the fifth year that Jehoiakim was king of Judah, the people fasted to gain the Lord's favour. The fast was kept by all who lived in Jerusalem and by all who came there from the towns of Judah.

¹⁰Then, while all the people were listening, Baruch read from the scroll everything that I had said.

¹¹Micaiah heard Baruch read from the scroll what the Lord had said. ¹²Then he went to the royal palace, to the room of the court secretary, where all the officials were in session. ¹³Micaiah told them everything that he had heard Baruch read to the people. ¹⁴Then the officials sent Jehudi to tell Baruch to bring the scroll that he had read to the people. Baruch brought them the scroll. ¹⁵"Sit down," they said, "and read the scroll to us." So Baruch did. ¹⁶After he had read it, **they turned to one another in alarm**, and said to Baruch, "We must report this to the king." ¹⁷Then they asked him, "Tell us, now, how did

you come to write all this? Did Jeremiah dictate it to you?"

¹⁸ Baruch answered, "Jeremiah dictated every word of it to me, and I wrote it down in ink on this scroll."

¹⁹ Then they said to him, "You and Jeremiah must go and hide. Don't let anyone know where you are."

²⁰ The officials put the scroll in the room of Elishama, the court secretary, and went to the king's court, where they reported everything to the king. ²¹Then the king sent Jehudi to get the scroll. He took it from the room of Elishama and read it to the king and all the officials who were standing round him. ²²It was winter and the king was sitting in his winter palace in front of the fire. ²³As soon as Jehudi finished reading three or four columns, the king cut them off with a small knife and threw them into the fire. He kept doing this until the entire scroll was burnt up. ²⁴But neither the king nor any of his officials who heard all this was afraid or showed any sign of sorrow. ²⁵Although Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah begged the king not to burn the scroll, he paid no attention to them.

< Reenact the burning of the scroll. >

Exodus 20: The Ten Commandments

John 3:3 (NIV84) In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

Romans 3:23 (NIV84) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 6:23 (NIV84) For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Revelation 22:18–19 (NIV84) ¹⁸ I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. ¹⁹ And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

Let us return to Jeremiah's account of King Jehoiakim's actions: ²⁶Then he ordered Prince Jerahmeel, together with Seraiah and Shelemiah to arrest me and my secretary Baruch. But the Lord had hidden us.

²⁷ After King Jehoiakim had burnt the scroll that I had dictated to Baruch, the Lord told me ²⁸to take another scroll and write on it everything that had been on the first one. ²⁹The Lord told me to say to the king, "You have burnt the scroll, and you have asked Jeremiah why he wrote that the king of Babylonia would come and destroy this land and kill its people and its animals. ³⁰So now, I, the Lord, say to you, King Jehoiakim, that no descendant of yours will ever rule over David's kingdom. Your corpse will be thrown out where it will be exposed to the sun during the day and to the frost at night. ³¹I will punish you, your descendants, and your officials because of the sins all of you commit. Neither you nor the people of Jerusalem and of Judah have paid any attention to my warnings, and so I will bring on all of you the disaster that I have threatened."

³² Then I took another scroll and gave it to my secretary Baruch, and he wrote down everything that I dictated. He wrote everything that had been on the first scroll and similar messages that I dictated to him.

We learn from this that God's word cannot be destroyed. What recourse does the Devil and his demons have? Well, let us open our Bible to Satan's first appearance in scripture. Genesis 3:1 (NIV84) *The Fall of Man*

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "**Did God really say, '(repeat)** you must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

This is the strategy of the Enemy in our day – to cast doubt; to categorize the Bible as just another holy book like any other; to suggest that the author's are only men; Detractors say things like, "everyone knows there are contradictions and errors of fact and history."

Another strategy is to classify all the commands as cultural and therefore relative. Times are different today. We are smarter. We are more scientific. Human knowledge has advanced beyond the limitations of our ignorant forefathers. The Bible is only descriptive not prescriptive. Surely it doesn't apply to us in our context.

It is helpful to know that Jehoiakim was installed as king by Egyptian conquerors. He replaced his brother. And remember that Egypt was a nation of gods and idolatry. In the Exodus story, the stiff-necked people of Israel wanted to return to Egypt. It seems it was part of their

DNA. It seems it is part of the human DNA. It seems sin has its own gene.

What is the final result of burning God's word? Judah, Jerusalem, and Jehoiakim were conquered by Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian army – instruments of God's wrath. Jehoiakim was carried off into exile in chains. Here let me quote Satan again in his retort to Eve, "You will not surely die." These are the words of a liar and deceiver, a murderer from the beginning.

CONCLUSION:

Again Vernon McGee: "My friends, let's be very candid and very matter-of-fact and very direct. I believe we could have a revival today, but first there must be a return to the Word of God to find out what God wants us to do. Then I believe there will be and there must be a total commitment to God on the part of God's people. There can be none of this halfhearted service which we see. There can be none of this business of trying to go with the world and trying to go with God. It is impossible to do both. There must be a clear-cut dedication of heart and life to God. When that takes place, the Spirit of God is free to move."

Reflection Questions from Praying with Fire

(on the back of the bulletin)

1. Was there a time in your life when you rediscovered the Word of God that had been lost? Describe the period before and after your rediscovery.
2. What truth has God specifically shown you lately from the Bible?

3. After hearing God's Word preached, do you take time to meditate and process it, or do you start talking about sports, weather, family, and so forth? What can you do to change that?

4. When was the last time you shared the Word of God with someone? What did you share?

5. Do you hold to the infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture but fail to live in the sufficiency of Scripture for your every need? What does the sufficiency of Scripture mean?

6. What practical changes do you need to make for Scripture to become sufficient for all your needs?

Amen and amen. Let us pray.