

## Was The Entire Torah Found?

### Commentary for March 15, 2021 — ... in the Temple in King Josiah's Reign?

The information in this Commentary will be placed within the March 2021 article "[Israel and Judah: 40. Josiah and Discovery of the Law](#)" as "Appendix 1" on page 14.

#### ***Appendix 1: More on "the Book of the Law" Discovered in the Temple***

A scroll was discovered in the Temple by Levitical officials in the reign of King Josiah. Did the scroll only contain the Book of Deuteronomy? A different understanding is that the scroll included the entire Torah (all five books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) as quoted by Donald Wiseman on page 10 of the article. Here again are two texts from page 9 for perspective from the Concordant Literal Old Testament translation:

#### ***TEXT: A Copy of the Law Discovered in the Temple***

##### **2 Kings 22:8–11**

<sup>8</sup> Then Hilkiah the great priest said to Shaphan the scribe: "**A scroll of the law have I found in the house of Yahweh.**" And Hilkiah gave the scroll to Shaphan, who read it.

##### **2 Chronicles 34:14–19**

<sup>14</sup> While they were bringing forth the silver that had been brought to the house of Yahweh, Hilkiah the priest **found a scroll of the law of Yahweh given by means of Moses.**

<sup>15</sup> Hilkiah *responded and* said to Shaphan the scribe, "**A scroll of the law have I found in the house of Yahweh.**" And Hilkiah gave the scroll to Shaphan.

Note the last words of 2 Chronicles 34:14, "**given by means of Moses**" from the Concordant translation. The King James Version translates those words as "**given by Moses.**" Most modern translations are similar. However, the Hebrew literally says "**Hilkiah the priest found a scroll given by the hand of Moses.**" The word "**hand**" is clear in Hebrew.

In the book [Treasury of Scripture Knowledge](#) (compiled by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, about 1880, with introduction by R.A. Torrey, hereafter *TSK*) there is a note accompanying the verse. It is found in "[TSK on 2 Kings 22:8.](#)" The *TSK* gives an explanation that fits the literal Hebrew meaning as explained in the 2 Chronicles 34:15 verse:

**"This certainly was a genuine copy of the divine law, and probably the autograph of Moses, as it is said, in the parallel place of Chronicles [2 Chronicles 34:14–15], to be the book of the law of the Lord by Moses.**

**It is not probable that this was the only copy of the law in the land, or that Josiah had never before seen the book of Moses; but the fact seems to be, that this was the original of the covenant renewed by Moses in the plains of Moab, and now being unexpectedly found,**

- its antiquity,

- the occasion of its being made,
- the present circumstances of the people,
- the imperfect state in which the reformation was as yet,
- after all that had been done,

would all concur to produce the effect here mentioned on the mind of the pious Josiah.”

A different view on the same subject is given in the note of the [TSK on 2 Chronicles 34:14](#):

“Literally [in Hebrew, it says], ‘a book of the law of the Lord, **by the hand of Moses,**’ i.e, as Dr. Kennicott understands it, ‘in the handwriting of Moses;’ for, says he, though there are fifteen places in the Old Testament which mention the ‘Law of Moses,’ and ‘book of Moses,’ yet **this one place only** mentions ‘the book of the law **in, or by, the hand of Moses.**’”

Does “**by the hand of Moses**” mean that Moses dictated the words to a scribe, or does it mean Moses Himself wrote the words? I now believe the latter. The contention of the *TSK* is that the Kings and Chronicles verses both refer to a passage telling about the end of the life of Moses in Deuteronomy chapter 31:

“It came to be as Moses concluded writing all the words of this law on a scroll until they were finished, that Moses instructed the Levites, the carriers of the coffer [Ark] of the covenant of Yahweh, saying:

‘You are to take this scroll of the law, and you must place it by the side of the coffer of the covenant of Yahweh your Elohim, and it will come to be there as a testimony against you.’”

• *Deuteronomy 31:24–26 CLV*

Exodus 32:18 says the Commandments were written on “**two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of Elohim.**” In 1 Chronicles 28:19 David said he received the plans for the Temple “in writing” from Yahweh which he passed to Solomon. In Hezekiah’s time 2 Chronicles 29:25 it is specified that “**by the hand of Yahweh is the command by the hand of his prophets**” [again, translation from the Hebrew].

Deuteronomy 17:18–20 tells of the responsibility of a newly enthroned king regarding the Law of Moses — the religious and civil constitution of the Israelite people:

“It will come to be when he is seated on the throne of his kingdom, that **he will write for himself a duplicate of this law on a scroll from the one before the priests, the Levites** [in the Tabernacle and later the Temple]. **And it will be with him, and he will read in it all the days of his life,**

Josiah tried hard to obey once the Law was found. Why must a new King do such a thing?

that he may learn: [1] to fear Yahweh his Elohim, [2] to observe all the words of this law and these statutes to do them, [3] by no means to exalt his heart above his brothers and [4] by no means to withdraw from the instruction, **either to the right or left,** so that he may prolong his days on the throne of his kingdom, he and his sons among Israel.”

• *Deuteronomy 17:18–20*

David Sielaff  
[david@askelm.com](mailto:david@askelm.com)