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Telephone: 503 292 4352

• Internet: [www.askelm.com](http://www.askelm.com) •

E-Mail: [askoffice@askelm.com](mailto:askoffice@askelm.com)

# Israel and Judah:

## 40. Josiah and Discovery of the Law

by David Sielaff, March 2021

Read first the March 1, 2021 Commentary, "[The Right Hand and the Left](#)"

Then read the accompanying "[March 2021 Newsletter](#)"

Israel and Judah: 40

Josiah and  
Discovery  
of the Law

**THE SITUATION:** Young King Josiah was anointed King of Judah. He was the son of Amon, and grandson of Manasseh, both evil kings. This episode examines Josiah's early reign and gives background to a significant discovery made in (or underneath) God's Temple. This detailed information is given in the books of Second Kings and Second Chronicles during the prophetic ministries of Jeremiah and Zephaniah. Josiah began to rule as a "good" King of Judah at age 8. Josiah's name means "supported by YHWH" or "healed by YHWH." Indeed, God supported this young king.

Remember that Manasseh was horribly evil for most of his 55-year reign, although he repented in his final years. However, evil begets evil. His son Amon ruled three years doing many of the worst evil acts his father did. Many important events followed the assassination of Amon. One good event was Josiah's anointing as King of Judah, and he subsequently initiated religious reforms for the people to return to worship YHWH.

Amon was assassinated by his own servants. Did they try to seize power for themselves, or did they seek to put on the throne a different relative of Amon, perhaps a brother? We are not told what was going on "behind the scenes." One thing we know, Amon's murderers did not support Josiah or put him on the throne:

**"Then Amon's courtiers conspired against him and put the king to death in his own house. But the people of the land smote all who had conspired against king Amon; and the people of the land proclaimed his son Josiah king in his stead."**

• 2 Kings 21:23-24

"**The people of the land**" imposed justice on the assassins; then the same people made Josiah king, and he was duly anointed by the high priest. Remember that all kings of Judah were from King David and would rule from Jerusalem, and all were anointed as a symbol of their kingship. Each king was a "messiah" which is the Hebrew term that means "anointed" in English. Read Dr. Martin's, "[Types of Messiah in the Old Testament](#)."

Many things were involved in Josiah being made ruler: his protection, his education, his training, his choosing or keeping wise advisers and officials to help him rule (Proverbs 22:6) as a good King of Judah.

## *TEXT: The Beginning of Josiah's Reign*

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### 2 Kings 22:1–2

<sup>1</sup> Eight years old was Josiah when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem; his mother's name was Jedidah daughter of Adaiah from Bozkath.

<sup>2</sup> He did what was upright in the eyes of Yahweh and walked in all the way of his father David; he did not withdraw to the right or left.

### 2 Chronicles 34:1–2

<sup>1</sup> Eight years old was Josiah when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> He did what was upright in the eyes of Yahweh and walked in the ways of his father David; he did not withdraw to the right or left. [end text]

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**2 Kings 22:1 and 2 Chronicles 34:1.** Beginning his reign at age 8 and reigning 31 years, Josiah therefore died at age 39. Also in 2 Kings 22:1, Josiah's mother is named Jedidah which means "beloved" or "darling." She was the widow of evil King Amon who was assassinated after a short two-year reign (2 Kings 21:19–26). She was likely a mother who taught him to be a just and godly ruler.

**Verses 2 and 2.** Josiah's reign is previewed, and he is said to be "**upright in the eyes of YHWH.**" He did not "**walk**" in the decades of the evil reign of his grandfather Manasseh, who later repented. Nor did he walk in the ways of his father Amon. Rather, Josiah followed "**the way of his father David**" and did not deviate from being "**upright.**" The phrase "**withdraw to the right or left**" meant that he did not deviate from the truth.

Before I present the events of his reign, there was a prophecy from long before his birth of a Davidic king to be named Josiah. Imagine the excitement of worshippers of YHWH when Josiah did begin to reign.

## *Background to Josiah and His Predicted Appearance as King*

Nearly three hundred years before Josiah was born, God gave a prophecy about a future king descended from David. The king was to be named "Josiah." The prophecy was given to Jeroboam, the idolatrous rebel and first ruler of the breakaway northern kingdom of Israel. Jeroboam's reign began when the united Kingdom of Israel divided into two parts, the southern Kingdom of Judah and the northern Kingdom of Israel after the death of King Solomon. Read 1 Kings chapters 11 and 12.<sup>a</sup> Here is some background:

**"So the king [Jeroboam] took counsel and made two calves of gold ... And he placed the one in Bethel and the other he set up in Dan ...**

**Jeroboam ... went up to the altar which he had built in Bethel to sacrifice to the [golden] calves that he had made. He also installed in Bethel the priests of the high-places which he had made. He went up to the altar which he had built in Bethel ... so he established a festival for the sons of Israel and went up to the altar to fume incense.**

• 1 Kings 12:28–29, 32–33

God was angry about the altar at Bethel, and He sent a man of God to prophesy about a future Davidic king named Josiah. He then told what that king would do to the altar that Jeroboam built to Baal and other gods. The sacrifices done at Bethel were shameful.

The prophet Jeremiah (a contemporary of King Josiah) later compared them to the sacrifices to the Moabite pagan god Chemosh begun by Jeroboam, "**Then Moab will be ashamed because of Chemosh,<sup>b</sup> Just as the house of Israel was ashamed because of Bethel, their trust.**" (Jeremiah 48:13). Chemosh was the god of the Moabites, who were known as "**the people of Chemosh**" (Numbers 21:29; Jeremiah 48:46).

Here is the text of the confrontation between "**a man of Elohim**" and King Jeroboam:

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<sup>a</sup> Read my narrative of the division of Solomon's kingdom and the idolatry of the kings of Judah and Israel in "[Israel and Judah: 20. Civil War and Division.](#)"

<sup>b</sup> Children were sacrificed to Chemosh, the chief god of Moab. Jeremiah warned the people and leaders of Judah in Jeremiah 48:7: "**For because you trust in your deeds and in your treasures, you too shall be seized, And Chemosh will go forth into deportation, its priests and its chief officials together.**" Chemosh was worshipped in Jerusalem and Judah during Josiah's reign.

***TEXT: From the Past, about God’s Prophecy of Josiah’s Future Deeds at Bethel***

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**1 Kings 13:1–5**

<sup>1</sup> Behold, a man of Elohim, he came from Judah by the word of Yahweh to Bethel while Jeroboam was standing at the altar to fume incense. <sup>2</sup> He called out against the altar by the word of Yahweh and said,

**“Altar, altar, thus speaks Yahweh: Behold, a son shall be born to the house of David; Josiah is his name. And he will sacrifice on you the priests of the high-places who are fuming incense on you; and he shall burn human bones on you.”**

<sup>3</sup> Then he gave a miracle on that day, saying, **“This is the miracle of which Yahweh has spoken: ‘Behold, the altar will be torn apart, and the greasy ash that is on it will be poured out.’”**

<sup>4</sup> Now this came to pass: As the king heard the word of the man of Elohim that he had called out against the altar in Bethel, Jeroboam stretched out his hand from above the altar, saying, **“Apprehend him!”** And his hand that he stretched out against him dried up, so that he could not bring it back to himself.

<sup>5</sup> As for the altar, it was torn apart, and the greasy ash was poured out from the altar, according to the miracle that the man of Elohim had given by the word of Yahweh. [end text]

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**1 Kings 13:1–5.** The prophet is not identified. Jeroboam I (the First) was the evil first King of Israel. Bethel is some 10 miles north of Jerusalem, not far from the traditional border between Israel and Judah. This seems to have been the inaugural ceremony for this new religious site at Bethel. These sites were constructed to be alternatives to the Jerusalem Temple of YHWH. Both money and politics merged with religion. (What a surprise!)

**Verse 2.** The prophecy predicted a future event at the Bethel ritual site. One wonders, why did God wait hundreds of years to remove the altar at Bethel? I have no answer other than it showed YHWH’s power to control time and future events.

**Verse 3.** A miracle (translated “sign” in the King James Bible) from God publicly declared a future demonstration of God’s power in the affairs of men.

**Verse 4.** Jeroboam thought to punish the man of Elohim. His hand withered. Jeroboam’s hand was restored later in verse 13:6. The withering and restoration of Jeroboam’s hand was not the “miracle.”

**Verse 5.** The writer of First Kings departs from the narrative from this one verse to write that the prophetic words were fulfilled, as you will read below. The miracle was accomplished by Josiah in his reign.

Read the rest of 1 Kings 13:6 to the end of the chapter 13 to learn what happened to the **“man of Elohim.”**

### ***Timeline of King Josiah***

Within Kings and Chronicles we are given chronological information about Josiah’s life and reign:

<b>Year of Josiah’s Reign</b>	<b>Events During Josiah’s Reign</b>	<b>Told in ...</b>
Reign begins	Age 8, anointed King of Judah	2 Kings 22:1–2 2 Chronicles 34:8–9
8 <sup>th</sup> year of reign	Age 16, began to seek His God	2 Chronicles 34:3
12 <sup>th</sup> year of reign	Age 20, began to clean idolatry from Judah, Jerusalem and north	2 Chronicles 34:3
13 <sup>th</sup> year of reign	Age 21, Jeremiah’s ministry began	Jeremiah 1:1–2, 25:3
18 <sup>th</sup> year of reign	Age 26, began Temple renovation	2 Chronicles 34:12–13

Some time after Temple renovation began	Law of Moses discovered in the Temple	2 Kings 22:12–20 2 Chronicles 34:20–28
23 <sup>rd</sup> year of reign	Age 31, Jeremiah receives a prophecy about Babylon	Jeremiah 25:3
31 years total reign	Age 39, wounded fighting the Egyptians, dies in Jerusalem	2 Kings 22:1

### *Josiah and the Prophet Zephaniah*

The prophecies in the three chapters of the Book of Zephaniah were given during Josiah’s reign. When Zephaniah received his prophecies from God during Josiah’s reign is not known, but the prophecies predict a future Babylonian attack on the Kingdom of Judah. Some of Zephaniah’s prophecies have dual fulfillment in the ancient biblical past, yet some also seem to have a future fulfillment in our time. See Dr. Martin’s article, [“The Book of Zephaniah.”](#) It is likely that Zephaniah knew about Jeremiah and knew him personally.

**“The word of Yahweh which came to Zephaniah son of Cushi, son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah, son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah.”**

• *Zephaniah 1:1*

The name Zephaniah means “hidden by Yah” or “treasured by Yah.”<sup>c</sup> The prophets Zephaniah and Jeremiah seem to have been contemporaries and likely both knew the well-known prophecy about Josiah in 1 Kings 13:1–5. Zephaniah was perhaps descended from his great-great-grandfather King Hezekiah of Judah, but if so, he was not in the line of succession to be king, but maybe had royal connections. Jeremiah was from a high priestly family and connections. See my November 2013 Commentary [“Zephaniah and Jeremiah”](#) for additional background information, and where I note that Jeremiah’s writings and those of the Books of Kings and Chronicles cannot be read in isolation without relevant books of the Minor Prophets. The Book of Zephaniah must be considered for a total understanding of the mosaic of all relevant prophecies.

The writings of Jeremiah and Zephaniah both give us insight into the continuing idolatry and sins of the nobles and common people of Judah. Their sins continued and worsened even when good kings like Asa (1 Kings 15:11), Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:3), and Josiah reformed religious life in the Kingdom and encouraged the sole worship of YHWH and acted to destroy pagan religious relics, altars, and public worship of other gods. Unfortunately, the reforms did not last, nor were they taken to heart by the people.

The Book of Habakkuk is also thought to be contemporary with Jeremiah and Zephaniah, but Habakkuk has no biographical or date information to place its text. However, Habakkuk rebukes and warns of harsh judgment for sin that fits the time leading to the Babylonian conquest of Judah. Read Dr. Martin’s article, [“The Book of Habakkuk,”](#) about the 8<sup>th</sup> of the 12 Minor Prophetic books. Invaders from Babylon attacking Judea is a major subject of Habakkuk’s prophecies both for the past and in a time future to us.

On the other hand, Jeremiah’s first three verses of his prophetic book gives useful date information.

### *TEXT: Jeremiah’s Prophecies Begin in “THE DAYS OF JOSIAH”*

#### **Jeremiah 1:1–3**

<sup>1</sup> The words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiah, of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, <sup>2</sup> to whom the word of Yahweh came in the days of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign;

<sup>c</sup> [“The Book of Zephaniah”](#) in ISBE (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia), 1915 edition. “Yah” is a word ending for many Hebrew names. It is a shortened form of “Yahweh.”

<sup>3</sup> it [later] came through [in] the days of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the finishing of the eleventh year of Zedekiah son of Josiah, king of Judah, that is, until the deportation of Jerusalem in the fifth month: [end text]

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**Jeremiah 1:1.** Jeremiah was from a Levitical family of Aaronic priests. His family lived in Anathoth, some 3 miles northeast of Jerusalem.

**Jeremiah 1:2.** See Josiah's chronology on page 3. Jeremiah seems to be younger than Josiah, who was 21 years old when Jeremiah began his prophetic ministry.

**Jeremiah 1:3.** Jeremiah received God's prophecies beginning in Josiah's 13<sup>th</sup> year in his reign, and more prophecies were given later to Josiah's sons as they ruled. (They did not listen.) God through Jeremiah praised Josiah and after his death Jeremiah served Josiah's sons until Babylon conquered Judah, captured Jerusalem, and began deporting the people to Babylon. Jeremiah tried to encourage Shallum (also named Jehoahaz),<sup>d</sup> Josiah's son and immediate successor, to be more like his father:

**“Your father, did he not eat and drink, Yet also [did Josiah] execute right judgment and justice? Then it was well for him. He adjudicated the rightful adjudication of the humble one and the needy one; Then it was well. Did that not show knowledge of Me? averring [saying] is Yahweh.”**

• *Jeremiah 22:15–16*

Josiah ate and drank like any other man, but his just rule as king set him apart from other men and other rulers. First Chronicles 3:15 says that Shallum was the fourth son of Josiah. We examine his reign in episode 41.

***TEXT: Josiah Fulfills the Prophecy to Destroy the Bethel Altars*** [Out of Sequence]

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### 2 Chronicles 34:3–7

<sup>3</sup> **In the eighth year** of his reign, while he was still a lad, he started to seek after the Elohim of his father David, and

**in the twelfth year** he started to cleanse Judah and Jerusalem from the high-places, the Asherah poles, the carvings and the molten images.

<sup>4</sup> In his presence,

[1] they tore down the altars of the Baalim, and

[2] he had the incense stands that were upward above them hewn down;

[3] he had the Asherah poles, the carvings and the molten images broken down, pulverized and sprinkled on the surface of the tombs of those who had sacrificed to them.

[4] <sup>5</sup> He burned the bones of priests on their altars and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem.

[5] <sup>6</sup> In the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim and Simeon, as far as Naphtali, he blazed up their houses all around.

<sup>7</sup> Thus he was tearing down the altars and the Asherah poles, pounding the carvings to pieces so as to pulverize them, and hewing down all the incense stands throughout the land of Israel. Then he returned to Jerusalem. [end text]

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**Note:** Go back to page 2 above to reread 2 Chronicles 34:1–2 for the story flow about Josiah's early life. Verses 3–7 here are out of sequence from the Second Kings narrative that I usually use as the standard for chronology. However, to present these dated events in Josiah's life as told in Second Chronicles is less difficult than presenting them in a different order.

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<sup>d</sup> Shallum or Jehoahaz only rules for 3 months after Josiah's death. He is summoned by the Pharaoh of Egypt who was traveling through Palestine, probably returning to Egypt with his army. He seizes Shallum and how he died is not told in any texts (2 Kings 23:30–33 and 2 Chronicles 36:1–4) as we learn later. Was Shallum named after the husband of Hudah the Prophetess? Perhaps.

**2 Chronicles 34:3.** In the 8<sup>th</sup> year of his reign Josiah began to study, devoting himself to the God of David. He had a mass of information available to him as he probably grew up in Jerusalem and as a member of the royal family. Josiah likely studied David's Psalms, and the writings of Hezekiah (his great-grandfather) who died 57 years before Josiah's reign began. Isaiah's writings were available to him, as were the writings of the "minor prophets" Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, and Nahum. He could also study the annals of the Kings of Judah and of Israel, all available to him to read or have them read aloud to him as part of his "family history."<sup>e</sup> The difference from his father Amon, who rejected God's ways and God's blessings, was that Josiah looked to YHWH for guidance in ruling with goodness, wisdom, and YHWH's blessings.

Four years later, after he began to "**seek after**" David's God, Josiah began to act on his beliefs. In the 12<sup>th</sup> year at age 20 he began religious reforms (explained in greater detail later) beginning with Judah and Jerusalem to "cleanse" pagan artifacts from the land and the capital city.

**Verse 4.** Josiah made his presence visible so all the tasks would be done. Besides fulfilling the prophecy of 1 Kings 13:1–5, we cannot know the full significance of Josiah's acts desecrating the sites and graves of the idolators who sacrificed to pagan gods on these altars. This included the sacrifice of children. Many, and perhaps most of Josiah's subjects, disliked or hated his actions, according to the prophets.

**Verses 5–6.** These verses tell us part of Josiah's fulfillment of the prophecy of 1 Kings 13:1–5. While Bethel is not named in these verses, we are told in 1 Chronicles 7:20 and 28 that Bethel was within the land of Ephraim, assigned when the tribes occupied the land God promised to Israel.

Josiah ranged far and wide in the lands of four tribal areas of Israel: Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon, and Naphtali, part of the northern Kingdom of Israel during Jeroboam's breakaway kingdom. He cleaned the land of the pagan influences, or at least he tried. During Josiah's reign those four tribes had been deported for several generations. The northern kingdom was destroyed and most of her people exiled to Assyria. Only a remnant remained, living mostly in Judah during Josiah's reign. See below, 2 Chronicles 34:9.

**Verse 7.** What Josiah did in Judah and Jerusalem, he also did in Israelite lands. This summary is a reference to 1 Kings 13:1–5 on page 3 above. Now go back to Second Kings chapter 23 to continue the story from the perspective of the events in the Book of Kings. It is best for the narratives of Kings and Chronicles to be separated for a clearer time sequence.

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***TEXT: More Confirmation of Josiah Destroying Bethel Altars*** [Also Out of Sequence]

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**2 Kings 23:15–20**

<sup>15</sup> Also the altar in Bethel, the high-place that Jeroboam son of Nebat had built, who caused Israel to sin, that altar too and the high-place he broke down. Then he burned the high-place, pulverized it to dust and burned the Asherah pole.

<sup>16</sup> Josiah turned around and saw the tombs that were there on the hillside. So he sent and took the bones from the tombs and burned them on the altar. He defiled it according to the word of Yahweh that the man of Elohim had called out, when Jeroboam stood by the altar at the celebration; and he turned back and lifted his eyes to the tomb of the man of Elohim who had proclaimed these things.

<sup>17</sup> Then he said, "**What is this cairn that I am seeing?**" Now the men of the city replied to him,

**"It is the tomb of the man of Elohim who came from Judah, and he proclaimed these things that you have done against the altar of Bethel."**

<sup>18</sup> He replied, "**Leave him alone; do not let any man move his bones.**" So they left his bones undisturbed together with the bones of the prophet who had come from Samaria.

<sup>19</sup> [Later,] Josiah also put away all the houses of the high-places in the cities of Samaria that the kings of Israel had built to provoke Yahweh to vexation; he dealt with them according to all the deeds that he had done at Bethel.

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<sup>e</sup> The books of First and Second Chronicles were composed from documents compiled by priests and finalized by Ezra, his priestly assistants, along with Nehemiah. See "[The Design of the Old Testament](#)."

<sup>20</sup> He sacrificed all priests of the high-places that were there, on the altars, and he burned human bones on them. Then he returned to Jerusalem. [end text]

**Note:** These verses fit within the chronology of Josiah's reign but cannot be synchronized in a useful way with Second Chronicles.

**2 Kings 23:15–19.** The reforms in these verses continue from those mentioned in 2 Chronicles 34:3–7, begun in the 12<sup>th</sup> year of Josiah's reign. During this time Josiah went north to the land of Ephraim to the former city of Bethel. These verses are about the ritual area of Bethel with its altar, the high place Jeroboam built. Again, Bethel was 10 miles north of Jerusalem close to the border with the land of Benjamin, an easy one day's march from the capital city.

**Verse 15.** Josiah's presence shows that he supervised those performing the tasks he commanded to cleanse paganism and idolatry from the land. In final fulfillment of the prophecy of 1 Kings 13:1–5, Josiah ordered desecration of the sites and graves of the idolators who sacrificed to pagan gods on these altars and high places. These horrific acts included the sacrifice of children to Chemosh and Baal. Josiah's actions must have enraged the pagan worshippers, priests, and supporters of Judah's wealthy, nobility, and likely members of his own royal family.

**Verse 16.** Josiah's defilement of the pagan tombs completed the prophecy of 1 Kings 13:1–5 by digging up the bones of the evil pagan prophets and priests and burning them on their own altar.

**Verses 17–18.** A "cairn" is an above surface tomb, piled with stones, in this case identified as the burial site of "the man of Elohim." These two verses refer to the narrative in 1 Kings 13:6–32.

**Verse 19.** This verse tells of Josiah's other deeds to remove idolatrous worship in Samaria, the land of the former kingdom of Israel. He acted similarly to what he did in Bethel. The people the Assyrians brought from Babylon and other areas were well-entrenched within Samaria, but there is no indication Josiah drove them out. Nor did he try to seize and occupy that land. He did not attempt to expand his kingdom. There may have been political reasons for doing so. The Egyptians were expanding into Palestine along the coast, and the Assyrians were still a major threat. The Babylonians were growing in power and expanding from Mesopotamia.

**Verse 20.** The last task Josiah performed in the north was to round up and sacrifice (kill) the priests who were performing pagan rites at altars in destroyed cities of Bethel. He sacrificed them on the altars where they did their sacrifices — including those who killed victims of human sacrifice. In other words, Josiah did to them what they did to others. Josiah is not censured or criticized for killing killers. Josiah's act is simply reported.

What Josiah did was risky, but, although this territory was under Assyria jurisdiction and Josiah was a vassal of the Assyrian king at the time, Assyria was weak prior to its downfall. Josiah took it upon himself to kill the evil pagan priests, who may have had approval of the Assyrian King.

In the section below we learn what Josiah did when he was 26 years old. He declared his intent and acted to repair the Temple like other "good" kings of Judah, particularly Hezekiah, his great-grandfather. Again, refer to Josiah's chronology on page 3. The narratives of Kings and Chronicles are again side by side.

### *TEXT: The Renovation of the Temple*

#### **2 Kings 22:3–7**

<sup>3</sup> It came to be in the eighteenth year of king Josiah that the king sent the scribe Shaphan son of Azaliah son of Meshullam to the house of Yahweh, saying:

<sup>4</sup> **“Go up to Hilkiah the great priest and let him pour out the silver brought into the house of Yahweh, that the keepers of**

#### **2 Chronicles 34:8–13**

<sup>8</sup> In the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had cleansed the land and the house, he sent Shaphan son of Azaliah, *Maaseiah the chief of the city*, and *Joah son of Joahaz the recorder* to repair the house of Yahweh his Elohim.

<sup>9</sup> When they came to Hilkiah the great priest, they delivered the silver brought into the house of Elohim, that *the Levites*, the keepers of

the threshold had gathered from

the people,

<sup>5</sup> and let them put it into the hands of those doing the work who had been given supervision in the house of Yahweh, that they may give it to those doing the work who are in the house of Yahweh to repair any gap in the house,  
<sup>6</sup> to the craftsmen and the builders and wall builders, and to buy timbers and hewn stones for repairing the house.”

<sup>7</sup> However no accounting should be required from them of the silver given into their hands, because they are performing in faithfulness.

the threshold, had gathered from

[1] the hand of Manasseh and

[2] Ephraim and

[3] from all the remnant of Israel, as well as from

[4] all of Judah and Benjamin and

[5] the dwellers of Jerusalem.

<sup>10</sup> They put it into the hands of those overseeing the work who had been given supervision in the house of Yahweh, that they may *deliver* it to those doing the work who are *working* in the house of Yahweh to *fill the gaps and to repair* the house. <sup>11</sup> So they gave it to the craftsmen and the builders to buy *hewn stones and timbers for the clamps, and to lay rafters for the buildings that had been brought to ruin by the kings of Judah.*

<sup>12</sup> The men were performing the work in faithfulness; over them supervision had been given to the Levites, Jahath and Obadiah, of the sons of Merari, and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to oversee, while other Levites, all proficient with the instruments of song, <sup>13</sup> were over the burden carriers as overseers of all doing the work, service by service; some of the Levites were scribes and clerks and gatekeepers. [end text]

**2 Kings 22:3 and 2 Chronicles 34:8.** Josiah was age 26 in his 18<sup>th</sup> year of rule. These narratives vary from each other, focusing on different details of the same event. They tell what Josiah commanded after the land and “the house” of God was cleansed of pagan artifacts, altars, and other unholy things.

**Verses 22:4 and 34:9.** Josiah sent the scribe Shaphan to order the repairs of the Temple. Offerings were received from the people, just as the people contributed in the time of Moses for the Tabernacle (Exodus 25:1–8), and in the time of King David for the Temple of God that Solomon built (1 Chronicles 29:1–9). The silver was not originally kept in the Temple complex. It was collected and stored at an unspecified place, perhaps in the treasury of the royal palace in the City of David.

From there it was brought to the Temple to be given to the construction supervisors. The money was gathered from several sources listed in 2 Chronicles 34:9. Some came from Manasseh’s personal treasure; some from those of Ephraim, and some **“from all the remnant of Israel.”** This last group may indicate the funds were from faithful believers in YHWH from the destroyed northern kingdom, from all Judah and Benjamin; and from the dwellers of Jerusalem. It may be that each of these groups were distinguished from each other and the silver was stored separately.

**Verses 22:5 and 34:10.** The funds were distributed to the supervisors of the laborers who would make the repairs to the Temple.

**Verses 22:6 and 34:11.** The money was paid to workers and to buy the supplies to make the repairs, **“for the buildings that had been brought to ruin by the kings of Judah.”** This refers to Kings Manasseh and Amon, Josiah’s predecessors.

**2 Kings 22:7.** The surprising statement is made that the supervisors were not required to account for the

money they each received and used to purchase the supplies they needed and to pay the workers.

**2 Chronicles 34:12–13.** It was a great honor for the men to be named supervisors of Temple repair.

### *Josiah in the Records of Other Countries*

Before Josiah became king, the Assyrian empire was on its last legs, but no one knew that yet. The Assyrian army was still strong, but its empire was putting out rebellious fires everywhere. Unknown to everyone the powerful Scythians were preparing to attack Assyria. Egypt was having a resurgence. There are no records of other kingdoms mentioning Judah or Josiah. The biblical texts do not mention other kingdoms until Josiah's death. There certainly were royal records and correspondence written to and about Judah, but none that have been discovered for the reign of Josiah.

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

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#### **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.

<sup>9</sup> Shaphan the scribe then came to the king and rendered a report on the matter to the king; he said:

**“Your officials have poured forth the silver that was found in the house; and they put it [the silver] into the hands**

**of those doing the work who had been given supervision in the house of Yahweh.”**

<sup>10</sup> Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, **“There is a scroll that Hilkiah the priest has given to me.”** And Shaphan read it before the king.

<sup>11</sup> It came to pass as the king heard the words of the scroll of the law, he tore his garments.

#### **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.

<sup>16</sup> Then Shaphan *brought the scroll* to the king and *furthermore* rendered a report to the king, *saying,*

**“All that was put in the hand of your officials, they are doing. <sup>17</sup> They have poured forth the silver that was found in the house of Yahweh; and they put it [the silver] into the hands of the supervisors and into the hands of those doing the work.”**

<sup>18</sup> Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, **“There is a scroll that Hilkiah the priest has given to me.”** And Shaphan read from it before the king.

<sup>19</sup> It came to pass as the king heard the words of the law, he tore his garments. [end text]

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**2 Chronicles 34:14.** This **“scroll of the law of Yahweh”** should have been inside or near the Ark of the Covenant. Note the words of Moses:

**“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 [Ark] of the covenant of Yahweh your Elohim, and it will come to be there as a testimony against you, for I know your rebellion and your scruff of obstinacy [stiff neck, KJV]. Behold if in my day, while I am still with you alive, you have been rebellious against Yahweh, how much more so [rebellious] after my death!’”**

• **Deuteronomy 31:24–27**

However, the scroll was not found there, nor was it found with the silver. It seems the scroll was found when the silver was brought into the Temple and put into temporary storage until it was distributed to the supervisors and workers.

Exactly what was the “scroll” written by Moses discovered among the store of silver? There is dispute as to what Mosaic text was found.

1. Was the scroll the Pentateuch, all five books of the Law of Moses, written by him (except for the verses describing the death of Moses at the end of Deuteronomy)?
2. Or was it only the book of Deuteronomy written before the people of Israel entered the promised land given to them by YHWH, immediately before Moses died?

The chart to the right shows the number of Hebrew words in each Pentateuch book, individually and together, and the Book of Isaiah. The data comes from the webpage, “[Word counts for every book of the Bible \(free download\)](#).”<sup>f</sup> The Book of Deuteronomy is smaller than the Isaiah Scroll.

The Hebrew word in verse 14 for “scroll” is “*sepher*.” It is a singular word, not plural.<sup>g</sup> The word is properly translated into English as “scroll” in the Concordant Old Testament and “book” in the King James Version. Both are correct. Clearly a single writing is meant, not a collection of writings.

If all five books of Moses were meant, that would make up a huge single “scroll.” In fact, it would be five times the size (in mass, weight, and in number of sheets on a roll, than the Isaiah Scroll discovered near the Dead Sea.<sup>h</sup> The Isaiah Scroll when rolled out is 734 centimeters in length which is 24+ feet all on two wooden spools. If the entire Pentateuch (all five books of Moses) was found on one single *sepher*, or scroll, then it would have been 5 times longer (120+ feet), 5 times heavier, and about 3.5 times thicker than the Isaiah Scroll.

[ **Editor’s note:** See the Appendix 1 at the end of this article for more information. ]

The “**scroll of the law of Yahweh**” was not found where it should have been, within or beside the Ark of the Covenant, but it was found when the Temple was prepared to store the silver brought to the Temple as told in verses 2 Kings 22:9 and 2 Chronicles 34:16–17. Professor D.J. Wiseman wrote that if it was the complete book of Deuteronomy ...

**“(Chapters] 1–11, and epilogue, 31–34) may have been in the rediscovered copy. However, since the historical background is essential to its interpretation, the whole scroll could well have been found complete. The identification with Deuteronomy rests on the dependence of some of Josiah’s actions on the book (e.g. 23:9, cf. Deut. 18:6–8; and the impact of the prophecies predicting exile; the support Deut. 17:14 gives to nationalistic aspirations, etc.)**

• **Donald J. Wiseman, 1 and 2 Kings, 314<sup>i</sup>**

<sup>f</sup> I was acquainted with a minister near Pasadena, California in the early 1990s who owned a manufactured reconstruction of the Temple Scroll and had it displayed in his meeting room. He said it was about the largest possible size that a usable scroll could be. Anything larger would be too fragile and unwieldy to transport or roll out in order to view and read the text.

<sup>g</sup> For comparison, in the Greek Old Testament (translated by Jews from a Hebrew text), the Greek word “*biblos*” is also singular in 2 Chronicles 34:14.

<sup>h</sup> From the official website, “The Digital Dead Sea Scrolls,” see the specific page, “[The Great Isaiah Scroll](#).”

**“The version of the text is generally in agreement with the Masoretic or traditional version codified in medieval codices, such as the Aleppo Codex, but it contains many variant readings, alternative spellings, scribal errors, and corrections.”**

<sup>i</sup> Donald J. Wiseman, *1 and 2 Kings: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 9, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 314.

Book	Hebrew Word Count
Genesis	32,046
Exodus	25,957
Leviticus	18,852
Numbers	25,048
Deuteronomy	23,008
<i>Total Pentateuch</i>	124,911
Isaiah Scroll	25,608

When this Scroll of the Law was found, it was an indictment against the practices by the people of Judah against their God. The word **“testimony”** in Deuteronomy 31:26 above was a legal term implying an inevitable indictment by God against His people, which was what YHWH’s prophets continually told the Israelites for many centuries since Moses.

With this discovery the people of Judah were suddenly left with no excuse before their God for their current and continuing disobedience. First, they should have remembered the Law of Moses in their hearts and memories, as they would have found if Deuteronomy was in their midst before. They were warned to remember the Law in Deuteronomy 4:9, 29, 5:29, 6:5, 8:2, 10:12, 11:13, 18, 13:3, 26:16, 30:2, 6, and 10. Second, their response should have been to immediately repent and seek to obey these words of God. The Israelites also had a list of blessings and curses in Leviticus chapter 26 if they disobeyed God’s Covenant laws. They did not need a “second statement” of blessing and curses found in Deuteronomy chapter 28.

**2 Kings 22:8 and 2 Chronicles 34:15.** **“Hilkiah the great priest,”** was probably Jeremiah’s father (Jeremiah 1:1); he gave the scroll of the law to the scribe Shaphan, who **“read it”** which meant he read it out loud, probably with others present.

**Verses 9 and 16–17.** Shaphan took it to King Josiah, explained the circumstances how the scroll was found while working on the Temple repairs.

**Verses 10 and 18.** Then Shaphan delivers the important news that brought him before his king: he tells Josiah what was found and then he reads it to Josiah.

**Verses 11 and 19.** Josiah was so horrified **“he tore his garments”** in anguish and fear because he understood the full importance of what God would likely do in punishing His people. The Book of Deuteronomy is explicit as to the judgments from God against His disobedient people in chapter 28. The worst punishments were defeat, decimation of the population, and eventual destruction of the kingdom. The final punishment was exile from the land YHWH promised to Israel in the time of Moses. Their remaining in the land was based on their obedience to their covenant with YHWH. That depended upon the obedience of all the people not just a few and not just an occasional good king like Josiah.

The people of Judah knew full well all about God’s judgment against the former northern Kingdom of Israel (even if they denied the reason for His judgment). What happened to them was predicted in the Law of Moses, and was now reinforced by the scroll of the law, which likely was the Book of Deuteronomy. Josiah feared certain judgment would come upon Judah, because its people were committing the same crimes and sins as the people from the northern kingdom before their destruction.

### ***TEXT: God Speaks to Josiah and Judah Through Huldah the Prophetess***

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#### **2 Kings 22:12–20**

<sup>12</sup> Then the king instructed Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Achbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan the scribe and Asaiah the king’s attendant, saying,

<sup>13</sup> **“Go, inquire of Yahweh about me and about the people and about all Judah concerning the words of this scroll that has been found; for great is the fury of Yahweh which ravages against us because our fathers did not hearken to the words of this scroll and do according to all that is written concerning us.”**

<sup>14</sup> So Hilkiah the priest, with Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan and Asaiah, went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah son of Harhas,

#### **2 Chronicles 34:20–28**

<sup>20</sup> Then the king instructed Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Abdon son of Micah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah the king’s attendant, saying,

<sup>21</sup> **“Go, inquire of Yahweh about me and about the remnant in Israel and in Judah concerning the words of the scroll that has been found; for great is the fury of Yahweh which is poured forth on us because our fathers did not observe the word of Yahweh and do according to all that is written in this scroll.”**

<sup>22</sup> So Hilkiah *and those whom the king had instructed*, went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum son of Tokhath son of Hasrah,

the keeper of the garments. She was dwelling in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter; and they spoke to her.

<sup>15</sup> She replied to them, **“Thus speaks Yahweh Elohim of Israel. Say to the man who sent you to me,**

<sup>16</sup> **Thus speaks Yahweh:**

‘Behold, I am bringing evil on this place and on its dwellers, all the words of the scroll that the king of Judah has read;

<sup>17</sup> **insomuch as they have forsaken Me and fumed incense to other elohim that they might provoke Me to vexation with all the deeds of their hands,**

**My fury ravages against this place, and it shall not be quenched.**

<sup>18</sup> **Regarding the king of Judah who is sending you to inquire of Yahweh, thus shall you say to him,**

**“Thus speaks Yahweh Elohim of Israel: As for the words that you have heard,**

<sup>19</sup> **because your heart was tender and you were submissive before the face of Yahweh when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its dwellers, that it will become an appalling object and a malediction, because you tore your garments and wept before Me, I for My part have heard you too; this is the averring [statement] of Yahweh.**

<sup>20</sup> **Wherefore, behold Me, I shall gather you to your fathers, and you will be gathered to your tombs in peace.**

**Your eyes shall not see all the evil which I am bringing on this place.”**

So they brought back this decree to the king.

the keeper of the garments. She was dwelling in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter; and they spoke to her *about this*.

<sup>23</sup> She replied to them, **“Thus speaks Yahweh Elohim of Israel. Say to the man who sent you to me,**

<sup>24</sup> **Thus speaks Yahweh:**

‘Behold, I am bringing evil on this place and on its dwellers, all *the execrations written on the scroll that they read before the king of Judah,*

<sup>25</sup> **insomuch as they have forsaken Me and fumed incense to other elohim that they might provoke Me to vexation with all the deeds of their hands,**

**My fury shall be poured forth on this place and it shall not be quenched.**

<sup>26</sup> **Regarding the king of Judah who is sending you to inquire of Yahweh, thus you shall say to him,**

**“Thus speaks Yahweh Elohim of Israel: As for the words that you have heard,**

<sup>27</sup> **because your heart was tender, and you were submissive before *Elohim* when you heard His words against this place and against its dwellers, *and you were submissive before Me and tore your garments* and wept before Me, I for My part have heard you too; this is the averring [statement] of Yahweh.**

<sup>28</sup> **Behold, I shall gather you to your fathers, and you will be gathered to your tombs in peace.**

**Your eyes shall not see all the evil which I am bringing on this place *and on its dwellers.*”**

So they brought back this decree to the king.

[end text]

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**2 Kings 22:12 and 2 Chronicles 34:20.** As usual, Josiah takes quick action. He told the men who came to him with this important document to act immediately. (I wonder why he did not go himself, but he sent them instead.)

**Verses 13 and 21.** Josiah tells them **“to inquire of YHWH”** [1] what he as King, [2] what the people of Judah, [3] what the people of Israel (**“the remnant of Israel”**), and [4] what those of Judah should do. Josiah acknowledges the importance of this timely discovery from YHWH as a final warning. Their fathers disobeyed, and Josiah knew the people were still disobeying. He wanted to know, what should be done to deal with this crisis threatening destruction for their sins against YHWH?

**Verses 14 and 22.** Who were the men who brought the scroll to Josiah and then took it to a surprising individual to obtain the information from God that King Josiah wanted to learn. This was ...

“... an official delegation asking for interpretation not by divination but through a spokesman of God. The reply was needed both by the king and by the people of Judah. Both must act in accord. Ahikam son of Shaphan was a priest who helped Jeremiah (26:24) and the father of Gedaliah, later the governor of Judah (2 Kgs 25:22; Jer. 39:14). Acbor (‘mouse’) was the father of Elnathan (Jer. 26:22; 36:12). Asaiah was ‘the royal official’ (‘*ebed hammelek*’), a term common on administrative seals from Judah.

• *Donald J. Wiseman, 1 and 2 Kings, 317*

Note who they did not take the scroll to, to learn God’s will and interpretation. They did not take it ...

- to the prophet Zephaniah (Zephaniah 1:1), who was perhaps too young or not yet a prophet; or
- to the prophet Jeremiah, who was perhaps absent at Anathoth, but that was only 3 miles away; but
- they took the scroll to a person who was close at hand and known for her prophetic gifts. They went to Huldah the prophetess, who was probably at this time a widow.

Huldah’s husband Shallum was mentioned by name, indicating some prominence in the society of Judah. Huldah’s husband was the grandson of a man named Harhas, “**keeper of the wardrobe**” meaning the priestly clothing. Harhas was a Levite. But it could refer to the royal wardrobe.<sup>j</sup> Huldah lived outside of the City of David, probably across the Tyropean Valley west of the Temple.

In New Testament times there were five gates from the Herodian Temple, two were to the south and they were called the Huldah Gates (*Mishnah* Middoth 1:3). King David’s Tomb was immediately south of the Gihon Temple (the site of all the Jerusalem Temples of YHWH). See my article, “[The Location and Future Discovery of King David’s Tomb](#).” The tomb of Huldah the prophetess was close to David’s unopened tomb and up to the time of Peter in Acts 2:25–34, David’s Tomb had not been opened, and has remained closed to our present time. Rabbi Akiba (he died in 135 AD) agreed and his disciples said that neither David’s Tombs nor Huldah’s Tomb had been desecrated or touched by the Romans. Akiba made his statement some 65 years after the destruction of the Herodian Temple in 70 AD.

“**In Jerusalem it was not permitted to leave tombs** [within the city] **with the exception of those of the house of David and that of the prophetess Huldah**. ... **All sepulchers should be cleared away, except the sepulcher of a king and the sepulcher of a prophet**. ...

**But there were at Jerusalem the sepulchers** [plural] **of the House of David and the sepulcher** [singular] **of Huldah the prophetess and nobody ever touched them**: ... **There was a tunnel in them through which the uncleanness went forth** [from the Temple] **to the Valley of Kidron**.”

• *Tosefta, Baba Bathra 1:2, 11–12*

So, the men went to see Huldah and she did have a message from YHWH and spoke for Him to them.

**2 Kings 22:15 and 2 Chronicles 34:23**. YHWH prophecy given to Huldah begins by saying that the information is for Josiah. It is in two parts. The first part is about Jerusalem.

**Verses 16 and 24**. Great evil will come upon Jerusalem. All the judgments in the scroll will come upon the city and on those living in the city. King Josiah and his court officials correctly read the text and understood its disastrous implications. In verse 16, “execrations” are curses. These curses come from YHWH.

**Verses 17 and 25**. The people have forsaken YHWH and honored other gods more than Him. They deliberately provoked Him. YHWH’s fury will not end until the destruction is complete.

**2 Kings 22:18–20 and 2 Chronicles 34:26–28**. The second part of the prophecy is YHWH telling the King of Judah how to avoid or delay the inevitable destruction. The next words from YHWH are for Josiah personally. He approves of Josiah’s acts. Josiah’s actions will have a positive consequences at least for him if not for anyone else.

<sup>j</sup> Robert Jamieson, A.R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, vol. 1 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 246.

His tender heart and submission to YHWH when Josiah learned of the scroll of Moses (not yet validated by YHWH through Huldah) and his tearing his garments in guilt and anguish for his peoples' sins all highlighted Josiah's feelings for Judah and her people, how they would suffer, his genuine tears were accepted before his God, and He heard Josiah's words. YHWH says that when Josiah dies, his death will be peaceful. Then God says something else that is very interesting. Josiah would die before God dispensed all the evil upon Judah's people. As long as Josiah lived, God will withhold His judgment. They returned and told Josiah.

### *What Josiah Did Next*

Josiah continued his reforms as you will read in the next episode. He dug deeper into the seamy side of pagan religion, cleaning out even more idolatrous ritual artifacts, sites, and people from Jerusalem and Judah. The people, unfortunately, did not follow the lead of their king.

After the Temple was repaired and rituals reordered, Josiah prepared and celebrated a wonderful Passover honoring YHWH in a manner never done before. If the Book of Deuteronomy was **"the Scroll of the Law"** discovered in the Temple, imagine Josiah's wonder at Deuteronomy 17:15, which begins a section about the responsibilities of a righteous king and how he should study God's laws. Josiah will have **"the Scroll of the Law"** read to the people during the Passover celebration and re-dedication of the Covenant with YHWH and the Temple. But that is in the next episode of Josiah's, Judah's, and Jerusalem's history.

I believe **"the Scroll of the Law"** was a copy of Deuteronomy written by an earlier king of Judah, such as King Hezekiah or perhaps even King David himself. Their tombs are still sealed just south of the correct site of the Temple in bedrock south of the Gihon Spring. Note what Deuteronomy 27:18–20 says:

**"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 [the scroll] before the priests, the Levites.**

**And it [the Law] will be with him, and he will read in it all the days of his life that he may learn:**

- **to fear Yahweh his Elohim,**
- **to observe all the words of this law and these statutes to do them,**
- **by no means to exalt his heart above his brothers and**
- **by no means to withdraw from the instruction, either to the right or left,**

**[why?] so that he may prolong his days on the throne of his kingdom, he and his sons among Israel."**

As we read the texts of Second Kings and Chronicles, Josiah certainly fulfilled those instructions, whether he did so in his youth or when he was older. His life, like Hezekiah's would have been extended, but we will read that Josiah made a mistake that shortened his life. The people of Judah feared what was to follow.

### *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 above for perspective.

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 even harder to obey once original copy 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*

## *Appendix 2: The Author of the 19<sup>th</sup> Psalm*

The acrostic Psalm 119, written by Jeremiah, praises and celebrates God's law as no writing did before. In fact, it was written by Jeremiah while he and Josiah were both young. If so, they certainly must have discussed it. Note what Dr. Martin wrote about the author of Psalm 119 in "[Bible Secret Number 90](#)":

### **Who was the author of Psalm 119? Was he David, or someone else?**

#### **Finding out who the real author is helps make the message of the Psalm much clearer.**

The author was not King David.

- The author was persecuted by "princes" who were the sons of kings (verses 23, 161).
- He was very young at the time he wrote the psalm (verses 9 with 10, 99, 100).
- He spoke to kings, and was himself not a king (verse 46).
- He was greatly afflicted (verses 67, 71, 75, 107).
- He was almost killed on one or more occasions (verses 78, 85, 87, 109 with 110).
- He greatly respected God's law and he said: "**Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not your law**" (verse 136)

This last point is precisely referenced in most Bibles to Jeremiah 9:1 and 14:17. Everything in the Psalm suggests that its author was Jeremiah. It fits him and his temperament to a tee. There can hardly be a doubt that it was Jeremiah who wrote Psalm 119..

David Sielaff, March 2021