

God Moves
August 28, 2022
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2 Kings 22:8-20

Have you ever said, *"Where are my glasses? I can't find them!"* Only to discover they were perched on your head. Or maybe you look frantically for your keys only to realize you had them in your hand? A couple of expressions apply: *"right under your nose"* or if you are from the south, *"if it had been a snake it would have bit me."* Sometimes we already possess what we need, we just aren't looking at it.

Here's another expression: *"out of sight, out of mind."* What does that one mean? In today's text the people of Israel had become so disobedient that the word of God was literally out of sight and out of mind.

Here's the point from this passage: When God's word is out of sight and out of mind, our lives will be out of order. God's truth is "right under our noses" we just need to read it and obey it.

In the era of the kings of Israel and Judah there were good kings and bad kings. King Josiah of Judah was a "good" king who worked to bring the nation back to God. One of his great initiatives was repairing the temple in Jerusalem. During the renovation, Hilkiah the high priest made a dramatic discovery:

8 Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the court secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in the Lord's Temple!" Then Hilkiah gave the scroll to Shaphan, and he read it. **[Verse 10]** Shaphan also told the king, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a scroll." So Shaphan read it to the king. **11** When the king heard what was written in the Book of the Law, he tore his clothes in despair. **[Note: Based on 2 Chronicles 34, the scroll "likely was Deuteronomy, which contains extensive accounts of God's law and the consequences for sin."]** **12** Then he gave these orders to Hilkiah the priest, [and several others] **13** "Go to the Temple and speak to the Lord for me and for the people and for all Judah. Inquire about the words written in this scroll that has been found. For the Lord's great anger is burning against us because our ancestors have not obeyed the words in this scroll. We have not been doing everything it says we must do." **14** So Hilkiah [and the king's advisers] went to consult with the prophet Huldah...**[Five women are explicitly identified as prophetesses]**¹ **15** She said to them, "The Lord, the God of Israel, has spoken! Go back and tell the man who sent you, [King Josiah] **16** 'This is what the Lord says: I am going to bring disaster on this city and its people. All the words written in the scroll that the king of Judah has read will come true. **17** For my people have abandoned me and offered sacrifices to pagan gods, and I am very angry with them for everything they have done. My anger will burn against this place, and it will not be quenched.' **18** "But go to the king of Judah who sent you to seek the Lord and tell

him: ‘This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says concerning the message you have just heard: **19** You were sorry and humbled yourself before the Lord when you heard what I said against this city and its people—that this land would be cursed and become desolate. You tore your clothing in despair and wept before me in repentance. And I have indeed heard you, says the Lord. **20** So I will not send the promised disaster until after you have died and been buried in peace. You will not see the disaster I am going to bring on this city.’ ” So they took her message back to the king.

- There was a country/gospel song in the 1950s entitled “Dust on the Bible.” The key line: *“Get the dust off the Bible and redeem your poor soul.”*ⁱⁱ
- Judah didn’t just have “dust” on God’s word; they had lost it in the attic!
- It’s no wonder they had drifted so far from God, His word wasn’t even being used in the temple. It was “out of sight and out of mind.”
- King Josiah’s reaction was dramatic in verse 13: *“...the Lord’s great anger is burning against us because our ancestors have not obeyed the words in this scroll. We have not been doing everything it says we must do.”*
- Verse 17 spells out their sin: *“...my people have abandoned me and offered sacrifices to pagan gods, and I am very angry with them for everything they have done.”* There was even Baal worship in the temple!ⁱⁱⁱ
- The temple was in operation but they were ignoring God’s commands.
- His word was right there but they were ignoring it. “If it had been a snake it would have bit them” --- and it was about to when God’s justice fell.
- What was true for the nation of Judah then is true for us today. When God’s word is out of sight and out of mind, our lives will be out of order.
- 26 year-old King Josiah understood the gravity of this situation. Tearing his robes was a sign of sorrow and repentance. (2 Chron. 34:27)
- Sorrow and repentance should be our reaction when we realize we have not been obedient to God’s commands in His word, but we can only obey it if we read it.
- By my count I own around forty copies of God’s word – His COMPLETE and final revelation to mankind. If I don’t do my best to obey His word, I will one day be without excuse when I stand before God.
- This young King didn’t just tear his robes and go on about life. This discovery moved him to make changes in his nation. Chapter 23 outlines how “Josiah made a covenant with the elders of Jerusalem and Judah to follow the Lord (23:1-3). [He] commanded Hilkiah to cleanse the temple of all remnants of Baal worship from the days of earlier kings (23:4-6). He also re-instituted the Passover celebration at a level the people had not experienced since the days of the judges (23:21-23; 2 Chron. 35:1-19).”^{iv}
- There is an interesting twist to this story in verses 19 and 20.
- Because the young King “wept” and “repented,” God said he would delay sending the “promised disaster” on the nation until after Josiah died.
- Why would God show grace to Josiah but not cancel the judgment on the whole nation? What does that teach us about repentance?
- God keeps His promises but not just the pleasant promises.

- God keeps ALL His promises including His promises of judgment for those who ignore His commands in scripture; especially those who reject Christ.
- It's like a loving but just parent. If that parent threatens discipline for disobedience but never delivers it, what kind of child will they raise?
- Sin is personal. Repentance is personal. Forgiveness is personal. Salvation is personal. I can't confess someone else's sins, only mine.
- Sadly, "God had given the nation time to repent, but the people had remained defiant. Consequently, they would receive the judgments of the covenant rather than its blessings."^v
- Josiah lived twelve more years after he led the nation back to God. They had the opportunity to repent. If they rejected God, it was on them.
- When I think of how they had God's word "right under their noses" I was reminded of what Paul wrote in Romans 10:8: "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart"^{vi} Ironically, Paul was quoting Deuteronomy (30:14) the scroll they likely found in the temple. In Romans 10, the "word" that is "near" all of us isn't about keeping rules. Look at the next two familiar verses (9 & 10). Here is the word that is near us:
Romans 10:9–10 (ESV) — 9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. **10** For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.
- The truth of the gospel is near everyone if they will only accept it, but we can only do that personally for ourselves.
- How does this passage speak to you? What kind of changes might it cause us to make in our relationship with God and His word? What do we see about knowledge versus obedience when it comes to God's word?

So, What's the Takeaway?

Psalms 1:1–3 (ESV) — 1 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; **2** but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. **3** He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

Psalms 119:105 (ESV) — 105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

- When God's word is out of sight and out of mind, our lives will be out of order. God's truth is "right under our noses" we must read it and obey it.
- Someone once said, "dusty Bibles lead to dirty lives." Do we have any "dust" on our Bibles?
- When we realize we're not doing our best to study and obey God's word, instead of tearing our clothes in repentance (like Josiah) we should get out a dust cloth and get back into our Bible.
- Like the old country song said, "*Get the dust off the Bible and redeem your poor soul.*"

ⁱ : Five women are explicitly identified as prophetesses Miriam (Exod. 15:20), Deborah (Judg. 4:4), Huldah (2 Kings 22:14), Noadiah, a “false” prophetess (Neh. 6:14), and Anna (Luke 2:36). Jezebel claimed to be a prophetess (Rev. 2:20). Brand, C., Draper, C., England, A., Bond, S., Clendenen, E. R., & Butler, T. C. (Eds.). (2003). [Prophetess](#). In *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (p. 1336). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

ⁱⁱ Songwriters: Walter Bailes / Johnny Bailes
Dust on the Bible lyrics © Sony/atv Acuff Rose Music

ⁱⁱⁱ (2 Kings 23:4-6).

^{iv} ibid

^v ibid

^{vi} [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Ro 10:8). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.