



“This is the Story...”

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Week 20: Scrolls and Consequences

2 Kings 22:1-23:25

Intro Video: https://youtu.be/7wbF_4ADwxE

Review the big story: God created the cosmos and humans and called it all good. We were created to live in harmony, but sometimes we miss the mark. All of humanity missed the mark, and they had to live with the consequences, but God stuck with them and continued to love them. Then God called a family to be a blessing to the whole earth. Like the humans before them, the generations of this family often missed the mark, but God was faithful. When the people became slaves in Egypt, God raised up Moses to be their leader. God performed many signs and wonders, and delivered them from slavery. In the wilderness, they learned to be a people of God, trusting in God’s provision, living out God’s commandments, and wrestling with the law in shalom community. As they prepared to go into the promised land, they were given the *shema*, words of love to keep with their whole beings. God gave the people a new leader, Joshua, and through miraculous works brought the people into the promised land. Once there, they had to learn again how to be God’s people. They missed the mark a lot, and God sent judges to guide them. Ordinary people showed creativity and steadfast love in the way they continued the story of the people of God. God called a young boy, Samuel, to be a bridge between the people and God. Prophets like Samuel would continue to try to keep the people faithful to God in the time of the kings, beginning with Saul and David. David’s son Solomon, the third king of Israel, built a temple in Jerusalem to be a gathering place for worship of God. But Solomon and all the kings continued to miss the mark, and the kingdom divided into the north (Israel) and the south (Judah). Prophets like Elijah kept God’s vision alive and continued to call the people back to God.

- **Key verses:** 2 Kings 22:2; 2 Kings 22:11; 2 Kings 23:3; 2 Kings 23:25

Tell the story: Almost 300 years after the northern and southern kingdoms divided, Josiah became king of Judah. He was just eight years old, and he followed God’s ways. When he was 26, he began repairs of the temple that Solomon had built. During these repairs, the priest Hilkiah discovered a book of the law in the temple. Josiah was very upset when he heard the words of the law, because he realized that no one was following them or even remembered them. He sent some people to ask Huldah, the prophetess, what he should do. Huldah brought a message from God, saying that God was very angry with the people, but that because God knew that Josiah was truly sorry, God would not bring disaster on the land of Judah while Josiah was alive. Josiah renewed the covenant with God. He ordered the destruction of all the idols and temples for other gods. Under Josiah’s rule, the people once again celebrated Passover and came back to the law of Moses. The Bible says that Josiah “turned to the LORD with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might.”

- Read 2 Kings 22:1-23:25. Or if you want a shorter section to read, try 2 Kings 22:1-2; 2 Kings 22:8-20; 2 Kings 23:1-4; 2 Kings 23:21-25
- Read page 112 in the *Shine On* story Bible

Prime the pump:

- **Things to notice:**
 - What do the words of 2 Kings 23:25 remind you of? Now look at 2 Kings 23:3.
 - Huldah is a woman - the only female prophet to be named in the Bible. Notice that this is not considered particularly noteworthy in the text. Wonder - may there have been others that aren’t named?

- **Background information:**
 - At this point in the story, it may be helpful to look at a table of the kings of Israel and Judah. [This one](#) maps them out well, although the “good/evil” labels on the kings may be lacking in nuance.
 - What is the book of the law that was found??? Scholarly consensus is that it was some form of what we now know as the book of Deuteronomy. It would not have been identical, since the form we have now dates to the Babylonian exile - which hasn’t happened yet in this story!
 - Scholars also are fairly unanimous in thinking that the core of this book was actually composed at this time to centralize worship in Jerusalem and to do away with paganism.
 - If you read 2 Kings 23:5-20, you’ll notice a lot of burning of human bones. What?! Doing this on an altar was permanent defilement - by burning human bones, Josiah made sure sacrifices would never happen on these altars again.
- **Conversation starters:**
 - The prophet Huldah says that Josiah will die in peace. In 2 Kings 23:29, we learn about Josiah’s death. Do you think Huldah’s prophecy was true? What does it mean to die in peace?
 - Notice all the destruction of temples and monuments and statues that are ordered in this passage. Why did all of these things need to be destroyed? Wrestle with that in connection with current events.

Microsong: “Scrolls and Consequences”

(Listen: <https://youtu.be/wKFx-lQiqTI>)

High priest finds the scroll of law. Josiah reads, and tears his clothes. Huldah prophesies judgement and desolation. Josiah cries and changes like David did before him. It doesn’t stop the consequences; but it postpones them.

Sing the big song:

(Listen: https://youtu.be/LNj7DaUE_s0)

This is the story of how it all began. God made matter, and chaos shattered.
 Eve and Adam, they tried to hide. The world got violent and God replied with a mark and flood
 and a rainbow sign, God’s love written on skin and sky,
And then God called a family to be a blessing to the earth, ohhh ohhhh
 A mother and her favorite son wrestle for the blessing, another son becomes a slave, the land is
 saved from famine.
 God’s family grows. Egypt oppresses. They groan to God and God sends Moses.
Ten strange signs say “Please release them!” By the sea God saves them. Ohhhh ohhh.
 The people complain and God rains bread. Daily food and ten new rules.
 Five sisters come and ask for land. God says “Yes, amend the law!”
*Moses says, “In your new life across the Jordan, love God with your whole heart and with all your
 being, and your strength, now listen: God is One, only God! God is One, only God!”*
 Cross over Jordan, stories and stones. Circuits and shouts and the walls come down.
 God sends judges like Deborah and the land has rest.
 Ruth’s worth more than seven sons; Redeem the lost with steadfast love.
 Corruption in the temple, then God sends Samuel.
 God gives them a prophet, they ask for a king. Does God need a temple? A wise king forgets.
 And when a bully rules the land, the nation tears apart. And loses David’s heart.....
 Through a widow’s gift and a prophet’s cry. God brings life in desperate times.
 Josiah reads a misplaced scroll. He turns to God wholeheartedly. Like David did. In his time.
God loves every one of us, it’s true, and God loves the universe.

Go do your household project!