

# The Lost Bible

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Wicked kings Manasseh and Amon corrupted the religion of Judah, putting pagan altars right in the Temple courts. They sacrificed their own children, practiced occultism, and allowed God's house to fall into a state of disrepair. When good king Josiah came to the throne, he reversed course, restoring the true worship of the Lord.

As the priests, by Josiah's orders, were cleansing and repairing the temple, the High Priest, Hilkiah, found the Book of the Law (2 Kings 22; 2 Chronicles 34). He gave it to Shaphan the scribe, who brought it to King Josiah and read it to him. Upon hearing God's laws forbidding the very things that Manasseh, Amon, and the people of Judah had been doing, Josiah was so horrified that *"he tore his clothes"* (2 Kings 22:11). He gathered the people for a public reading of the Law and pledged himself to keep it faithfully (2 Kings 23:1-3). Josiah's legacy as a great restorer is well-known among students of the Bible to this day.

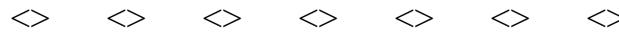
Just imagine it: God's chosen people had become so corrupt that they lost their Bible! Josiah was 26 years old, of royal descent, and had been seeking the Lord since childhood; yet he had neither heard nor read the Law of the Lord. The sacred volume was missing, and nobody seemed to know or care. No wonder they behaved so shamefully!

Have you lost your Bible? Maybe you know right where it is – but have you read it lately? Do you listen to what it says and take it to heart. If not, you are no better off than the Jews under Manasseh and Amon. They were more interested in imitating the religions of their pagan neighbors than they were in faithfulness to God and His word. Some in the church today seem more interested in copying the latest denominational fads and gimmicks

than in being true to the Scriptures. Result: God's temple (the church) is in a state of disrepair! In some cases, worship has been corrupted.

Like Josiah, we need to hear, and encourage others to hear, the word of the Lord. We need leaders like Josiah who will pledge themselves to keep God's commands and then live up to that pledge. Josiah also *"made all who were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin take a stand"* (2 Chronicles 34:32). In like manner, every Christian today ought to take a stand for the Lord! Moses challenged the children of Israel: *"Who is on the Lord's side?"* (Exodus 32:26). His question echoes to us. Do we mean it when we sing, "Stand up, stand up for Jesus"?

Unfortunately, restoration under Josiah was short-lived. History doesn't have to repeat itself. May God help us to believe and obey His word fully and carefully, and to maintain faithfulness for many generations to come.



## What Spills Out?

Christian personality is hidden deep inside us. It is unseen, like the soup carried in a tureen high over a waiter's head. No one knows what's inside – unless the waiter is bumped or trips! If soup is in the tureen, then soup is what spills out.

Just so, people don't know what is inside of us until we've been "bumped." Someone offends us, or Satan puts a stumbling block in our path. Whatever is already in our heart will spill out when we are "bumped." Will it be wholesome words and godly behavior? Jesus said, *"For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks"* (Matthew 12:34); and, *"For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies"* (Matthew 15:19).

What's in your heart? What spills out?

## No Turning Back

*For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them (II Peter 2:20-21).*

Notice that Peter said it would have been better for one not to have obeyed the gospel and become a Christian than to have become a Christian and then turn his/her back on what he/she had learned and returned to the old way of life. Yet, so many Christians do just that - they become unfaithful.

How does one become unfaithful to Christ? First, some return to the old life of sin. The temptations of the old life have a strong pull. Our human nature seems to crave that old sinful lifestyle. Satan knows that and gives us every opportunity to become involved in the old sinful ways.

Second, some simply neglect the obligations of being a Christian (Hebrews 2:1-4). They may not return to the old life of sin, but they just quit being an active Christian. They may be good moral people, but they fail to assemble with the church to worship God. Thus, they fail to remember the Lord's death by observing the Lord's Supper with the saints (Luke 22:19; Acts 20:7). They fail to praise God and encourage one another through singing (Ephesians 5:19).

This was the problem with the Hebrew brethren so the writer exhorted them, "not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near" (Hebrews 10:25).

The hardest work in evangelizing is not getting people to be baptized, but in keeping these new Christians faithful. Once you are baptized, Satan works even harder to get you back.

Don't let Satan win. "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

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