

Finding a **Lost Bible**

King Ahaz, in his wicked rebellion against God's authority, had caused the manuscripts of God's Law to Israel to be burned -- presumably all of them -- and the house or Temple of the Lord to be shut up. -- 2 Chron. 28:24

However, in God's providence, perhaps with the cooperation of some of the faithful priests, one copy of the Law was buried under a pile of stone and rubbish in one of the little rooms surrounding the court of the Temple. There it was found nearly 100 years later by the priest Hilkiah in the process of the cleaning up and restoring of the Temple services commanded by King Josiah in connection with the reforms he instituted. -- 2 Chron. 34:14-33

The long period of idolatry preceding Josiah's work of reformation had placed the testimonies of the Lord at a discount so that the King had never seen, perhaps had never heard of the divine Law up to this time. If this seems strange to us for the moment, let us remember that today we have Bibles by the millions, but in olden times books were written with a pen and, hence, were very expensive. A copy was provided for the King as well as one for the Temple, but idolatrous kings would have no use for God's Word, and the royal copy was doubtless destroyed before long.

King Josiah caused the manuscript to be read in his hearing. It detailed what blessings would come upon the nation of Israel if obedient to God. It also portrayed the penalties which would be theirs if they neglected the services of the Almighty and His laws. Deuteronomy 28 is a very clear statement of what appeared to be the penalty due Josiah's kingdom because of idolatry preceding his day. The King was astonished; he rent his clothes -- the tearing of the loose outer garment in olden times being a symbol of distress, perplexity or fear. Evidently divine judgments were due. Why they waited, he knew not. He reflected that something might be done yet to offset the evil. He sent to make inquiry to the prophetess Huldah. She gave the Lord's answer, saying that all the woes foretold in the Law would surely come to pass, but that the trouble would not come in Josiah's day because of his earnest repentance.

Nevertheless, the King did all in his power to remedy the evil and to bring back the nation into accord with the Almighty. He proclaimed a general meeting at the Temple, which he himself attended with the nobles and various representatives of the people. He caused the Book of the Law to be read in the hearing of the people and pointed out their shortcomings and what must be expected. The work of purging from idolatry was still more thoroughly carried out and the work of reformation made yet more deep.

How foolish for Ahaz to think that by his burning of the Word of God he could hinder God's plan or hide His testimony! This reminds us of some of the darkest pages of Church history known as the period of the "Holy" Roman Empire -- in reality the darkest of ages. This is when the Papacy ruled the Roman Empire with a high hand and kept the masses in ignorance, not only in temporal education, but particularly in spiritual understanding. We quote Henry Halley's "Bible Handbook" page 880:

"The Papacy and the Bible -- (Pope) Hildebrand ordered Bohemians not to read the Bible. (Pope) Innocent III forbade the people reading the Bible in their own language. (Pope) Gregory IX forbade laymen possessing the Bible, and suppressed translations. Translations among the Albigenses and Waldenses were burned, and people burned for having them. (Pope) Paul IV prohibited the possession of translations without permission of the Inquisition. The Jesuits induced (Pope) Clement XI to condemn the reading of the Bible by the laity. (Popes) Leo XII, Pius VIII, Gregory XVI,

and Pius IX all condemned Bible societies. In Catholic countries the Bible is an unknown book."

The Bible Indestructible

We thank our Heavenly Father that His Word cannot be long suppressed, and, as in Josiah's day, God raised up faithful Christians who sacrificed greatly, some even unto death, to bring us the Bible in our own language and, with the advent of the printing press, available by the millions at prices affordable by all.

"In 1888 Rev. W. C. Van Meter had printed a large number of copies of the Gospel according to John in Italian for use in Rome. A *singular coincidence*, which shows the changes which God has worked, is that the gospel was actually printed in the room formerly used as the torture chamber of the Inquisition. The printer who had undertaken the work was obliged to use rooms in an ancient edifice. A strange-looking iron ring in the ceiling arrested his attention, and on making inquiries about it he learned of its past. There within the walls that have resounded with the cries of men and women suffering for conscience' sake, he set up and printed the gospel of John." -- *Dawn of the Morning*

Higher Critics Attack the Bible

As the Bible of Josiah's day rose from the heap of rubble, so, too, the attempts of so-called "higher critics" and skeptics to "bury" the Bible with their doubts and criticisms have come to nought.

During the past 150 years, many archeological discoveries have verified the Bible as history. We offer at the conclusion of this article a booklet entitled "*Archeology proves the Bible*" which examines a number of these findings.

Time proves the critics wrong. An example of this is that the great Sir Isaac Newton, guided by the promise of the Lord through the Prophet Daniel, declared his belief in the possibility of rapid transit amongst men. Daniel declared, "many shall run to and from and knowledge shall be increased." (Daniel 12:4) Based on this, Newton declared his belief that man would someday travel at the rate of 50 miles an hour. And yet the locomotive was centuries away, and steam power was as yet undiscovered. Nearly two centuries later, an infidel, worldly-wise man Voltaire, called the Christian Newton "a poor old dotard, misled by that old Book the Bible." We all know by this time which of these great men was misled! And let not the irony of this be lost -- in 1890 A.D., Voltaire's house was being used by the Geneva Bible Society as a depot for their Bibles.

Another form of criticism intended to bury the Bible is the claim that later Church councils formed the Bible. But what is the truth? It is that the church is a result of the Bible. Internal evidence is that our Lord Jesus and his Apostles frequently quoted from the Old Testament Scriptures and claimed them as authority. Many of the miracles recorded in the Old Testament are referred to by Jesus and the Apostles as having literally transpired. For example: Isaac on the altar, Jonah and the great fish, Elijah and the fire from heaven, the great drought and subsequent rain, the fall of Satan, Moses and Aaron with the magicians of Egypt, Samson, Isaac's miraculous birth, etc. To reject these is to reject Jesus and the Apostles' authority in all the New Testament.

Jesus said, "Search the Scriptures . . . (the Old Testament of his and our day) they are they which testify of me." -- John 5:39; Luke 24:27, 44

Regarding the New Testament, the earliest copy of the New Testament known is written in the Syriac language. Its date is estimated to be about the year 100 A.D., and even at that early date it contained the same books as at present with the exception of 2 Peter, III John, Jude and

Revelation. These omitted books we know were written about the close of the first century and probably had not been widely circulated among the Christian congregations at that time. However, all the books of the Old and New Testaments, as we now have them appear in the Greek language in the Sinaitic manuscript, dated to 350 A.D. (This Sinaitic manuscript can be seen in the British Museum, as well as the Alexandrian manuscript, made in the 5th century, containing our entire Bible with a few fragments missing.) This demonstrates that the New Testament canon was complete long before approval by church councils. We offer a pamphlet entitled "*The Authorship and Credibility of the Bible*" at the end of this article for more complete examination of this interesting subject.

The Bible Lost Today

You may be amazed when we say that to the majority of people today, God's Book is lost. It is true that there are millions of Bibles throughout the world and millions being printed each year. But, alas! Though Bibles we have, to the majority of the worldly-wise, they are Bibles no longer. They are the inspired Word of God Almighty no longer! They are studied, believed and obeyed no longer. God's precious counsel and guidance are lost, and the people grope vainly in the dark for instruction and help and so, turning to human speculations and theories, they stumble along, becoming less and less content and satisfied with life. They are unprepared to cope with all the various duties, decisions and struggles that we all face.

Again we ask, How did the Bible become lost? We answer that during the Dark Ages, when the Bible was largely set aside, it was replaced with man-made doctrines and creeds that really were in conflict with God's Word and reason. As knowledge and general education increased, many started to re-think the Bible based upon the gross misunderstandings of the Dark Ages and, sensing their unreasonableness, they lost faith in these man-made teachings; but, believing that they originated in the Scriptures, they rejected both, throwing out the proverbial baby with the bath water. Now, in due time, the Word of God is found. It is our great privilege to cooperate with God in handing forth the pure Word, the true doctrines from the Bible, to bring forth the beautiful harmony of God's teachings which offer life eternal and bring happiness of heart with contentment of mind. It is this which reveals a loving, merciful Creator, whose justice and wisdom are shown to be perfect and majestic in the unfolding of His great plan of the ages.

King Josiah of old had not only a humble heart and receptive mind for hearing the words of the Lord, but he also was willing to put in practice what he heard. Let us live according to what we find in Scripture and, as the noble Bereans who "searched the Scriptures daily." (Acts 17:11) Let us not merely read the Bible, but rather let us study it, a systematic, subject by subject, meditative and thoughtful approach to understanding His plan and ways. As God promised the help of teachers (Ephesians 4:11-14; 1 Corinthians 12:28, 29), we offer the help of a Bible study series entitled "*Studies in the Scriptures.*" [EMAIL FOR DETAILS & MENTION THE 6 VOLUME SET.](#) This 6-volume set takes a refreshingly clear and unprejudiced approach to studying the Bible. It offers the following:

- 5,800 Scripture quotes.
- Demonstrates the difference between symbolic and literal verses.
- Demonstrates how the Bible interprets itself.
- Covers every important topic in the Bible.
- Brings out the pertinent Hebrew and Greek word meanings.
- Harmonizes history and science with the Bible.
- Examines time prophecies already fulfilled.
- Considers in detail a scriptural and common sense approach to daily Christian living.
- Clearly brings to light the beautiful and precious promises.
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The summary effect of such careful Bible study is a stronger faith, firmer convictions, greater peace of heart, and a more Christ-like life lived in harmony with our God.

Courtesy of The Oakland County Bible Students