

Finding the book of the law (Quality: Average)

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[0 : 00] We find our text in the chapter that we read, the second book of Chronicles, chapter 34, verse 15.

! And we have these words, And Ilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord.

And Ilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan. When a soul is wrought upon by the Spirit of God, he is born again by the Holy Spirit of Almighty God.

And we must ever recognize that there's no true spiritual experience in any soul unless he's subject to the work of the Spirit of God.

For Christ himself declared, Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

[1 : 15] It is impossible for any person to understand the eternal truths of the gospel unless they are born from above.

There is the origin of every spiritual experience. So when a person is wrought upon by the Holy Spirit, when he is born again, he enters into a new world.

All things are passed away. Behold, all things become new. So having been born again and entered into this spiritual experience, he views everything in this life in a new way.

He looks at life. He looks at eternity. He looks at the atoning work of Christ in a new way altogether. Truly, it is definitely true that all things are passed away.

And behold, all things become new. So after the soul being wrought upon by the Spirit of God, having been subject to the work of the Holy Ghost, he views two particular things in this life.

[2 : 50] He looks at his responsibility to the Church of God. Now every soul is quickened by the Spirit, whether they realize it or not.

They have responsibility to the chapel to which they belong. Let us get that truth firmly fixed in our minds, that if you are born again, if you are subject to the work of regeneration, you have a responsibility to the Church that you belong to.

We often say, I will work like any slave for love of God's dear Son. not only has he a responsibility to the Church of God, but he has a responsibility to the nation to which he belongs.

There is the Church and there is the nation. And truly, each of us have a responsibility to the nation. And the Scriptures set forth that solemn responsibility in the Scriptures concerning how we behave ourselves as a citizen in this country of ours and also as a child of God in the Church.

Notice what Peter says about our citizenship when he declares these words concerning our conduct.

[4 : 31] He says, Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the King as supreme, or unto governors as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of them that do well.

For so is the will of God that with well-doing he may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

So there is our responsibility set forth in the Word of God as a citizen. So having responsibility to the Church, having responsibility to the nation, we must remember that both of them are different entities.

one looks after our temporal welfare, our citizenship, and the Church looks after our spiritual welfare.

But though both of them have different functions, both are intertwined one with the other, one as an effect upon the other.

[5 : 43] So where you have a sinful nation in which the majority of the citizens are ungodly men who fulfill the desires of their wicked dispositions, where you have a sinful nation, you have also a weak church.

A sinful nation you notice historically, you notice in the Word of God, a sinful nation is allied with a weak testimony from the Church of God.

But where you have a flourishing church, where the numbers are multiplied, where the power of God is exercised through the ministry of the Word, where many are called from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, where there's a transformation in that the Word goes forth in the power of the Holy Ghost.

The effect of that flourishing church as an effect upon the nation which we are in at the present time.

History repeats that truth and it is confirmed by the Holy Scriptures. the question arises, we have a strong church, we have a nation that is affected by the church and the wickedness of those people are extreme.

[7 : 18] What do we see today? What do we see today? We have a weak church at the present time.

We have a church that outwardly speaking is in decay and its testimony is weak and feeble.

So much so that the professing church today is overlooked by the men of this world. They pour scorn upon it. They blaspheme the name of Christ.

They ridicule the Word of God and everything that's wicked and vile and sinful and depraved is exhibited because the church of God is weak.

Now friends, you profess to be a member of the church of God. You profess to be regenerated by the blood of Christ. So I want us to look into this testimony concerning the wickedness of our land in which we live.

[8 : 26] Have we ever lived in such a deplorable condition at the present time when evil men grow worse and worse and worse?

We read our daily newspapers and what do we read? There's murder, there's adultery, there's pornication of every description and we wonder which way to turn.

Everything seems to be full of the vileness of sin which will ever sin prevail. Ever remember that there's a punishment with that sin.

So much so we read that the prisons in this country are overflowing. They're building new prisons because the numbers that should be in prison there's no accommodation for them.

Think of the consequences. The prisons are poor. The asylums are overflowing. You would be amazed if this was made public whilst it's really rampant throughout the land.

[9 : 35] The asylums are poor. Everywhere we see the effects of sin on godliness and wickedness. What we are concerned about as Christians is this.

Why are we in such a state as a professing Christian church? It should be the anxiety the desire from the depths of our hearts to be concerned about the state of the church.

We have a few here in this chapel which we believe in a sovereign God. We believe in a God that's eternal and does whatsoever he wills in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth.

So we ask ourselves and this is vital. We ask ourselves what is the remedy? We ask ourselves what is the consequences of our present position.

For notice though God has revealed the greatness and majesty of his divine power in the creation of the world, we see testified before us in the first chapter of Romans the repetition of what happened when the apostle Paul was living.

[11 : 02] and we truly have a solemn consequence of what is happening in the world. Notice what the holy scriptures declares concerning the ungodly.

Though the invisible things from the creation of the world are clearly seen, testifying to God's eternal power and Godhead, hear what the scriptures say about the ungodliness of men, professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like the corruptible man, the birds and the four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

Wherefore, now notice the judgments of Almighty God upon a sinful nation, upon a sinful world, he says, were full of God also gave them up.

God, why is there so much wickedness and vileness and immorality and adultery and fornication of every description? Here's the point which the scriptures set forth.

God also gave them up to uncleanness through the loss of their own hearts to dishonor their own bodies between themselves, who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the creator who is blessed forevermore.

[12 : 36] God. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind to do those things which are not convenient.

So we live in a day, according to the scriptures, in which God gives mankind up to a reprobate mind.

Look at the vileness and wickedness and immorality that's going on today. look at in which society fights each other for supremacy in the social world.

God has given this nation up because of its wickedness, immorality, and vileness, and it is only preserved, let me emphasize this point, that this nation is only preserved by the elect of God, by the church of God, by those whom God has chosen to salvation.

When he hears their feeble petitions, listens to their supplications, and causes grace to be made known. But Christ said concerning the church, ye are the light of the world.

[13 : 57] A city that is set upon a hill cannot be hid. and though those in authority in the religious world deny the fundamental doctrines of the scriptures, and instead of being Christians, they are atheists, atheists, because they deny the fundamental doctrines of holy scripture, whoever plausible they might be in their manner, the scriptures declare that whosoever believeth, whosoever believeth not that Jesus is the Christ, is not of God.

So looking at these sad things, the state of the church and the state of the nation, one of the most solemn things connected with the church is the withdrawing of the Holy Ghost in the ministry of the world.

church, there are faithful ministers in our denomination who seek to set forth the doctrines of grace according to that ability which God had given them.

And when the word of God goes forth, it should always have an effect upon the hearts of the hearers. The word should go forth, not in word only, but in the power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost.

And this is what you are called to do as individuals, to pray for the minister, to pray earnestly, to pray effectually, that when he preaches the gospel of Christ, his word should go forth in the power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost.

- [15 : 45] Though he may speak in weakness and fear and in much trembling, as he sees the solemn realities of an eternal world, as he sees the necessity of preaching Christ and him crucified, though he preaches in weakness and fear, nevertheless the word goes forth, the elect are called, the power of God is exercised.

So whatever the state of the nation might be, whatever the state of the church may be, we must always out respect to the sovereignty and the majesty of an eternal God.

For the faith of God's people, even in the midst of great dissolution, even in the midst of great impiety and wickedness, the church of God believes, our God is in the heavens, he hath done whatsoever he hath purposed.

And God, whether the church is prosperous, whether the church is in adversity, almighty God is fulfilling his sovereign eternal purposes, the elect are being called, the glory of God is being displayed, not in the manner in which we desire, not in the effect that we desire, nevertheless God's ways are not our ways, his thoughts are not our thoughts.

So when we realize the state of the nation, the state of the church, the sovereignty of God, let us have respect to the words of our text this evening.

- [17 : 30] So this is our consolation. Notice what our text says, And Ilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord, and Ilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan.

Now it's these words I want to impress upon you this afternoon, where he says, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord.

So we shall give a brief summary of the circumstances in which this book was found. Josiah was a young man. He was eight years old when he began to reign.

He reigned thirty-one years. And the scriptures say, He did that which is right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David, his father, and he climbed neither to the right hand nor to the left.

So when he was twenty years of age, he designed as a godly man to bring the nation under the authority of God.

- [18 : 45] So he sent out his people, and they burnt and destroyed all the altars of Balaam in his presence. The images were destroyed, the carved images and molten images he break in pieces and made dust of them.

dead. So, and then he went north and south of the land, and all the idols were destroyed. He comes back to the city of Jerusalem after accomplishing the destruction of the idols, and then they began to repair the house of the Lord.

Now, strange to say, for two hundred and eighteen years, Jerusalem was in desolation. Everything around them for two hundred and eighteen years had been neglected because of the apostasy of the nation and the prevalence of idolatry throughout the land.

So, Josiah calls the priests, Elkia the high priest, and Shaph and the scribe, and they have a conference and design to clean up the house of the Lord.

Now, as they were cleaning the house of the Lord, they find a copy of the Holy Scriptures. This was truly a great find in the church because there had been little or no reading of the Holy Scriptures for over two centuries.

- [20 : 25] Everything had been neglected, so they gathered a few of the friends together and they cleaned up the temple. And they did what they possibly could, and they found the book.

Now, I want us to notice what happened. For 218 years, the Holy Scriptures had been neglected. the Word of God had been overlooked.

It is said that the high priests should have read the Holy Scriptures every morning to the people. the Word of God should have been meditated upon and read continually.

But they saw the book, and this book transformed the whole of their lives. It went through the history of the nation and caused them to realize where they were.

They found the book. But notice, they found a book in the place where it should never be lost. It was in the house of God that they found the book.

[21 : 45] And for 218 years it lay dormant. You will remember that God said the copy of the Word of God should have been put in the ark. Some priests, it is said, took the book out of the ark and put it in the temple and hid it under some stones because the ungodly men round about had come to destroy the temple.

So to make sure that every copy of the Word of God was not destroyed, he hid the book under the stone. There it lay dormant.

The amazing part about it is this, that for 218 years the church was unconscious that they lost the boot. They lived their lives apart from the elect of God in the church.

They lived their lives, the great majority of the nation lived their lives without the boot and they lost the boot in the church of God. Is there a lesson here for us?

I ask you this question. what place has the reading of the Holy Scriptures in your life?

[23 : 04] Does your life conform to the testimony of the Holy Scriptures that you meditate upon them day and night? Have you lost the boot?

Do you never read the Scriptures? That boot which shows us the way to eternal life? That boot which shows the glories of the person of our Lord Jesus Christ?

That boot which shows the impeccability of Christ person, perfect God, perfect man? And you mean to tell me did you never read the boot?

The cause of the spiritual declension at this time was because the church had lost the boot and the cause of our spiritual declension as a denomination and as a nation is because we've lost the boot.

Let's be honest with ourselves. Do you ever read the Scriptures? Do you ever meditate upon the Word of God? Do you ever understand or seek in prayer to cry unto God to those words that you may open the boot?

[24 : 19] book? Notice how it was restored. A few godly men in that temple found the boot. Wherever they found the boot it had a radical effect upon their lives.

They gathered a few workmen together. And these workmen were so conscientious that they never issued a balance sheet how the money was spent.

It tells us. Never issued a it was so honest, so thorough in the work which they did for the house of God. But they never had any balance sheets.

They were trusted perfectly because they found the boot. Now is there not an illustration in our own experience as a denomination?

There are in most of our chapels just a few men and women. And so conscientious are they that they attend every meeting that there is.

[25 : 24] They listen to the word of God intelligently and earnestly. And their desire, here as they are, their earnest desire is to prosper the church of God.

And no doubt they seek God's pace in prayer that it would revive his church and make his power known. Now these men have done that.

They spend every possible thing that they had, their time, their labor, and their money. They were earnest, they were conscientious, and they desired the prosperity of the church.

They found the boot. And because they found the boot, they had a revelation given to them concerning the necessity of a revival of true religion.

They'd found the boot. But when we read the scriptures, as I hope many of us do, how do we read it? You can read the letter of scripture from A to Z.

[26 : 30] And unless your mind is enlightened by the spirit of God, you will never, never, understand the scriptures. Never.

The first thing you must do is to understand that without a new nature, without the gift of the Holy Spirit of God, you must understand the book.

You remember at the time of Jesus Christ, there were the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Now if any class of person revered the Old Testament scriptures, it was the scribes and the Pharisees.

They did every possible thing to keep the Holy Scriptures pure and holy. If you know anything about the original language of the Old Testament, you will notice how difficult it was for the translators to translate the Old Testament language.

There's so many little dots above each letter, and if they missed one dot, one joss, a tittle, it would alter the whole trend of the scriptures.

[27 : 51] But the Jews, the scribes and Pharisees had such reverence for the Old Testament scriptures that they were careful how the scriptures were translated.

When they left the temple and walked through the streets of Jerusalem, they put a band around their foreheads. And in those days, the scriptures were not bound like it is today.

It was a scroll. So they got a scroll of the Old Testament, and they pinned it to the band in front of their face. There they walked around the streets of Jerusalem with a band around their forehead, the scroll of the scriptures in front of them, and they lift the scroll off and read it as they went through the streets of Jerusalem.

They pictured a true knowledge of the letter of holy scripture. And yet, when the Lord Jesus Christ spoke to them, he told them that they didn't understand the word they read, didn't understand.

Oh, they knew the letter of scripture. They knew, quote, passages and passages of scripture by memory, but they didn't understand anything concerning the work of Christ or the salvation of their souls.

[29 : 20] If you read the second chapter, the second Corinthians, the third chapter, you'll find a verse like this, concerning the scribes and Pharisees, concerning the Jews.

Their eyes were blinded and taken away in the reading of the Old Testament scriptures. They read the letter of scripture, but their eyes were blinded.

They'd opened a book but didn't understand. That is why Christ said to them these solemn words, and notice how the two things are allied together.

He said, you do earth, you know not the scriptures, nor the power of God. Two things, two things.

They knew not the scriptures, and yet they read it every day. The word says they read it every day. and yet they didn't understand the way of salvation.

[30 : 31] You do earth. You know not the scriptures, nor the power of God. Now, innate in the scriptures is the power of almighty God revealed.

The question about it. for the word says these words, and it shows the authority and the power of the word of God.

Look at Hebrews chapter 4. The word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

If you read the holy scriptures right, you will have that experience, that experience. Innate in the word of God is God's sovereign power in applying the holy scriptures to the hearts of his church.

Let me repeat those words again. I trust that each one of you knows something of this power behind the scriptures. the word of God is the answer to all the problems of our nation and the answer to all the problems of the church.

[32 : 01] The word of God is quick, powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow.

is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. You ever had that experience when you've read the holy scriptures?

For we have that divine exhortation. Let the word of God spoken to the church, to those that are quickened, let the word of God dwell in your hearts, richly in all wisdom.

That's the way the word should lay upon our hearts. Let the word of God dwell in our hearts, richly in all wisdom.

Because that wonderful chapter in the Old Testament, the 119th Psalm, which says for the power and authority of the word, every part of that 176 verses in the 119th Psalm, sets forth the power and authority of the word of God in the heart of a believer.

[33 : 27] Three times the psalmist cries out, Thy word hath quickened me. Yet a personal experience of the quickening power of the Holy Ghost through the priest's words.

So when the psalmist cries out, Will thou not revive us again that thy people may rejoice in thee? He points us to the Holy Scriptures.

What he says again in the 119th Psalm, Thy word hath quickened me. So what do these people find when they found the book?

Now whatever the book has found in a right way, it never returns to God without an effect.

My word shall not return unto me void, but shall accomplish that which I please, and prosper unto the thing where to I sent it.

[34 : 41] Now when we preach the word and it has no effect, the church is under the judgments of God, church is under the judgments of God, for whatever the word is applied by the Spirit of God, it makes people do things.

that's how you know the word's going forth. The word has a transforming effect upon the hearts of those that meditate upon the Scripture.

So what do we find concerning these people? They found the book. They found the book. Now three things happened to these people when they found the book.

The first thing that the king Josiah did was this, to call the people together to repent. Now there's the first power that's manifested when a person truly receives the word of God.

He repents of his sins. And without repentance there's no forgiveness. Repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out.

[36 : 02] That was the exhortation of the apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost. Repent. Now we know that no ungodly men can repent of themselves.

So if the call is to come to repentance, and if the manifestation of the Holy Spirit caused a man to repent, it's the quickening of the word, it's the power of God being exercised.

So there's a calling to repent. Repentance means being sorry for your sins, having a spirit of contrition and compassion.

Have you ever manifested that condition repentance? Have you ever been sorry for your sins? Because without repentance, there's no conversion.

Without repentance, there's no manifestation of divine power. That's the first thing he did. He repents of his sins.

[37 : 10] God's God's And the second thing he did was this, that they manifested a covenant with God.

This is what they did. There was a call of the church or of the people in the temple to come. And they made a covenant with Almighty God. That they would obey God's holy word.

That they would have respect to the commandments of God. That they would repent of their sins and turn unto God. How essential that this thing should be.

I have made, says Christ, a covenant with my people. And when the Lord's people are constrained to come together to confess their sins, to repent of the way in which they have trodden under the Son of God, the Lord speaks to their souls.

And the revelation of divine truth comes with power to their souls. Next thing they did was this. There was a recognition of the authority of God's word in their lives.

[38 : 32] And three times we read at the end of this chapter he says these words concerning the word of God. And the king went up into the house of the Lord, and all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people, great and small.

And he read in the ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was made in the house of the Lord. Because they made a covenant.

God had threatened them. You notice they read the scriptures. And they read the curses that were laid down in the book of Deuteronomy.

Curses. What if you read the book of Deuteronomy as the Jews added in their original language? They read the curses of the disobedient and the blessings of the obedient.

They realized that obedience was better than sacrifice, and to hearken on the fatter grounds. When they read God's word in the book of Deuteronomy, when they read the curses of the law to the disobedient, they trembled.

[39 : 55] Trembled. And if the word of God is to do anything in our midst, we shall tremble at the word of God.

When we read the spiritual implications which are contained therein. But notice what the scriptures declare. As we said this morning, that every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

Can I say it repeatedly and repeatedly? It's true, solemnly true. It's in the next world. If your soul is not covered by the precious blood of Christ, those words will be fulfilled in your experience.

are you saved? Have you been made regenerate by the God in your soul? Have you been born again by the Spirit of God?

So they came back. They found the book of the law in the house of the Lord, where it should have been read continually, where it should have been meditated upon day after day.

[41 : 18] And it may be in our churches that adventure in this church the word of God has been lost.

Lost. And the most solemn thing in our lives is this, that we live a life, live a life, without the scripture of truth, without a revelation to our souls of what God has decreed in this world.

For in the midst of the ungodliness that abounds, the united testimony of the church should ever be conspicuous to the divine authority of the Holy Scripture.

For there's the foundation of all revival, all blessing, and all contentment. Why did the history of the Reformation succeed?

Godly men, learned men they were, Luther, Calvin, Beeser, Busser, and all the rest. They had one supreme object in their ministry.

[42 : 31] That was that the common people might read the Holy Scriptures. And that caused the Reformation. That caused a revival of true Protestantism throughout the land.

and if there's anything to revive the church in our present day, it's the responsibility of the individual. But if you are a godly soul, quickened by the spirit, the evidences of your life should be made evident.

Now, you accumulate that personal experience into hundreds of thousands of God's people. Just consider one godly man or woman.

And then you multiply a say by twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty thousand. You see the cumulative effect that it will have upon the nation in which we live.

So we should obey the Scriptures. Godliness must be because we desire to conform ourselves to the Holy Scriptures. But the communal effect of that divine truth throughout the church obeys the word.

[43 : 54] Let your light so shine before men. They see in your good works shall glorify your Father which is in heaven.

I have found the book of the Lord in the house of the Lord. Would it not be nice of each one of us commence to read the Holy Scriptures?

For through thy word, says the psalmist, I get understanding. Therefore, notice what he says, therefore, I hate every false way.

There's the effect of true governance. May the Lord bring us back to the Scripture of truth and cause his name to be glorified. For his name's sake.

Amen. Amen. Amen.