

THE WORDS OF THIS BOOK

2 KINGS 22:13 • TV149A

A television broadcast sermon delivered
SUNDAY, JULY 26TH, 1981

By
HENRY T. MAHAN

Transcribed, edited and published
MARCH 2ND, 2014

HENRY T. MAHAN TAPE LIBRARY
Zebulon Baptist Church
6088 Zebulon Highway
Pikeville, KY 41501

2 Kings 22:13

“Go ye, enquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us.”

We are turning today to the **Book of 2 Kings chapter 22:13**. I will be speaking to you in a few moments on the subject: **“THE WORDS OF THIS BOOK.”**

Listen to the Scripture in **2 Kings 22:13**: *“Go ye; inquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this Book that has been found: for great is the wrath of the Lord God that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this Book, to do all that is written concerning us.”*

Now, King Josiah said to the priest: *“You go and inquire of the Lord and see if there is any mercy for us because we have not hearkened to the words of this book and our fathers have not taught us the words of this book.”*

My friends, if I understand today's religion at all, and this is what I am trying to do, is preach messages that are applicable to this day. I'm not talking about what happened only 2,000 years ago or even 1,000 years ago, but I am talking about right now.

If I understand today's religion I would say that it is characterized by five things:

First of all: We are living in a day of doubt!

Everything in Scripture is under attack, not only by the theologians, but by the pastors, the preachers, teachers, church officers and people.

Creation is under attack, the inspiration of the Scripture, the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's immutable sovereignty, authority in the home, in the church, in the school, and in the office. Morality, marriage, decency, the home; everything is under attack. It's popular today to question the Bible.

We are substituting the thoughts of men for the Word of God. It's like Pharaoh of old who asked Moses: "*Who is the Lord that I should obey his word? Who is the Lord that I should listen to and obey his word?*" This is the day of doubt.

Secondly: This is a day of church failure, our Lord and Master said: "*My house shall be called a house of Prayer.*"

Now, the church today, the average church, is anything but a house of prayer and preaching; you know that's true and I know it's true.

Today's church is anything but a house of prayer. It's a school, it's a cafeteria, it's a gymnasium, it's a social club and it's an entertainment center. "*The church has left her first love.*"

What is the churches first love? It is Christ and the Gospel. Our Lord said in the **Book of Revelation**: "*I have something against you; you have left your first love.*"

The mission of the church is to bring men to know God, not to bring men to know one another. The mission of the church today is to feed men the Word of God, not feed them in socials and suppers and pot-luck dinners. The mission of the church is to preach the Gospel, not to entertain sinners on their road to hell. You know it's true and I know it's true.

The church today has music but no message. The church today has games but no Gospel. The church today has entertainment but no edification. The church today has competition but no comfort for sinners.

This is the day of total, complete, church failure. If I understand today's religion, I say that this is the day of doubt when everything in the Book of God is being questioned. It's the day of church failure.

Thirdly: This is the day of spectator religion!

What do I mean by that? I mean this, most church members do very little studying; they do less praying and practically no worshipping. The average church member is a spectator watching from the pew while professional singers and professional promoters and professional preachers entertain them.

Today we sit in our pews and pay somebody to preach for us, to study for us, to pray for us, and to somehow get us to heaven when we die.

Yes, this is the day, not of participation in prayer, in worship, and study. It is not the day when men *“study to show themselves approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”* This is the day of spectator religion.

The great minister, Charles Spurgeon, who preached so many years in London, England, to so many people, said: “The power of his ministry was the prayers of his people.”

As he preached, hundreds of people prayed for him. “The power of my ministry, is the prayers of our church,” he said.

Fourthly: This is the day, if I understand today’s religion, of divine desertion!

Amos wrote in **chapter 8:11**: *“Behold; the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the word of the Lord: and they shall wander from sea to sea and from the north and even to the east and they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord and they shall not find it.”*

My friend; with all of our temples and our cathedrals, with all of our church buildings and educational buildings, with all of our sects and cults and denominations, men and women are constantly writing me and asking this question: “where can I go to hear the Word of the Lord preached, where can I go?”

“Preacher; do you know any place in my area where I can go and hear the Word of God preached? Oh, I can go to be entertained and I can go and listen to a preacher, but where can I go and hear the Gospel of the glory of God?” Yes, I’m afraid that we are in the day of divine desertion.

Fifthly: I believe that this is the fifth thing that characterizes today’s religion, perhaps, I believe it’s so; we are in the last days!

Listen to what Paul said; now he says this over and over again in **1 Timothy and 2 Timothy**; here is a summary of what he declares in three or four places:

In 2 Timothy 4:2-4, he says to Timothy: *“Preach the word. Be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine: for the time will come, the time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine but after their own lust they will heap unto themselves teachers, having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned to fables.”* How desperate we are, how desperately we are in need of a return to the Word of God.

Now, this is what our text is all about. In the book of **2 Kings chapter 22**, we have the story of a young king who came to power. His name was King Josiah. Now, before Josiah came to power the nation of Israel had just departed from the Lord.

They had gone so far away from God. The temple worship was no longer. The temple had grown up with weeds. Some of the structure had fallen down and the sacrifices were no longer offered.

But, when Josiah came to power, he had been king for a few years. He sent word to Hilkiah the priest and Shaphan the scribe. He sent word to the carpenters and to the builders and to the masons to clean out and repair the temple of the Lord.

He sent word to all of these people. They raised the money and the king sent word to all that were in authority and to all that were supposed to be doing these particular duties. He said: *“I want worship restored in the house of the Lord.”*

When they began to go to work on the temple, they brought in the carpenters, the builders, and the masons. They began to go to work in the house of the Lord. They began to clean it out, carry out the rubble and all of the filth and sweep out the dust and the dirt and erect the place back like it was.

While they were rebuilding the house of God they found a book. Hilkiah the priest found a book, a book he had never read. He was a priest. He was going about the duties of religion but he had not read this particular book. This Book was the writings of Moses, the first five books of the Bible.

Hilkiah the priest took this book to Shaphan the scribe. The scribe read it and he took it to the king. The king said: *“What have you?”* He said: *“While we were cleaning out the temple, the house of God, we found this book.”*

The king said: *“Read it to me.”* The Scripture said: *“It came to pass that when the king heard the words of this book, the word of God, the first time that this young man had ever heard the word of God, that he rent his clothes.”*

He displayed great repentance and great anguish and great anxiety and concern. This is what he said: *“Go, go and inquire of the Lord for me and for the people and for all of Judah, concerning the words of this book, for great is the wrath of the Lord against us: for our fathers have not hearkened to the words of this Book.”*

Cannot that be said in this day of doubt, this day of church failure, this day of spectator religion, this day of divine desertion and perhaps in these last days? *“Our fathers have not hearkened to the words of this book.”*

And, when you hear it read, when you hear it read, when you hear the words of this book, do you not feel like renting your clothes? Do you not feel like bowing down in the dust before God, full of anxiety and concern, yea, and even to despair?

“The wrath of God is kindled against us. We have departed from the word of God.” We have departed to traditions, customs, ceremonies, ritualism, Holy Days, and all of these things, man-made religion. *“We have departed from the Word of God.”*

I experienced this about 30 years ago. I faced this same issue 30 years ago. I was raised in today’s fundamentalism, brought up in today’s fundamentalism. I was steeped in religious programs and religious entertainment and I was zealous for the traditions of men who did not know God.

One day I discovered the Word of God. I discovered the Bible. I discovered some powerful questions that were answered for me and for those who were listening to me preach.

This is what happened; this is what happened when Hilkiah the priest found the Word of God. He took it to the king and read it to him and the king said: *“Great is the wrath of God against us for we have departed from the words of this book: and our fathers have departed from the words of this Book and our fathers have not taught us according to the words of this book.”*

I discovered the answer to some important questions. I want to go over about four or five of these questions with you today. Listen to me and let me ask you four or five questions and answer them from the Word of God.

I believe that if you will listen, if you will listen with an open heart, and ask God to give you an understanding heart, you will discover that from the Word of God; these are the answers to those questions:

First of all: Who is the Lord God?

Moses came to the burning bush; you know the story. God was going to send Moses down into Egypt to deliver Israel from captivity and Moses came up the side of the mountain and he discovered there a bush that was burning but was not consumed.

He walked closer to investigate this strange and miraculous sight and as he walked closer, God spoke and said: *“Moses; put off your shoes; you are on holy ground.”* Moses put off his shoes and came near to the bush and God spoke to him and told him how he would go down into Egypt and deliver the people from slavery.

Moses asked this question; he said: *“Lord, when I go to the people of Israel to deliver them from the bondage of Egypt, they are going to ask me, who is the Lord God that sent you?”*

“I’m going to say that the Lord sent me and they are going to say: ‘what’s his name; who is the Lord God? What God do you represent Moses? What God do you preach Moses? What God sent you to us Moses?’”

That’s a pretty good question isn’t it? Who is this God that you are preaching, preacher? Who is this God that you represent? Who is this God that you are telling us about? Who is this God? Who is the Lord God? Well, the Lord answered and said this to Moses: *“you tell them I AM that I Am.”*

I say this to you: they asked David that. The heathen had all of their idols and their statues and they said: *“David; here is our god; here are our gods, now where is your God?”*

David replied: *“Our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he pleased: whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven and in the earth and in the seas, and all deep places.”* He is the omnipotent, omniscient, almighty, eternal God.

First: He’s the Lord God of creation! *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”*

Second: He’s the Lord God of holiness! Isaiah said: *“In the year that king Uzziah died; I saw the Lord high and lifted up and his train filled the temple and the cherubim’s and seraphim’s all cried together: holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts.”*

Third: He is the Lord God of sovereignty!
He does as He will, when He will, with whom He will. *“He worketh all things after the council of his own will.”* Nebuchadnezzar said: *“He ruleth in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth and giveth it to whomsoever he will. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning.”*

Fourth: He’s the Lord God of judgment!

Fifth: He’s the Lord God of justice!

Sixth: He’s the Lord God of righteousness!

Seventh: He’s the Lord God of truth!

Eighth: But thank God; he’s the Lord God of mercy! He said: *“I will be merciful. The Lord delights to show mercy. He’s plenteous in mercy.”*

Ninth: He’s the Lord God of love! God is love!

He’s the Lord God of omniscience, omnipresent: *“Bow down O ye heavens; bow down O ye earth and worship the Lord our God.”*

Who is God? He is the Lord God of glory: *“Let all the earth keep silence before him.”* How awesome, how immutable, infinite, and eternal, is the Lord our God.

Secondly: Here is another question that I faced when I discovered this Book, not only who is the Lord God but I will also tell you: when you discover who is the Lord God, this is the next question that will come to you, this is: what is man, or what is sin?

Now; if you ask for a definition of sin, you will get as many different answers as there are people; that’s right! You can go down the street and ask all of the people you meet: “what is sin, what is sin, what is sin?” You will get as many answers as people that you talk to.

Most of those answers, I guarantee you, most of those answers will deal with some outward habit or some outward practice; rarely will you hear anyone clearly, truthfully, scripturally, define sin.

Here is what we are doing: We are talking about the words of this Book. I am not saying that we don't have religion, religion we have. I'm not saying that we don't have ceremonies and we don't have morality; those things we have.

But, Josiah said: *"We have sinned in that we haven't hearkened to the words of this Book."* Who is the Lord God? What is sin; what is sin?

Most everybody that you encounter and ask them for a definition of sin, they will immediately talk to you about outward habits and outward deeds and outward practices. There are very, very, few, practically none, will talk to you about the sins of the heart, the sin of the imagination, and the sin of the thoughts.

The Pharisees thought a great sin was to eat without washing one's hands. They thought that was a great sin.

I read one time about an old, 19th Century Scotch Presbyterian preacher who heard that a church down the street had installed an organ to accompany their singing.

Now, back in those days, the old scotch Presbyterians in Scotland did not use any kind of musical instrument; they thought it was wrong. I want you to listen how this preacher reacted when he heard that a church down the road had installed an organ.

This is what he exclaimed from his pulpit, strongly, forcefully: He said: "Will nothing stem this avalanche of will-worship and gross sin that plagues our day?" This was just like the Pharisees of old; they thought to eat without washing your hands was a great sin.

This poor man thought to sing a hymn accompanied by an organ or a piano was a gross sin. Our Lord Jesus Christ said to these Pharisees: *"It's not what you put into your mouth that defiles you; it's what comes out of your heart; it's what comes out of your heart: for out of the heart proceeds murders, evil thoughts, adulteries, blasphemies, envy, jealousy; these are the things that defile, not to eat with unwashed hands."*

Take the people on the street and ask them what is sin and they will say, "drinking is sin, cursing is sin, smoking is sin, chewing is sin, playing cards is sin, dancing is sin, going to the movies is sin and ballgames are sin."

I read one church constitution that said if you played pool you were excluded from the church; most of the time it depends where you are located in the world or in our nation; we call it "geographical sanctification."

These things are the results or products of sin. A man is not a sinner because he steals; he steals because he is a sinner. Sin starts out in the heart.

If you want to understand sin, what is sin; we are talking about the drunkenness is the result of sin and is evil in the sight of God; *“drunkards shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.”*

But, that’s not what makes a man a sinner. Do you understand sin?

First: You understand sin by its origin *“as in Adam all die. By one man’s disobedience we were made sinners”*

You see, sin has to do with the will. Sin has to do with the heart. Sin has to do with the attitude of an individual toward God and toward God’s law.

Sin is understood by its origin; go back to when it started and see where it took place. It took place in the will. It took place in the heart. It took place in the attitude of Adam toward God.

Sin is understood by its nature; it’s a heart trouble, it’s a heart disease. Sin is not just a hand disease. You can cut my hands off and be done with it. Sin is not just a mouth disease; you could make it that I couldn’t talk but that would not conquer sin.

Sin is not just an eye disease, put out my eyes I would be done with that or put me in a wheelchair and render me a vegetable and I would be done with sin. Oh no! Sin is in the heart; it’s a nature. *“Out of the heart proceeds evil thoughts:*

“My son; give me thy heart,” God says. *“Keep thy heart; out of it are the issues of life.”* Do you see what I am saying? Sin is understood by its affect. What we do is because of what we are. Now, that’s our problem.

David said: *“I was born in sin. I was shapen in iniquity. I was brought forth speaking lies.”* You see, my friend; this is why Christ said *“a man must be born again.”*

The Pharisees had cleansed the outside of the cup; Christ said: *“You are like whited sepulchers; on the outside you appear beautiful to men but on the inside you are full of dead men’s bones. Cleanse first, thou hypocrite; cleanse first that which is within and then the outside will be taken care of.”*

What we are doing today is going up and down the country preaching “this is wrong and that is wrong and the other is wrong” and we are leaving men’s hearts alone and they are rotting inside while they are appearing on the outside to be clean, wholesome, moral, and beautiful.

They live with themselves and with their hearts and they know what they are. God doesn’t look on the outward countenance; *“God looks on the heart.”* That’s why He said: *“you’ve got to be born again;”* you need a new nature.

I’ll tell you; if God does something in the heart, it will change the outward life. It will change the conduct and the walk and the speech and all of these other things.

Thirdly: What is the Gospel?

Have you ever discovered the Gospel? Paul said: *“I’m not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. I am ready to preach unto you the gospel.”*

My friend; there is but one Gospel and he said: *“if any man preach any other gospel; let him be accursed.”* This Gospel is the Gospel of God.

It’s not the Gospel of a church or the Gospel of a denomination; it’s the Gospel of God. He planned it, He purposed it, He executed it; it originated with God. Paul said: *“I’m separated to the gospel of God.”*

Fourthly: It’s the Gospel of the Old Testament! It’s no new Gospel. It didn’t originate in Bethlehem. It didn’t originate on the Sea of Galilee. It didn’t even originate at the cross. The Gospel is the ancient Gospel *“which he promised afore by his holy prophets and the holy scriptures.”*

Christ said, *“Abraham, saw my day and was glad. Moses wrote of me.” “Christ was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”*

Every person, every believer in the Old Testament was redeemed by looking for the coming Redeemer. Everyone today is redeemed by looking back to the Redeemer who has come.

It’s the Gospel of the Old Testament. *“It’s the gospel concerning his Son who was made of the seed of David but declared to be the Son of God.”* He was born of a woman but He was sent by God. He is the God-man; Jesus Christ is the God-man.

It’s the Gospel of representation; *“in Adam we died and in Christ we are made alive. As we borne the image of the earthy (the first Adam) we will bear the image of the heavenly, (the second Adam).*

“As by one man, sin entered into the world and death by sin, so death passed upon all men.” By the righteousness of Christ we were made holy and pure in God’s sight, that is representation.

It’s the Gospel of substitution: *“He was made sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. The just died for the unjust that he might bring us to God.”*

It’s the Gospel of complete redemption: *“This is eternal life; this is eternal life that they might know thee the true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. God has given us eternal life and that life is in his Son.”*

Let me give you this **fifth** question: What is salvation?

Salvation is not just giving mental assent to some Bible facts. Salvation is not just a moral reformation only. Salvation is not just joining the church and going through the motions of religious activities.

THE WORDS OF THIS BOOK

2 KINGS 22:19 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Salvation is not just fighting for doctrinal orthodoxy; salvation is a miracle of God's grace. It is regeneration; it is an awakening from the tomb. *"It is being brought from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God's dear son."*

It's to be born of God. It's to become by the grace of God a new creature in Christ Jesus. It is to be chosen by the Father, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and redeemed by the Son.

It is to be brought to rest in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and to see in Him the glory of God Almighty; to see in Him the glory of God's wisdom, of God's justice, and of God's righteousness.

Now, here is the summary:

Who is God? He is the holy, omnipotent, creator. Who am I? I am a sinner in need of mercy. *"How can I be just with God,"* only through His Mediator, His Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ?

Sue for mercy and sue for peace, in the name which is above every name! Lord have mercy on me the sinner!