**Wise to Unwise**

The record of the death of the once wise King Solomon is recorded in 1st Kings 11:41-43. Following his death, God's people split into two nations. Ten of the tribes, located to the north, continued to be referred to as Israel. The two tribes to the south became known as Judah (1 Kings 12:21, 23, 27, 32).

The once wise King Solomon had been leading God's people deep into idolatry for many years. When the people of Israel split, both Israel and Judah continued to practice idolatry mixing worship to God with the worship of idols. Their actions were in direct violation of the very first of the Commandments given by God, delivered by Moses, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image…you shall not bow down to them nor serve them..." (Exodus 20:2-5).

The longer God's people worshipped idols, the farther they drifted away from Him. Like Solomon, they moved from being wise to unwise. The kings of Israel were for the most part continually unfaithful to God. Eventually, God allowed the northern kingdom to be conquered by Assyria. In addition to conquering Israel, the Assyrians took virtually all of the people captive and removed them to other lands.

The nation of Judah followed much the same direction as their brethren Israel to the north. However, along the way they did have some good kings, the last of which was Josiah, who began to reign when he was only eight years old (2 Kings 22:1). When Josiah turned sixteen years old (2 Chronicles 34:3) he began to seek

God. By the time Josiah is twenty-six years old (2 Chronicles 34:8), he begins to lead the nation in something of a spiritual reform movement, removing from Jerusalem and Judah the images, altars, and places of worship that had been used in the worship of idols.

The temple had fallen into disrepair, probably indicating the people's lack of focus on serving God. While the temple was being repaired, Hilkiah the high priest found "the Book of the Law of the Lord given by Moses... in the house of the Lord" (2 Chronicles 34:14-15). This was likely the first five books of the Old Testament and contained the law given by God to Moses, including the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20). How/why was the book unnoticed or lost? The context of the text presents that the nation of Judah had become so unfaithful to God that the people, the king, even the high priest had forgotten that the Book of the Law of the Lord even existed. This would be equivalent to forgetting that the Bible ever existed.

Josiah exhibited great fervor in destroying the idolatry that had been practiced in the land. When the book was read to Josiah, he tore his clothes (2 Kings 22:11), recognizing that his nation, who were supposed to be God's people, the keepers of God's temple, had been unfaithful to God for a very long time. Losing the Book of the Law of the Lord seems almost unbelievable, yet it occurred.

How did this tragic event in Bible history take place? Consider the inspired words of Paul, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). The less time God's people spend reading His word, the weaker their faith will become. As faith continues to weaken, God's people spend less time in His word. Eventually, God's people become unfaithful to the point that they do not

read His word at all. Then, over time, they forget most of what they had learned. Thereby, they are not able to teach what they should know to their children. Thus, their children cannot teach it to their children. And just as we read, the Law of the Lord becomes lost. People do not know God's word nor do they know about God's word.

Let us each purpose to become wise through His word and stay wise.