

Huldah's story

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I'm still trying to process this request. The high priest Hilkiah was here a little bit ago. At first, I assumed he wanted to talk to my husband, who is the keeper of the wardrobe.

But then my husband called me over. "He wants to talk to you."

There are few people who know that I have a gift. I am a prophet. It means I have a special kind of sight. If God reveals it to me, I see what God is doing, and I also see where the course we are on as a people is leading us.

It's not that we prophets have all the answers. It's just that we are specially gifted to see a bit farther than others.

Some people look at the fact that I am a woman, and doubt I could have this kind of gift. But my words speak for themselves. As time has revealed the truth of my insights, my reputation has expanded. When you have a gift and others value it, it doesn't really matter if you are man or woman.

I came over and asked Hilkiah how I could be of service to such an esteemed individual as the high priest. Hilkiah replied that he came on behalf of the King.

The king! I tried to disguise my gasp. Yes, my reputation was growing, but to think that the *king* would send for me...

Hilkiah explained that he has found one of the books of the Law of Moses. I sensed a bit of embarrassment. Of course, if this is an important scroll, should not the high priest have known about it?

Oh, I wish *I* could have been schooled in the art of deciphering letters – to hear words spoken long ago. Scrolls are magical. The words we say in day to day life eventually pass away. But when they are inscribed on the scroll through the art of letters, the words remain alive. They can be recovered years and years later, even after the person who uttered them is long gone!

The King's secretary is exceptionally good at deciphering letters. He already spoke the words contained in the scroll in the presence of the King. Hilkiah had been there too, and heard the words himself. They are words of a covenant from long ago between

Yahweh our God and our nation. There are words of blessing if we follow the covenant, and words of terrible curses if we don't.

As Hilkiah explained all this, I knew something was wrong. For generations now, our nation has forgotten this covenant. The king is concerned that Yahweh our God is upset with us. So he asked me:

“With your special gift, Huldah, can you determine if it's true? Is God angry with us? Will the curses in the scroll come true?”

I don't have the gift of deciphering letters – they seem like squiggly lines to me. But I know what I can do: I can pray. I can listen. If Yahweh will entrust words through me, I will feel those words in my bones.

My mind raced. Perhaps not all is lost... Even if the scroll is genuine, and even if our people have violated the covenant, perhaps Yahweh will overlook it. Surely Yahweh is pleased with the reforms that our King Josiah has already made.

I needed several days to sit on the rooftop, look over the city to the tops of the surrounding hills, tracing an uneven line against the blue sky. If I sit, perhaps I will hear Yahweh's words in my bones.

That was two days ago.

I have begun to feel the Word of Yahweh igniting within me, burning the edges of my heart like a glowing ember.

And it's not a good word! I don't want to have to say it. I also know I can't hold it in. If I do it will become a burning fire shut up in my bones.

So I reach into the depths of my spirit for courage.

We have brought this on ourselves. Our nation hasn't trusted Yahweh our God to be our security. Instead, we have set up altars to all kinds of gods. We thought it unwise to have all our eggs in one basket, but we've ended up giving Yahweh pain.

In our devotion to gods of wealth, power, and warfare, we've set up a society that takes from those who have little and give it to those on the top. A day of reckoning is coming, when those of us who are the elite in Judah will get a taste of what it is like to be on the bottom.

It saddens me to give this kind of word. Josiah is leading some very important reforms. These reforms may buy us some time, but disaster is still on its way.