

## Soul Sisters 5 – Huldah



### 2 Kings 22:1-4-15, 18-20 NRSV

*So the priest Hilkiah, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to the prophetess Huldah the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; she resided in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter, where they consulted her. <sup>15</sup>She declared to them, ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Tell the man who sent you to me,...*

*Regarding the words that you have heard, <sup>19</sup>because your heart was penitent, and you humbled yourself before the Lord, when you heard how I spoke against this place, and against its inhabitants, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and because you have torn your clothes and wept before me, I also have heard you, says the Lord. <sup>20</sup>Therefore, I will gather you to your ancestors, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; your eyes shall not see all the disaster that I will bring on this place.’ They took the message back to the king.*

Image: Rembrandt, *Old Woman Reading Scripture*, possibly Huldah

King Josiah was doing just fine, until someone started applying scripture to his politics. When the “book of the law” was discovered in the temple, Josiah was horrified – they were clearly not living up to God’s priorities, and all Judea would be punished. He called his advisors and asked them to find prophet who could interpret the words and tell him what to do.

They went to the prophet Huldah, in the “Second Quarter” – so not the most prestigious position. However, the advisors felt that she would speak the truth. “Thus says God, the God of Israel...” a sign that it was indeed God speaking through her. She went on to prophesy the destruction (which eventually took place in 586 BCE) but promised if Josiah was truly penitent, God would spare his reign and let him die in peace. King Josiah listened to Huldah and initiated widespread reforms throughout Judea. He did all he could do, not just for his own salvation, but to reconcile the people of God to their creator. These are passages that have been edited and pulled together, layer upon layer, to reinforce the “orthodoxy” of the law. It is impossible to know what Huldah actually prophesied, but it is significant that her name and her importance were included in the history of the Kings.

**What can we learn from our Soul Sister Huldah?** Perhaps that there is value in raising our voices and speaking our truths, even when it may not be an easy message for others to hear. Who knows – we might even reconcile a nation to its own soul.

**Questions for Reflection:** How does the image of a woman as prophet re-shape our image of God? Is the wisdom of women only for women? How does women’s wisdom influence and shape the world today?

### Prayer:

*O God of every voice and every singer: come to us with courage, we pray. For sometimes we are silent when we should be speaking out. Sometimes we say things because we believe people will find them more acceptable, instead of offering our truth. Give us the song of a new creation, when all are embraced in reconciliation and hope. Give us faith and courage we pray. Amen*