

MAY 2026 | DAY 17

# ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

With Fellowship of the Rockies

## SCRIPTURE

**2 Kings 18**  
**2 Kings 19**  
**Psalms 106**

**Unlike father, unlike son.**

In today's reading, Israel's new southern king becomes a refreshing contrast to his predecessor, offering much-needed hope for Judah. Hezekiah follows the Torah with precision. He trusts Yahweh with all his heart and adopts an aggressive anti-idolatry policy during his reign. He takes an axe to the wooden Asherah poles and smashes the Ba'al statues to bits.

But a huge, vicious Assyrian army tests Hezekiah's ultimate trust in God. Assyria's general hurls threats and taunting insults over the city walls for all to hear. Judah's measly military force doesn't stand a chance against Assyria, the global superpower that just carted off Judah's northern neighbors in chains. However, Hezekiah holds strong, refusing to let the king of Assyria and his trash-talking cronies bully him into submission. When desperation intensifies for Hezekiah, he chooses to go to the temple—not to raid its treasury, but to cry out to Yahweh for help.

Once again, Hannah's prophetic words from the beginning of Israel's royal saga prove true. Yahweh answers Hezekiah's humble prayer and rebukes the Assyrians' pride. The menacing army pressing against Jerusalem's gates collapses overnight. Maybe the Southern Kingdom will be okay after all?

MAY 2026 | DAY 18

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## SCRIPTURE

2 Kings 20

2 Kings 21

2 Kings 22

Psalms 107

If the generational whiplash in yesterday's reading made you dizzy, brace yourself. It gets worse.

After Hezekiah dies, the monarchy corrupts into chaos. Hezekiah is the best southern king yet, according to biblical authors, but his son Manasseh is the worst. Like, the worst.

Throughout Judah, Manasseh rekindles the idol-worship culture his father worked to eradicate. Manasseh assembles altars for other spiritual beings. He sets an idol in the middle of Yahweh's temple. It's like spitting in God's face and then laughing at him.

Predictably, Canaanite idolatry comes with devalued humanity, allowing for murder, sorcery, even child sacrifice (again). Manasseh's violence and injustice pollute the whole city with innocent blood. It's the last straw. Yahweh warns that a flood of divine justice is coming to wash the land of Judah clean.

Fortunately, David's line goes through another reversal two generations later with Manasseh's grandson, Josiah. The young king orders a reconstruction project for the temple, during which the priests discover an old Torah scroll. Its words move Josiah to tears.

Yahweh has always been calling his people to a way of life that is *tov*—a Hebrew word that, as you'll learn in the video, describes what is good, beautiful, and life-giving. By reading the Torah once again, Josiah realizes the people have abandoned Yahweh's good way to follow their own wisdom.

Which way will this young king choose?

MAY 2026 | DAY 19

# ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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## SCRIPTURE

2 Kings 23  
2 Kings 24  
2 Kings 25  
Psalms 108

When Josiah reads the lost scroll of the Torah, he realizes his kingdom is off the rails. Josiah spends the rest of his reign working to get Judah back on track. He renews the people's covenant partnership with Yahweh in a public ceremony. He burns down all wooden idol poles he can find, then grinds their ashes to dust for good measure. He even celebrates Passover for the first time since the days of the judges. Josiah's wholehearted devotion has no parallel: "There was no king like him who turned to Yahweh with all his heart, all his soul, and all his might."

But all of Josiah's efforts are too little, too late. His grandfather Manasseh had already sealed Judah's fate. When Josiah dies, his reform program dies with him. A few corrupt kings later, the Babylonians invade Jerusalem, burn the temple to the ground, and carry the people of Judah into exile.

The kingdom that was supposed to bring Yahweh's blessing to the world now lies in smoking ruins. The book's tragic conclusion leaves us wondering: Is God done with Israel and the line of David?

The final paragraph in Kings jumps 40 years ahead to an odd, short story about Jehoiachin, a descendant of David who would have been king in Jerusalem but now lives in exile. The king of Babylon releases Jehoiachin from prison and invites him to eat at the royal table for the rest of his life. It's not much, but the story offers a glimmer of hope that Yahweh has not abandoned his promise to David. The wisdom and prophetic books of the Bible further explore this hope.

MAY 2026 | DAY 20

# ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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## SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 1  
Isaiah 2  
Isaiah 3  
Isaiah 4  
Psalms 109

**In a traditional English Bible's book list, Chronicles follows Kings. So what are we doing in Isaiah? Today's video introduces the traditional Jewish order of the Hebrew Scriptures, also called the TaNaK, and will help explain the reasoning. Note that the "N" in TaNaK refers to the Nevi'im, which is Hebrew for prophets, referring to the later prophets' work. The first of these latter prophets is Isaiah, who lived in Judah during the kingships of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Like most of the prophetic books, Isaiah consists almost entirely of poetry, a literary style designed to ignite your imagination through the experience of verbal art. Today's reading introduces the main themes that will shape the rest of the book. Yahweh partnered with Abraham's family to spread God's Eden-style blessing to all nations. Abraham's descendants have abandoned this partnership and embraced idolatry, which blesses nobody and which led to oppression and violence. Isaiah warns the people of Judah that God will bring judgment on their injustice. Yet the prophet also offers a message of hope. Even though the people have failed to keep their covenant commitments, Yahweh remains faithful to his promises. Keep reading to learn about the surprising future of God's rescue plan for humanity in the book of Isaiah.**

MAY 2026 | DAY 21

# ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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## SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 5  
Isaiah 6  
Isaiah 7  
Isaiah 8  
Psalms 110

**How would a divine spokesperson be chosen and assigned work? In today's reading, Isaiah receives a vision of Yahweh's heavenly temple. He sees and hears choirs of six-winged angels. He witnesses glory that shakes the building to its bones and fills the room with smoke. He experiences a fiery commission to speak.**

**But Isaiah does not receive an encouraging send-off or any divine promise that suggests his mission will succeed. In fact, Yahweh tells Isaiah his mission is doomed to fail. Isaiah's message will only entrench his audience deeper into rebellion!**

**The next story proves this point. Yahweh sends Isaiah to confront Judah's king, Ahaz. He is facing the threat of Assyria's northern invasion. Isaiah tells Ahaz not to worry: The northern kings are barking loud but won't bite. Still, when the prophet invites Ahaz to ask God for a sign, Ahaz stubbornly refuses.**

**Yahweh provides a sign anyway. Because Ahaz rejected Yahweh, whose love gently sustains his people like a life-giving stream, the raging torrent of Assyria's wrath will sweep Judah away. Yet Isaiah also points to the hope of new life emerging on the other side of this flood of divine judgment.**

**Watch the video to learn more about this message of judgment and hope in the book of Isaiah.**

MAY 2026 | DAY 22

# ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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## SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 9  
Isaiah 10  
Isaiah 11  
Isaiah 12  
Psalms 111

**Would the real king from the line of David please stand up?**

Yahweh promised David that one of his descendants would spread blessing to all nations. So far, David's heirs have only succeeded in running everything into the ground. After Isaiah's testy exchange with Ahaz in yesterday's reading, not to mention the royal train wreck of Samuel and Kings, you might be skeptical of David's line.

Isaiah's mission as a prophet aims to settle such suspicions. As you'll learn in the video, the prophets act like covenant prosecutors. They call out Israel and its leaders for violating the terms of their partnership with Yahweh. Isaiah warns that Israel's exploitation of the vulnerable, which is also a rejection of Yahweh, will have severe consequences. This is all happening while Assyria's army is swarming into a dark, ominous storm on the northern border.

Isaiah also sees beyond Israel's bleak days of judgment to the arrival of the promised, true Davidic king. Isaiah describes his coming reign with words that sound like a return to Eden. Light will again break through the chaotic darkness, as it did when God first created. The land will overflow with joy and abundance again. Justice, right relationships, and peace will rule the day, not just among people but between the animals too.

When the Prince of Peace comes, he'll turn Israel's tragic story of failure and exile into a story of hope and restoration for all creation.

MAY 2026 | DAY 23

# ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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## SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 13  
Isaiah 14  
Isaiah 15  
Isaiah 16  
Isaiah 17  
Psalms 112

A mighty battle cry thunders in the distance. Countless legions of soldiers pour over the horizon, cascading down the mountains in terrifying waves. Overhead, the stars wink out one by one until even the sun fades. Convulsions shudder through the skies. The ground bucks and surges underfoot.

Is the world coming to an end?

Yes and no, but more no. This is apocalyptic imagery. Isaiah uses it to show the cosmic significance of Yahweh's de-creating judgment against Babylon. The prophet looks forward to a world turned upside down, where Yahweh dethrones the global superpowers of Assyria and Babylon and raises insignificant little Judah to triumph. Isaiah's cosmic imagery invites readers to see how these individual events fit into a much bigger story about God's mission to undo every corrupt and violent empire, once and for all.

Isaiah's warning opens a mystery for all readers to continue pondering: Even though Yahweh sometimes describes the violence of these nations as an instrument of justice against Israel's evil, that does not mean Yahweh approves of human violence. Yes, Babylon might be the force that puts Israel's rebellion to rest, but Babylon's own rebellion is not therefore okay.

Isaiah warns that Yahweh will judge their injustice and pride the same way he's judged both in Israel. Reduced to ash and rubble, Babylon's lush urban gardens will wither in parched, barren soil. Their gleaming palaces will crumble to a heap of dusty stones.

Brace yourselves, Isaiah says, the Day of the Lord is coming.