

MAY 2026 | DAY 24

# ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

With Fellowship of the Rockies

## SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 18  
Isaiah 19  
Isaiah 20  
Isaiah 21  
Isaiah 22  
Psalms 113

### Employment Opportunity

- **Wanted:** Prophet of Yahweh.
- **Location:** Jerusalem, in Judah's southern kingdom (some travel required).
- **Required:** Complete an orientation meeting with seraphim (winged angelic beings) in God's heavenly temple.
- **Duties Include:** Holding Israel accountable for breaking agreements with Yahweh, running an unsuccessful repentance campaign, and announcing both judgment and hope for Jerusalem and other nations. Also must be willing to walk around naked for three years.

As God's prophet, Isaiah certainly speaks on God's behalf. He also communicates with attention-grabbing actions that disrupt and challenge onlookers.

Isaiah's public nudity in today's reading symbolically shows the shame and humiliation of Israel's exile. His exposed, vulnerable body is a warning. Any nation that sets itself against Yahweh (Judah, take note) will be completely exposed and vulnerable.

Remember that the Egyptians (and other nations) count on lifeless elements and idols for protection, things that have no power to help them or keep them safe. The river that irrigates lush fields will dry up, leaving them desperate in a harsh desert. The sages and spiritists who supply Egypt's royal court with wisdom will be thrown into confusion.

MAY 2026 | DAY 24 - CONTINUED

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## SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 18  
Isaiah 19  
Isaiah 20  
Isaiah 21  
Isaiah 22  
Psalms 113

**Isaiah boldly warns non-Israelite nations, but his warning extends deep into Israel's heart as well. Isaiah warns two high-ranking Israelite officials in Jerusalem, Shebna and Eliakim, that embracing pride and self-sufficiency will also be their downfall.**

**While he's delivering intense warnings, Isaiah also offers messages intended to comfort. Those who choose to trust in Yahweh, be they from Judah or other nations, will find safety and healing in Yahweh.**

MAY 2026 | DAY 25

# ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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## SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 23  
Isaiah 24  
Isaiah 25  
Isaiah 26  
Isaiah 27  
Psalms 114

**Today, Isaiah tells the story of the world as though it's a tale of two cities—the “lofty city” of the world versus the new Jerusalem.**

**The lofty city pridefully regards itself as greater than Yahweh, resulting in corruption and brutal injustice. Notice how Isaiah blends earlier images of Jerusalem, Assyria, and Babylon's evil to present the lofty city as a poetic archetype of rebellious humanity overall.**

**It may seem confident and strong now. However, the lofty city's gates will eventually dangle by their hinges, shattered in ruin. Once thriving neighborhoods will become lifeless wastelands of boarded-up houses. The lofty city's fortified walls will crumble into dust.**

**Isaiah's down-to-earth prediction connects to Israel's historic moment. It also links to the larger story of Yahweh's ultimate mission to end all injustice forever.**

**To make that deeper, all-encompassing connection, Isaiah uses cosmic imagery. The skies are caving in. The ground writhes. The sun averts its gaze. Even the leviathan, a primordial monster in the Hebrew Bible that, as you'll learn in the video, symbolizes destruction and chaos, meets its end.**

MAY 2026 | DAY 25 - CONTINUED

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## SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 23  
Isaiah 24  
Isaiah 25  
Isaiah 26  
Isaiah 27  
Psalms 114

**But corrective judgment is never the last word for Judah or its oppressors. As Isaiah glimpses the future, he sees another city: the new Jerusalem. Unlike the lofty city, the new Jerusalem stands firm on a high mountain where Heaven meets Earth. Its strong gates open wide to welcome all who trust in Yahweh. Inside, they find joy, real security, and an extravagant feast hosted by Yahweh himself. Is anyone hungry for justice, peace, and joy? Grab a seat, says Yahweh, and join the greatest dinner party of all time.**

MAY 2026 | DAY 26

# ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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## SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 28  
Isaiah 29  
Isaiah 30  
Psalms 115

**Ephraim has a drinking problem.**

It's a symptom of the northern tribes' profound disconnection from God. The priests and prophets in the spiritual driver's seat are intoxicated at the wheel. Eugene Peterson paraphrases Isaiah's descriptive words in 28:1, calling the people "tipsy, sloppy-fat, beer-bellied parodies of a proud and handsome past" (The Message).

The northern tribes were not the only ones affected. In the south as well, Judah's spiritual leaders are unable to walk in a straight line, let alone steer the people down the right path. They spew and vomit slurred gibberish when they should be speaking Yahweh's wisdom to the people. So Isaiah warns them: Violent foreign nations will get your attention. When God's justice sweeps through like a hailstorm, it's going to wash out your shaky shelter at its corrupted foundation.

Watch the video to see how Jesus picks up on this image in his Sermon on the Mount, including Isaiah's warning against illegitimate religious leaders.

Isaiah also warns Jerusalem's leaders not to trust alliances with, and the military support of, other nations. Yahweh wants them to trust him alone, not their own best strategizing. They've emptied Judah's meager savings account, only to send the cash down a snake-infested highway to Egypt, their powerless paper tiger of an ally.

Meanwhile, Jerusalem's real hope, Yahweh, longs to show his people grace and mercy and to reunite with them. Will they cry out to him?

MAY 2026 | DAY 27

# ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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## SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 31  
Isaiah 32  
Isaiah 33  
Isaiah 34  
Isaiah 35  
Psalms 116

**If a group of people brutally harmed you and your family, and you escaped, would you then go back and trust them to keep you safe? “Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help,” Isaiah says (31:1), because Judah’s leaders believe the Egyptian military force has more power to protect them than Yahweh.**

**Yahweh defeated Egypt’s pharaoh, whom everyone thought was undefeatable. He then led Israel out of Egypt, protected them through 40 years of wilderness travel, and settled them in the promised land. After all that, it would make sense to trust Yahweh, not Egypt, for help in a bad situation.**

**Instead of trusting Yahweh, Judah’s leaders want Egypt’s horses, chariots, and warriors to ensure their safety. It’s like the exodus narrative has reversed. Isaiah knows this is heading toward exile, out of freedom and back into enslavement.**

**The exile will be brutal, yes, but it will not be Israel’s end. Isaiah promises God will lead them on a new exodus road. The dangerous, desolate wasteland will become a safe and fertile highway. This road will lead to something even better.**

**Watch the video to learn more about the “exodus way” literary pattern in the Bible, woven throughout both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament.**

MAY 2026 | DAY 28

# ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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## SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 36  
Isaiah 37  
Isaiah 38  
Psalms 117

**Feeling some déjà vu after today's reading? If it sounds familiar, that's because it is.**

**The story of Hezekiah and the Assyrian army already appeared in 2 Kings 18-20. Why would the biblical authors include the same story twice?**

**Zooming out to see the literary design of Isaiah can help.**

**Isaiah's opening chapters introduce a problem: Israel has become violent, unjust, and idolatrous instead of a blessing to every nation on Earth as God had promised (see Gen. 12:2-3). So Yahweh commissions Isaiah to deliver messages of both judgment and hope to the people. They will experience loss and pain from their corruption, but that's not the end. A future king from David's line will come to fulfill Yahweh's promise (see 2 Sam. 7).**

**Unfortunately, the first Davidic king in Isaiah, Ahaz, becomes a major letdown. When invaders press against his northern border, Ahaz shrugs off Yahweh's offer of help. Now Hezekiah, Ahaz' son, faces the same threat in exactly the same place: "at the end of the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the fuller's field" (Isa. 7:3, 36:2). The repeated phrase acts as a hyperlink between the two stories, drawing our attention to the contrast between them. Where Ahaz distrusted and snubbed God, Hezekiah trusts and pleads with God, going straight to the temple and praying for Yahweh to rescue.**

MAY 2026 | DAY 28 - CONTINUED

# ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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## SCRIPTURE

**Isaiah 36**  
**Isaiah 37**  
**Isaiah 38**  
**Psalms 117**

**Hezekiah's humble faith stands out against his father's faithlessness—and against the arrogant self-reliance that Isaiah condemns in the long poetic section between these two stories. Finally, a king who trusts in Yahweh! Could this be the "tender shoot" from the "stump" of Jesse (see Isa. 11) that we've been waiting for?**

MAY 2026 | DAY 29

# ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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## SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 39  
Isaiah 40  
Isaiah 41  
Psalms 118

**Hezekiah had such a strong start, but his story ends with broken faith and suffering.**

**When a delegation from Babylon shows up with a get-well-soon card, Hezekiah gives them a tour of the royal treasury. He's using wealth to woo them into a military alliance. He'd rather hedge his bets with Babylonian warriors than spend another enemy-invasion crisis on his knees in prayer. When Isaiah warns that the alliance will fail and Babylon will one day betray and destroy Jerusalem, Hezekiah shrugs. From his perspective, the impending catastrophe shouldn't be too bad if he's played the game well. Especially if he doesn't have to live through it.**

**As we know from the book of Kings, Isaiah's tragic prediction about Babylon proves true about 100 years later, during 586 B.C.E. The Babylonians burn down Jerusalem and carry its inhabitants into exile. But that's not the end of the story ... or the end of the book of Isaiah.**

**As you'll see in the video, the second half of Isaiah (chs. 40-66) starts during the 530s B.C.E., well after the Babylonian exile ended. Whether these words were from Isaiah himself or a later prophet remains a subject of debate. From either angle, they carry a message of hope. The suffering will not only end but will also, eventually, lead to the end of all suffering, everywhere.**

MAY 2026 | DAY 29 - CONTINUED

# ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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## SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 39  
Isaiah 40  
Isaiah 41  
Psalms 118

**At this place in the story, cynicism grips the community, likely related to the intense trauma everyone went through. Seeing their cities crushed, their families dragged off in chains, and their magnificent temple reduced to rubble and ash convinces the Israelites that their God has abandoned them.**

**Chapters 41-48 imagine a courtroom scene, with God as the defendant answering their accusations. Starting today and continuing through the next two days of reading, listen closely to the way God responds and explains why the exile happened. Will God's judicial response convince a jury of his Israelites?**

MAY 2026 | DAY 30

# ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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## SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 42  
Isaiah 43  
Isaiah 44  
Psalms 119:1-32

**Yahweh is on trial.**

**The accuser: his own people. The charge: Yahweh has stopped caring for the Israelites. The evidence: Israel's pain and humiliation in Babylonian exile does not feel like the peace and blessing God promised. This courtroom scene, which began in chapter 41, continues through today's and into tomorrow's reading.**

**How can God matter if he won't end the suffering of his people? Maybe the Babylonian idols actually are running the show?**

**Yahweh takes the stand, appealing to his proven character and genuine power: I have shown you constant love and provision. I have proven myself to be unstoppable. If you think those things you make, those idols, also somehow care for you—where do they come from? A carpenter chops firewood and chisels an idol from the extra wood. The fuel for heating and cooking that you get from a woodpile is now also a god?**

**They can't care for you; they're utterly powerless. Who else levels mountains? Who else parts seas and splits the cosmic darkness with light? Yahweh insists that he alone is Israel's redeemer.**

**As you'll learn in the video, biblical authors use the term "redemption" to describe liberating people from situations of distress or death. Just as Yahweh redeemed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt (see Exod. 6:6), he will redeem them from exile in Babylon. He promises the Israelites will once again pass through waters without being harmed and through deserts without being thirsty.**

MAY 2026 | DAY 30 - CONTINUED

# ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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## SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 42

Isaiah 43

Isaiah 44

Psalms 119:1-32

**When Yahweh redeems his people, he not only frees them but also forgives their sins that led to exile in the first place. He invites them back into a loving relationship with him. Will the Israelites trade their indictments for intimacy?**