



# Lessons from the Old Testament

First Quarter 1892—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel

*Lesson 4—Hezekiah's Prayer and Deliverance*

*Isaiah 37:14-21, 33-36*

◆ Who was Hezekiah?—2 Kings 16:20

*Hezekiah.* A king of Judah. His father was Ahaz. Israel as a nation was soon to be destroyed by the Assyrians. Judah continued for nearly a century and a half longer. Under Ahaz, Judah followed in Israel's ways. The worship of heathen gods was encouraged, the Temple of the Lord was devoted to the worship of idols, and tribute was paid to Assyria but Hezekiah made a reversal from his father. The Temple was cleansed, the worship of false gods was rooted out, and submission to Assyria was eventually abandoned.

Hezekiah did that which was right in the sight of God.

He had to go contrary to the trend of the times, and faced opposition within his own country and without.

But encouraged by the prophet Isaiah, he fearlessly stood for principle and introduced a religious reformation that did much to return the people of Judah to the ways of their fathers and to give them stability and strength among the nations.

And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did. He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan. He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor *any* that were before him. (2 Kings 18:3–5)

*Historical Setting.* The books of Kings parallel one of the most interesting and eventful periods of ancient Near Eastern history. This is the period when **Assyria** rose to the height of its power and when its kings went out to conquer the world, including in their schemes of conquest the monarchies of Israel and Judah. This is the time of the Twenty-first to the Twenty-sixth Dynasty in **Egypt**, when Egypt had not yet given up its plans of conquest and when it vied with the Mesopotamia powers for the control of Palestine and Syria. This is the time of the Neo-**Babylonian** Empire, when the Medes and Chaldeans defeated the Assyrian Empire and brought much of the Near East under their sway, destroying the nation of Judah and taking the southern tribes into captivity to Babylon.

Throughout this period the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were in almost constant contact with the nations of the East. Among the wives of Solomon was a daughter of Pharaoh. Hiram of Tyre was regarded by Solomon as a personal friend, and lent great assistance in the construction of the Temple. Jeroboam, who was destined to become the first king of Israel, was a political refugee from Solomon and sought asylum in Egypt. Rehoboam, in the fifth year of his reign, was attacked by Shishak of Egypt. This biblical "Shishak" was the famous Sheshonk I, founder of Egypt's Twenty-second Dynasty, who also left his own record of his attack on the cities of Israel and Judah. Omri was a king who left such an imprint upon posterity that the kingdom of Israel came to be known among the Assyrians as *Mat Humri*, "Omri-Land." Shalmaneser III mentions Ahab as having fought with the western allies against Assyria at the battle of Qarqar in Shalmaneser's sixth year and that in his eighteenth year he received tribute from Jehu.

## 2 Kings 18:1 to 20:21—Hezekiah

1. Hezekiah served the Lord and destroyed idolatry, 18:1–12.
2. Sennacherib's campaigns, 18:13 to 19:37. Samaria had fallen into Assyrian hands only 22 years before the attack on Judah by Sennacherib.

# Isaiah

The sixteen prophets from Isaiah to Malachi, whose writings have come down to us, lived during four centuries, from about 800 to 400 BC.



# Isaiah

Isaiah is quoted more than 90 times in the New Testament. He was a prophet of the southern kingdom and was an important help to King Ahaz, during the war between Syria and Israel, and to King Hezekiah, during a siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib.



# Isaiah

He also was a prophet during the reigns of King Uzziah and King Jotham, but when Manasseh became king, tradition declares Manasseh had Isaiah killed.

Isaiah's whole ministry, from Uzziah to Manasseh, probably lasted more than half a century.



And for this *cause* Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz, prayed and cried to heaven. (2 Chronicles 32:20)



# Hezekiah's Prayer

## Isaiah 37:14-21

- ◆ Praised God, the only God, the creator of heaven and earth
- ◆ Incline thine ear, open thine eyes and see and hear all the words of Sennacherib.
- ◆ It is true the kings of Assyria have laid waste.
- ◆ Save us from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD.
- ◆ “Hezekiah’s pleadings in behalf of Judah and of the honor of their Supreme Ruler were in harmony with the mind of God” (*PK 359.3*).



God's Answer  
Isaiah 37:33–38

- ◆ “The God of the Hebrews had prevailed over the proud Assyrian. The honor of Jehovah was vindicated in the eyes of the surrounding nations. In Jerusalem the hearts of the people were filled with holy joy. Their earnest entreaties for deliverance had been mingled with confession of sin and with many tears. In their great need they had trusted wholly in the power of God to save, and He had not failed them. Now the temple courts resounded with songs of solemn praise” (*PK*, 361.4).
- ◆ “With unerring accuracy the Infinite One still keeps account with the nations. . . .The pride of Assyria and its fall are to serve as an object lesson to the end of time” (*Ibid.*, 364.3, 366.1).

# King Hoshea vs King Hezekiah

- ◆ 2 Kings 17—King Hoshea, of Israel, and Shalmaneser, King of Assyria
- ◆ 2 Kings 17:20

# King Hoshea, King Hezekiah, and God's People

- ◆ 2 Kings 17, 2 Kings 19, Isaiah 37
- ◆ Revelation 13, 14:6–12; 18:1–5

God's word has given warning of the impending danger; let this be unheeded, and the Protestant world will learn what the purposes of Rome really are, only when it is too late to escape the snare. **She is silently growing into power. Her doctrines are exerting their influence in legislative halls, in the churches, and in the hearts of men.** She is piling up her lofty and massive structures **in the secret recesses of which her former persecutions will be repeated.** Stealthily and unsuspectedly she is strengthening her forces to further her own ends when the time shall come for her to strike. All that she desires is vantage ground, and this is already being given her. We shall soon see and shall feel what the purpose of the Roman element is. Whoever shall believe and obey the word of God will thereby incur reproach and persecution. (GC 581.2)

Before His crucifixion the Saviour explained to His disciples that He was to be put to death and to rise again from the tomb, and angels were present to impress His words on minds and hearts. But the disciples were looking for temporal deliverance from the Roman yoke, and they could not tolerate the thought that He in whom all their hopes centered should suffer an ignominious death. The words which they needed to remember were banished from their minds; and when the time of trial came, it found them unprepared. **The death of Jesus** as fully destroyed their hopes as if He had not forewarned them. So in the prophecies the future is opened before us as plainly as it was opened to the disciples by the words of Christ. **The events connected with the close of probation and the work of preparation for the time of trouble, are clearly presented.** But multitudes have no more understanding of these important truths than if they had never been revealed. Satan watches to catch away every impression that would make them wise unto salvation, and the time of trouble will find them unready. (GC 594.1)

A single angel destroyed all the first-born of the Egyptians and filled the land with mourning. When David offended against God by numbering the people, one angel caused that terrible destruction by which his sin was punished.

The same destructive power exercised by holy angels when God commands, **will be exercised by evil angels when He permits**. There are forces now ready, and only waiting the divine permission, to spread desolation everywhere. (GC 614.2)

When God's presence was finally withdrawn from the Jewish nation, priests and people knew it not. . . . So when the irrevocable decision of the sanctuary has been pronounced and the destiny of the world has been forever fixed, the inhabitants of the earth will know it not. **The forms of religion will be continued** by a people from whom the Spirit of God has been finally withdrawn; and the satanic zeal with which the prince of evil will inspire them for the accomplishment of his malignant designs, **will bear the semblance of zeal for God.** (GC 615.1)

Then will be the time for us to trust wholly in God, and He will sustain us. I saw that our bread and water will be sure at that time, and that we shall not lack or suffer hunger; for God is able to spread a table for us in the wilderness. If necessary He would send ravens to feed us, as He did to feed Elijah, or rain manna from heaven, as He did for the Israelites. (*EW 56.2*)

The season of distress and anguish before us **will require a faith that can endure weariness, delay, and hunger**—a faith that will not faint though severely tried. The period of probation is granted to all **to prepare for that time**. Jacob prevailed because he was persevering and determined. His victory is an evidence of the power of **importunate prayer**. All who will lay hold of **God's promises**, as he did, and be as **earnest and persevering** as he was, will succeed as he succeeded. Those who are unwilling to deny self, to agonize before God, to **pray** long and earnestly for His blessing, will not obtain it. Wrestling with God—how few know what it is! How few have ever had their souls drawn out after God with intensity of desire until every power is on the stretch. When waves of despair which no language can express sweep over the suppliant, how few cling with unyielding faith to the promises of God. (GC 621.2)

If the messengers who bear the last solemn warning to the world would **pray** for the blessing of God, not in a cold, listless, lazy manner, but fervently and in faith, as did Jacob, they would find many places where they could say: "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." Genesis 32:30. They would be accounted of heaven as princes, having power to prevail with God and with men. (GC 622.3)

Could men see with heavenly vision, they would behold companies of angels that excel in strength stationed about those who have kept the word of Christ's patience. With sympathizing tenderness, angels have witnessed their distress and have heard their prayers. They are waiting the word of their Commander to snatch them from their peril.

(GC 630.2)

In all ages, God has wrought through holy angels for the succor and deliverance of His people. Celestial beings have taken an active part in the affairs of men. They have appeared clothed in garments that shone as the lightning; they have come as men in the garb of wayfarers. Angels have appeared in human form to men of God. They have rested, as if weary, under the oaks at noon. They have accepted the hospitalities of human homes. They have acted as guides to benighted travelers. They have, with their own hands, kindled the fires at the altar. They have opened prison doors and set free the servants of the Lord. Clothed with the panoply of heaven, they came to roll away the stone from the Saviour's tomb. (GC 631.2)

In the form of men, angels are often in the assemblies of the righteous; and they visit the assemblies of the wicked, as they went to Sodom, to make a record of their deeds, to determine whether they have passed the boundary of God's forbearance. The Lord delights in mercy; and for the sake of a few who really serve Him, He restrains calamities and prolongs the tranquillity of multitudes. Little do sinners against God realize that they are indebted for their own lives to the faithful few whom they delight to ridicule and oppress. (GC 631.3)

Though the rulers of this world know it not, yet often in their councils angels have been spokesmen. Human eyes have looked upon them; human ears have listened to their appeals; human lips have opposed their suggestions and ridiculed their counsels; human hands have met them with insult and abuse. In the council hall and the court of justice these heavenly messengers have shown an intimate acquaintance with human history; they have proved themselves better able to plead the cause of the oppressed than were their ablest and most eloquent defenders. They have defeated purposes and arrested evils that would have greatly retarded the work of God and would have caused great suffering to His people. In the hour of peril and distress “the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.” Psalm 34:7. (GC 632.1)

None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict. (GC 593.2)

The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. (Psalm 34:7)

*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. (Hebrews 13:5–6)*