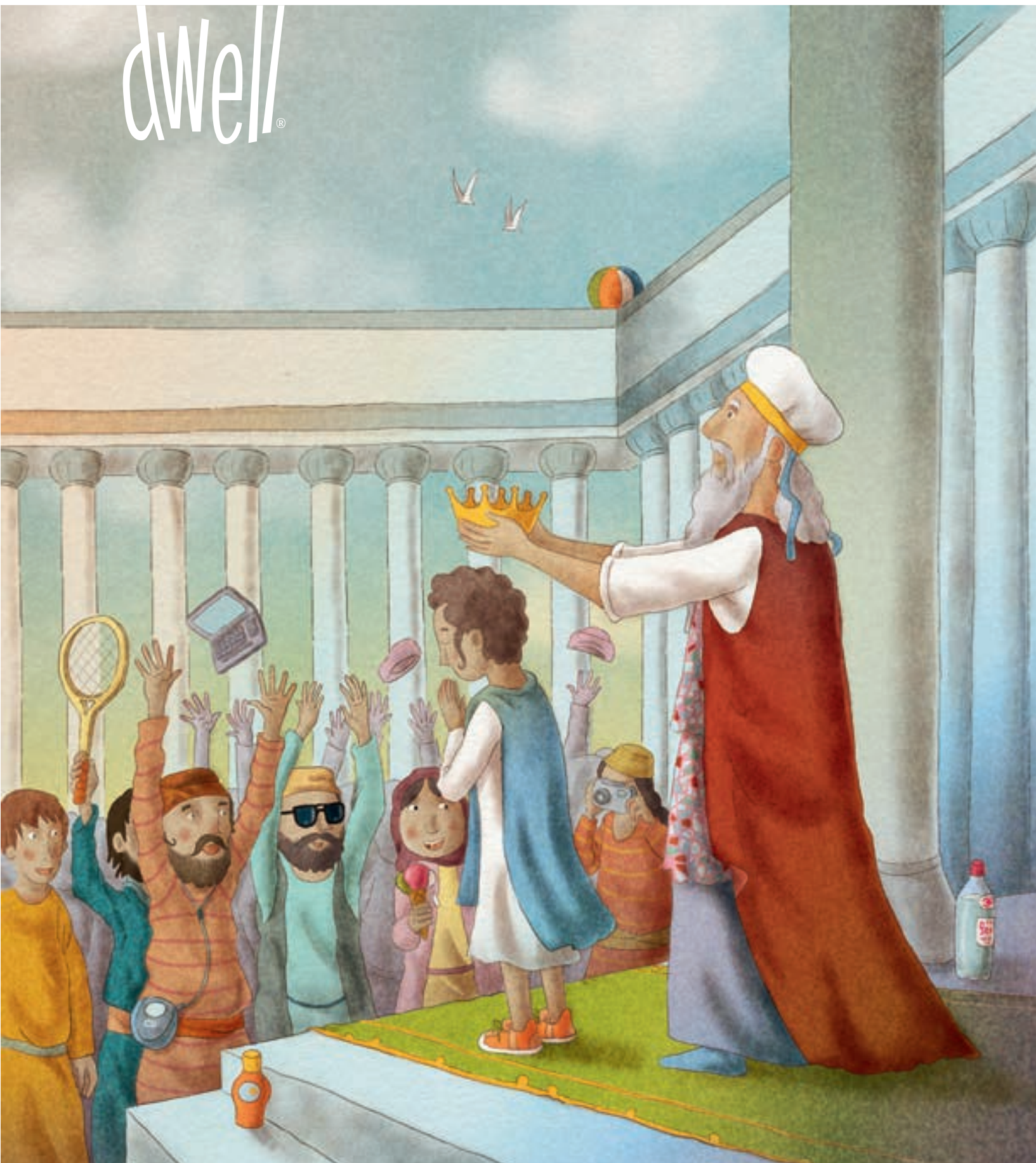


dwell<sup>®</sup>



Dear Family,

During the six weeks of this unit, our group will explore some difficult stories. We'll be discovering how God's people refused to listen and respond to the prophets God sent them. Even the few good kings who came along weren't enough to keep them in line. The people worshipped other gods and turned their backs on the God who loved them.

I hope you have time to read, explore, and talk about these stories at home, too. This schedule will help you keep track of where we are in God's big story, the Bible.

Date:\_\_\_\_\_ Elisha and the Blind Soldiers (2 Kings 6:8-23) 

Imagine together what the angels surrounding us look like.

Date:\_\_\_\_\_ Joash (2 Kings 11-12)



How do you see God at work in this story?

Date:\_\_\_\_\_ The Fall of Samaria (2 Kings 17:1-23) 

In what ways do you think God's judgment and grace can be seen in today's world?

Date:\_\_\_\_\_ A Bully and a Threat (2 Kings 18-19)



How do you think Hezekiah viewed prayer? How does that compare with your own views?

Date:\_\_\_\_\_ Lost and Found (2 Kings 22-23:30)



Josiah's father and grandfather were evil. How do you suppose Josiah became a good king who served God?

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Judah Taken Captive (2 Kings 25; 2 Chronicles 36:11-23; Jeremiah 27:16-22)



How does this story show God is both a God of justice and a God of love?

Our Memory Challenge is Matthew 6:20-21. To listen to or purchase a great musical version of these verses, visit [DwellCurriculum.org](http://DwellCurriculum.org) and look for the song "Treasure." Or consider purchasing a copy of the *DwellSongs* CD, Year 2, at [www.faithaliveresources.org](http://www.faithaliveresources.org).

Sincerely,

## Memory Challenge

But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

—Matthew 6:20-21, NIV

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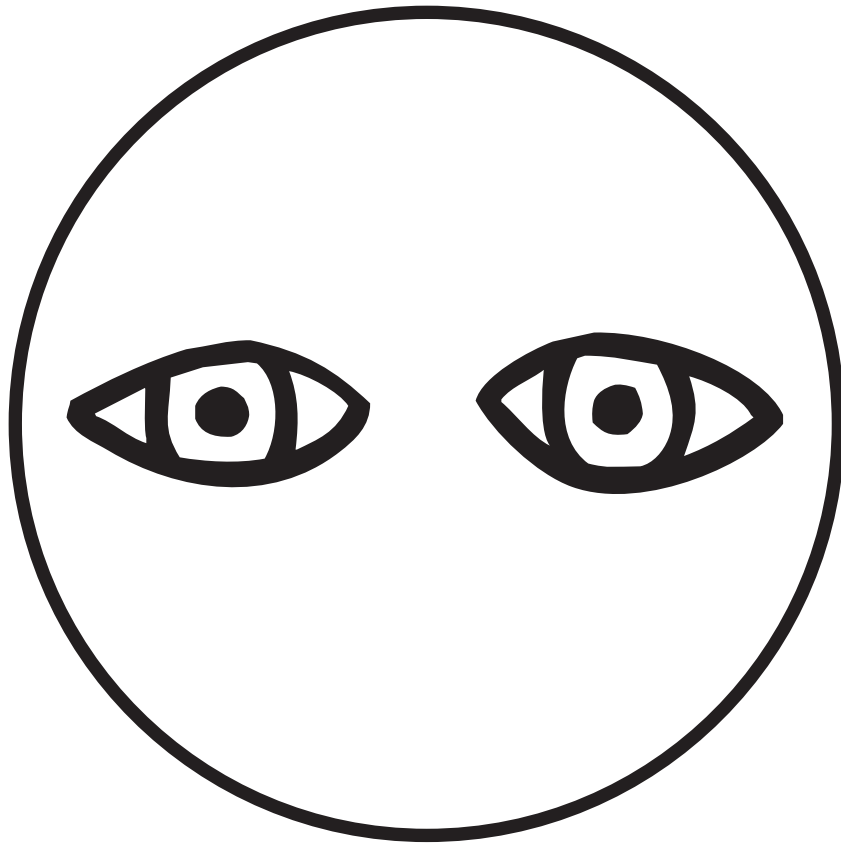
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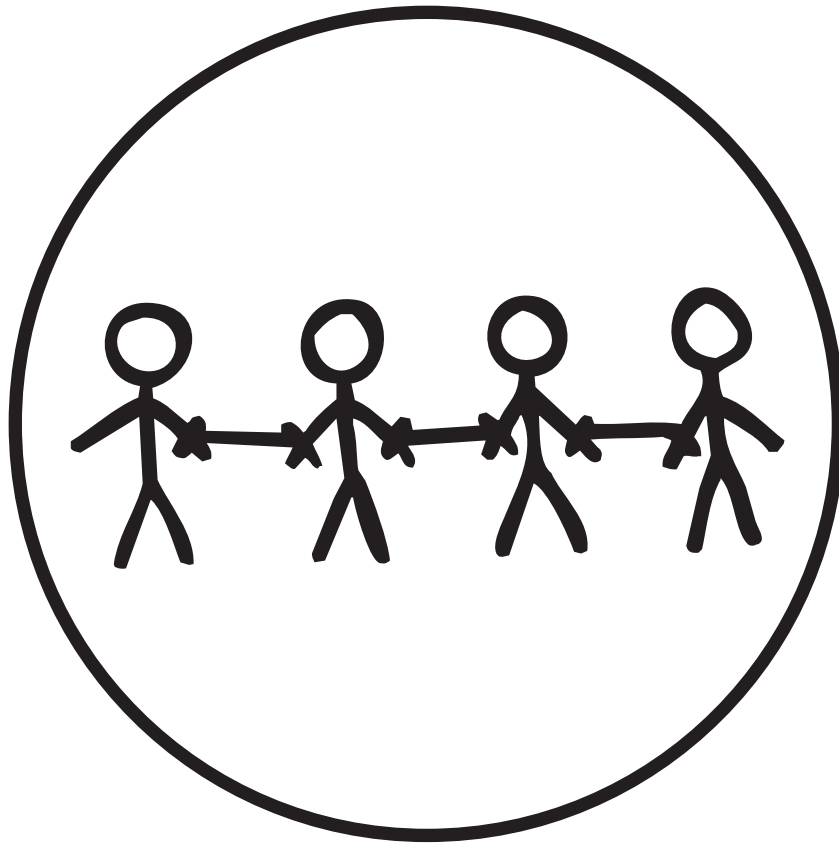


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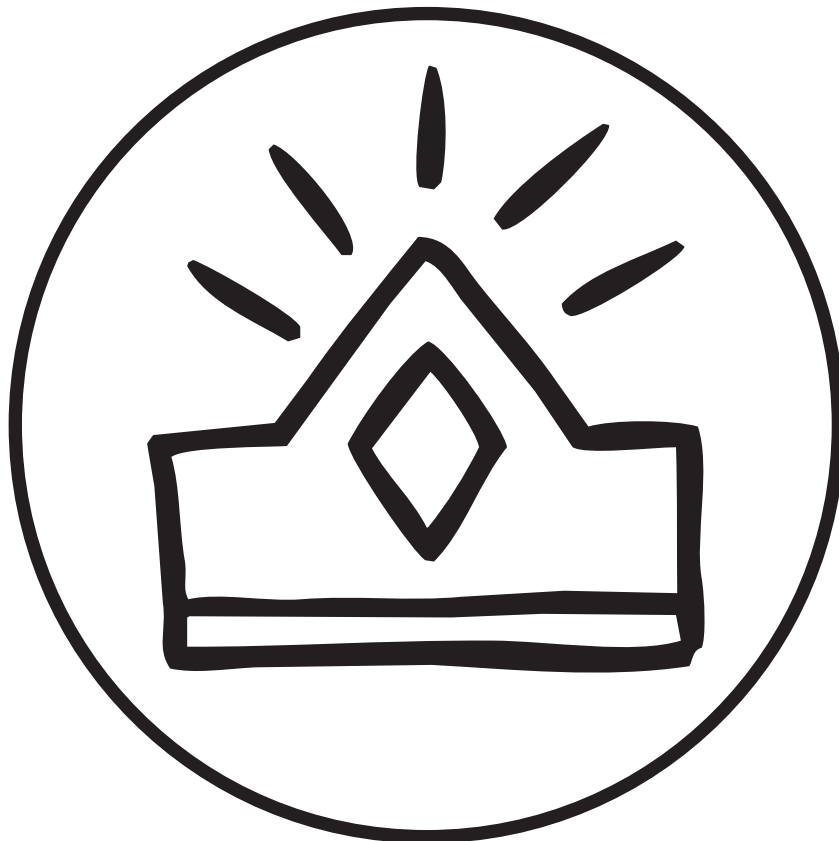


Marvel Year 2, Unit 4, Session 2

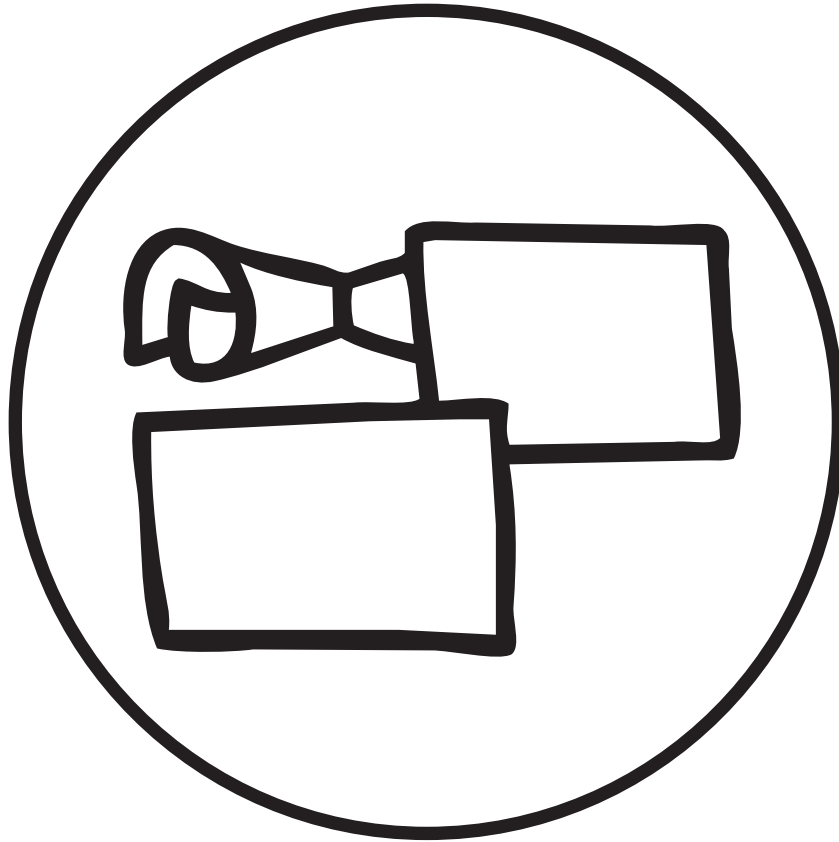




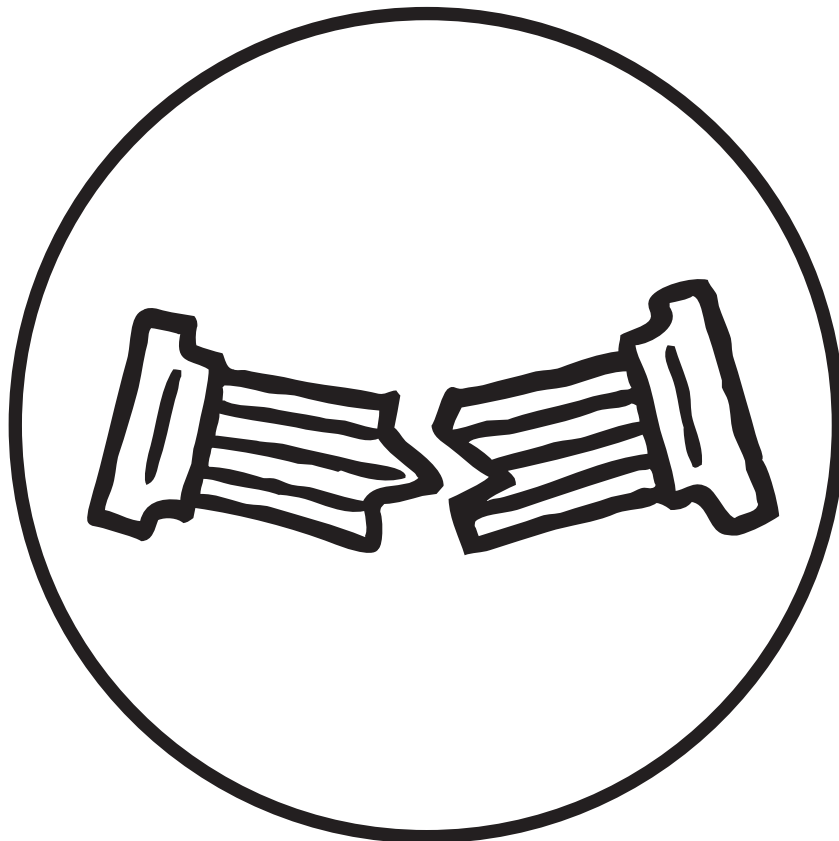
Marvel Year 2, Unit 4, Session 3



Marvel Year 2, Unit 4, Session 4



Marvel Year 2, Unit 4, Session 5



Marvel Year 2, Unit 4, Session 6

# Elisha and the Blind Soldiers: A Melodrama

## Based on 2 Kings 6:8-23 from *The Message*

The king of Aram was at war with Israel, and he was determined to win. He told his officers, “I want an ambush set.” (*Have your king repeat the words after you.*) Then he told them exactly where they should set it. The officers marched off to do as the king had ordered them. (*Officers march off with stern looks on their faces.*)

Meanwhile, Elisha, a holy man of God, sent a messenger to another king—the king of Israel. (*Elisha talks to his servant and sends him toward the king of Israel. When servant gets to the king, he speaks, repeating after you.*) “Watch out when you’re passing this place, because Aram has set an ambush there,” the messenger said.

The king of Israel smiled. He believed the messenger, because this kind of thing happened all the time. Elisha told him what was going to happen—and it did! He sent a messenger on a journey to warn his army’s soldiers. (*Have the messenger go as directed to a place in your room that you have marked as Israel’s army camp.*) The messenger told the soldiers to avoid the place where the ambush would take place. He told them exactly what Elisha had warned the king.

The king of Aram was furious when he heard what had happened. He waved his arms around and stomped across the room. (*Invite your king to do that.*) Then he called his officers together and shouted, “Tell me, who is leaking information to the king of Israel? Who is the spy in our ranks?” (*Have the king repeat the words after you.*)

But one of his men said, “No, my master, dear king. It’s not any of us. It’s Elisha, the prophet in Israel. He tells the king of Israel everything you say, even what you whisper in your bedroom.” (*Have the officer repeat the lines after you, one by one.*)

The king was angry and upset. He said, “Go and find out where he is. I’ll send someone to capture him.” (*Encourage king to act the part and repeat after you.*)

The officers brought back a report: “He’s in Dothan.” (*The officers can give the message to the king in unison.*)

The king paced back and forth. He pounded the table. He said, “Go now—I want all of my best horses and chariots and soldiers to go to Dothan and surround the city!

(*By now the group should have the pattern of the melodrama down and not need too much coaching from you! Be sure to allow time for the characters to perform their actions and say their lines each time.*)

So the officers of the king of Aram led their troops to Dothan and surrounded it. (*Any child who doesn’t have an active role can be in the troops of Dothan at this point.*)

Early in the morning a servant of Elisha got up and went outside. Surprise! Horses and chariots surrounded the city! The young man ran back inside to find Elisha. He was very upset! He exclaimed, “Oh, master! What shall we do?”

Elisha wasn’t worried at all. He smiled at his servant. He said, “Don’t worry about it—there are more on our side than on their side.”

The servant looked very puzzled. He shook his head, trying to figure out what Elisha meant.

Then Elisha prayed, “O GOD, open his eyes and let him see.”

The eyes of the young man were opened and he saw. A wonder! The whole mountainside full of horses and chariots of fire surrounding Elisha! (*Give your actor plenty of time to reflect amazement. Invite all of the group members to imagine they are seeing what the servant saw!*)



When the Aramean soldier attacked, Elisha was still praying. He had a request for GOD: “Strike these people blind!” he said, and GOD struck them blind, just as Elisha had said. *(Invite all of your children to spend a moment or two reacting as the Aramean army must have reacted. What did they say to each other? How were they feeling?)*

Then Elisha called out to them, “Not that way! Not this city! Follow me and I’ll lead you to the man you’re looking for.” And he led the army of Aramean soldiers into Samaria. *(At this point in the story, have all of the children who aren’t playing the roles of Elisha or the king of Israel act out the actions of the blind Aramean soldiers.)*

As they entered the city, the very center of Israel, Elisha prayed, “O GOD, open their eyes so they can see where they are.” GOD opened their eyes. They looked around—they were trapped in Samaria! *(Again, invite group members to respond as the soldiers did.)*

When the king of Israel saw them, he was very excited. He laughed. He said to Elisha, “Father, shall I massacre the lot?”

“Not on your life!” said Elisha. “You didn’t lift a hand to capture them, and now you’re going to kill them? No sir, make a feast for them and send them back to their master.”

So that’s just what the king of Israel did. He prepared a huge feast for his enemies and invited them to sit down and eat. It was amazing! And after they ate and drank their fill, he set them free. He sent them home!

So the soldiers returned home to their master. And the raiding bands of Aram didn’t bother Israel anymore.

# Explorers

Explorers often search in places people haven't been before or look into things people don't know much about. That's what you're invited to do with your team. Choose one of the following challenges—and good luck!

## *Challenge 1*

The story ends by telling us that the army of Aram never bothered God's people again. Develop a short skit that tells what was said in Aram when the soldiers returned unharmed from their visit to Samaria.

- What did the king think and say?
- Why did the king never send his army against Israel again?
- What did the people of Aram think about Israel and Israel's God?

Plan to give your skit to the larger group.

## *Challenge 2*

Imagine exactly what the servant saw when his eyes were opened. Draw a large picture of it and prepare to tell the group about your picture. Or draw that same picture showing the army of angels around you and your group.

## *Challenge 3*

Imagine that you live in Samaria. Plan a conversation you might have together the day all the blind soldiers come to town.

- What do you say to each other when Elisha leads the soldiers into the city?
- What do you think and say when you see they're being treated to a dinner and later freed?
- What does this whole situation tell you about your God?

# THE DOTHAN DAILY

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*Enemy soldiers surround city*

## CITY SAVED FROM ATTACK

DOTHAN—Elisha’s servant always gathers sticks early in the morning. As servant to the prophet Elisha, one of his duties is to start the fire for his master’s breakfast. But two mornings ago, his master’s fire and breakfast were forgotten.

“I got up, and all I could see were chariots and horses and soldiers encamped around the city,” said the servant. “My knees buckled under me in fear—I knew these soldiers had come for me and my master, Elisha.”

Elisha has been a rather popular prophet in Israel, but there’s been a reward on his head in the land of Aram. It seems that our man of God has been somehow receiving secret information about the Aramean’s battle plans. As one of the Aramean soldiers put it, “Elisha the prophet tells the king of Israel the very words that our king speaks in his bedroom!”

Elisha’s servant has been running back and forth between Elisha and the king of Israel, keeping the king informed of ambushes planned by the Aramean army.

Two days ago the Arameans came to capture Elisha so he wouldn’t cause them any more trouble. But as they closed in on the city, the enemy soldiers were suddenly struck with blindness (see story on next page). And just before this happened, Elisha’s servant says he saw an amazing sight.

According to the servant, when he saw the Aramean army, he ran to get Elisha. “What shall we do?” the servant said, pointing to the attackers surrounding Dothan.

“Don’t be afraid,” was all the prophet said. “Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.”

Then, according to the servant, Elisha closed his eyes and prayed, “O LORD, open his eyes that he may see.”

“Though no one else may believe me,” the servant said, “I saw horses and chariots of fire surrounding our attackers. It was the army of the LORD, sent to protect us! Elisha had seen them there all along!”

*Elisha leads blinded enemy soldiers into Samaria*

## ENEMY SOLDIERS STUCK BLIND!

DOTHAN—The Dothan Daily has obtained an exclusive interview with Abda, a captain sent by the Aramean army to capture the prophet Elisha. Abda is known for his leadership abilities and his sharp eyesight.

Abda said the Aramean army, which had come and surrounded Dothan at night, was moving in on the city, now that it was morning. Then, all of a sudden, blindness struck.

“The whole army must have gone blind at the same time,” said Abda. “Everyone started shouting. We began bumping into each other. Some men drew their swords, fearing an attack. We could easily have killed each other off.”

According to Abda, the next thing he heard was a man calmly saying, “Peace! Peace! I can lead you to the man you are looking for!”

“Can you help us?” Abda asked. “We’re looking for a man called Elisha, a prophet of God. We heard that he was staying in Dothan.”

According to Abda, the man (who was actually Elisha himself) just laughed and said, “This is not the road, and this is not the city. Follow me and I will lead you to the man you are looking for.”

Abda realized that he had no choice. He called to his men and told them to leave their horses and chariots behind, grab each other’s robes or arms and follow along. The men walked in a line, single file, for many hours, following their guide. They heard people laughing at them along the road. Finally, said Abda, they heard a city gate creak open. “Let them in,” the guide said. “It’s all right; the LORD has brought them here.”

The men stumbled through the gate into the city square. “Then,” said Abda, “all at once we could see! Our guide was Elisha, and he had taken us to Samaria! We were inside the capital city of our enemies, surrounded by their army! The king of Israel was there—and he asked Elisha if he should kill us all!”

But Elisha just laughed again. “Bring food and water for these men, that they may eat!” he said. And we feasted! Every last one of us was treated like a royal guest. These Israelites—they are very strange people!”

And will Abda ever come back to visit?

“No way!” he says. “This place is spooky! I’ll take my chances with the idols of Aram that don’t do anything, rather than tangle with the God of Israel again. There is no god in all the world that works like him!”

# God's Amazing Plan to Save a King

## CHARACTERS

**Narrator 1**

**Narrator 2**

**Queen Athaliah**

**Jehosheba**

**Jehoiada**

**King Joash**

**Builders**

**Narrator 1:** Long ago, in the land of Judah, there lived a king named Amaziah. He was one of the great-, great-, great-grandchildren of King David.

**Narrator 2:** King Amaziah had many wives and many children. He was a terrible—just plain awful—king.

**Narrator 1:** The truth is, he was a murderer.

**Narrator 2:** God was sad to see that his people were ruled by such a violent man.

**Narrator 1:** One day, Amaziah died. Who would rule the land? Would it be one of the royal princes?

**Narrator 2:** Well, let's find out. King Amaziah's mother, Athaliah, is about to pay us a visit. She will know.

### Queen Athaliah



My name is Athaliah,  
And I'm the queen of all.  
Whoever gets in my way  
Is going to take a fall.  
None of those little princes  
Will take MY throne away.  
I'll make sure they disappear  
I'll do it NOW—today!

**Narrator 1:** Wow! It doesn't sound like any of the royal princes will become king, does it?

**Narrator 2:** Athaliah did exactly what she said she would do. She killed the royal princes and named herself queen. It's no surprise to learn that she was just as wicked as her son had been.

**Narrator 1:** Things looked bad for the people of Judah. It almost seemed as though God wasn't going to keep his promises to keep David's children on the throne forever. Queen Athaliah was certainly not one of David's children.

**Narrator 2:** Who could fix this awful mess? Do you think God had a plan? Jehosheba, the priest's wife, is about to visit. She might know.

### Jehosheba



Jehosheba, Jehosheba—that's my name.  
Tricking Athaliah—that's my game.  
She killed the royal princes, but she didn't get them all!  
I carried out a baby that was oh-so-small.  
I tiptoed very carefully down the temple hall  
And hid that little baby boy behind the temple wall.  
God will keep his promise; it will come true.  
God's the one who showed me exactly what to do.

**Narrator 1:** The little child, whose name was Joash, grew up hidden in the temple, far away from the murdering Queen Athaliah. The priests taught Joash all about God and his wonderful ways.

**Narrator 2:** Jehoiada, the priest, is coming right now. Perhaps he can tell us what happened next.

**Jehoiada**

I'm the priest, Jehoiada; Jehosheba's my wife.  
 She brought the little prince to me so we could save his life.  
 Now it's time for Joash to put on Judah's crown.  
 I've called in lots of guards; they're all right here in town.  
 When my plan starts happening, the people all will cheer,  
 Oh, killer Athaliah, you'd better shake in fear.

**Narrator 1:** On a day when many people were in town, Jehoiada announced a special celebration. When the people were gathered and hundreds of guards were stationed around the temple, he brought out Joash and crowned him king.

**Narrator 2:** The people shouted and blew trumpets. They praised God for keeping his promise. Athaliah got what she deserved—the same punishment she'd given to the royal princes.

**Narrator 1:** That was the end of her!

**Narrator 2:** Wait! Joash is about to speak. Let's listen to what this new king has to say.

**Joash**

I am now KING Joash, and though I am a kid,  
 I'm here to rule this country, just like my grandpa did.  
 I know that I am very young; in fact, I'm not quite eight.  
 But I declare that God is God—and God alone is great.  
 And now let's make a promise; let's all join in and say  
 That we will live the way God says, starting out today.  
 Someday in the future another king will come.  
 He will reign forever; he will be our God's own Son.

**Narrator 1:** Yes, Joash was young, but he loved and served God. And the people loved and served their king and their God.

**Narrator 2:** They tore down the temple that wicked Queen Athaliah had built to her phony god, Baal. And they gathered their treasure to build a new temple to the one true God—though it took them twenty-three years to begin!

**Builders**

Long live Joash; he's our king!  
 It's thanks to him that we're building  
 a temple that is huge and grand  
 for God the ruler of our land!

**Narrator 1:** Peace and justice returned to the land and the people served the LORD. David's children were on the throne as God promised. Jesus would be born through the children of David so salvation could come to us.

**Narrator 2:** There's no question about it—our God is a promise-keeping God!



# I Am King Joash

Hi, I'm Joash. Well, King Joash, really! I've been king since I was seven. That's right—seven years old! And I'm in the middle of a really exciting project: rebuilding the Temple of God. (*point off to side*) See that gold wall? That's just the beginning. This temple is going to be really spectacular!

I almost didn't become king of Judah. And I wouldn't even be alive if my wicked grandmother Athaliah had had her way. She definitely did NOT care about honoring God. And my great-grandparents Ahab and Jezebel were not interested in honoring God either. In fact, they worshipped all kinds of false gods, including Baal. I'm the first king in my family to turn the people of God back to him. In fact, it's a miracle that I'm even alive today!

Let me tell you how God helped me become king.

It all started when I was a little baby. My father, King Ahaziah, had just been killed by the king of Israel. When my grandmother Athaliah heard that her son was dead, she was sure it was her big chance to become queen. So she did something unspeakably awful. It's even hard to talk about. She ordered the whole royal family to the palace and killed them! She killed her own grandchildren—my brothers and sisters! What a monster! The only reason I'm alive today is that my Aunt Jehosheba grabbed me and hid me. She and her husband, the high priest Jehoiada, found a place in the temple where they could keep me safe. And they kept me there for *six years*! Athaliah didn't have any idea I was alive.

Meanwhile, my grandmother, Athaliah, was becoming a hated, evil queen of Judah. She was cruel to the people, and she didn't serve God—not one bit. Jehoiada and Jehosheba kept telling me that one day soon all that would end. I would be king in place of my wicked grandmother.

That day happened much quicker than I thought it would. I was only seven years old when my uncle, Jehoiada, called together all the commanders of the army and guards to protect me. He led me out of the temple, surrounded by guards. I was glad there were so many guards—but I was scared too!

Right there at the temple pillar, Jehoiada crowned me king of Judah—ME, seven-year-old Joash, grandson of wicked Queen Athaliah. The people of Judah were gathered all around. They shouted, “Long live the king!” I couldn't believe that they were shouting for ME!

Of course, it was no wonder. After all, they really hated my grandmother because she was so evil and down-right mean. They wanted to get rid of her. They wanted me, a descendant of King David, on the throne, just as God had promised.

You can imagine how Athaliah reacted when she heard the trumpets and the shouting and the joy. She tore her robes and shouted, “Treason! Treason!”

But it didn't do her any good. Jehoiada ordered the army commanders to take her out of the LORD's temple, and later she was put to death. Everyone was so happy—she had been so evil!

The people hurried to the temple of Baal and destroyed all the idols there. We made a promise together that from now on we would serve the one true God. And now we're doing what I wanted to do all along: rebuilding the temple for the one true God!

Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to go watch some builders at work!

# Bible Study

## 2 Kings 17:1-23, *New International Reader's Version (NIRV)*

When you see a  talk about the question together as a group. When you see a  write down your own thoughts about the question.

### 1

1 Hoshea became king of Israel in Samaria. It was in the 12th year that Ahaz was king of Judah. Hoshea ruled for nine years. He was the son of Elah.

2 Hoshea did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. But he wasn't as evil as the kings of Israel who ruled before him.

3 Shalmaneser came up to attack Hoshea. Shalmaneser was king of Assyria. He had been Hoshea's master. He had forced Hoshea to bring him gifts. 4 But the king of Assyria found out that Hoshea had turned against him. Hoshea had sent messengers to So, the king of Egypt. Hoshea didn't send gifts to the king of Assyria anymore. He had been sending them every year. So Shalmaneser grabbed hold of him and put him in prison.



Name some of the wicked kings of Israel that you remember.



Imagine that you are one of the people of Samaria. What do you think as you see your king being led away in chains?

### 2

5 The king of Assyria marched into the whole land of Israel. He marched to Samaria and surrounded it for three years. From time to time he attacked it. 6 Finally, the king of Assyria captured Samaria. It was in the ninth year of Hoshea. The king of Assyria took the people of Israel away from their own land. He sent them off to Assyria. He settled some of them in Halah. He settled others in Gozan on the Habor River. And he settled still others in the towns of the Medes.

7 All of that took place because the people of Israel had committed sins against the Lord their God. He had brought them up out of Egypt. He had brought them out from under the power of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. But they worshiped other gods.

8 The Lord had driven out other nations to make room for them. But they followed the evil practices of those nations. They also followed the practices that the kings of Israel had started. 9 The people of Israel did things against the Lord their God in secret. What they did wasn't right. They built high places for worship in all of their towns. They built them at lookout towers. They also built them at cities that had high walls around them. 10 They set up sacred stones. And they set up poles that were used to worship the goddess Asherah. They did that on every high hill and under every green tree.

11 The Lord had driven out nations to make room for Israel. But the people of Israel burned incense at every high place, just as those nations had done. The Israelites did evil things that made the Lord very angry. 12 They worshipped statues of gods. They did it even though the Lord had said, "Do not do that."



Why was God so angry?



What do we do that makes God angry?

### 3

13 The Lord warned Israel and Judah through all of his prophets and seers. He said, “Turn from your evil ways. Keep my commands and rules. Obey every part of my Law. I commanded your people who lived long ago to obey it. And I gave it to you through my servants the prophets.”



Remember together the names of some of the prophets God sent.

Wonder together about how many times God had warned his people to turn back to him.

### 4

14 But the people wouldn't listen. They were as stubborn as their people of long ago had been. Those people didn't trust in the Lord their God. 15 They refused to obey his rules. They broke the covenant he had made with them. They didn't pay any attention to the warnings he had given them. They worshipped worthless statues of gods. Then they themselves became worthless. They followed the example of the nations that were around them. They did it even though the Lord had ordered them not to. He had said, “Do not do as they do.” They did the very things the Lord had told them not to do.



How are we sometimes tempted to do what the world around us does instead of obeying God?

### 5

16 They turned away from all of the commands of the Lord their God. They made two statues of gods for themselves. The statues were shaped like calves. They made a pole that was used to worship the goddess Asherah. They bowed down to all of the stars. And they worshipped the god Baal.

17 They sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire. They practiced all kinds of evil magic. They gave themselves over to do what was evil in the sight of the Lord. All of those things made him very angry.

18 So the Lord was filled with anger against Israel. He removed them from his land. Only the tribe of Judah was left. 19 And even Judah didn't obey the commands of the Lord their God. They followed the practices Israel had started.

20 So the Lord turned his back on all of the people of Israel. He made them suffer. He handed them over to people who stole everything they had. And finally he threw them out of his land.

21 He tore Israel away from the royal house of David. The people of Israel made Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, their king. Jeroboam tried to get Israel to stop following the Lord. He caused them to commit a terrible sin.

22 The people of Israel were stubborn. They continued to commit all of the sins Jeroboam had committed. They didn't turn away from them.

23 So the Lord removed them from his land. That's what he had warned them he would do. He had given that warning through all of his servants the prophets. So the people of Israel were taken away from their country. They were forced to go to Assyria. And that's where they still are.



What does this story tell you about God?



What does the symbol for today's story mean to you after reading the story?

# Press Conference

**King Shalmaneser:** Thank you for coming today. It is a glorious day in the history of Assyria. King Hoshea of Israel thought he could outsmart me, the mighty King Shalmaneser of Assyria, by appealing to King So of Egypt for help. But I showed King Hoshea you can't mess with me. King Hoshea is in my prison. And I've sent all his loyal subjects to Halah—a piece of empty land down by the Habor River. They can cry and complain all they want about Israel being their land. Too bad! I have other plans for their beloved Israel.

(1) **Judean Reporter o bed:** King Shalmaneser, your army captured King Hoshea and the people of Israel. But isn't it a fact that the one true God allowed it to happen?

**King Shalmaneser:** Nonsense! [*points to self proudly*] I brought about the capture of that traitor King Hoshea. I showed him he couldn't mess with me. He was under my rule and owed me taxes. The nerve of him—trying to escape his duty by asking King So of Egypt to be on the side of the Israelites. It didn't work!

(2) **Reporter Jenny:** The Bible says that God allowed you to capture the Israelites as their punishment for worshipping idols.

**King Shalmaneser:** My reporter covered the battle. Tig can set you straight. Tig, what do you say?

(3) **Assyrian Reporter Tig:** My king and my lord, what the reporter Jenny and the Judean are saying has some truth. The Israelites had built high places to many gods in all their towns. They had gods on every high hill and under every tree. They burned incense to all kinds of gods.

**King Shalmaneser:** So? What difference does that make?

(4) **Egyptian Reporter Ha:** Did you say SO? Please show some respect for the name of my king.

**King Shalmaneser:** It's not my fault that your king has a common word for a name. Tig, be sensible. What difference does it make that the Israelites worshipped many gods?

(5) **Assyrian Reporter Tig:** I've done some research, O king, and it seems that the God of Israel requires people to worship him alone. If Israel had done that,

then this God of theirs promised to bless them and help them. But as I already said, Israel worshipped many gods. They had gods in the shapes of calves and poles. They bowed to the stars and moon; they worshipped Baal; they even sacrificed their infant sons and daughters. If they did have one true God, that God would have to think these Israelites were a foolish bunch.

**King Shalmaneser:** No one can take away the victory from me.

(6) **Wise Voice:** If only you knew the truth about the one true God. Long, long ago, all the Israelites were slaves in Egypt. They suffered under the hand of Pharaoh.

**King Shalmaneser:** Ha? Is that true?

(7) **Egyptian Reporter Ha:** Are you picking on my country again? Just because one pharaoh had a stubborn heart doesn't make King So a bad guy. So's reputation is becoming muddier than the banks of the Nile River.

**King Shalmaneser:** Forget it. Let's hear from that old wise one again.

(8) **Wise Voice:** It may have been nine hundred years ago, but God told the Israelites never to forget how God saved them from slavery. "Remember the way I saved you," God told them. "Talk about it with your children and write it on the doorposts." God taught them never to worship things but to worship only God. They didn't need to go to King So for help. God would have helped them if they had asked.

**King Shalmaneser:** So you are saying that this punishment I've brought them comes from their God because they were disobedient to him?

(9) **Wise Voice:** Yes. You would have had no power over them if they had turned back to God.

**King Shalmaneser:** I still find that hard to believe.

(10) **Reporter Jenny:** It's true, O king. And one day, when they return to the God who loves them, when they walk in faith and obedience, their God will forgive them and bless them once again. Your power over them will be ended.

**King Shalmaneser:** Enough already! This conference is over!

# Interview Cards

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(1) **Judean Reporter o bed:** King Shalmaneser, your army captured King Hoshea and the people of Israel. But isn't it a fact that the one true God allowed it to happen?

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(2) **Reporter Jenny:** The Bible says that God allowed you to capture the Israelites as their punishment for worshipping idols.

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# The Fall of Samaria

## Assyria, 722 BC

My dearest friend,

It is I, Joshua. I do not know if you will receive this letter, or if you are even alive. But I am writing to you anyway, praying that this letter finds you well. It's been almost three months since my family and I, along with the entire city of Samaria, were taken captive by the Assyrians. We now live in their country, and I miss my home terribly. I remember the day the Assyrians invaded our city like it was yesterday. My brother and I were on our way home from visiting with my cousins when we heard the watchmen from the city wall shout, "The Assyrians are coming! The Assyrians are coming! Women and children, flee to your houses! Men, grab your weapons and defend your city!"

My brother and I were too young to stand at the city wall with the other men, so we rushed to our house just as my father was leaving with his bow and arrow. "Stay here and protect your mother and sisters!" he called out as he disappeared down the street. That was the last time I ever saw him. The men of our city flooded the streets and made their way to the city walls. As we rushed home, I told my brother to make sure my mother and sisters were okay, and I dashed up the stairs of our house to the roof, which was attached to a portion of the city wall. I crouched behind a stone and peeked over the edge. There were thousands of Assyrian soldiers with horses, spears, bows, and arrows. They surrounded our entire city! I ran back into my house and waited with my family. I knew it was only a matter of time before they would burst through our city gate.

When they finally took us captive, they made us walk for days to the country of Assyria. As we marched in the heat of the sun, we hung our heads in defeat and desperation. Why was this happening to us? Why would God allow us to be defeated by our enemies? But I already knew the answer. It is because we forgot to follow God's commands. Even King Hoshea did evil in God's eyes, though he was not as terrible as the kings before him.

There were shrines built to false gods all throughout our city, along with terrible Asherah poles on every high hill and under every spreading tree. Many people even started sacrificing their children to these false gods! I knew that these things broke God's heart. My father used to tell us never to enter those awful places. He told us how sad and angry he was that we as a people had forgotten about the deliverance God gave our ancestors when he brought them out of Egypt. I'm sure God must be hurt and angry, too. Please pray for the people of Israel!

Yours truly,

Joshua



# And the Winner Is . . .

*(Look at King Hezekiah, and put a hand on his shoulder)*

I'd like to introduce you to King Hezekiah. He might look like any other king, but he's very different. He loved God and trusted God. King Hezekiah, please **WAVE** to these kind folks who've come to hear your story.

*(Turn to look at Sennacherib and put a hand on his shoulder)*

This is King Sennacherib, king of Assyria. He is the proud commander of one of the mightiest armies in the world. Almost anyone could tell you that he is always *\*itching, itching, itching\** for a fight. He can't wait to take over another country or two. King Sennacherib, please **WAVE HELLO** to this outstanding audience.

*(Look at King H)*

King Hezekiah here was quite a guy. Some people are all *\*talk, talk, talk\** about loving and obeying God, but this guy showed that he really did. He got up many mornings, **STRETCHED** a few times . . . **YAWNED** a bit . . . then **HELD HIS ARMS ou T** for his servant to put on his robes. He **SNAPPED HIS FINGERS** for his chariot. Then he was off, **Bou NC-ING u P AND Do WN** in the chariot as he rode through the countryside, *\*jiggling, jiggling, jiggling\** as the horses ran over rough fields. He was on a mission to tear down the hundreds of idols that the people had built over the years. He would **THRo W HIS ARM ou T . . . Po INT AT EACH IDo L . . .** and **YELL**: "Down with it! Now!" *(Wait for King H to yell those words)*

*(Look at King S)*

Every time King Sennacherib thought about Hezekiah, he **THREW HIS HEAD BACK AND LAu GHED**. *(Pause for King S to laugh)* What a joke, he thought. Like Hezekiah's God was really going to help him! He'd **SHAKE HIS HEAD** in disgust. He thought it was *\*crazy, crazy, crazy\** that Hezekiah couldn't see that he'd already captured about fifty other cities, and now his army was moving into Hezekiah's territory. Each time he saw Hezekiah, Sennacherib **Pu MPED HIS Mu S-Cu LAR ARMS . . .** and **FLEXED HIS ARM Mu SCLES**. Rubbing it in, you know. Making fun of this guy who thought God could help him.

*(Look at King H)*

Hezekiah was in a tight spot, all right. It was true. Sennacherib was ready to strike. Hezekiah **STRo KED HIS CHIN...and PACED THE FLoo R**, *\*back and forth and back and forth\**. He'd asked Sennacherib what it would cost for protection, and Sennacherib demanded eleven tons of silver and one ton of gold. Yikes!

Hezekiah **HELD u P HIS FINGERS . . .** and **STARTED Cou NTING** it out: one, two, three, four, five six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve tons of precious metals! He didn't want to, but he **Pu LLED THE Go LD o FF THE TEMPLE Doo RS**. He **GRABBED SILVER** from the temple store rooms . . . and he **CRo SSED HIS FINGERS . . .** hoping he'd get the protection he was paying for.

*(Look at King S)*

Sennacherib **LAu GHED So HARD HIS Bo DY SHoo K . . .** as he told his commanders that he was going to take Jerusalem and every town on the way. The commanders cheered so loudly Sennacherib had to **PLu G HIS EARS**.

Sennacherib **Tu RNED ARou ND . . .** his back to the army. He **SCRATCHED THE BACK o F HIS HEAD . . .** as he thought about his strategy. Suddenly he **Tu RNED ARou ND . . . THREW HIS FIST IN THE AIR . . .** and **YELLED**: I will take Jerusalem! *(Pause for King S to yell)* He **Po INTED To HIS CHEST . . .** and **SHou TED**: Yes, Jerusalem will be mine! *(Pause for King S to shout)*

He decided to send a letter to Hezekiah. He **PACED THE FLoo R**, *\*back and forth and back and forth\**. Then he **STo PPED . . . Pu T o NE FINGER o N HIS CHIN . . .** and told his servant what to put in the letter:

To King Hezekiah:

My army is camped outside Jerusalem. We're going to take it, and your people will starve. Don't think that your God can help you. He can't! Your God didn't stop us before, and he can't stop us now!

Tell you what: I'm so sure that I can win, I'll even give you two thousand horses. I'll bet that you don't have two thousand men who are willing to fight my army!

But, hey, let's make a deal. I'll take Jerusalem, because I want the city. But we'll haul you and your people off to another city to live. It'll be \*good, good, good\*, Hezekiah. Really!

Sincerely, King Sennacherib, the unstoppable power king

Sennacherib spent the next day **FLEXING HIS MUSCLES** and **THINKING** about the battle he planned to win.

*(Look at King H)*

Hezekiah was **SITTING DOWN** near the city wall when the messenger arrived. After he heard the letter, Hezekiah **STOOD UP . . . he PUT HIS HANDS BEHIND HIS BACK . . . and BENT HIS HEAD DOWN . . .** as he **PACED BACK AND FORTH** thinking. The messenger had read the letter so loudly that Hezekiah's people could hear it. He knew that his people were scared silly of the superpower's army sitting outside Jerusalem. \*Nobody, nobody, nobody\* wanted to fight them. They'd die for sure.

Hezekiah **RIPPED HIS CLOTHES TO SHREDS . . .** then he **WALKED** to the temple . . . and **PULLED OPEN THE DOOR**—the one that used to be covered in gold. Inside, he **FELL ON HIS KNEES . . .** and **PRAYED** to God. Only his **LIPS MOVED**. Hezekiah was pleading with God to save him and his people. \*Again and again and again\* he said that he trusted God, and he asked God to save them.

The king **GOT UP . . . and HELD UP HIS HAND**, calling for a writer to write and deliver a letter to God's prophet, Isaiah. As he dictated the letter, he **WALKED SLOWLY AROUND IN CIRCLES**.

To Isaiah, God's prophet:

This is a terrible day. Sennacherib has insulted God, saying that God has no power to stop his army. None of my people are willing to fight. May God help us all!

The King **DIPPED HIS RING IN WAX . . . and STAMPED HIS RING ON THE PAPER**. Then he \*waited, waited, waited\*.

When Isaiah's messenger arrived, King Hezekiah **RAN OUT TO MEET HIM**. He **PUT HIS HAND BEHIND HIS EAR** not to miss a word. The messenger said: "Isaiah has a word for you from the LORD. The LORD says: Don't worry about Sennacherib and the way he mocks me. I, myself, will take care of him. He will not enter Jerusalem! I will see that he is killed."

*(Look at the audience)*

Time went by as letters went \*back and forth, back and forth, back and forth.\* Days and weeks went by. Months, too.

Meanwhile, Sennacherib sent Hezekiah another letter saying that God couldn't do a thing to stop his army. Hezekiah prayed to God again, laying Sennacherib's letter before God and promising his trust in God. God answered. Isaiah, God's prophet, brought another message from God. God made it very clear that Sennacherib would be history—soon!

*(Look at King Hezekiah)*

One pretty ordinary night, Hezekiah **LAY DOWN** in his king-sized bed . . . and **SLEPT** as usual. While he snored, God was at work. God sent an angel through the Assyrian army camp. \*Hmmm, hmmm, hmmm.\*

*(Look at King Sennacherib)*

Sennacherib **GOT UP** the next morning. He was \*itching, itching, itching\* to get started. He **LIFTED THE DOOR OF HIS TENT . . . and HOOKED IT OPEN**. He **STOOD STILL**. His **EYES BULGED OUT OF HIS HEAD**. His **HAND FLEW TO HIS HEART**. He **GASPED FOR AIR**. He **HELD ON TO THE WALL OF THE TENT SO HE WOULDN'T FALL OVER**. Then he **FELL DOWN** and **WEPT**. King Sennacherib saw 185,000 of his finest soldiers—dead! There were bodies everywhere! \*Dead, dead, dead\*.

*(Look at the audience)*

The only sounds were the sounds of the rest of Sennacherib's soldiers, who were taking down tents and trying to get out of Jerusalem as fast as possible. And do you know that sometime later, Sennacherib was dead too—killed by his own sons?

# Hezekiah and the Bully

Many of the kings of Judah did not follow the commands of God, but worshipped idols and made sacrifices to them. When Hezekiah became king of Judah, he did not do these terrible things, but trusted in the LORD. There was no other king like him who was fully devoted to God.

Miles away from the kingdom of Judah lived Sennacherib, the king of Assyria. Unlike Hezekiah, Sennacherib was mean and proud. He didn't believe the LORD was the one true God. Ten years earlier, his father smashed the armies of Israel and took the people captive, forcing them to live in Assyria. Sennacherib followed in his father's footsteps and sought to crush the remaining nation of Judah. He and his armies captured many cities of Judah one by one. Realizing that his kingdom was in danger, Hezekiah sent a message to Sennacherib: "I have done no wrong to you. Please, leave my people and cities alone, and I will pay you whatever you wish."

"Give me eleven tons of silver and one ton of gold!" Sennacherib demanded. So King Hezekiah had no choice but to take gold and silver from the temple of the LORD and give these treasures to Sennacherib. Hezekiah wanted peace with Assyria, not war. The terrible King Sennacherib laughed to himself. He had Hezekiah right where he wanted him! Instead of leaving Judah alone, he sent his best army commanders to tell King Hezekiah that he was going to crush his nation anyway. They stood at the city wall and gave Hezekiah's officials this message:

"Why are you so confident in your God? You say that you have a strong army, but your words are empty! You are even trying to get help from the pitiful king of Egypt, and you say you are depending on your God to deliver you? You are a fool! I, the mighty king of Assyria, offer to give you two thousand horses to fight against me—but you won't even get enough pathetic soldiers to ride them! My army is going to destroy you!"

The Israelites standing on the wall could almost hear the mocking laughter in Sennacherib's words. His commanders went on to tell the people of Judah to turn their backs on Hezekiah and join the Assyrian army. "Don't listen to Hezekiah when he says that your God will deliver you," they urged. "Choose life and not death!" The Israelites on the wall remained silent, just as King Hezekiah had instructed them.

When Sennacherib's army commanders left and the officials reported what Sennacherib said, Hezekiah tore his clothes, put on sackcloth, and went to the temple of the LORD to pray. He knew that his situation was hopeless without God's help. The prophet Isaiah sent a message to encourage King Hezekiah not to give up. "This is what the LORD says: Do not be afraid of what you have heard. The king of Assyria has spoken against me, so I will defeat him. He will hear news that will make him go back to his own country. And there I will see to it that he is killed by a sword."

King Hezekiah was comforted by the prophet's words, but then he received a chilling letter from Sennacherib:

"Are you still trusting in that God of yours? I know that you have heard what my armies have done to the nations around you. Where were their gods when I destroyed them? Did their gods save them? Not a chance! No one can defeat me!"

Once again, Hezekiah was gripped with fear. He went back to the temple of the LORD, spread the letter out before God, and prayed:

"O LORD, God of Israel, you alone are God over all kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth; all power is in your hands. Please, O God, hear the insults Sennacherib has made against you. It is true that he has destroyed many nations. He threw their gods of wood and stone into the fire, but those were not real gods. O LORD our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all kingdoms on earth may know that you alone are God."

The prophet Isaiah encouraged Hezekiah once more with a word from the LORD:

"I will defend this city and save it, for my sake and for the sake of David my servant."

That very night an angel of the LORD struck down and killed 185,000 soldiers in the Assyrian camp. Sennacherib fled the camp and went back to his country, where he was later killed by his own sons. God heard Hezekiah's prayer and delivered the people of Judah from the hand of their enemies.

# Message Slips

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*The commander to the people of Judah (2 Kings 18:28-35)*

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*Hezekiah to Isaiah (2 Kings 19:4)*

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*Isaiah to Hezekiah (2 Kings 19:6-7)*

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*Sennacherib to Hezekiah (2 Kings 19:10-11)*

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*Isaiah to Hezekiah (2 Kings 19:32-34)*

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# Josiah and the Lost Scrolls

## A Readers' Theater, based on *The Message*

**Reader 1:** Josiah was eight years old when he became king. He ruled for thirty-one years in Jerusalem.

**Reader 2:** He lived the way God wanted. He kept straight on the path blazed by his ancestor David, not one step to either left or right.

**Reader 1:** One day in the eighteenth year of his kingship, King Josiah sent the royal secretary Shaphan to the temple of God with instructions.

**King Josiah:** Go to Hilkiah the high priest and have him count the money that has been brought to the temple of God that the doormen have collected from the people. Have them turn it over to the foremen who are managing the work on the temple of God so they can pay the workers who are repairing God's temple—all the carpenters, construction workers, and masons. Also, authorize them to buy the lumber and stone for the temple repairs. You don't need to get a receipt for the money you give them—they're all honest men.

**Reader 2:** When Shaphan arrived at the temple, Hilkiah, the High Priest, had some important information for him.

**Hilkiah:** I've just found the book of God's revelation, instructing us in God's ways. I found it in the temple!

**Reader 1:** He gave it to Shaphan, and Shaphan read it.

**Reader 2:** Then Shaphan, the royal secretary, came back to the king and gave him an account of what had gone on.

**Shaphan:** Your servants have bagged up the money that has been collected for the temple; they have given it to the foremen to pay the temple workers. But I have some exciting news. Hilkiah the priest gave me a book.

**Reader 1:** Shaphan proceeded to read it to the king.

**Reader 2:** When the king heard what was written in the book, God's revelation, he ripped his robes in dismay. And then he called for Hilkiah the priest and others from his royal court.

**King Josiah:** Go and pray to God for me and for this people—for all of Judah! Find out what we must do in response to what is written in this book that has just been found! God's anger must be burning furiously against us—our ancestors haven't obeyed a thing written in this book, nor followed any of the instructions directed to us.

**Reader 1:** Hilkiah, Shaphan, and the others went straight to Huldah the prophetess and consulted with her.

**Huldah:** This is what the God of Israel says to you: Tell the man who sent you here that I'm on my way to bring the doom of judgment on this place and this people. Every word written in the book read by the king of Judah will happen. And why? Because the people have deserted God and taken up with other gods. They've made me thoroughly angry by setting up their god-making businesses. My anger is raging white-hot against this place, and nobody is going to put it out.

**Reader 2:** The listeners were shaken and surprised by what they heard! They had expected good news.

**Huldah:** Also tell the king of Judah this: "Because you took seriously the doom of judgment I spoke against this place and people, and because you responded in humble repentance, tearing your robe in dismay and weeping before me, I'm taking you seriously. I'll take care of you. You'll have a quiet death and be buried in peace. You won't be around to see the doom that I'm going to bring upon this place."

**Reader 1:** The men took her message back to the king.

**Reader 2:** The king acted immediately, assembling all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem at the temple of God. Then he read out publicly everything written in the Book of the Covenant that was found in the temple of God.

**Reader 1:** The king stood by the pillar and, before God, solemnly committed them all to the covenant: to follow God believingly and obediently; to follow his instructions, heart and soul, about what to believe and do; and to put into practice the entire covenant—all that was written in the book.

**Reader 2:** The people agreed; their commitment was unanimous.

**Reader 1:** Then the king ordered Hilkiah and others to clean the temple—to get rid of everything in the temple of God that had been made for worshipping Baal and Asherah and the cosmic powers.

**Reader 2:** He fired the pagan priests whom the kings of Judah had hired to supervise the local sex-and-religion shrines in the towns of Judah and neighborhoods of Jerusalem. And he ordered that all those shrines be smashed and burned.

**Reader 1:** Then Josiah demolished the iron furnace griddle set up for sacrificing children in the fire. No longer could anyone burn a son or daughter to the god Molech.

**Reader 2:** He hauled off the horse statues honoring the sun god that the kings of Judah had set up near the entrance to the temple, and he burned them as so much rubbish.

**Reader 1:** The king smashed all the altars throughout the land to smithereens. Then he returned to Jerusalem and spoke to the people:

**King Josiah:** From now on celebrate the Passover to the LORD, your God, exactly as directed in this Book of the Covenant.

**Reader 2:** This commanded Passover had not been celebrated since the days the judges judged Israel—none of the kings of Israel or Judah had celebrated it. But in the eighteenth year of the rule of King Josiah this very Passover was celebrated to God in Jerusalem.

**Reader 1:** There was no king to compare with Josiah, neither before nor after, a king who turned in total and repentant obedience to God, heart and mind and strength, following the instructions revealed to and written by Moses. The world would never again see a king like Josiah.

**Reader 2:** But despite Josiah, God's hot anger did not cool; the raging anger ignited by Manasseh burned unchecked. And God, not swerving in his judgment, gave sentence: "I'll remove Judah from my presence in the same way I removed Israel. I'll turn my back on this city, Jerusalem, that I chose, and even from this temple, of which I said, 'My Name lives here.'"



# Lost and Found

Greetings. My name is Shaphan (SHAY-Fuhn). I am King Josiah's secretary. It's been an honor to work for such a good and upright king. I remember that day he became king—he was only eight years old! King Josiah is one of the greatest kings Judah has ever had. He is honest and trustworthy, and he serves God with all of his heart.

You'd never have guessed that Josiah would become such a wonderful king if you looked at his royal family. His father, King Amon, was so wicked that his own officers killed him after only two years as king of Judah. Josiah's grandfather Manasseh wasn't much better. He did many evil things in the LORD's eyes as well. But Josiah turned the entire nation of Judah back to God—and at such a young age!

When Josiah was in his twenties, he called me to run an important errand for him.

“Shaphan, go to Hilkiah the high priest. Tell him to count all the money that he's collected from the people in the temple. He can use that money to buy lumber and stone to repair the LORD's temple. Tell him to also use the money to pay the carpenters, builders, and masons who will do the repair work.”

I went to speak with the high priest Hilkiah, who was very pleased to hear about the king's plans. But little did I know the priest had something very important to tell me. “I have found the Book of the Law!” he said with great excitement. He handed me the worn brown scroll. I could tell that this book was very old—and very important. When I read the book, I was amazed at the words it contained. “King Josiah must hear this right away!” I thought to myself. I carefully tucked the book with the other things I brought on my journey. I felt as if I were carrying precious jewels.

When I returned to the palace, I told the king that the high priest had followed his orders for rebuilding the temple. I then added, “Hilkiah the priest has given me a book.” But I knew that this was no ordinary book. It was the Book of the Law, God's holy book. I read it to King Josiah, and his face grew pale with horror. When I finished, he tore his robes in despair. He and I both knew that our nation was not following the LORD's commands.

“O people of Judah,” he cried, “What have we done? There are still many shrines and temples in our land that are dedicated to false gods. We don't even celebrate Passover any more to honor what God did for our ancestors when he delivered them from Egypt! Quick!” he told me, “Find out what the LORD will do to us because we have not obeyed the words of the law. Go quickly!”

I, the high priest Hilkiah, and other officials of the king went to speak to a prophetess named Huldah to hear what God would say to us. As we expected, God was not pleased with the nation of Judah. “God will bring terrible punishment on this place, just as the books of the law say,” Huldah replied. “But because King Josiah humbled himself before God, he will not see the destruction of Judah in his lifetime.”

We returned to the king and told him everything the prophetess told us. Josiah was relieved. At least our nation had time to turn back to God while Josiah was still king. He gathered all the people of Judah to the temple of the LORD. Standing beside the pillar of the temple, King Josiah read the books of the law aloud for everyone to hear. Then he said, “I will follow the LORD and keep his commands with all my heart and soul.” All the people made a promise that they, too, would serve God.

Then Josiah got rid of all of the false idols and tore down the altars and statues that had been built for other gods. He cleared the temple courtyard of anything that did not honor the one true God, and burned it. When our nation was finally clean of all of these evil things, the king gave an order for all the people to celebrate Passover, which hadn't been celebrated since the days the judges ruled our land!

Since that day, Josiah and the people of Judah served the LORD God. And I have been proud to serve as the secretary for such a faithful and noble king.

# Judah Goes Down

Jeremiah had one important message for God's people. And God asked him to deliver it again and again and again. God said, "Unless you turn from your evil ways, Jerusalem will be destroyed." God had another message, too: "Do not serve and worship false gods."

But Zedekiah, the king of Judah, hated Jeremiah and his messages from God. He hardened his heart against Jeremiah. "Why do you keep reminding me of the God of Israel?" he complained. "Let me do what I want to do."

This went on for eleven years. God kept sending Jeremiah to call his people back to him. And the king kept telling Jeremiah to get lost. God was very patient. But Zedekiah's mind was made up. And all the priests and leaders of the people followed Zedekiah's lead. They became more and more wicked. They trashed God's temple and worshipped false gods. They mocked God's words and scoffed at Jeremiah and the other prophets.

Finally, God was fed up. He was so angry with Zedekiah and the people that he vowed to punish them.

When King Zedekiah looked down from the walls of Jerusalem one day, he saw a huge army camped around the city. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had come, just as Jeremiah has warned them. No one could get out of or into the city.

Finally the people were so tired and scared that they couldn't even guard the city walls anymore. Nebuchadnezzar and his soldiers marched right into the city. They burned the beautiful temple, the royal palace, and all the houses in Jerusalem. They knocked down the high wall around the city. Then they marched all the people of Jerusalem off to Babylon.

Now the people were sorry. They cried and they called out, but it was too late. The Babylonian army put them in chains and hauled them off to Babylon. God's people were now the slaves of King Nebuchadnezzar—all because they didn't listen and obey.

But that wasn't the end of God's people. A long time ago, God had made a promise to Abraham, to Moses, and to David. And God didn't forget about that promise. God sent Jeremiah again with a new message—this time, a message of hope: "After seventy years, I will bring you back to the land of Judah," God said. "Then you will pray to me, and I will listen to you." God promised the people a new beginning.

# Judah Goes Down—Missing Words

Jeremiah had one important message for God’s people. And God asked him to \_\_\_\_\_ it again and again and again. God said, “Unless you \_\_\_\_\_ from your \_\_\_\_\_ ways, Jerusalem will be destroyed.” God had another message, too: “Do not \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ false gods.”

But Zedekiah, the king of Judah, \_\_\_\_\_ Jeremiah and his messages from God. He \_\_\_\_\_ against Jeremiah. “Why do you keep \_\_\_\_\_ of the God of Israel?” he complained. “Let me do \_\_\_\_\_.”

This went on for \_\_\_\_\_ years. God kept \_\_\_\_\_ Jeremiah to call his people back to him. And the king kept telling Jeremiah to \_\_\_\_\_. God was \_\_\_\_\_. But Zedekiah’s mind was \_\_\_\_\_. And all the priests and leaders of the people \_\_\_\_\_ Zedekiah’s lead. They became \_\_\_\_\_. They \_\_\_\_\_ God’s temple and worshipped false gods. They \_\_\_\_\_ God words and \_\_\_\_\_ at Jeremiah and the other prophets.

Finally, God was \_\_\_\_\_. He was so \_\_\_\_\_ with Zedekiah and the people that he \_\_\_\_\_.

When King Zedekiah looked down from the walls of Jerusalem one day, he saw a \_\_\_\_\_ camped around the city. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had come, just as Jeremiah had \_\_\_\_\_ them. No one could get out of or into the city.

Finally the people were so \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ that they couldn’t even \_\_\_\_\_ the city walls anymore. Nebuchadnezzar and his soldiers \_\_\_\_\_. They \_\_\_\_\_ the beautiful temple, the royal palace, and all the houses in Jerusalem. They \_\_\_\_\_ the high wall around the city. Then they marched all the people of Jerusalem off to Babylon.

Now the people \_\_\_\_\_. They \_\_\_\_\_ and they called out, but it was too late. The Babylonian army \_\_\_\_\_ and hauled them off to Babylon. God’s people were now the \_\_\_\_\_ of King Nebuchadnezzar—all because they didn’t \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

But that wasn’t the end of God’s \_\_\_\_\_. A long time ago, God had made a promise to Abraham, to Moses, and to David. And God didn’t \_\_\_\_\_ that promise. God sent Jeremiah again with a new message—this time, a message of hope: “After seventy years, I will \_\_\_\_\_ to the land of Judah,” God said. “Then you will pray to me, and I will listen to you.” God promised the people a \_\_\_\_\_.

# Bible Trivia Questions

1. To help trick the soldiers from Aram, what did the prophet Elisha ask God to strike the army with?

*Answer:* Blindness

(2 Kings 6:18)

2. What did Elisha tell the king of Israel to do with the blinded soldiers?

*Answer:* Give them something to eat and send them home

(2 Kings 6:22)

3. When he was a baby, this king was saved from a wicked queen.

*Answer:* King Joash

(2 Kings 11:1-3)

4. When Joash was king, what did he repair?

*Answer:* The temple

(2 Kings 12:6-7)

5. This king loved and served God. He asked God to protect Jerusalem against the Assyrian army.

*Answer:* King Hezekiah

(2 Kings 18-19)

6. Due to their continued disobedience to God's commands, the nation of Israel was exiled to the country of \_\_\_\_\_.

*Answer:* Assyria

(2 Kings 17:22-23)

7. This king read the book of the Law and was deeply saddened because the nation of Judah did not keep God's commands. He then destroyed all of the false idols in the city of Jerusalem.

*Answer:* King Josiah

(2 Kings 22:11; 23:12-13)

8. Due to their continued disobedience to God's commands, the nation of Judah was exiled to the country of \_\_\_\_\_.

*Answer:* Babylon

(2 Kings 25:1-6)

9. This prophet warned the people of Judah to worship the one true God, not idols.

*Answer:* Jeremiah

(2 Chronicles 36:15-16; 20-21)

10. Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, sent boastful threats to King Hezekiah that he would destroy their land. What did the angel of the Lord do to the Assyrian army?

*Answer:* Struck them dead

(2 Kings 19:35-36)



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