

2 Kings 16-25 - “He Trusted in the Lord God of Israel”

Come, Follow Me 2026 - July 13-19

CFM chapters: 2 Kings 16-25 [↗](#)

Major parallel accounts: Isaiah 36-39 [↗](#), 2 Chronicles 29-33 [↗](#)

Overview

This block is the hinge between the historical books and the prophetic books. The northern kingdom of Israel falls to Assyria, the ten tribes are scattered, Judah narrowly survives under Hezekiah, then Judah’s spiritual collapse resumes under Manasseh and finally ends in Jerusalem’s destruction by Babylon. The Book of Mormon begins in the shadow of these chapters.

The spiritual center of the lesson is not just the fall of kingdoms. It is the question of trust: when Assyria mocks, when Babylon rises, when inherited religion is corrupted, when the book of the law has been forgotten, will covenant people still trust the Lord enough to repent, pray, repair, and renew?

Two bright kings stand in the dark: **Hezekiah**, who removes corrupt worship, prays in the temple, and trusts Isaiah’s word while Assyria surrounds Jerusalem; and **Josiah**, who receives the rediscovered book of the law with a tender heart and leads a national covenant renewal. They cannot permanently save a people who will not repent, but they show what faithful leadership looks like in a collapsing age.¹

Teaching Spine

If teaching this in 25–35 minutes, use this simple flow:

1. **The scattering explains the gathering.** 2 Kings 17 [↗](#) is not dead history. It explains why latter-day Israel must be gathered on both sides of the veil.
 2. **Assyria attacks trust before it attacks walls.** Rabshakeh’s speech is a case study in how the adversary uses intimidation, mockery, isolation, and false promises.
 3. **Hezekiah takes the letter to the temple.** His answer to Assyria is not bravado; it is prayer.
 4. **Josiah lets scripture wound him into repentance.** He hears the book of the law, rends his clothes, seeks prophetic confirmation through Huldah, and renews covenant.
 5. **The Book of Mormon opens inside this world.** Lehi, Jeremiah, scattered Israel, brass plates, altars, and prophetic warnings all become clearer when 2 Kings is in the background.
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Historical and Literary Context

The Late Monarchy World

These chapters cover the late monarchy period, roughly from the age of Isaiah to the fall of Jerusalem. Assyria is the dominant empire first; Babylon rises later. Israel and Judah are small kingdoms trying to survive between great powers. Their political choices are inseparable from their spiritual choices.

2 Kings 16² shows Ahaz importing Assyrian patterns into temple worship. Dr. Mike Day calls this **syncretism** - blending covenant worship with outside religious systems.² That matters because apostasy here is not always atheism. It often looks like keeping the Lord's name while replacing His ways.

2 Kings 17² pauses the narrative to interpret the fall of Israel. The author tells us *why* the north was scattered: they feared other gods, built high places, rejected prophets, hardened their necks, rejected covenant, and followed vanity until they became vain.

Jared Halverson compares that chapter to the Book of Mormon's "thus we see" moments. The historian interrupts the story to make sure the reader does not miss the moral pattern.³

The Two Falls

- **Israel falls to Assyria** in 721 BC. The northern ten tribes are scattered.
- **Judah survives Assyria** under Hezekiah, but later falls to Babylon in 586 BC.
- **The Book of Mormon begins before Judah's final fall**, when Lehi and Jeremiah warn Jerusalem that Babylon really will destroy it.

That last point is crucial. Jerusalem had once been miraculously delivered from Assyria. A later generation may have assumed, "The city cannot fall." Lehi's message would have sounded impossible to people whose collective memory included Hezekiah's deliverance.⁴

Major Themes

1. Scattering Is What Happens When Covenant Identity Collapses

The scattering of Israel is not merely forced migration. It is covenant disintegration made visible on a map.

2 Kings 17:7-15² traces the spiritual sequence:

- God delivered them from Egypt.
- They feared other gods.
- They secretly practiced what was not right.

- They built high places instead of honoring the Lord's house.
- They rejected prophets and seers.
- They rejected statutes, covenant, and testimony.
- They followed vanity and became vain.

Halverson's line is worth keeping: Assyria did not merely want the edges of the kingdom; it wanted the capital. Likewise, the adversary is not content with small compromises. He wants the center.⁵

For latter-day disciples, this connects directly to gathering Israel. President Nelson's emphasis on the gathering makes more sense when we understand how Israel was scattered. The gathering is not just geographical return; it is coming to the true knowledge of the Messiah, receiving covenants, and helping others do the same on both sides of the veil.⁶

Teaching question: Where do people today lose covenant identity slowly before they lose it visibly?

2. Rabshakeh Is the Voice of Spiritual Intimidation

In 2 Kings 18¹⁸, Assyria surrounds Jerusalem, and Rabshakeh becomes the spokesman of fear. His argument is not subtle:

- Your allies cannot save you.
- Your God cannot save you.
- Your leaders are deceiving you.
- Every other nation has fallen.
- Surrender and you will have peace.

His most dangerous line is essentially: do not let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord (2 Kings 18:30¹⁸).

Mike Day compares Rabshakeh's taunting to the adversary's negative tapes: do not testify, do not trust, you are outnumbered, this will not work.⁷ Halverson points out how Rabshakeh tries to sound theologically informed. He says Hezekiah offended the Lord by removing the high places, when in truth Hezekiah was purifying worship.⁸ That is one of Satan's cleaner tricks: accuse faithful reform of being faithlessness.

Teaching angle: Ask: "What are modern Rabshakeh messages?" Then list them:

- "You are the only one trying to live this."
- "Prophets do not understand the real world."
- "You are safer if you make terms with the world."
- "The Lord has not delivered others; why would He deliver you?"
- "Religious standards are the siege, not the protection."

3. Hezekiah Takes the Letter to the House of the Lord

Hezekiah's best moment comes in 2 Kings 19:14-19². He receives the Assyrian threat, goes up to the house of the Lord, spreads the letter before Him, and prays.

The prayer is honest. Hezekiah does not pretend Assyria is weak. He says the kings of Assyria really have destroyed nations. But then he draws the line: those gods were the work of men's hands; the Lord alone made heaven and earth.

This is a pattern for discipleship:

1. Do not deny the threat.
2. Do not let the threat define God.
3. Take the actual document, diagnosis, accusation, fear, bill, letter, or burden into the Lord's presence.
4. Ask for deliverance in a way that reveals God to others.

Isaiah's answer is one of the great divine reversals: "I have heard" (2 Kings 19:20³). Three words can be enough.

Teaching question: What would it mean this week to "spread the letter before the Lord" instead of carrying it alone?

4. A Remnant Shall Take Root Downward and Bear Fruit Upward

Isaiah promises Hezekiah that a remnant will "take root downward, and bear fruit upward" (2 Kings 19:30⁴; Isaiah 37:31⁵).

That phrase is one of the most teachable images in the block. Fruit upward depends on roots downward. Public spiritual strength depends on hidden covenant depth.

Hezekiah's Jerusalem is surrounded, but the Lord is still thinking in agricultural terms: root, remnant, fruit, future. Empire thinks in siege engines. God thinks in covenants.

Application: The visible part of discipleship – callings, teaching, parenting, ministering, leadership – cannot outgrow the hidden root system of prayer, scripture, repentance, temple worship, and covenant loyalty.

5. Hezekiah's Reforms: Breaking Nehushtan

2 Kings 18:4⁶ says Hezekiah broke the bronze serpent Moses had made because Israel had begun burning incense to it. He called it **Nehushtan**, something like "a piece of bronze."

That is a stunning reform. The bronze serpent had once been a God-given saving symbol (Numbers 21:8-9⁷; Alma 33:19-22⁸). But a holy symbol had become an idol.

Halverson's teaching point is sharp: never confuse the means with the end.⁹ Anything that once pointed to Christ can become a substitute for Christ if we cling to the object, program, ritual, memory, or method more than the Redeemer it was meant to reveal.

Teaching question: What good thing can become “Nehushtan” if it stops pointing us to Christ?

6. Manasseh Shows the Damage Sin Does, and Chronicles Shows the Mercy God Still Offers

Kings portrays Manasseh as one of Judah’s worst kings. He rebuilds high places, worships Baal and the host of heaven, puts idolatrous altars in the temple, practices child sacrifice, and sheds innocent blood (2 Kings 21¹⁰).

Kings emphasizes the long-term damage: Manasseh’s sins become part of why Judah eventually falls. Sin is never private when leadership, family, and culture are involved.

But 2 Chronicles 33¹⁰ adds another angle: when Manasseh is carried away in affliction, he humbles himself, prays, and is restored. Halverson calls this one of the great repentance stories because God can still be entreated even by someone as corrupted as Manasseh.¹⁰

Both truths matter:

- No one is beyond repentance.
- Repentance does not erase all downstream consequences for others.

Amon, Manasseh’s son, follows the worst of his father’s earlier pattern and not the humility of his later repentance. That makes the parental and leadership lesson sobering: a temporary spiritual departure for one generation can become a permanent inheritance for the next.

7. Josiah Lets Scripture Correct Him

Josiah begins reigning as a child. Chronicles adds a growth pattern: at 16 he begins to seek the God of David; at 20 he begins purging idolatry; at 26 the book of the law is found during temple repairs.¹¹

When Josiah hears the book read, he rends his clothes. He does not defend himself. He does not blame his fathers only. He does not ask for an easier interpretation. He recognizes the gap between God’s covenant and Judah’s life.

That is a rare response to scripture. Many people read scripture to confirm themselves. Josiah lets scripture judge him.

Teaching question: When was the last time scripture corrected you instead of merely comforting you?

8. Huldah the Prophetess: Revelation in a Woman’s Voice

Josiah’s leaders go to Huldah the prophetess to inquire of the Lord (2 Kings 22:14-20¹¹). She speaks with prophetic authority: “Thus saith the Lord God of Israel.”

This is a powerful moment for a class. The king, priests, scribes, and royal officials recognize Huldah as someone who can reveal the mind of God. Halverson notes that she spiritually outranks her setting; no

one in the narrative seems scandalized that a woman is the prophetic voice confirming the meaning of the book.¹²

Her message holds two truths together:

- Judah's destruction is coming because the people have forsaken the Lord.
- Josiah will be spared because his heart was tender and he humbled himself.

The phrase "because thine heart was tender" is the key. Josiah could not control all of Judah's future, but he could control the softness of his own heart.

9. From Book of the Law to Book of the Covenant

When the record is found, it is called the **book of the law** (2 Kings 22:8¹⁴). When Josiah gathers the people to the temple, it is called the **book of the covenant** (2 Kings 23:2¹⁵).

That shift matters. Law can sound transactional. Covenant is relational. Josiah does not merely launch a compliance program; he gathers all the people, reads the words in the house of the Lord, stands by a pillar, and renews covenant "with all their heart and all their soul" (2 Kings 23:3¹⁶).

This is reform at its best:

- Scripture is rediscovered.
- Prophetic confirmation is sought.
- Covenant is renewed publicly.
- Idols are removed practically.
- Passover is restored.

It is not enough to feel bad about neglect. Josiah turns tenderness into action.

10. The Book of Mormon Reads These Chapters From Inside the House

2 Kings 16-25 is the world of Lehi.

Dr. Mike Day's strongest Book of Mormon connection is that Josiah's reforms and Deuteronomic religion may help explain tensions in **1 Nephi**¹⁷. Lehi sees God, angels, and mysteries; he builds altars outside Jerusalem; he prophesies Jerusalem's destruction. Laman and Lemuel may have seen some of that as religiously suspect, especially if they had absorbed a reform movement emphasizing centralization, suspicion of dreamers, and the temple as the only authorized sacrificial site.¹³

Even without settling every scholarly question, the practical point is rich:

- The Book of Mormon knows this world.
- Lehi's family is living in the aftermath of Hezekiah, Manasseh, Josiah, and the rise of Babylon.
- The brass plates preserve a record through which Nephi can testify of Christ with unusual clarity.

- The scattering and gathering are not abstract doctrines; they are family history.

The Book of Mormon does not replace the Old Testament. It helps us read it with Christ at the center.

Words and Phrases Worth Slowing Down For

- **Rabshakeh** - likely an Assyrian title, not a personal name. In the story he functions as the empire's public voice of intimidation.
 - **Nehushtan** - the bronze serpent reduced to "a piece of bronze." A saving symbol had become an idol.
 - **Asherah / grove** - often rendered "grove" in the King James Version; connected with Canaanite worship and repeatedly removed by reforming kings.
 - **Syncretism** - blending covenant worship with surrounding religious or political forms. Ahaz is a major example.
 - **Remnant** - the surviving covenant people. Isaiah's promise that the remnant will take root downward and bear fruit upward is the hope inside judgment.
 - **Book of the law / book of the covenant** - the rediscovered scripture becomes the basis for relational covenant renewal, not mere rule-keeping.
 - **Tender heart** - Huldah's explanation for why Josiah is spared. The opposite of the stiff neck in 2 Kings 17.
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Cross-References

- 2 Kings 17:13-15 [↗](#) - Prophets warn Israel, but the people reject statutes, covenant, and testimony.
- 2 Kings 18:4-6 [↗](#) - Hezekiah removes corrupt worship and cleaves to the Lord.
- 2 Kings 18:30 [↗](#) - Rabshakeh's core message: do not trust the Lord.
- 2 Kings 19:14-20 [↗](#) - Hezekiah spreads the letter before the Lord and receives the answer, "I have heard."
- 2 Kings 19:30 [↗](#) - The remnant takes root downward and bears fruit upward.
- 2 Kings 22:8-13 [↗](#) - The book of the law is found; Josiah is pierced by scripture.
- 2 Kings 22:14-20 [↗](#) - Huldah speaks the word of the Lord.
- 2 Kings 23:1-3 [↗](#) - Josiah gathers the people to the temple and renews covenant.
- 2 Chronicles 33:10-13 [↗](#) - Manasseh humbles himself and is heard.
- Isaiah 37:31-35 [↗](#) - Isaiah promises the remnant and the Lord's defense of Jerusalem.
- 1 Nephi 1:18-20 [↗](#) - Lehi warns Jerusalem in the same late-monarchy world.
- 1 Nephi 10:12-14 [↗](#) - Nephi explains scattering and gathering through the Messiah.
- Alma 33:19-22 [↗](#) - The bronze serpent points to Christ, which clarifies why Hezekiah had to destroy it once it became an idol.
- 3 Nephi 10:4-6 [↗](#) - The Lord's repeated desire to gather His people as a hen gathers her chickens.

Questions for Study or Teaching

1. Why is understanding the scattering of Israel essential for understanding the gathering of Israel?
 2. Which part of Rabshakeh's speech sounds most like the adversary's voice today?
 3. What "letter" do you need to spread before the Lord rather than keep replaying in your head?
 4. What does it mean to take root downward before bearing fruit upward?
 5. What good thing in your life could become a Nehushtan if it stops pointing to Christ?
 6. How do you hold both truths in Manasseh's story: God can forgive deeply, and sin can still wound others?
 7. What is your usual reaction when scripture corrects you?
 8. Why does Huldah matter in this story?
 9. What is the difference between treating scripture as a book of law and receiving it as a book of covenant?
 10. How does this block change the way you read the opening chapters of the Book of Mormon?
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A Possible Closing Thought

The final chapters of Kings are tragic, but not hopeless. Israel is scattered, yet the scattering creates the need for a latter-day gathering. Jerusalem falls, yet Lehi's family carries scripture and covenant into a new promised land. Hezekiah is surrounded, yet the Lord hears. Josiah discovers how far his people have drifted, yet a tender heart still matters.

The lesson is not "good kings fix everything." They do not. The lesson is that in any generation, even one under siege or in decline, someone can still trust the Lord, repair the temple, dust off the word, ask a prophet, renew covenant, and stand with a tender heart.

Previous: 1 Kings 12-22 — If the Lord Be God, Follow Him

Next: 2 Chronicles 14-20; 26; 30 - Come Follow Me

Footnotes

1. Come, Follow Me - For Home and Church: Old Testament 2026, July 13-19, "He Trusted in the Lord God of Israel": 2 Kings 16-25. ↩
2. 29 Dr. Mike Day Show Notes, Part 1, discussion of Ahaz, Assyrian influence, and syncretism in 2 Kings 16. ↩
3. 29 Come Follow Me - 2 Kings 14-25 - The Scattering of Israel, discussion of 2 Kings 17 as an interpretive pause like the Book of Mormon's "thus we see." ↩

4. 29 Dr. Mike Day Show Notes, Part 1, Hezekiah's deliverance as background for why Lehi's warning would be difficult to receive. ↩
 5. 29 Come Follow Me - 2 Kings 14-25 - The Scattering of Israel, treatment of Assyria conquering the capital and scattering Israel. ↩
 6. 30 2 Kings 17-25 Taylor and Tyler Come Follow Me Insights, opening discussion of scattering and gathering; see also 29 Dr. Mike Day Show Notes, Part 1, 1 Nephi 10 connection. ↩
 7. 29 Dr. Mike Day Show Notes, Part 1, Rabshakeh as a voice of discouragement and accusation. ↩
 8. 29 Come Follow Me - 2 Kings 14-25 - The Scattering of Israel, Rabshakeh's rhetoric against Hezekiah's reforms. ↩
 9. 29 Come Follow Me - 2 Kings 14-25 - The Scattering of Israel, description of Hezekiah destroying Nehushtan. ↩
 10. 29 Come Follow Me - 2 Kings 14-25 - The Scattering of Israel, Manasseh in Kings and Chronicles. ↩
 11. 29 Come Follow Me - 2 Kings 14-25 - The Scattering of Israel, Josiah's age pattern from 2 Chronicles 34. ↩
 12. 29 Come Follow Me - 2 Kings 14-25 - The Scattering of Israel, Huldah the prophetess and Josiah's tender heart. ↩
 13. 29 Dr. Mike Day Show Notes, Part 2, discussion of Josiah's reforms, Deuteronomy, Laman and Lemuel, Lehi's visions, and Book of Mormon theology. ↩
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