

OLD TESTAMENT GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASS

Green Mountain 1st Ward, Lakewood, Colorado

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Lesson 30: "Come to the House of the Lord" (2 Chronicles 29–30; 32; 34)

Introduction



But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life—John 4:14

To help defend Jerusalem against attacks by the Assyrians, King Hezekiah diverted the water of the spring of Gihon to the pool of Siloam, inside the city walls (2 Chronicles 32:2–4, 30; Bible Dictionary, "Hezekiah's Tunnel," 702). This was done by digging a conduit (tunnel) for the water through about 1770 feet of limestone rock. Hezekiah then ordered that the fountains outside the city be covered to deny the Assyrians easy access to the water. Without this water inside the walls of the city, the people of Jerusalem would not have survived the siege by the Assyrians.

Just as the water from the spring of Gihon was vital for the physical survival of Hezekiah's people during their battles with the Assyrians, living water is essential for our spiritual survival during our battles with Satan.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained that living water is "*the words of eternal life, the message of salvation, the truths about God and his kingdom; it is the doctrines of the gospel*" (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 3 vols. [1966–73], 1:151).

One way to receive living water is to go to the temple, the house of the Lord, where we may be endowed with power and understanding, be instructed by the Lord, and feel peace and joy.

Worship in the temple was an important protection for the Israelites in Hezekiah's time, and it can also be an important protection for us today.

Lesson Highlights

- Hezekiah orders the house of the Lord to be cleansed.
- The Assyrians invade the kingdom of Judah. Isaiah and Hezekiah pray for help, and an angel of the Lord destroys much of the Assyrian army.
- Josiah and his people covenant to serve the Lord.

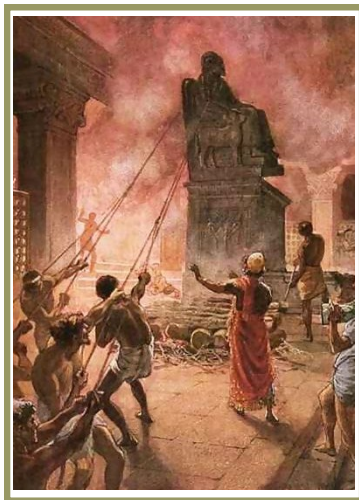
A study of this lesson will help inspire us to receive the promised blessings that come from temple work and scripture study.

Next Week

#31 "Happy Is the Man That Findeth Wisdom"
(Proverbs and Ecclesiastes)



Hezekiah Reopens the Temple,
T. C. Duddale



King Josiah cleansing the land of
idols—William Brassey Hole

“The story of King Josiah in the Old Testament is a most profitable one to “liken ... unto [our]selves.” (1 Ne. 19:24.) To me, it is one of the finest stories in all of the scriptures.”

—Spencer W. Kimball
(Teachings of Presidents of the Church (2006), 59–68)

Hezekiah orders the house of the Lord to be cleansed. (2 Chronicles 29–30)

Hezekiah’s father, Ahaz, was a wicked king who had desecrated the temple of the Lord and “shut up [its] doors” (2 Chronicles 28:24). When Hezekiah became king of Judah, the Southern Kingdom, in 715 B.C., one of the first things he did was open the doors of the temple and order the priests and Levites to cleanse and sanctify it (2 Chronicles 29:3-5). According to Hezekiah, the temple needed to be sanctified because the people had been “turn[ing] away [our] faces from the habitation of the Lord”.

2 Chronicles 29:8-10 - Because of their disregard for the temple, the Lord had forsaken them. By cleansing the temple and preparing it for worship again, Hezekiah hoped the Lord would turn away his wrath.

2 Chronicles 29:20-21, 29-31, 36 - Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem consecrated themselves, offered sacrifices, and worshipped when the temple had been cleansed.

By the time of Hezekiah’s reign, much of the kingdom of Israel [the Northern King-

dom] had been taken captive by the Assyrians. Hezekiah promised the remaining Israelites that if they would “turn again unto the Lord,” the captives would be released. Instead, most of the people of Israel rejected Hezekiah’s invitation. Because of the wickedness of the people, the remainder of the kingdom of Israel was taken captive several years later (see 2 Kings 18:10-12). The captive Israelites became the lost ten tribes.

The Assyrians invade the kingdom of Judah. Isaiah and Hezekiah pray for help, and an angel of the Lord destroys much of the Assyrian army. (2 Chronicles 32:1–23)

2 Chronicles 32:1 - After Israel was taken into captivity, the Assyrians began to attack Judah.

2 Chronicles 32:6-8 - Hezekiah told his people that the Lord was with them so they should be strong.

2 Chronicles 32:9-17 - Sennacherib sent his servants to speak to and scare the people in Jerusalem by telling them that their God could not save them any more than other nations’ gods had saved them.

Of course, today Satan tries to convince us that God cannot or will not help us.

2 Chronicles 32:20 - Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah prayed to heaven for protection.

Their prayers were answered as the Lord slew the leaders of the Assyrian army. The Lord’s protection was received because of their righteousness, which was demonstrated by their worship at the temple.

President Howard W. Hunter encouraged: *“Let us be a temple-attending people. Attend the temple as frequently as personal circumstances allow. Keep a picture of a temple in your home that your children may see it.*

Teach them about the purposes of the house of the Lord. Have them plan from their earliest years to go there and to remain worthy of that blessing. If proximity to a temple does not allow frequent attendance, gather in the history of your family and prepare the names for the sacred ordinances performed only in the temple. This family research is essential to the work of the temples, and blessings surely will come to those who do that work” (Ensign, Nov. 1994, 8).

Josiah and his people covenant to serve the Lord. (2 Chronicles 34)

Hezekiah was succeeded as king by his son Manasseh and his grandson Amon. Manasseh ruled Judah in wickedness, placing idols in the temple and leading the people to sin. Manasseh eventually humbled himself, however, and repented before his death. Manasseh’s son Amon also worshiped the idols his father had made. Amon did not repent, and was slain by his own servants. His son Josiah became

king of Judah when eight years old. He became a righteous king who rejected the wicked ways of his father and grandfather.

2 Chronicles 34:1-2 - King Josiah “did which was right in the sight of the Lord.” Josiah sought the true God, destroyed idolatry in the kingdom, and sent people to repair the temple. He was only 15 or 16 years old when he began making these important changes.

2 Chronicles 34:14 - During the renovation of the temple, Hilkiah the high priest found a book of the law of the Lord. By this time in Judah’s history the written law apparently had been lost and was virtually unknown.

2 Chronicles 34:19, 21 - When the book of the law was read to him, Josiah was caused to mourn because the wrath of the Lord would be poured out on he and his people.

2 Chronicles 34:22-25 – The prophetess Huldah said the judgment of God would come upon Judah because the people had failed to keep the word of the Lord and do what the scriptures taught.

President Ezra Taft Benson described the dangers of neglecting one of our books of scripture, the Book of Mormon: *“In 1829, the Lord warned the Saints that they are not to trifle with sacred things (see D&C 6:12). Surely the Book of Mormon is a sacred thing, and yet many trifle with it, or in other words, take it lightly, treat it as though it is of little importance. In 1832, as some early missionaries returned from their fields of labor, the Lord reproved them for treating the Book of Mormon lightly. As a result of that attitude, he said, their minds had been darkened. Not only had treating this sacred book*

lightly brought a loss of light to themselves, it had also brought the whole Church under condemnation, even all the children of Zion. And then the Lord said, ‘And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon’ (D&C 84:54-57). ... If the early Saints were rebuked for treating [it] lightly, are we under any less condemnation if we do the same?”

(Ensign, Nov. 1986, 4-5).

2 Chronicles 34:26, 28 - Huldah said Josiah would die in peace because of his righteousness.

2 Chronicles 34:29-30 -

After Josiah found that his people would be condemned because they had not done as the scriptures instructed, he called all the people to the temple and read the scriptures to them.

He did this knowing that the people could not follow God’s laws if they did not know them.

President Spencer W. Kimball said: *“The Lord is not trifling with us when he gives us these things, for ‘unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.’ (Luke 12:48).*

Access to these things means responsibility for them. We must study the scriptures according to the Lord’s commandment (see 3 Nephi 23:1-5); and we must let them govern our lives” (Ensign, Sept. 1976, 5).

2 Chronicles 34:31-33 -

While Josiah and his people were at the temple, they made a covenant with the Lord to follow the Lord and keep his commandments with all their hearts and souls.

“I feel strongly that we must all of us return to the scriptures just as King Josiah did and let them work mightily within us, impelling us to an unwavering determination to serve the Lord.”

—**Spencer W. Kimball**
(Teachings of Presidents of the Church (2006), 59–68)

Conclusion

The people in the kingdom of Judah eventually became so wicked that the Lord allowed them to be taken captive (2 Chronicles 36:14–21). During their reigns, however, Hezekiah and Josiah had sought to strengthen the people by turning their attention to the temple and the scriptures. As we focus our attention on obeying the Lord’s commandments and being worthy to enter the temple, we will be blessed with spiritual strength and joy. Enjoy the blessings of the temple by living worthily and attending as often as possible.

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the teachings discussed in this lesson.

- In what ways might we be guilty of “turn[ing] away [our] faces from the habitation of the Lord”?
- Why is it important to keep unclean things out of the temple?
- What can we learn from Hezekiah about the proper relationship between trusting in our own efforts and trusting in the Lord?
- In what ways does Satan try to convince us that God cannot or will not help us?
- What will happen to us if we neglect to read the scriptures and apply their teachings?