

# TESTIMONY (MARTYRDOM) OF ISAIAH

## CHAPTER 1

It came to pass in the twenty-sixth<sup>1</sup> year of his reign, that Hezekiah king of Judah<sup>2</sup> summoned his son Manasseh who was eleven years old.<sup>3</sup> Now he was his only son. **2** And he summoned him into the presence of the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, and into the presence of Jashub, the son of Isaiah.<sup>4,5</sup> **3** And while *Hezekiah* was giving commands, Jashub the son of Isaiah stood by.

**4** But when they were no longer in the presence of Manasseh, Isaiah spoke to Hezekiah the king alone,<sup>6</sup> “As Yahweh lives, whose name has not been sent into this world,<sup>7</sup> and as his beloved son lives,<sup>8</sup> and as the spirit which utters within me lives, all these commands and these words will have no effect on your son Manasseh, and through the agency of his hands I will depart from life<sup>9</sup> while my body is being tortured. **5** For the Adversary will dwell in the heart of your son Manasseh. **6** And I will be sawn into two by him, from head to feet, with a woodcutting saw; and he will cause many in Jerusalem and in Judah to abandon the living God and to bow-down to idols.”<sup>10</sup>

**7** Now when Hezekiah heard these words he was exceedingly grieved, and tore his robes, and threw dust upon his head, and put on sackcloth and ashes,<sup>11</sup> and fell on his face as *though* he was a corpse.<sup>12</sup>

**8** And the great prophet of God,<sup>13</sup> Isaiah said to him, “Nothing shall avail you from this day forth.<sup>14</sup> For the Adversary’s<sup>15</sup> counsel against your son<sup>16</sup> Manasseh is complete.”

**9** But in that hour,<sup>17</sup> Hezekiah rationalized that he would kill his son Manasseh.<sup>18</sup>

**10** And the great<sup>19</sup> Isaiah said to King<sup>20</sup> Hezekiah, “The Beloved has made your plan ineffective, for the<sup>21</sup> purpose of your heart shall not be accomplished,<sup>22</sup> for with this calling have I been called<sup>23</sup> and I shall inherit the inheritance of the Beloved.”<sup>24</sup>

## CHAPTER 2

Now after this, it came to pass that Hezekiah came-to-his-end and was added to his fathers and his son<sup>25</sup> Manasseh received his kingdom.<sup>26</sup> But he<sup>27</sup> did not remember the instructions of his father Hezekiah,<sup>28</sup> instead he forgot all of<sup>29</sup> them. And Sammael dwelled within Manasseh and clung close to him.<sup>30</sup> **2** And he got rid of the service of God,<sup>31</sup> and he was willing to follow golden and silver idols,<sup>32</sup> and he served the Adversary and his messengers and his powers. **3** And all of those who belonged to his father’s house, who had been with Hezekiah,<sup>33</sup> he turned away from<sup>34</sup> the words of wisdom and from<sup>35</sup> the service and adoration<sup>36</sup> of God. And Manasseh served the Slanderer and his messengers, the profane and unclean idols.<sup>37</sup> **4** And *the Slanderer* rejoiced over Jerusalem because of Manasseh, and he enabled him in the insurrection and in the lawlessness which was sown *abroad* in Jerusalem. **5** And the sorcery,<sup>38</sup> and the magic and the divination and the augury, and the sexual-immorality,<sup>39</sup> and the adultery,<sup>40</sup> and the persecution<sup>41</sup> of the righteous-ones increased in the hands of Manasseh and the hands of Belchira, and<sup>42</sup> the hands of Tobiah the Canaanite, and the hands Johanan of Anathoth, and in the hands of Zadok, the one who was over these operations.<sup>43</sup> **6** And behold, the rest of the accounts are written in the book of the Kings of Judah and Israel.<sup>44</sup>

**7** And when Isaiah the son of Amoz saw the great iniquity which was being committed in Jerusalem<sup>45</sup> and the bowing-down to and worship of the Adversary and his procession,<sup>46</sup> he withdrew from Jerusalem and settled in Bethlehem of Judah. **8** But there was also much lawlessness here, so he withdrew from Bethlehem and settled on the mountain in a desert region.<sup>47</sup> And not only he, but instead<sup>48</sup> Micaiah the prophet, and the aged Hananiah, and Joel and Habakkuk, and his son Jashub,<sup>49</sup> and many of the faithful-ones who had faith in the ascension into heaven,<sup>50</sup> withdrew and settled on the mountain.<sup>51</sup>

**9** And everyone there was clothed in sackcloth, and they were all prophets, nor did they have anything with them; instead they were destitute, and they all lamented bitterly because Israel had gone astray. **10** And they had nothing to eat except wild herbs which they gathered on the mountains, and they cooked them. They lived there together with Isaiah the prophet. And they dwelt there for two years of days.

And after this, while they were in the desert, there was a certain man in Samaria named Belchira,<sup>52</sup> who was of the family of Zedekiah<sup>53</sup> son of Chenaanah, the false-prophet whose dwelling was in Bethlehem.<sup>54</sup> And Zedekiah<sup>55</sup> son of Chennanah was the brother of his father, but had been a teacher of the 400 prophets of Baal<sup>56</sup> in the days of Ahab, king of Israel. This Belchira had himself smitten and reproved Micaiah the son of Imlah the prophet. And he was been abused by Ahab and Micaiah<sup>57</sup> cast into prison, and he was with Zedekiah the false-prophet,<sup>58</sup> by Ahaziah the son of Ahab, king in Samaria.

And Elijah the prophet of Tebon of Gilead reproved Ahaziah and Samaria, and prophesied regarding Ahaziah that he should die on his bed of sickness, and that Samaria would be delivered into the hand of Shalmaneser because he had slain the prophets of God. And when the false-prophets,<sup>59</sup> who were with Ahaziah

<sup>1</sup> [1] Eth / Gk1 “twenty-fifth” / Cop “sixteenth”

<sup>2</sup> [1] Eth / Gk1 “Jerusalem”

<sup>3</sup> [1] Eth / Gk1 incorrectly add

<sup>4</sup> [1] Eth / Gk1 “... years old, before the prophet Isaiah and Isaiah’s son Jashub”

<sup>5</sup> [1] Gk1 / most have a lengthy interpolation here “This was in order to hand over to him the words of righteousness, which the king himself had witnessed and also the words regarding the eternal judgments and of the torments of Gehenna, and of the Chief of this World and his messengers, his authority, his powers, and the words concerning faith in the Beloved, which he himself had seen in the fifteenth year of his reign during his sickness.

And he handed to him the written words, which Shebna the secretary had written out, and also those, which Isaiah the son of Amos has given to him and to the prophets. That they might write down, and store up with him what he himself had seen in the house of the king concerning the robes of the holy ones, and concerning the transformation, the persecution, and the ascension of the Beloved. How in the twentieth year of the reign of Hezekiah, Isaiah had seen the words of this prophecy, and had handed them to his son Jashub.”

<sup>6</sup> [1] Eth / Gk1 replaces of “And while Hezekiah...the king alone” with a lengthy interpolation “And when Isaiah had come, he delivered to Hezekiah the accounts of the prophecy, which the happy Isaiah himself saw, and the descent and going-out of the Beloved-One from the seventh heaven into the Netherworld, and the transformation by which he was transformed in front of his learners, and the accounts which King Hezekiah himself saw in his sickness. And when Somnas the scribe heard, and Asour the recorder, that the great Isaiah was coming from Gilgal to Jerusalem, and with him forty sons of prophets, and Jasoum his son, they brought a message to Hezekiah about their coming. But King Hezekiah, having heard these things, rejoiced with exceedingly great joy; and having gone out for a meeting, he took hold of the hand of the happy Isaiah and led him into the house of his kingdom. And he directed that a seat be set down for him. But he did not sit upon the seat; instead, he reclined on the bed of the king. King Hezekiah, taking his son Manasseh, led him to the happy prophet Isaiah, in order that he might place his hands on him and bless him. But when the great prophet Isaiah saw Manasseh, he laughed at him, and spoke to Hezekiah, “I am not able to bless Manasseh, who is about to punish me with great tortures and bitter deeds. And Hezekiah spoke to the holy prophet Isaiah, “Father, bless my son Manasseh!” But he spoke,

<sup>7</sup> [1] Gk1 / Eth add

<sup>8</sup> [1] likely Christian interpolation (Gk1 “and as his beloved son lives” / Eth “and as the Beloved of Yahweh lives”)

<sup>9</sup> [1] Gk1 add

<sup>10</sup> [1] Gk1 / Eth “And he will cause many to abandon the true faith, and Belial will dwell in Manasseh, and I will be sawn in half by his hands.”

<sup>11</sup> [1] Eth / Gk1 add

<sup>12</sup> [1] Gk1 / Eth omit “as though...corpse”

<sup>13</sup> [1] Eth / Gk1 add

<sup>14</sup> [1] Eth / Gk1 “You will gain nothing for yourself by weeping and sorrowing”

<sup>15</sup> [1] Gk1 / Eth “For Sammael’s”

<sup>16</sup> [1] Gk1 / Eth omit “your son”

<sup>17</sup> [1] Eth[B,C] / Eth[D,E] “from that day. And” / Eth[A] “from those words. And” / Gk1 “But in that hour”

<sup>18</sup> [1] Eth / Gk1 add here “But Somnas the recorder said to the holy prophet Isaiah, “King Hezekiah plans to kill-off his son on account of you.”

<sup>19</sup> [1] Eth / Gk1 add

<sup>20</sup> [1] Eth / Gk1 add

<sup>21</sup> [1] likely Christian interpolation

<sup>22</sup> [1] Eth / Gk1 “for you will in no way do this”

<sup>23</sup> [1] Eth / Gk1 “for it is necessary for me that, having been punished with everything at the hands of your son Manasseh, to go out of his life.”

<sup>24</sup> [1] likely Christian interpolation(Eth) / Gk1 add here (before the manuscript breaks off) “Now the great Isaiah, excavated in the ground in Jerusalem with household hands, and he found much water, and he named it ‘Well of Siloam’, which means, ‘Sent’.

<sup>25</sup> [2] Eth / Gk1 add “and was...fathers” & “his son”

<sup>26</sup> [2] Gk1 / Eth “Manasseh became king.”

<sup>27</sup> [2] Eth / Gk1 “But King Manasseh”

<sup>28</sup> [2] Gk1 / Eth add

<sup>29</sup> [1] Eth / Gk1 add

<sup>30</sup> [1] Gk1 / Eth add

<sup>31</sup> [2] Gk1 / Eth “And he ceased serving the God of his father”

<sup>32</sup> [2] Gk1 / Eth omit “and he was...idols”

<sup>33</sup> [2] Gk1 / Eth add

<sup>34</sup> [2] one Gk1 / one Gk1, Eth omit “from”

<sup>35</sup> [2] Gk1 / Eth add

<sup>36</sup> [2] Gk1 / Eth omit “and adoration”

<sup>37</sup> [3] Gk1 / Eth “And Manasseh turned his heart aside to serve Belial. For the messenger of lawlessness, who is the ruler of this age, is Belial, whose name is also Matanbuchus.”

<sup>38</sup> may also be translated “drug-use”

<sup>39</sup> [3] Gk2, Eth / Gk1 “sorcery, and the sexual-immorality, and the enchantment, and the augury, and the falsehood”

<sup>40</sup> [2] Gk1, Gk2 / Eth add

<sup>41</sup> literally “pursuit”

<sup>42</sup> [2] Gk2 / Eth add ([A] “Belachira” / [B,C] “Melchira” / [D] “Belchira”)

<sup>43</sup> [2] Gk2 / Eth[A] “through Zaliq Neway” / Eth[B,C,D] “through Zaliqa”

<sup>44</sup> [2] Gk2, Eth / Gk1 omit “and the persecution...and Israel.”

<sup>45</sup> [2] Eth[B,C,D] / Eth[A] “saw the great iniquity...” / Gk1 “saw the developing lawlessness and debauchery in her”

<sup>46</sup> [7] Gk2 / Eth “and his wantonness” / Gk1 omit altogether

<sup>47</sup> [ ] Gk2, Eth / Gk1 “And leaving Jerusalem, he sat down opposite Bethlehem. But there much lawlessness there. From there, leaving again, he sat down on a certain mountain, a quiet and clean place, glorifying without ceasing the humane God.”

<sup>48</sup> [2] Gk2, Eth / Gk1 add

<sup>49</sup> [2] Gk2, Eth / Gk1 “Micaiah the prophet, and Habakkuk, and his son Jashub, and the aged Hanan”

<sup>50</sup> [2] Eth / Gk2 “who believed that he had ascended into heaven” / Gk1 omit altogether

<sup>51</sup> [2] most likely an interpolation (Gk1 omit “withdrew and settled on the mountain”)

<sup>52</sup> [2] Eth[A], Lat / Eth[B,C,D] “Melchira” / Gk2 “Belicheiar”

<sup>53</sup> [2] Gk2, Eth[A,B,C] / Eth[D] “Hezekiah”

<sup>54</sup> [2] Eth / Gk2 “Bethania”

<sup>55</sup> [2] Gk2 / Eth “Hezekiah”

<sup>56</sup> [2] Gk2, Eth[A] / Eth[B,C,D] omit “of Baal”

<sup>57</sup> [2] Gk2, Eth[A,C,D] / Eth[B] omit “Micaiah”

<sup>58</sup> [2] Gk2 / Eth “prison, with Zedekiah the prophet”

<sup>59</sup> [2] Gk2 / Eth “the prophets”

the son of Ahab and their teacher Jalerias<sup>60</sup> from Mount Israel<sup>61</sup> had heard—now he<sup>62</sup> was a brother of Zedekiah—when they heard, they persuaded Ahaziah the king of Gomorrah<sup>63</sup> and he murdered Micaiah.<sup>64</sup>

### CHAPTER 3

And Belchira discovered and saw the place of Isaiah and the prophets who were with him; for he dwelt in the country of Bethlehem, and adhered to Manasseh. And he was a false-prophet in Jerusalem, and many Jerusalemites adhered to him. But he was also from Samaria.

2 And it had come to pass, when Shalmaneser king of Assyria had come and captured Samaria and taken the nine and a half<sup>65</sup> tribes into captivity, and led them away to the mountains<sup>66</sup> of the Medes and the rivers of Gozan, 3 this *Belchira*, was still a youth, and he had escaped and come to Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah; but he did not walk in the ways of his Samaritan father, because he hated Hezekiah. 4 And in the time of Hezekiah, he was found uttering accounts of lawlessness in Jerusalem. 5 And the boys of Hezekiah accused him, but he escaped to the country of Bethlehem.<sup>67 68</sup>

6 And Belchira<sup>69</sup> discovered Isaiah and those who were with him, and he accused Isaiah, saying,<sup>70</sup> “Isaiah and the prophets who are with him prophesies<sup>71</sup> against Jerusalem and against all<sup>72</sup> the cities of Judah that they will be laid waste, and against the sons of Judah and<sup>73</sup> Benjamin that they will go into captivity, and against you, O lord the king, that you will go bound with hooks and iron chains. 7 And they prophesy lies even against Israel and against Judah and against Jerusalem.”<sup>74</sup> 8 And Isaiah himself has stated, “I see more than Moses the prophet.”<sup>75</sup> 9 For Moses stated, “No man can see God and live.” But Isaiah has said, “I have seen God and behold I live.”<sup>76</sup> 10 Therefore, know, O king, that he is a liar.<sup>77</sup> And he has also called Jerusalem, Sodom, and the chiefs of Judah and Israel<sup>78</sup> he has declared to be the people of Gomorrah.”

And in this way, he brought many accusations before Manasseh against Isaiah and<sup>79</sup> the prophets. 11 And Belial dwelt in the heart of Manasseh, and in the heart of the chiefs of Judah and Benjamin, and in the eunuchs, and in the councilors of the king, 12 so that the accounts of Belchira pleased him exceedingly.<sup>80</sup> And he sent and seized Isaiah.<sup>81 82</sup>

### CHAPTER 4

And he sawed him in half with a woodcutting-saw.<sup>83</sup> 2 And while Isaiah was being sawn in two, his accuser Belchira stood by, and all the false-prophets stood

<sup>60</sup> [2] Eth[B,C] / Gk2 “Iallaris” / Lat1 “Gamarias” / Eth[A,D] omit “and their teacher Jalerias”

<sup>61</sup> [2] Emendation / Gk2 “Islal” (assumed to be corrupt for Israel) / Eth “Joel” / Lat1 “Ephraim”

<sup>62</sup> [2] Lat1 (referring to Jalerias) / Eth “now he, Becheira”

<sup>63</sup> [2] Gk2, Lat / Eth “Aguaron”

<sup>64</sup> [2] Gk2, Eth / Gk1 omit (starting in verse 10) “And they dwelt there for two years of days...murdered Micaiah.”

<sup>65</sup> [2] Eth / Gk2, Lat1 add

<sup>66</sup> [2] Gk2, Lat1 / Eth “territories”

<sup>67</sup> [3] Gk2, Eth / Gk1 omit (starting in verse 1) “And Belchira discovered... Bethlehem”

<sup>68</sup> [3] Gk1 has an addition segment here “Then, therefore, the great Isaiah prophesied about the city of Jerusalem, saying, “This is what the Lord God says: This city, which is beloved and chosen, will be delivered into the hands of Shalmaneser, king of Babel; and King Manasseh and his wife and his sons and his chiefs will be taken captive as captives to Babel.”

<sup>69</sup> [3] Eth / Gk1 “Melchiah” / Gk2 “Melcheira”

<sup>70</sup> [3] Eth / Gk1 “And when Melchiah the false-prophet heard these things prophesied by the great Isaiah, and said about Jerusalem and those who were dwelling in her, he spoke to King Manasseh”

<sup>71</sup> [3] Gk1 / Eth[C,D], Lat1 “and the prophets who are with him prophesy” / Eth[A,B] “Isaiah and those who are with him prophesy”

<sup>72</sup> [3] Gk2, Eth / Gk1 add

<sup>73</sup> [3] Lat1 / Eth omit “the sons of Judah and” / Gk2 omit “that they will be laid waste, and against the sons of Judah” (by scribal error)

<sup>74</sup> [3] Eth / Gk2, Lat1 add “and Jerusalem” / Gk1 replaces “they will be laid waste... against Judah” with “this city will be delivered into the hands of Babel, and that King Manasseh and his wife and his sons and all his chiefs will be taken captive as captives to Babel in chains and cages, and that King Manasseh will be a prisoner in the house of the Babelians.”

<sup>75</sup> [3] Eth, Lat / Gk2 add

<sup>76</sup> [3] Eth / Gk2, Lat add

<sup>77</sup> [3] Gk2, Lat / Eth “that they are false-prophets”

<sup>78</sup> [3] Gk2 / Eth, Lat “Jerusalem”

<sup>79</sup> [3] Gk2 / Eth, Lat add

<sup>80</sup> [3] Gk2 / Eth add / Gk1 omit “And Isaiah himself has stated...pleased him exceedingly.” (Instead it has “Then King Manasseh, having heard these things, was filled with much fury and anger, and he directed Melchiah the false-prophet to arrest the great Isaiah, since he prophesied terrible and harsh things against Jerusalem.”

<sup>81</sup> [3] Gk2, Eth / Gk1 “Therefore, at last, Melchiah and Becheira the false prophets, going up, arrested the holy Isaiah the prophet.”

<sup>82</sup> [3] A lengthy Christian interpolation (which will not be reproduced here) follows in Eth / A lengthy (likely interpolation) follows here in Gk1 “And leading him to King Manasseh, he spoke to him, “Isaiah, why are you prophesying wicked things against Jerusalem and against me and my children?” And the great prophet Isaiah spoke to Manasseh, “O King, I am not prophesying wicked things about this city; instead, I am uttering the things which are about to befall it. For as the Lord my God lives [and as his beloved son and his spirits which utters in me lives], this city, which is the beautiful and great one, will be delivered into the hands of sinful and shameless men on account of the lawless-deeds of the people who are dwelling within it; but even you, O King Manasseh, will be taken away captive to Babel in chains and cages.” Then, having heard him, King Manasseh, being exceedingly furious, immediately directed them with bitter words to have the holy Isaiah be sawn with an iron saw.

<sup>83</sup> [3] Eth / Gk1 (instead of all of verse 1) “And while this was quickly happening, and while he was being sawn in sufficient time, the iron implement did not touch him at all. Then the holy Isaiah the prophet said to Manasseh, “O King, you will know that I was chosen to be cut by a woodcutting-saw, and otherwise this would have been impossible for you to have done.” Then King Manasseh ordered him to be cut with the woodcutting-saw.”

by, laughing and rejoicing because of Isaiah. 3 And Belchira, with the aid of Matanbuchus,<sup>84</sup> stood up before Isaiah, laughing and<sup>85</sup> deriding him.

4 And Belchira the false prophet<sup>86</sup> said to Isaiah,<sup>87</sup> “Say: ‘I have lied in all that I have spoken,’ and likewise, ‘the ways of Manasseh are good and right’ 5 and also ‘the ways of Belchira and of his associates are good.’” 6 And he said this to him when he began to be sawn in two. 7 But Isaiah was in a vision of the Lord with his eyes open, watching them.<sup>88</sup>

8 And Belchira spoke the following to Isaiah, “Say what I tell you and I will turn their heart, and I will compel Manasseh and the chiefs of Judah and the people and all Jerusalem to worship you.”<sup>89</sup>

9 And the holy<sup>90</sup> Isaiah answered and spoke to him,<sup>91</sup> “If it is within my power: Damned and cursed be you and all your powers and all your house! 10 For you cannot take anything from me save the skin of my body.”<sup>92</sup>

11 And they seized Isaiah the son of Amoz, and sawed him in half with a woodcutting-saw. 12 And Manasseh and Belchira and the false-prophets and the chiefs and the people and all stood looking on. 13 And before he had been sawn in half, he said to the prophets who were with him, “All of you, go into the region of Tsor and Sidon; for God has mixed this cup for me alone.”

14 And when Isaiah was being sawn in half, he neither cried aloud nor wept, but his lips spoke with the Holy Spirit until he was sawn in two. Belial did this to Isaiah through Belchira and through Manasseh, for Sammael was very angry with Isaiah from the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, because of Sammael’s exposure by which Isaiah had exposed him in the days when Hezekiah was king, and he did as the Adversary wished.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>84</sup> [3] marked as a likely interpolation – the Gk1 is not preserved here, but it’s omission in the previous section in the Gk1 (as opposed to the Eth), as well as its omission from the duplicated account in verse 12, gives the likelihood that it was not original / Eth has this name here

<sup>85</sup> [4] Eth / some add

<sup>86</sup> [4] Eth[B] / Eth[A,C,D] “Belial” / Gk “Melchiah the false prophet”

<sup>87</sup> [4] Eth / Gk1 (starting at verse 2) “And while he was being sawn, Melchiah the false prophet was saying to his face”

<sup>88</sup> [4] Gk1 / Eth add (probably due to the pseudo vision of Isaiah to which the martyrdom was later attached)

<sup>89</sup> [4] Eth / Gk1 “Say: ‘I did not prophesy these things about Jerusalem,’ and these tortures will be taken away from you.”

<sup>90</sup> [4] Eth / Gk1 add

<sup>91</sup> [4] Eth[C,D] add

<sup>92</sup> [4] Eth[A,C,D] “If it is within my power, Cursed, that is to say, you” / Gk1 “A curse be on you, Melchiah, you false-prophet, you slanderer! For as the Lord my God lives and as his spirit which utters in me lives: Jerusalem, this great city, and which is perfectly broad, will be made desolate, and Manasseh and his children and his wife and his chiefs and the people of this city will be captured as captives in Babel.”

<sup>93</sup> [4] an editorial interpolation (Eth) / Gk2 omit the entire ending (“And they seized Isaiah...sawn in two.”) and has only “And when the happy Isaiah had spoken these things, they sawed him in two with a woodcutting saw.”