

Title: Hezekiah's Trial with Assyria

Text: 2 Kings 19: 1-34

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Let's turn to 2 Kings 18. We have looked at two passages that deal with the same trial. In Isaiah 30, we heard how the Lord sent his preacher telling Judah to turn from self and rest in the Lord.

Isaiah 30: 15: For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength:

In Isaiah 32, we heard as the Lord sent Isaiah declaring it is Christ we are to trust and wait on.

Isaiah 32: 2: And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

This time, we come to details. We see specifically the trial Hezekiah was in. We see specifically what it is to return, rest and wait on the Lord. We see specifically how the Lord is a refuge

Hezekiah was king of Judah. He was a good king. His father, Ahaz, led the children of Judah to hold worship services wherever and however they pleased. But Hezekiah restored true worship to Judah.

2 Kings 18: 4: [Hezekiah] removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan [a worthless, piece of brass]. 5: He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor *any* that were before him. 6: For he clave to the LORD, *and* departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses.

None could turn him from trusting God through faith in Christ as God commanded through Moses. God commanded his people were to come to God through God's high priest, through the lamb, at Jerusalem alone, in the tabernacle or temple alone. It typified coming to God through faith in Christ our High Priest, our Lamb, through the preaching of his gospel where God has established his gospel.

Hezekiah was in the process of restoring true worship to Judah. It was a good work of faith. But as Hezekiah was doing that good work, the LORD sent this great trial to Hezekiah. The king of Assyria, Sennacherib, conquered Syria then Israel. Then he conquered many fenced cities of Judah, taking the citizens captive to cities of the Medes.

Now, the king of Assyria has sent his generals to the wall of Jerusalem with a message to Hezekiah that he is about to do the same to Jerusalem. If Jerusalem falls it will be the end of Judah through whom God promised Christ would come. This was a very serious trial. We should never think it strange, when God has granted us repentance and we have turned in faith to do as God commands yet God sends a trial of afflictions.

So the king of Assyria sent three generals with a great army to the wall of Jerusalem. Hezekiah sent out three officers to speak with them.

**2 Kings 18: 19: And Rabshakeh said unto them, Speak ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? 20: Thou sayest, (but *they are but* vain words,) *I have* counsel and strength for the war. Now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me? 21: Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, *even* upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him. 22: But if ye say unto me, We trust in the LORD our God: is not that he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem?**

Rabshakeh tried to turn the children of Judah against Hezekiah for taking away their convenient places of worship. Rabshakeh wants them to think the Lord is against Hezekiah.

**2 Kings 18: 23: Now therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them. 24: How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen?**

He says 'you are so small in number; we could easily beat you; but you could have so much, if you simply give up?'

**2 Kings 18: 25: Am I now come up without the LORD against this place to destroy it? The LORD said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.**

He saved his strongest argument for last. The Assyrians had, indeed, defeated many nations. So he claims the Lord is for the Assyrian. He claims the Lord sent him against the children of Judah. Hezekiah's men asked him to speak in the Syrian language and not so that the Jews on the wall could hear.

**2 Kings 18: 28: Then Rabshakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and spake, saying, Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria: 29: Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you out of his hand: 30: Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. 31: Harken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make an agreement with me by a present, and come out to me, and *then* eat ye every man of his own vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his cistern: 32: Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil olive and of honey, that ye may live, and not die: and hearken not unto Hezekiah, when he persuadeth you, saying, The LORD will deliver us. 33: Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? 34: Where *are* the gods of Hamath, and of Arpad? where *are* the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? have they delivered Samaria out of mine hand? 35 Who *are* they among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered their country out of mine hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand? 36: But the people held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not. 37: Then came Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah with *their* clothes rent, and told him the words of Rabshakeh.**

Brethren, seeing how great this trial was, as we see what Hezekiah did and as we see how the Lord fulfilled his word then know that in whatever trial we face, this is what we should do. Can you imagine an entire nation coming up against you and the word of the Lord to you be, "Wait on the Lord. Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ."

In far lesser trials, we have this notion that we cannot sit on our hands. We must do something. But God sent a man, his preacher, Isaiah. Hezekiah had wise counselors. Men of state. These men advised him to make alliance with Egypt. But God's preacher came speaking the word of the Lord, "Return and be quiet and wait on the Lord. Christ shall be a covert from the storm." It took God giving Hezekiah faith to obey the word of the Lord. So it will for us, too.

Now, let's see what Hezekiah learned through this trial.

## **HEZEKIAH LEARNED AGAIN HIS OWN INABILITY**

**Kings 19: 1: And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard *it*, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. [he sent his officer to Isaiah the prophet]... 3: And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day *is* a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and *there is* not strength to bring forth.**

Hezekiah owned himself unable to save himself or anyone else. He sent his officers to the Lord's preacher, Isaiah. He asked Isaiah to pray to the Lord because they did not have strength. Wouldn't it be God's amazing grace if we had a president do this? Wouldn't it be wise if we did this?

When God first saves a sinner, he brings us down, so that we own ourselves incapable of contributing to our salvation. The same is true in the trial. Be it in the first hour or in the trial, if we yet lean to our understanding, we are not trusting Christ our Wisdom. If we look to our works, we are not looking to Christ our Righteousness and our Sanctification. If we can deliver ourselves, we are not trusting Christ our Redemption.

This is true when God first began a work of grace in his child. It is true in every trial. We must be brought to the end of self. There is no difference in putting our hand to the work in the trial as there is in putting our hand to the work in regeneration and conversion. Both are trusting the works of our hands rather than faith in Christ.

When God first brings his child to behold our need for Christ to save, he does so by showing us we have no strength. If we are yet trying to save ourselves then we do not yet believe salvation is of the Lord alone. The same is true in every trial—"*the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth.*" But if we are still trying to save ourselves and others then we have not been humbled to see we are the sinner.

Salvation is of the Lord, not by our works!

## **HEZEKIAH CAST ALL HIS CARE ON THE LORD IN FAITH**

**2 Kings 19: 4:** [he asked Isaiah to pray to the Lord] **It may be the LORD thy God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God; and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left.**

Hezekiah is the king of Judah, the most powerful man in Judah. He had armies at his disposal. Hezekiah had weapons to lean on. But he sent word to God's preacher. He asked Isaiah to pray to the Lord. Doing so, Hezekiah cast all his care and all the care of Judah on the LORD to save them.

God's elect, those Christ redeemed, those born of the Spirit of God, are one with Christ. We are the church of God which he purchased with his own blood. We are Christ's purchased possession. We are members of his body, bone of his bones, flesh of his flesh. So when the king of Assyria reproached Hezekiah and the elect in Judah, he reproached the living God. The same is true of anyone who reproaches us, children of God.

Notice, Hezekiah said, "the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God". So Hezekiah asked Isaiah to pray the Lord save his elect remnant—"wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left." The Spirit of God draws us to submit all to Christ.

## **AGAIN HEZEKIAH LEARNED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GOSPEL**

**2 Kings 19: 6:** **And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. 7: Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land. 8: So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish.**

We need to hear the gospel preached because it is how the Lord answers prayer and strengthens faith. This took time. Isaiah prayed. The Lord's answer to their prayer was through Isaiah preaching "*Thus saith the Lord.*" Have you been praying for the Lord to save? Have you been praying for the Lord to save you out of a trial? The Lord answered their prayer in this great, great trial by sending Isaiah preaching the word of the Lord. God strengthens our faith through the preaching of the gospel of Christ.

We heard the Lord's word to return to him, from trusting self or any other, and wait on the Lord.

Isaiah 30: 15 For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength:

We heard the Lord's word to believe on Christ.

Isaiah 32: 2: And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

God speaks to his people through his gospel. Now, the Lord declares this good news--“*Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.*”

Any word that tells us to save ourselves, any word that tells us to look to our hands or any word that tells us not to trust the Lord alone is blasphemy. The Lord said, “*they have blasphemed me!*”

The Lord declared through Isaiah what the Lord would do, “*Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land. So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish.*”

The Lord said, “I will”; “I will cause” the enemy to return and leave my people alone. That is what the Lord caused to happen. Rabshakeh returned and found the king of Assyria warring against someone else. Hezekiah could not do that in this man’s heart. The children of Judah could not do that. The Lord alone did that!

## **HEZEKIAH LEARNED WE HAVE TO WAIT ON THE LORD**

**2 Kings 19: 9: And when he heard say of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, Behold, he is come out to fight against thee: he sent messengers again unto Hezekiah, saying, 10: Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. 11: Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly: and shalt thou be delivered? 12: Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed; as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezep, and the children of Eden which *were* in Thelasar? 13: Where *is* the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivah? 14: And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. 15: And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest *between* the cherubims, thou art the God, *even* thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth. 16: LORD, bow down thine ear, and hear: open, LORD, thine eyes, and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God. 17: Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands, 18: And have cast their gods into the fire: for they *were* no gods, but the work of men’s hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them. 19: Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou *art* the LORD God, *even* thou only.**

Though the Lord gives us his word of comfort, he may not immediately deliver us. Sennacherib sent more threats. But the Lord is teaching us to trust him to work in the Lord’s time. The Lord began to fulfill his promise. But the Lord allowed the enemy to roar a while longer. But Hezekiah did not give up. He went into the Lord’s house and spread it before the Lord. True faith perseveres, waiting on the Lord to work in his time.

The Lord answered Hezekiah’s prayer the same way as before, through sending Isaiah with the gospel.

**2 Kings 19: 20: Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *That* which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard. 21: *This is* the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning him; The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, *and* laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee. 22: Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted *thy* voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? *even* against the Holy *One* of Israel. 23: By thy messengers thou hast reproached the Lord, and hast said, With the multitude of my chariots I am come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon, and will cut down the tall cedar trees thereof, *and* the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the lodgings of his borders, *and into* the forest of his Carmel. 24: I have digged and drunk strange waters, and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged places.**

But the Lord declares it was the Lord who did it using the king of Assyria as the weapon in his hand.

**2 Kings 19: 25: Hast thou not heard long ago *how* I have done it, *and* of ancient times that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste fenced cities *into* ruinous heaps. 26 Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded; they were *as* the grass of the field, and *as* the green herb, *as* the grass on the housetops, and *as* corn blasted before it be grown up. 27 But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me. 28 Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest. 29 And this *shall be* a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof. 30 And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. 31 For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD *of hosts* shall do this. 32: Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it. 33 By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD. 34 For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake."**

Through the trial the Lord teaches his children that our God is sovereign over all. The Lord used the king of Assyria to work God's will. When God was finished using him, God cast him away. Nothing comes to pass but by the will and power of our God and all accomplished his purpose.

God defends his holy city and saves it for his own sake, that is, for Christ, his servant's sake. God chose his elect remnant IN CHRIST. IN CHRIST, his elect remnant are redeemed and accepted of God. God shall save his people for the sake of Christ his Servant in whom he is well pleased.

Christ declared the wisdom of God, the righteousness of God, the holiness of God, the redemption accomplished by God. God will not share his glory, he will save his church for his own glory for the sake of his Son, King Jesus. THAT IS SURE SALVATION FOR THOSE WHO ARE TRUSTING CHRIST!

## **HEZEKIAH LEARNED AGAIN THAT GOD IS FAITHFUL**

**2 Kings 19: 35: And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they *were* all dead corpses. 36: So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. 37: And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.**

God did for Hezekiah and Judah, exactly what he said he would do. God taught Hezekiah through this trial that God is faithful to fulfill his word. That is what God is teaching us, brethren.

Why does God send the trial even when we have repented and doing a work of faith? It is to work in us what the Lord worked in Hezekiah.

One, this trial kept Hezekiah from trusting in himself. It kept Hezekiah from trusting his repentance, from trusting his good works by showing Hezekiah his total inability to save himself or anyone else. Two, through the trial, the Spirit of God made Hezekiah come to the LORD in faith and wait on the Lord to save. Three, through the trial, the LORD showed Hezekiah the importance of hearing the gospel preached. Then the Lord showed Hezekiah, again, that the Lord is faithful to save according to the Lord's promise delivered through Isaiah.

In short, the trial was for Hezekiah's good and God's glory! That is always the purpose and outcome of every trial God sends his church. Christ shall not fail to work this in his redeemed. Return from trusting self or any other and believe on Christ and wait on the Lord. Trust in the Man who is our Refuge and Provider. Pray to our Lord to save. Hear him answer through the gospel. Wait on him. He shall bring his promise to pass and he shall not lose one. In every way the trial will prove a profit to you as you behold more of Christ!

**Amen!**