

2 Kings 18-19 - "The Battle Is His"

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier
Calvary Chapel Ontario

Go ahead and open your Bibles to 2 Kings chapter 18. 2 Kings, chapter 18. I probably need to remind you of the fact that the last time that we got together in the last couple of chapters, we saw the fall of Israel.

And I want you to remember again that Israel had gone through a split so that there became two kingdoms; the Northern kingdom, which retained the name of Israel, and the Southern kingdom, which took the name of Judah.

And the kingdom of Israel to the north because they had been worse in the sense of their disobedience to the Lord, they fell first to the Assyrian Empire who eventually came and conquered them and then displaced them. Just took them to other places, spread them out. That's the way the Assyrians dealt with their enemies.

It was frankly, a very strategic and effective way of eliminating the threat of uprisings against the enemies that you had conquered by basically spreading the people out among various other nations that they had conquered, and that's exactly what they did.

And so the nation of Israel has now fallen and Judah is not done with some good kings, and that's what we find happening here in chapter 18. Look with me in verse 1. It says, *"In the third year of Hoshea son of Elah, king of Israel, ..."* (ESV) So they're dating it now before the fall of Israel by telling you that Hoshea was in his third year.

Now, when he gets to his ninth year, that's when Israel will fall, but just for the sense of dating it, we see here that when he was in his third year that, *"Hezekiah the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, began to reign."* We've basically stepped back, at least for the purposes of dating, back about six years from where the previous chapter left us.

But remember here, as we go on, it says here about Hezekiah. *"² He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abi the daughter of Zechariah."*

And it says in verse 3, and this is a little bit of a shock when we've been hearing about all the other kings that have come before him. *“And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done. ⁴ He (in fact) removed the high places and broke the pillars and cut down the Asherah. And he broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it (and) (it was (they) called (it, the) Nehushtan). ⁵ He trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel, so that there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, (look at this) nor among those who were before him. (and it tells us why) ⁶ For he held fast to the LORD. He did not depart from following him, but kept the commandments that the LORD commanded Moses.”* Stop there for just a moment.

This is really an amazing bio for us to be reading at this late date in the history of the kingdom of Judah because there's always a tendency for things to progressively get worse, and they've been doing that. We've seen a few kingdoms rise up that began to have a little glimmer of hope when the king came to power.

But this is the first time that we've read of a king at this late date of whom the Lord said, this guy's amazing. He trusted the Lord and there was no one like him both before or after. And that's saying something. Especially in light of the fact his father was Ahaz. And I don't know how many of you remember, just a couple, a few weeks back when we talked about king Ahaz, and wasn't he a charmer? I mean, the guy was just a total piece of work, even to the point of offering up one of his sons, killing one of his sons. Making a sacrificial offering of one of his children to one of the Canaanite pagan gods. The guy was just incredible.

God was gracious to him. Do you remember it was about Ahaz that God spoke to him a word of deliverance from their enemies and then said, ask of me anything, a sign to prove that I will do it. And Ahaz wouldn't do it. He wouldn't ask. He said, I'm not going to, I'm not going to ask.

And the Lord said, will you test the Lord in this? And the Lord went ahead and gave him a sign anyway, remember? And that sign became a beautiful secondary prophecy of the coming of Messiah because that sign was all about how the virgin will give birth and so forth and so on.

Anyway, we're going to find out that Hezekiah goes through a similar situation as far as signs go but look at here that it says, he even took down the high places. We've had some good kings come along in the past chapters and it will say of them, they were a good king, they were for the most part obedient to the

Lord, but they didn't touch the high places. What first of all were the high places? Well, they were locations on high hills that the Israelites would worship, where they would worship.

Now God had told them way back when they came into the land, God told them, I don't want you worshipping just anywhere, because the people would offer sacrifices out in the open country. Wherever they wanted to, they would just offer sacrifices to the Lord and God said, I want you to do it at the temple. I want you to bring your offerings to the priest. And I want you to do it in the prescribed way, because there are things that need to be done appropriately and so forth.

Well, sometimes the people honored that, but often there was a group of folks that just did just ignored that altogether and they continued to worship. Now, sometimes the high places were used to worship YAHWEH, but when the nation of Israel degraded into a greater and greater idol worship, those high places became opportunities for pagan worship to take place. Sometimes they were truly worshipping God, sometimes they were not at those high places. But either way, it was not the place that God wanted them to worship.

This issue of where to worship never completely got settled among many people's minds, even though God had been very clear in the Word. Do you remember when Jesus talked to the woman at the well, the Samaritan woman? Now remember Samaria by the time of Jesus, that whole area of Samaria was where the Northern kingdom of Israel once stood.

But in the last few chapters, we saw that it fell. The capital city of Israel, the Northern kingdom of Israel was Samaria. When Israel got taken away, they began to call the whole region Samaria, and that stuck. And the people who lived there were Samaritans, many of whom were Jewish half breeds: Canaanites, Assyrians, other people's groups who had merged with the Jews over time.

Do you remember the conversation between Jesus and the woman at the well? As soon as she realized that he was somebody special, she wanted to talk about the big debate of the day that was still going on. She said, you Jews think that we should only worship in Jerusalem, but we Samaritans think it's just as good to worship here on this mountain.

And you remember Jesus talked to her a little bit about these as well, frankly, you Samaritans worship what you don't know. The Jews worship what they do know. And what he meant by that was that there was a desire among the Jews to

be obedient to the will of God as it relates to where they should worship and where they needed to worship was at the temple in a very prescribed sort of a manner.

These high places that were in existence at the time of Hezekiah, it says he took them down. He dismantled them. He sent his men up there or whatever and said, break them down, get rid of them. If you go up on the hills and you find places where people have been worshiping, just take it down, decimate it.

Now you're going to hear this come up again in conversation in a little bit here and you'll find it interesting, I think. Anyway, it goes on in verse 7. Look with me there. *“And the LORD was with him; (meaning Hezekiah) wherever he went out, he prospered. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and would not serve him.”*

And that means, of course, that Hezekiah, under his father Ahaz, the Assyrians had flexed their muscle and said, listen, you either pay us, like a ransom, or will invade your land. And so his father had set up a tribute to the Assyrians of sending them so much money, silver, gold, other goods, or whatever the thing might be, and when Hezekiah gained the throne of Judah this thing was already in place. He was sending money, probably annually to the king of Assyria.

And Hezekiah decided, you know what? I'm done with that. I'm done sending goods and services and things to the enemy. And he, it says, *“He rebelled against the king of Assyria.”*

It goes on to tell us in verse 8 that the Lord was giving him success in that, *“He struck down the Philistines as far as Gaza and its territory, from watchtower to fortified city.”* So Hezekiah was having success in his military campaigns.

And then it says, *“⁹ In the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah, king of Israel, Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria (which again, was the capital city of the Northern kingdom of Israel) and (he) besieged it, ¹⁰ and at the end of three years he took it. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, which was the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken.”*

That meaning, and that of course means that the Northern kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrian Empire. And the reason they mention Samaria is because that was the capital city, and when the capital city falls, the kingdom falls. Okay.

“¹¹ The king of Assyria carried the Israelites away to Assyria and put them in (various places like) Halah, and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes, ¹² because they did not obey the voice of the LORD their God but transgressed his covenant, even all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded. They neither listened nor obeyed.” Now, stop there.

We're reminded in these verses of why the Northern kingdom of Israel, Northern kingdom of Israel fell because they'd been disobedient to the Lord. But you got to know that this must have been challenging for Hezekiah and the Jews that were living in Judah. Because they've been having some military success and God has been blessing.

But remember what Hezekiah did just a couple of years ago, he stopped sending tribute to the king of Assyria. And now Assyria comes down and conquers the Northern kingdom of Israel. And you got to wonder what Hezekiah is thinking about the work of this enemy, because he has just seen the Northern kingdom fall.

What happens in your life when you see what really appears to be very rotten things happening to other people around you. Does your heart become unsettled when you see other people go through difficult seasons. When you see other people go through problems, when you see them go through health issues, or financial problems, or relationship issues, or something like that. And you might see their family just absolutely decimated. Does that ever send a shockwave through you?

I think that's pretty common, don't you think? I think it's pretty natural for us to sense, at least some worrisome sort of a vibe when we see things happen to other people. And that had to have been Hezekiah's concern along these lines.

Sure, he's a man of faith, but it seems like there are situations that come up occasionally that really test our faith. Are you really going to stand strong? Are you going to trust in the Lord? Or is this situation over there that happened to those people, that marriage, that home, that family, that business, that nation or whatever.

I remember years ago. And I mean, years ago, it was probably in the late 80s. I remember hearing about a very prominent televangelist who fell morally. And this particular guy Was not one that, well, society tends to look down to the to a large degree on televangelists and to another degree some of them have earned it. But this particular guy was a guy that I had some respect for even though he did have a pretty colossal and very public moral failure.

I remember going to bed one night and I wasn't all that old in the Lord myself, but I remember going to bed one night and just I just had this wave of fear just come over me like, man, if that guy couldn't stand who can. If he fell to the temptations of the flesh, is there any chance for me to continue to walk with the Lord in any sort of an upright, way with integrity and honor? That had to have been somewhat of what Hezekiah is thinking here.

And then it's going to get worse. Look at verse 13. *“In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria (so we’ve had a change of kings) came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and (he) took them.”*

Now, when you say, when they say fortified cities, that means in a kingdom, you have cities that you build on the peripheral of your border, and you fortify them to hold back an enemy from getting deeper into your territory. And so there were these fortified Judean cities that were on the border and the Assyrian army decided it was time. They were no longer going to accept this dishonor that Hezekiah had presented them with by saying, I'm not going to give you guys any money anymore. I'm done serving you.

So they decided, okay, we can't just, we can't just let that go, right? If we do all the other people that are giving us money are going to be emboldened to do the same. So they come out in full force with their army against these outlying cities of Judea and they took them. The Lord allows them to fall. Now imagine what Hezekiah is thinking?

Again you're looking at other cities, you're looking at the nation of Israel as they fall. Now it's happening. Your worst fear is coming to fruition as it relates to this whole mess. And Hezekiah gets word from, I'm sure, his sentries and messengers throughout the kingdom. This is, hey, another city fell to the Assyrians, they're coming. And it's just a matter of time.

I mean, yes, he's there within the walls of Jerusalem, and for the moment he's safe, but they're coming. There's nothing worse than seeing the bullet on its way. There is nothing worse than knowing that your doom is out there and there's nothing you can do to stop it. You can't run. It's on its way. I mean, it's just a horrible feeling, so this is what he's dealing with. So boy, I tell you, like I said, everybody has their limitations.

It says in verse 14, *“And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, (because that's where he was encamped) saying, “I have done wrong; withdraw from me. Whatever you impose on me I will bear.” And the king of*

Assyria (he basically) required of Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.” Stop there for a moment.

You think to yourself, wow, I thought you said this was such a great man of faith. Like I said, everybody's got their limitations. And things become so difficult, they become so challenging, and they can become quite fearful that we just begin to cave. And what we're seeing here, is we're seeing Hezekiah cave rather than. There's no mention here of Hezekiah taking this to the Lord

Now, here in a bit, he's going to do that when they actually get to the city of Jerusalem. But at this particular point, there's no record of Hezekiah going to the Lord and saying, God, what would you have me to do? He basically just steps out into this situation and says, okay, we've got to resolve this thing so I'm going to pay him off.

There's only one problem with trying to pay off the enemy. The enemy, he's got this voracious appetite and the more you give to him, the more he wants. And even though there's a bargain here that Hezekiah is trying to fashion with the enemy, he's basically creating rules and saying, all right, here's the deal. I'll give you your price. What do you want? You want silver and gold? I'll give you silver and gold. Just stay out of my city. And essentially, the king of Assyria is agreeing to that.

How many times have you seen the enemy of your soul express agreement and follow along with the rules that you that you established. He's the lawless one and that's exactly what we're going to see happening.

Verse 15 tells us, *“And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD (all of it) and in the treasuries of the king's house. ¹⁶At that time Hezekiah stripped the gold from the doors of the temple of the LORD and from the doorposts that Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid and gave it to the king of Assyria.”*

How would you like to have been those servants of to go into the temple and scrape that gold off the door posts to give to an enemy king because there'd been a collapse of faith. Wouldn't that have been just a really encouraging thing to go do? I mean, you can imagine that the morale here in Judah has probably taken a bit of a dive, right? Which is what often happens when we lose our sense of faith. And like I said, you can't pay off the enemy, he refuses to play by the rules.

Look what happens in verse 17. It says, *“And the king of Assyria sent the Tartan, (and that's a title, and it means basically the highest commander, alright? Or your bible might even say, supreme commander, he also sent) the Rab-saris, (which is a chief officer) and the Rabshakeh (which is another name for field commander, it's a title for field commander) with a great army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. When they arrived, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is on the highway to the Washer's Field.”*

So here we have the Assyrian army now camped on Hezekiah's doorstep with all these three officers. All right, now stop there for just a moment. Let me just, let me lay this thing out to you again.

Hezekiah got a little full of himself. He, God gave him some success and while he's enjoying his success, he sends a little letter to the, I don't think he probably communicated with the king of Assyria, but he just stopped giving tribute. Which is a way of saying, hey, go take a hike. And then shortly thereafter, the king of Israel, and all his people fall to the Assyrian army, and Hezekiah is back there in Judah going, oh, interesting. I suppose now they're going to be coming after us.

And then he hears word that they have come against his outlying cities and his outlying cities fell. They're on the way, and then he steps out to try to bring a sense of deliverance to his nation in his own power in his own strength. Hey, listen, we'll give you whatever you want and it appears to work for a short time. And then the king of Assyria says I don't really care how much money he sent, let's take up our battle places right at the on the doorstep of Jerusalem. And here he is now, here's the enemy. He's on your doorstep.

Can you relate? Have you ever had the enemy on your doorstep? Camped, right there. And he doesn't come to camp just to roast marshmallows and sing campfire songs. He comes to taunt and to make you feel miserable. And that's, in fact, what they're going to do.

Look at verse 18. *“And when they called for the king, (they called for king Hezekiah but he didn't come out, but) there came out to them Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, who was over the household, and Shebna the secretary, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder.*

¹⁹ *And the Rabshakeh (again, that's the field commander) said to them, “Say to Hezekiah, ‘Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: On what do you rest this trust of yours?’* ²⁰ *Do you think that mere words are strategy and power for*

war? In whom do you now trust, that you have rebelled against me? ²¹ Behold, you are trusting now in Egypt, that broken reed of a staff, which will pierce the hand of any man who leans on it. Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him.”

By the way, we know from historical documents that king Sennacherib was actually on his way to Egypt when he decided to stop and conquer Judah first. And then he was going to move on to Egypt and conquer that kingdom. So he's basically, the field commander is taunting by saying, so who are you depending on? Is it Egypt? Well, they're not dependable.

Now, he's going to go on and he's going to try to taunt them further, but I want you to notice what he says. Verse 22, *“But if you say to me, “We trust in the LORD our God,” is it not he whose high places and altars Hezekiah has removed, saying to Judah and to Jerusalem, “You shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem”?”*

Now this is really typical of pagan ignorance. This guy thinks that what Hezekiah did in removing those high places was a bad thing. And so he's using it to say, isn't this the man who took away your high places? And to be sure, there might even have been some people on the wall who heard him say that, thinking, yeah, that wasn't so good of him but we know better. We know that what Hezekiah did was actually an act of obedience.

In fact, what Hezekiah did in removing those high places is going to turn out toward his deliverance, ultimately because it was an act of obedience, and God will honor that act of obedience. But at this particular point, this field commander is bringing it up as if it was a really bad thing.

So he says in verse 23, *“Come now, make a wager with my master the king of Assyria: (tell you what) I will give you two thousand horses, if you are able (if you can put men on it) on your part to set riders on them.”*

You can see how he's continuing to taunt. I'll give you a couple of thousand. I'll, we'll bring a couple of thousand horses right here to the city of Jerusalem if you have enough men that'll sit on them, and then we can fight. You can see what's going on here. Reminds you a little bit of the taunt that Goliath gave to the nation of Israel many years before.

“²⁴ How then can you repulse a single captain among the least of my master's servants, when you trust in Egypt for chariots and for horsemen?” Okay, so now he's not only boasting, he's lying and he's claiming that the God of Israel

told him to do it. To come and the reason you know that he's saying that the God of Israel told him is in verse 25. He says, *“Moreover, is it without the LORD that I have come up against this place to destroy it? The LORD said to me, ...”*

And the word, Lord there is in the Hebrew YEHOVAH or YAHWEH, so he's using that covenant name for God. He knows enough about the God of the Israelites to speak the name of their covenant God. And he's lying to them, saying, hey, your God told me. You might as well surrender now because if you try to fight against me, you'll just fight against your own God.

“²⁶ Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and Shebnah, and Joah, said to the (field commander, that’s) Rabshakeh, “Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand it. Do not speak to us in the language of Judah within the hearing of the people who are on the wall.” So obviously the field commander was speaking in Hebrew because he wanted the people to hear it.

“²⁷ But the (field commander) Rabshakeh said to them, “Has my master sent me to speak these words to your master and to you, and not to the men sitting on the wall, who are doomed with you to eat their own dung and to drink their own urine?” Boy, he is really laying it on thick, isn't he?

²⁸ Then the (field commander) Rabshakeh stood and called out in a loud voice in the language of Judah: “Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria! ²⁹ Thus says the king: ‘Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you out of my hand. ³⁰ Do not let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD by saying, The LORD will surely deliver us, and this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.’ ³¹ Do not listen to Hezekiah, for thus says the king of Assyria: ‘Make your peace with me and come out to me. Then each one of you will eat of his own vine, and each one of his own fig tree, and each one of you will drink the water of his own cistern, ³² until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive trees and honey, that you may live, and not die. And do not listen to Hezekiah when he misleads you by saying, “The LORD will deliver us.””

Boy, doesn't this just sound like the enemy? I mean, doesn't this sound familiar? This is very familiar to me. This is the junk that Satan likes to whisper in our ear. It's not going to be so bad. Just give up. Your God isn't going to help you anyway. And if you give up, it's not going to be so bad. Yeah. You might have to change the, where you're living, but it's, it'd be a fine place we'll take you to. Yeah.

And then he begins to say this in verse 33. *“Has any of the gods of the nations ever delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? ³⁴ Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand?”*

He's basically telling the people that all the gods of the other people were humiliated, and that the people who believed in those gods they also were putting confidence in their God, but their God didn't deliver them. So why should you think that your God will?

And that's what he concludes here in verse 35. *“Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their lands out of my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?”* Can you get a sense though that he's just overstepped himself?

I mean, he's been boasting, he's been lying, but you know what he did? He really stepped in it here because now he's insulting the God of Israel. And he's saying, He's not able. Your God isn't able to save you any more than all the other gods were able to save these other people that we conquered.

“But the people (verse 36) were silent and answered him not a word, for the king's command was, “Do not answer him.”” Hey guys, don't let this verse pass without seeing the wisdom here. Don't negotiate with the enemy. Don't even talk to him. He is a liar. Jesus told us when the enemy lies, he speaks his native language. (John 8:44) And what that means is, he can't help it.

If he speaks, if he opens his mouth outcomes lies and that's all he can do. So why in the world would you take up a conversation with the enemy and start some negotiation process with him? He's a big fat liar. And I really liked the fact that Hezekiah gave this word to the people and said, don't talk to this man. Don't respond to him. You just, you put on the best poker face you can and let the man blabber because ultimately he's going to dig himself a hole that he won't be able to get out of.

Verse 37 tells us, *“Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, and Shebna the secretary, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn (sign of sorrow and grief) and told him the words of the (the field commander) Rabshakeh.*

As soon as King Hezekiah heard it, he tore his clothes and covered himself with sackcloth and went into the house of the Lord. ² And he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the secretary, and the senior priests, covered

with sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz. ³ They said to him, "Thus says Hezekiah, This day is a day of distress, of rebuke, and of disgrace; children have come to the point of birth, and there is no strength to bring them forth." Which is a likening phrase. Stop there for a moment.

Let me just tell you. This is where Hezekiah starts taking really, really, good steps. He should have done this before. He should have done this when he heard that Assyria was beginning to amass their army and invade his land. He should have done this a long time ago. Instead of taking all of the silver and gold that he could find and paying this ransom, which we knew wasn't going to do any good anyway.

Instead of doing that, he should have gone to the Lord. He should have, he and all of his men should have humbled themselves and said, God, what would you have us do? And you know that God wouldn't say, well, here's what I think you should do. I think you should strip off all the silver and gold in the temple and send it off to the guy, and then we'll see if that helps. You think that's something God would say? Absolutely not! Now he's finally there.

Can you relate to this process of going through these motions when we get into trouble, when we go through difficult seasons, we go through these motions of, then we're strong, then we're weak. And then we finally get to this place where there's nothing else we can do. And God literally brings us to a place where you have no options except to fall on your knees before God and cry out to Him and say, God save me or we're dead. Right?

And do you know that even though we, you and I may think about that sort of a position as being dreadful, it's one of the most powerful positions you can be in. And here's why. You've come to the end of yourself. Let me remind you again of what Paul says in 2 Corinthians chapter 1. He says, brothers, I don't want you to be ignorant about the trials and difficulties we suffered in the province of Asia. He said, we were tested and tried far beyond our ability to endure so that we despaired even of life. Then he goes on to say, but this happened so that we might not rely on ourselves, but so that we might rely instead on God who raises the dead.

Paul explains this situation where God allowed them to come to a place where the enemy is so strong, and so entrenched, and so scary, that you're out of options. You're out of options to try to save yourself. All you can do is cry out to God. And again, we don't like to be in that place because it makes us feel weak and it makes us feel like we're out of control. Which is a fallacy in the first place, we were never in control.

But what happens is God brings us to a place and removes all those support structures around us so that we just, we have nothing to rely on, but God. And suddenly we find a strength and a power that we didn't even know existed before. And suddenly we begin to think to ourselves, how in the world did I get through my Christian walk up to this point? I mean, how did I even make it here without knowing this power.

Remember what Paul said to the Ephesians when he starts that section about spiritual warfare and putting on the full armor of God. He says be strong in the power of God's might and then he goes on to talk about putting on the full armor. But he says to the people be strong in the Lord, be strong in the power of God's might. Well, that doesn't happen unless our might has come to an end of itself.

And that's where God has Hezekiah. There's nothing he can do. There's no army that is big enough or strong enough to repel the Assyrian forces that are on his doorstep. There's nothing he can, there's no escape. So here you are.

He says, I love the fact that they basically, he sends these men over to Isaiah, and they say to Isaiah, this is like a woman going through all the trouble of labor only to get to the point where of the birth, and she has no strength to push the baby out. That's what they're likening it to. Which is a very sad situation indeed.

Verse 4 says, *“It may be that the LORD your God heard all the words of the Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to mock the living God, and will rebuke the words that the LORD your God has heard; therefore lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left.”*

So here's what they're saying. They're going to Isaiah and they're saying, buddy, you need to pray. We're asking you to pray. So would you do that? Would you just get on your knees and pray because we need the deliverance of God.

“⁵ When the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah, (this is great because Isaiah, the Lord had already met with Isaiah and told him what to say) ⁶ Isaiah said to them, “Say to your master, ‘Thus says the LORD: (listen to these words and let them encourage your heart) Do not be afraid because of the words that you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have reviled me. ⁷ Behold, I will put a spirit in him, so that he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land, and I will make him fall by the sword in his own land.’”

“The Rabshakeh (field commander, it tells us in verse 8 in fact) returned, and found the king of Assyria fighting against Libnah, for he heard that the king had left Lachish.” He didn't know why, but when he got to the area, he found that the king was actually fighting against another people, right?

And it says in verse 9, *“Now the king (even) heard concerning Tirhakah king of Cush, “Behold, he has set out to fight against you.”* (the king of Assyria hears that the king of the Cushites is on his way to fight) *So he sent messengers again to Hezekiah, saying, (here he is going to really dig himself deeper) ¹⁰ “Thus shall you speak to Hezekiah king of Judah: ‘Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you by promising that Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. ¹¹ Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, devoting them to destruction. And shall you be delivered? ¹² Have the gods of the nations delivered them, the nations that my fathers destroyed, Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the people of Eden who were in Telassar? ¹³ Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of the city of Sepharvaim, the king of Hena, or the king of Ivvah?’”*

¹⁴ *Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it; (and look at this) and Hezekiah went up to the house of the Lord and spread it before the LORD. (took this letter and literally laid it out before the presence of the Lord) ¹⁵ And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD and (he) said: “O LORD, the God of Israel, enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth. (now he says) ¹⁶ Incline your ear, O LORD, and hear; open your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to mock the living God. ¹⁷ Truly, O LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands ¹⁸ and have cast their gods into the fire, (I'll tell you why) for they were not gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone. Therefore they were destroyed. ¹⁹ So now, O LORD our God, save us, please, from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O LORD, are God alone.”*

²⁰ *Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Your prayer to me about Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard. ²¹ This is the word that the LORD has spoken concerning him:*

*“She despises you, she scorns you—
the virgin daughter of Zion;
she wags her head behind you—
the daughter of Jerusalem.*

²² *“Whom have you mocked and reviled?
Against whom have you raised your voice
and lifted your eyes to the heights?
Against the Holy One of Israel!*
²³ *By your messengers you have mocked the LORD,
and you have said, ‘With my many chariots
I have gone up the heights of the mountains,
to the far recesses of Lebanon;
I felled its tallest cedars,
its choicest cypresses;
I entered its farthest lodging place,
its most fruitful forest.*
²⁴ *I dug wells
and drank foreign waters,
and I dried up with the sole of my foot
all the streams of Egypt.’”*

Wow, He's talking about the pride of that king but look what he says in verse 25. I love it.

*“Have you not heard
that I determined it long ago?
I planned from days of old
what now I bring to pass,
that you should turn fortified cities
into heaps of ruins,
²⁶ while their inhabitants, shorn of strength,
are dismayed and confounded,
and have become like plants of the field
and like tender grass,
like grass on the housetops,
blighted before it is grown.”*

You see what the Lord's saying here? The Lord is saying to Sennacherib, who do you think came up with all this? Who do you think gave you the power to conquer? You think you did it on your own. You're sitting here gloating in your success saying, by my great power, by my great chariots and my, this and that my army is. He says no, He says, I allowed you to do this.

And this is a good reminder for you and I, Hezekiah said in his prayer, when he went to the Lord, laid this letter out before him, he said, you know what, God, you're not just the God of Israel. You're the God of all the earth. You're the God

of all these nations, even if they don't acknowledge You. And yes, they may have their pet gods, small g, but you are the ultimate God. You are the creator of heaven and earth.

We forget that, don't we? We forget that our God is the God over even those who attack us. Even over your problems. Even over those enemies that come against you, that build up their bulwark around you, that stand opposed to you, that threaten and mock you, and seek to make you cower in fear to their intimidation tactics. We forget our God is God over them. What is it that you're afraid of? Cause you know what? Everybody's got his price, don't they?

We're all afraid of something, whatever it is that you're afraid of it, whether it's a thing, or whether it's a person, or whether it's a condition slash circumstance. Your God is God over that thing. He rules over that thing which you fear. And that's why God says to you and I, don't be afraid.

Well, easier said than done, isn't it? I mean, I remember even in the Gospels when Jesus said, have no fear, the people, they were still quaking in their boots, if they, or sandals. You know what I mean? I mean, you can say, don't be afraid, but we're wired to be afraid, aren't we?

We're wired to be fearful and yet the reality of the situation is the God that you and I serve is sovereignly over all those things of which you and I are so afraid. He rules over those things. He is the ruler.

So what Hezekiah is saying, and God is confirming here in this response through Isaiah is, he's saying, God, you rule over Assyria. You remember what Jesus said to Pilate when Pilate puffed himself up? He was all upset because Jesus wouldn't answer his stupid questions. And all the accusations that were coming against him. So Pilate finally got mad and he said, aren't you going to answer me? And this is a man who wants to now flex his muscle. And He says, Don't you know that I have the power to either free you or crucify you?

Jesus said, you would have no power over me if it had not been given you from above. That, people, is the attitude that you and I should have about all those things that we fear so much, but we often don't have, right? But that is, that's the birthright of every born again Christian.

Whatever it is that intimidates you would have no power over you had it not been given from above. Your God is sovereign. And that's a great reminder, guys, and Hezekiah had to be brought to the end of himself to remember it. You know, sometimes that's what it takes. Sometimes that's what it takes.

Look what God goes on to say about Sennacherib, the king of Assyria. He says,

²⁷ *“But I know your sitting down
and your going out and coming in,
and your raging against me. (that's a fancy way of saying, I've got your
number)*

²⁸ *Because you have raged against me
and your complacency has come into my ears,
I will put my hook in your nose
and my bit in your mouth,
and I will turn you back on the way
by which you came.*

²⁹ *“And this shall be the sign for you: this year eat what grows of itself, and in
the second year what springs of the same. Then in the third year sow and reap
and plant vineyards, and eat their fruit. ³⁰ And the surviving remnant of the
house of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward. ³¹ For
out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant, and out of Mount Zion a band of survivors.
(oh I like that) The zeal of the LORD will do this.*

³² *“Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria: He shall not
come into this city or (in fact, he's not even going to) shoot an arrow there, or
come before it with a shield or cast up a siege mound against it. ³³ By the way
that he came, by the same he shall return, and he shall not come into this city,
declares the LORD. ³⁴ For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and
for the sake of my servant David.””*

Look what it goes on to say. ³⁵ *And that night the angel of the LORD went out
and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose
early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies.”* This is one of the
reasons I know that angels don't look like those stupid little pygmies, naked
people that have... Cause one angel went out and took care of 185,000 soldiers.
One angel, right? And it says, they got up the next morning and there *“were
(just) all (these) dead bodies.”*

³⁶ *Then Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went home (I bet) and lived
at Nineveh. ³⁷ And as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god,
Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons, struck him down with the sword (in other
words, they assassinated their own father) and escaped into the land of Ararat.
(which is Turkey) And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.”*

How do you like that?

God had His way. God had His way. Let me ask you a question. Did Hezekiah have to take up arms? Did he have to gather any group of soldiers? Did they shoot any arrows? No, not one. Not one. Was the army defeated? Oh yeah. How did it come about? Trusting in the Lord with all of their heart. Waiting on the Lord. Letting God go before them to conquer the enemy.

There's a statement that rings through the scripture, the battle belongs to the Lord. There are times when God does call His people to take up arms, to stand and to go out and face the enemy, but ultimately the battle belongs to the Lord. The battle is His.