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2 KINGS 18:1-19:37

Last week we saw how Assyria came against Israel and defeated them. This was the fulfillment of prophecy. God had given Israel **two hundred years** to repent and come back to Him. But, they refused. They cared more about the gods they had made with **their** own hands than the God who had made **them** with **His** hands!

So, from now on, in our study of **2 Kings**, we'll not be dealing with **both** kingdoms...we'll be dealing only with the **southern kingdom of Judah**.

And in today's lesson we'll see a **great** king. We've been focusing on so many bad kings that the king we see today is a welcomed change...like a breath of fresh air. This king's name is **Hezekiah**.

2 Kings 18:1-4...

Hezekiah was the son of Ahaz and Abi. We don't know what kind of mother Abi was, but we **do** know what kind of father of Ahaz was. He was an extremely wicked and ungodly king. And this makes us think Abi was probably a godly mother who made a difference in the life of her son.

We do know this. By the grace of God...God working through his mother or through someone else...Hezekiah became a godly man. ***"He did right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done."***

"He removed the high places." How many times have we read that a certain king did right in the sight of the LORD, but he did not remove the high places? But, Hezekiah **did**. Not only that, but he also broke down the sacred pillars and cut down the Asherah. The Asherah was a wooden symbol of a female deity.

Not only that, but he also broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made.

Remember from the book of **Numbers** how the children of Israel were complaining against Moses and Aaron and because of this, God sent fiery serpents among His children?

Remember that Moses interceded for the people and God told Moses to make a standard and set a bronze serpent on it and when the people looked at the serpent they would live?

Well, God never told Moses to tell the people to burn incense to it.

And God never told Moses to tell the people to set it up as an object of worship.

But, this is what they did. They had placed this pole with a serpent on it on a par with all their other "gods." And they had placed their other "gods" on a par with Jehovah God!!!

This reminds me of the story over in the little book of **Jude** where we're told that when Moses died, there was a dispute between the devil and Michael over the body of Moses. WHY? Why would the devil want the body of Moses?

Because if he could have gotten it, he would have made certain folks would have come to the tomb of Moses to worship! Satan wants nothing more than to get the attention of God's people off God and onto something or someone else!

Example: Reagan...

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Hezekiah had decided in his heart that he would rid his kingdom of these wooden and brass gods and goddesses!

Another thing Hezekiah did was to open the doors of the temple. We don't see that in **2 Kings**...but **2 Chronicles 29** gives us the account of how the temple doors were opened. Who had closed them? Well, Ahaz had! Hezekiah's own father had closed the doors of the temple!

And not only had Ahaz closed the temple doors, but he also had defiled the temple. He had allowed all manner of unclean things to be brought into the temple.

Hezekiah was attempting to lead his kingdom into revival.

Hezekiah knew if his kingdom was going to have revival, it must begin in the house of God!

And I want to tell you...before there can ever be revival in **our** land...the church doors must be opened and the church must be cleansed. **You and I** are the church! And the doors of our hearts must be opened to revival and our hearts must be cleansed before God!

We keep hoping for revival in our day, don't we? And we **pray** for revival and we **pray** for godly leaders...and there's nothing wrong with that, but revival won't come from our leaders...**revival will come only when God's people get clean before Him and when they get serious about walking a pure and holy walk before Him!**

Judah was so blessed to have a man like Hezekiah to lead them into righteousness. How blessed our country would be if we had some leaders who would clean out the idols from our country and lead us into righteousness!

Verses 5-8...

Now, this sounds like Hezekiah is set for life. I mean, nothing bad is happening in the land of Judah. Revival has come. If we had the time to go over to the book of **2 Chronicles** we would find that

- the temple had been consecrated and all the priests had been consecrated as well...
- bulls and rams and lambs and goats had been offered as sin offerings for the sin of the people...
- all the temple utensils that had been discarded were recovered and prepared...
- the Levites were stationed in the temple with cymbals and with harps and with lyres...
- the whole assembly worshiped...and the singers sang and the trumpets sounded...
- and burnt offerings were made to the LORD...

Because of Hezekiah's leadership, the people had gotten right with God!!!

And **2 Chronicles 30** tells us that they even celebrated Passover once again!

And don't you know the devil was mad about all this? So, what happened next?

Verses 13-16...

Even the **best** men can make wrong decisions. And that's exactly what we see Hezekiah doing here. For fourteen years, Hezekiah and his kingdom had experienced a spiritual revival...

But, when he least expected it, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came against Judah! And he seized the fortified cities of Judah.

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And instead of Hezekiah turning to the **Lord** and seeking **His** counsel and **His** protection and **His** deliverance, Hezekiah said, "Oh, I've done wrong in not paying you tribute. Please forgive me. I'll pay you to leave us alone...Whatever you want from me you can have."

But this wasn't good enough for Sennacherib. He had already invaded the **northern** kingdom of Israel and taken **them** captive, and he wasn't going to stop until he had invaded the **southern** kingdom of Judah and captured **them**!

So, Sennacherib sent **three representatives** to give a message to Hezekiah. And when they arrived Hezekiah sent out **three representatives** from **his** side.

Now we need to get the picture in our mind of what was happening. Three representatives from one of the most blood-thirsty, cruel, and war-loving nations on earth came to the wall of Jerusalem and they faced three representatives from Hezekiah. But, these men didn't come alone.

The men from Assyria had a **large army** with them.
The men from Judah had a crowd of people who had gathered on the wall.

Verses 19-22...This was a lie. The high places Hezekiah tore down weren't places God was to be worshiped. They were places set up for idol worship or convenience...God had called His people to worship Him in Jerusalem!

Example cell groups...

Verses 23-32...

Do you see this for what it was? It was **intimidation**! All around and on top of the wall people of Judah were standing and sitting and looking and listening...just doing their best to **see** what was going to happen and trying to **hear** what was being said.

And even though Eliakim tried to get the Assyrians to speak in their native tongue so as not to alarm the people, they refused. They spoke in Hebrew so all of the people **would** be frightened and intimidated! That was exactly what the Assyrians wanted!!!

And the people heard **plenty**, didn't they? But, King Hezekiah had instructed them not to answer them a word...and they didn't!

Rabshakeh goes on...

Verses 33-35...

Well, the reason the gods of the other nations hadn't delivered their people was because they were gods of wood and they were gods of stone...but Sennacherib didn't know he was going to come up against the God of Israel!

And did you notice what he said in verses 31 and 32?

He was saying, "My king who is the great king is going to take care of you. You don't have to listen to King Hezekiah and you don't have to listen to Jehovah.

"You don't have to believe in some old God of Abraham. You just need to listen to me. Our king loves you. And our king will take care of you.

"Our king is going to give you something better than you've ever had...better and more fertile land...and better and more delicious food...and better and more plentiful water."

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And even today, in America, our country's leaders have said, "Hey, we'll take care of you. You don't need God in your schools or in your workplace or in your courts or on your public property! We have something better to give you!"

And the bottom line of this is that folks vote with their pocketbooks many times...

Example: Clinton...

And isn't that exactly what Satan does to us as individuals? He comes alongside the believer and he says,

"Don't live for God! Don't walk by faith! You come do what I say! Live it up! You only go around once in life... if it feels good, do it!"

Well, when Hezekiah heard this, he was beside himself. He tore his clothes. He covered himself with sackcloth. He did what he should have done. He sent word to Isaiah the prophet. **"We're in a real mess...What shall we do, Isaiah?"**

So, let's see what Isaiah said about this...

2 Kings 19:6-7...

In our lives, God may not take us out of our battles...out of our hard places, but He will go through them with us. And He will ultimately give us victory over them.

Sennacherib sent another message to Hezekiah and let's see this.

Verses 10-13 tell us basically that Sennacherib called Hezekiah's God a liar, a deceiver. Sennacherib named specific kings that he had defeated.

And when he did this, he said, "Don't think I'm afraid of you **or** your God, Hezekiah. Where are the gods of the nations that I have come against? Where are the kings of the nations that I have come against? Where are they? You, your God, or nobody else will ever defeat me!"

There are situations in our lives when we bring our burdens to the Lord and then we pick them up again...but then there are other times when we're so very desperate and we fall on our knees and we drop our heavy burdens at the foot of the Cross, because that's all we **can** do...

And that's what we see Hezekiah doing here...

Verses 14...

Isn't that good? Can't you just see Hezekiah going into the temple and saying, "God, I just want to show you this. God, you're not going to believe this letter I got." And he spreads it out as though God didn't already know what it said...

You know, Hezekiah was doing the best thing he could do. He was telling God on Sennacherib. He was laying his burden at the feet of God. He was acknowledging that he could do nothing to make the situation better, but he knew that God could take care of it!

***"Are you weary? Are you heavy hearted?
Tell it to Jesus. Tell it to Jesus."***

And Hezekiah prays in
Verses 15-19...

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I want to take just a moment to look at this beautiful prayer. Many books have been written on the subject of prayer. But, this is a wonderful picture of how prayer should be.

First, Hezekiah acknowledged the holiness of God. When you see a reference to God who sits in the midst of the cherubim, it's a reference to the holiness of God.

I believe this is a worthy example for you and me to follow when **we** pray. Before we even lay out our wish list and our want list and our burden list, we should acknowledge that God and God alone is worthy of our worship...

that He is holy and we praise Him and know that even if He doesn't answer the way we want, because He is holy and because He is righteous and because there is no one beside Him, the answer will be good because He does **all** things well!

He says, "Open your ears, God. See what's going on, God. Listen to the words the king of Assyria has spoken!

And he goes on to tell God that Sennacherib had devastated the nations around him and cast the gods of those nations into the fire and they have been destroyed...as if God didn't know any of this!

But, let me ask you...have you ever felt like this?

Did you ever have a burden that was so heavy and when you went before God, you said some pretty foolish things?

I mean, you just have to tell God all the details and then you wonder deep down in your heart of hearts if He's really there and if He's there if He really cares and He's there and He cares, if He is really able to help! Have you ever been there? Well, maybe you haven't, but I surely have!

And have you thought about how patient God is with His children? God's already told Hezekiah through Isaiah that these people weren't going to do to Judah what they had done to Israel, but God understands

our weakness...He **knows** our frame...He **knows** we're but dust.

And He knows we need lots of assurance!!

And we have to commend Hezekiah for coming to God on his own, don't we? He wasn't solely relying on the prayers of Isaiah...but he was coming to God himself and saying, "Oh, God, we need help that only You can give!"

And what does God do? He speaks to Isaiah and Isaiah sends Hezekiah a message from the Lord!

Verses 20-26...

These words have all been directed to Hezekiah, but they are **about Sennacherib**.

And God is saying, "Listen, I have used Assyria as a rod in my hands to do my bidding. Assyria may have thought they have defeated all these nations by their own strength and military might, but they haven't. They would have defeated no one aside from Me.

Every victory you've ever had, Sennacherib, is because I have used you. You're nothing but a tool in my hand."

And finally, **I verses 27-28**, God says, "I know your sitting down, and I know your going out and your coming in and I know your raging against Me...and because you have raged against

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Me, I will put My hook in your nose and My bridle in your lips and I will turn you back by the way which you came.”

Listen, God is not intimidated! The things that make us afraid, don't make God afraid. The things that worry us, don't worry God! The enemies that cause you and me to tremble, these things don't cause our God to tremble!

And God is telling the Assyrians that even though they may think they're going to do what they want to do against Judah, He has another plan for them.

Apparently, Assyria came against Judah for two years...they had pillaged the land and destroyed the crops...and God told Hezekiah in **verses 29-31** that they would have enough to eat and they would have enough survivors to fill the land again...

Verses 32-34...

God is assuring Hezekiah for the third time that He is able and will indeed give victory to Judah...and how many times were God's children delivered for "His son's David's sake?"

Verses 35-37...

Now, get this setting, Sennacherib has finally gathered the full force of his troops. It's night. Nobody is sleeping inside the walled city of Jerusalem. Hezekiah and Isaiah are on their faces before God.

The men of Judah upon the wall are looking and they see thousands and thousands and thousands of Assyrians. The people inside Jerusalem can hear those 185,000 Assyrian soldiers sharpening their swords and their spears and arrows.

The battering rams and the catapults are in place.

Assyrian sentries take their positions to guard the camp...All the other Assyrian soldiers go into their tents to get a good night's sleep before the big battle.

But, the next morning, as the sun comes up, there's not a sound in the Assyrian camp...not a movement...

The angel of the LORD had struck 185,000 Assyrians...and they were all dead!

And the king of Assyria went back home to Nineveh and **verse 37** tells us he was killed. **2 Kings** doesn't tell us but Isaiah does...The men who killed him were his sons.

Let me just close by saying this...

There was a day when the enemy of our own souls came against us.

There was a day when the enemy of our souls laughed in the face of God and said, "They belong to me. I'll put a chain around their neck and when I pull it they'll jump. They'll do whatever I say do. They'll go wherever I say go. I'm their master, and they're my servants."

But, one day Jesus came and went to the cross and shed His precious blood. And when they buried Jesus in the tomb, the devil must have thought he had won!

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But on the third day, He arose! And there was a day when we bowed and accepted Jesus as our Savior and our Master and our Lord...and now we've been delivered from the hands of our enemy.

Oh, he still comes against us from time to time...but if we bow before the One who fights for us, He will walk with us even in the heat of battle. He will make sure we come out on the other side.

And even though you and I might go through the fire, we will not be scorched or burned nor will there even be the smell of smoke about us.

And even though you and I might go through deep waters, they will not overflow us.

I hope that we've learned from Hezekiah today to trust in the Lord and to take everything to Him in prayer. I hope that we've learned from Hezekiah today to trust the Lord's righteous right hand to sustain us.

And I hope that we've learned from this passage of Scripture today that there is no enemy that can come against us that is bigger than the God we serve!

I hope that we've learned that He does all these things for us, not because of our goodness, but because of His glory and because of His Son's sake.

May God help us this week to walk in the light of the truths of 2 ***Kings 18 and 19***.