

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to 2 Kings 18

We have been going verse by verse through this amazing book that God has given to us –

A historical book that not only helps us understand God's true nature: His mercy, His amazing grace, His longsuffering, His holiness, His yearning to want to have a relationship with those that He created.

But we have also man's tendency to pursue a life without His presence.

We want to do things our ways. We want to worship whatever god we desire in the way we want.

We want our will to be done – not His will to be done.

So for the past couple of weeks, we have seen king after king – both in the north and the south – turn their backs on God.

And in reality, their reign was a reflection of the heart of the people.

Wicked king led to wicked people.

So because the people wanted to live their lives pursuing other gods – God gave them up to their desires – we saw this last week as God used the Assyrians to bring judgment upon Israel and take the people away back to a land where they would be able to worship whatever god they desired.

The problem with the southern kingdom was that they were not far behind – until out of nowhere, a new king arises that will bring hope to the nation.

His name – Hezekiah.

And for the next three weeks, we will what separated King Hezekiah from many of the other kings.

We will see how he was able to overcome fear and despair.

Hezekiah is not going to render to the Assyrians like the other kings did.

What made Hezekiah different from any of the other kings of Judah?

That is what we are about to find out –

Let's pray...

[2Ki 18:1-37 NKJV] 1 Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea the son of Elah, king of Israel, [that] Hezekiah the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, began to reign. 2 He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name [was] Abi the daughter of

Zechariah. 3 And he did [what was] right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done.

So, Hezekiah becomes king of Judah and it was during his reign that Israel was taken away by the Assyrians – remember from our study last week, it was King Hoshea, who was the last king of Israel.

And I had you make a note that the scriptures tell us that he did [what was] right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done.

We haven't seen this before – even among some of the other kings of Judah that were so-so good.

For them it said, they did what was right in the sight of the Lord but then it would say, not like David or they didn't take down the high places (the alternate form of worship that was being practiced in Judah)

The amazing thing was that he came to the throne during one of the darkest periods in Judah.

His father, King Ahaz – we saw two weeks ago, he had put to a stop the worship of the One True God.

He boarded up the doors to the temple – no more sacrifices / burnt offerings to God.

Instead, he had an altar built for the Assyrian gods – sacrifices were made on that altar.

He also instituted the worship of the Assyrian gods all over Judah.

And this was after God had assured him of deliverance – I had told you to read Isaiah 7.

So Ahaz turned his back completely on God for the Assyrian gods.

But as we will see, his son, Hezekiah didn't.

As we will find out, his godly influence came not from his father – but from the prophet Isaiah.

4 He removed the high places and broke the [sacred] pillars, cut down the wooden image and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan.

Here in verse 4 – we are told about some of the reforms that Hezekiah instituted.

However, we get a much fuller list of the things he did in 2 Chronicles 29,30. You guys can read that during your own time.

Among the things he did, he reinstated temple worship

He brought the priests and the Levites back to work

He cleaned, repaired and refurbished the temple

He gathered the people together to partake of Passover – something that had not been done since the time of Solomon. (2 Chron 30:26)

He got rid of all the idols and the alternate forms of worship, including the bronze serpent.

In the book of Numbers (21) – some 800 years earlier - as the Children of Israel were wandering the wilderness – they were doing what they were always doing – complaining about God's provisions –

So God sends fiery serpents to bite people and many start to die.

The people complain to Moses for help, God told Moses to make a bronze serpent, put it up on a pole, and if the people would look to the brass serpent after being bitten, they would not die.

Originally, this was meant to be a lesson of faith.

Jesus said,

(Jn 3:14–15 NKJV) —14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

Jesus would be lifted up on a cross/pole, and people would need to look up and believe in Him in order to be saved.

The problem with the nation of Judah was that they had taken the bronze serpent (Nehushtan: a thing of bronze) and made it into an idol.

Here is an application church –

God will sometimes use “things” in our lives.

Sometimes it’s a “thing of bronze”. Sometimes it’s a person.

But if we’re not careful, we can allow that thing or that person to become an idol.

This past Wednesday, we were looking at Stephen’s address to the Sanhedrin where they had taken the temple of God and had made the temple an idol.

Instead of worshipping the God of the temple, they were worshipping the temple of the God. They were worshipping that thing.

There is nothing special about that thing - God is special. He is the one we look to.

5 He trusted in the LORD God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. 6 For he held fast to the LORD; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the LORD had commanded Moses. 7 The LORD was with him; he prospered wherever he went. And he rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve

him. 8 He subdued the Philistines, as far as Gaza and its territory, from watchtower to fortified city.

What separated Hezekiah from the rest was that he placed his trust in the Lord.

And here we see the result of him trusting in the Lord.

Hezekiah started well and guess what? He finished well. Unlike some of the other kings.

His father had made a treaty with the Assyrian king – Hezekiah said – no way, “I am not going to pay you tribute, I am not going to put my trust in you, I am going to trust the Lord”

9 Now it came to pass in the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which [was] the seventh year of Hoshea the son of Elah, king of Israel, [that] Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria and besieged it. 10 And at the end of three years they took it. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, that [is], the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. 11 Then the king of Assyria carried Israel away captive to Assyria, and put them in Halah and by 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 [and] all that Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded; and they would neither hear nor do [them].

This is a warning to Judah – why did judgment come upon Israel – because they rebelled against God.

The same judgment would come upon Judah if they rebelled.

13 And in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them.

Didn't the scripture tell us earlier that Hezekiah was a good king. That he trusted in the Lord

That the Lord was with him (verse 7)

That he prospered

But here we find that the Assyrian king came upon Judah and conquered all the fortified cities.

Tough times come to good people

Be careful of thinking that because God was with Hezekiah and he was "prospering", that he would not have any difficult times.

Difficult times come to all of us.

The real test of whether or not your relationship with the Lord is worth anything is how we do in the tough times.

It's in the tough times that our faith is stretched, refined, and matured.

[Jas 1:2-3 NKJV] 2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

14 Then Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, "I have done wrong; turn away from me; whatever you impose on me I will pay." And the king of Assyria assessed Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. 15 So Hezekiah gave [him] all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king's house. 16 At that time Hezekiah stripped [the gold from] the doors of the temple of the LORD, and [from] the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.

Lachish is the last fortified city – once it falls, there is nothing in the way of Assyria from getting to Jerusalem.

He most certainly had heard the horror stories of what the Assyrians had done to Israel -

So, Hezekiah sends messengers to the King of Assyria and says , “what do you want – will pay whatever, leave us alone”

Wait a minute Herb – I thought you said Hezekiah trusted the Lord.

Why is he paying off the King of Assyria?

Why is he trying to appease him?

Nowhere does it say that Hezekiah was perfect.

Even those who place their trust in the Lord, we will have lapses in faith where we will have doubt – or where we will try to remedy a situation ourselves before bringing it to the Lord.

That is what Hezekiah is doing here -

17 Then the king of Assyria sent [the] Tartan, [the] Rabsaris, [and the] Rabshakeh from Lachish (these are not their names (the Rock) – they are most like their titles), **with a great army against Jerusalem, to King Hezekiah. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. When they had come up, they went and stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool, which [was] on the highway to the Fuller's Field.**

18 And when they had called to the king, Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who [was] over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came out to them.

So the king of Assyria sends a delegation to Jerusalem to negotiate – they make their way into Jerusalem and Hezekiah sends a delegation to meet them there.

Now, the reason for sending the delegation is because they want Judah's complete and unconditional surrender –

So as we will see, they are going to come in and convince the people and Hezekiah that all hope is lost.

And in the process, use the same tactic that the enemy uses against us today.

19 Then [the] Rabshakeh said to them, "Say now to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: "What confidence [is] this in which you trust? 20 "You speak of [having] plans and power for war; but [they are] mere words. And in whom do you trust, that you rebel against me? 21 "Now look! You are trusting in the staff of this broken reed, Egypt, on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So [is] Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him. 22 "But if you say to me, 'We trust in the LORD our God,' [is] it not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away, and said to Judah and Jerusalem, 'You shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem'?" '

So, the Rabshakeh, he begins by attacking the confidence of Judah.

“Judah, what makes you think you have a chance against us??? Is it your alliances with the other nations” – by the way, the only nation that was left from that alliance was Egypt – all the other ones had been conquered by Assyria and Egypt wasn't a military power house.

He then says, your confidence can't be with your God – and then notice, he says that the reason was because of the reforms of Hezekiah. God's not going to help you because you took away all His altars.

So the first tactic that the enemy uses is that he distorts the truth to try to discourage us.

Egypt was an ally but Judah was not putting their trust in Egypt.

And Hezekiah's reforms only strengthened their relationship with the Lord – not weaken it. Hezekiah could have thought, maybe this guys right – maybe I made a mistake in taking down the altars – maybe God is mad at me for doing – bringing condemnation (that is the tool of the enemy)

The enemy will try to tell us,

“You dirty, rotten sinner. Now God can never use you again.”

The truth: You are a dirty, rotten sinner.

The lie: God can't use you.

The truth is, God forgives sinners.

The truth is, the only people God uses are sinners, like you and me.

23 "Now therefore, I urge you, give a pledge to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses--if you are able on your part to put riders

on them! 24 "How then will you repel one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put your trust in Egypt for chariots and horsemen? 25 "Have 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.' "

The next tactic of the enemy is deception.

But first, he begins to taunt them – even if my king were to give you horses, you don't have the manpower to ride them. Give in – quit resisting.

And then he says, Hezekiah – we are here because God wanted us to come and conquer you.

God told me to do it.

Sometimes people use the "God told me" phrase just to get you to stop questioning what they're doing or saying. Sometimes they want you to go along with their program, like Rabshakeh.

The best tool we have is the Word of God, the Bible. It is the One Source where we know God has spoken.

God will not contradict Himself with what He's already revealed in Scripture.

26 Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, Shebna, and Joah said to [the] Rabshakeh, "Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand [it]; and do not

speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people who [are] on the wall." 27 But [the] Rabshakeh said to them, "Has my master sent me to your master and to you to speak these words, and not to the men who sit on the wall, who will eat and drink their own waste with you?"

In 2 Chronicles, we are told that the Assyrian officials spoke in Hebrew because they wanted to terrify the people.

They wanted the people to be so scared, that they would pressure Hezekiah into surrender.

Which brings us to the next tactic that the enemy uses – fear

The enemy's greatest weapon is fear.

His greatest tactic to keep us from doing the right thing is to make us afraid.

Church, God has two words to answer our fears.

1. Trust

[Isa 12:2 NKJV] 2 Behold, God [is] my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; 'For YAH, the LORD, [is] my strength and song; He also has become my salvation.' "

2. Love

[1Jo 4:18 NKJV] 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

We have nothing to be afraid of because God loves us. If we are afraid, we need to run to Jesus.

28 Then [the] Rabshakeh stood and called out with a loud voice in Hebrew, and spoke, saying, "Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria! 29 "Thus says the king: 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, **for he shall not be able to deliver you from his hand; 30 'nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, "The LORD will surely deliver us; this city shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria." '**

By the way, the statement that [the] Rabshakeh makes here is correct.

Hezekiah was not going to be able to deliver them – But God is.

Here we have another tactic that the enemy uses.

Doubt -

31 "Do not listen to Hezekiah; for thus says the king of Assyria: 'Make [peace] with me by a present and come out to me; and every one of you eat from his own vine and every one from his own fig tree, and every one of you drink the waters of his own cistern; 32 'until I come and take you away to a land like your own

land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive groves and honey, that you may live and not die. But do not listen to Hezekiah, lest he persuade you, saying, "The LORD will deliver us."

Another tactic that the enemy makes is to paint a picture that everything will be so much better if you simply give in.

We just read last week that the people were taken to Assyria with fish hooks piercing their extremities – that's not what he is saying here.

Remember, it was the serpent in the garden of Eden who told Eve – “you will not surely die”

The same promise that is being made here by the enemy

They would lose their language, their customs, and their identity if they surrendered to Assyria.

33 'Has any of the gods of the nations at all delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria? 34 'Where [are] the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where [are] the gods of Sepharvaim and Hena and Ivah? Indeed, have they delivered Samaria from my hand? 35 'Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?'

The last tactic of the enemy – despair or hopelessness.

Judah – no one has been able to stand against us – what makes you think you will be able to?

It is futile.

Sometimes that enemy whispers in our ears that there is no way we can overcome whatever we are going through –

“Nobody has ever conquered the sin you’re struggling with.”

or

“You can never get out of your hopeless situation”

“you will never conquer that addiction”

[1Co 10:13 NKJV] 13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God [is] faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear [it].

Lots of people have struggled with it before you ever did.

And God is able to deliver you. Trust Him.

" 36 But the people held their peace and answered him not a word; for the king's commandment was, "Do not answer him." 37 Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who [was] over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph,

the recorder, came to Hezekiah with [their] clothes torn, and told him the words of [the] Rabshakeh.

Hezekiah's men bring that bad news to him.

Things don't look to good – but the battle is not over.

How will they respond? Will they put their trust in the Lord or will surrender to the tactics of the enemy.

We will see next week.

Let's pray...

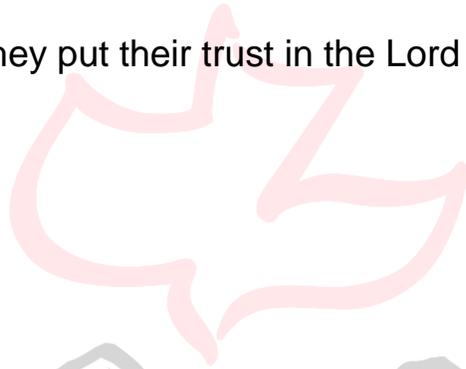
To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.



CALVARY
Santa Cruz

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

I was reading a short story about Karl Wallenda.

He was probably the greatest tightrope walker that ever lived.

He died in the 1978 at the age of 73, he fell in a tightrope accident in Puerto Rico

His wife was also a tightrope walker and after his death, she said that for months, Karl had told her that he had a fear that he was going to fall.

And she says that in the weeks before the event in Puerto Rico, he spent all his time installing the tightrope and the support ropes for the event – this was something that he never did throughout his career.

He also spent countless hours trying to calculate the wind pattern around the buildings – again something that he never did before any of his stunts.

Regarding her husband's death – she said, “I believe the reason Karl fell was because he spent all of his time preparing not to fall, instead of spending time preparing to walk the rope.”

Church, the enemy would rather have us focus on our fears rather than our preparation to walk the rope / to do the things that God has called us to do.

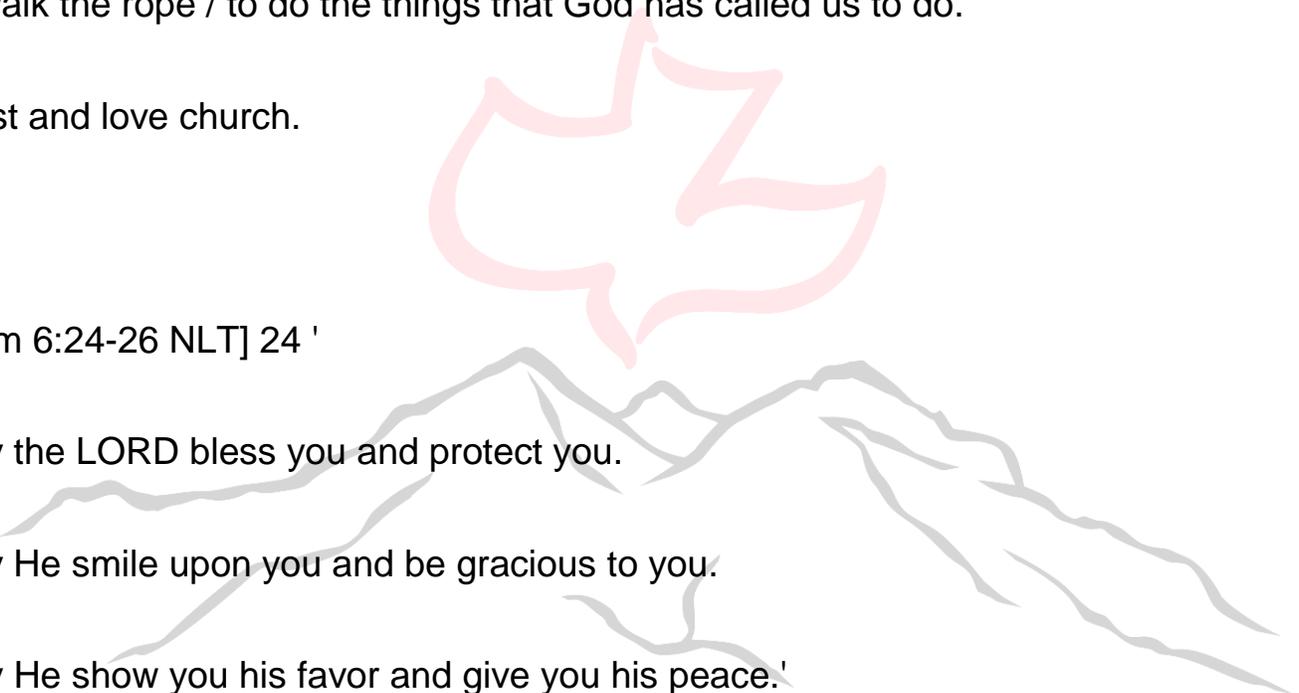
Trust and love church.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May He smile upon you and be gracious to you.

May He show you his favor and give you his peace.'



CALVARY
Santa Cruz