

NOON BIBLE STUDY: 2 KINGS 19

REMEMBER WHERE WE ARE: ISRAEL IS NO MORE: DEFEATED AND EXILED BY ASSYRIA. ASSYRIA HAS NOW TURNED THEIR SIGHTS ON JUDAH AND HER CAPITAL - JERUSALEM. HEZEKIAH IS KING OF JUDAH AND HAS PROVEN TO BE A FAITHFUL SERVANT OF THE LORD, CLEANSING THE LAND OF IDOLS AND RESTORING THE TEMPLE AND THE WORSHIP OF YAHWEH, THE GOD OF ABRAHAM AND DAVID. WE LEFT OFF IN 2 KINGS 18 HEARING THE BOASTS OF THE ASSYRIAN SPOKESMAN, RABSHAKEH. HE HAS DECLARED IN THE COMMON LANGUAGE OF THE PEOPLE THAT IT'S NO USE TO TRUST IN THE LORD, DON'T LISTEN TO HEZEKIAH, FOR ASSYRIA HAS DEFEATED EVERY OTHER NATION SO FAR (AND BY IMPLICATION THEIR NATIONAL DEITIES), AND NOW IT IS JUDAH (AND HER GOD'S) TURN TOO. THE PEOPLE ARE SILENT IN RESPONSE AND WE TURN NOW TO SEE HOW HEZEKIAH IS PREPARING THE NATION TO RESPOND.

2 CHRONICLES 32:1-8 - HEZEKIAH'S LEADERSHIP AS KING DURING CRISIS

THIS PARALLEL RECORD ADDS SOME MORE OF THE DETAILS TO OUR OVERALL STORY. IF YOU REMEMBER FROM 2 KINGS 18, PART OF RABSHAKEH'S CENTRAL MESSAGE WAS ATTACKING THE WORD OF HEZEKIAH. WE SUGGESTED THAT IT WAS LIKELY HEZEKIAH AND HIS OFFICIALS HAD SPOKEN TO THE NATION TO PREPARE THEM, AND 2 CHRONICLES 32 CONFIRMS THIS. AND WHAT A MESSAGE HEZEKIAH SPOKE!

BE STRONG. BE COURAGEOUS. THE LORD IS WITH US. THE LORD IS GREATER THAN ASSYRIA. ASSYRIA IS LIMITED, THE LORD IS NOT! THE LORD WILL FIGHT OUR BATTLES.

WOW! THIS IS QUITE THE WORD TO DECLARE TO THE PEOPLE UNDER THREAT OF THE WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL EMPIRE. HEZEKIAH IS CONVINCED THAT IF THE LORD IS ON THE SIDE OF JUDAH, THEY NEED NOT FEAR ANYTHING. AND HE ALSO PREPARES HIS PEOPLE, BEYOND JUST IN HEART AND MIND, BUT PRACTICALLY TOO. HE REPAIRS SOME BREACHES IN THE WALLS AND APPOINTS MILITARY LEADERS. HE ALSO STOPS UP THE SPRINGS TO MAKE THEM INACCESSIBLE TO THE INVADING ARMY...MORE ON THIS LATER. HE DOESN'T KNOW HOW THE LORD WILL WORK - BUT HE PREPARES HIMSELF WISELY.

WHILE WE SEE HEZEKIAH PREPARING AND ENCOURAGING HIS PEOPLE, WE ALSO GET SOME INSIGHT INTO HIS OWN HEART AND PERSONAL RESPONSE TO RABSHAKEH'S PROPAGANDA.

2 KINGS 19:1-5 - HEZEKIAH HEARS RABSHAKEH'S MESSAGE, REACHES OUT TO ISAIAH

WHEN HEZEKIAH HEARD RABSHAKEH'S WORDS, HE SOUGHT THE LORD. AND HE SENT FOR ISAIAH THE PROPHET.

V. 4 - NOTICE HERE HEZEKIAH'S HEART FOR GOD AND GOD'S REPUTATION. THIS IS A COMMON REFRAIN FOR THE GREAT SAINTS OF SCRIPTURE. THEY CARE ABOUT GOD'S NAME BEING HONORED. THEY ARE BOTHERED WHEN ENEMIES OF THE LORD SPEAK AGAINST HIM AND HIS CHARACTER. THIS IS AN APPEAL THAT GETS THE ATTENTION OF GOD. WHEN YOU CARE ABOUT HIM AND SEEK HIS FACE TO THIS END, THE LORD SEES A MAN OR WOMAN WHO LOVES HIM WITH THEIR WHOLE HEART. HEZEKIAH ISN'T JUST PRAYING, "GOD, THEY ARE SPEAKING EVIL OF US...", HE IS PRAYING "YAHWEH, THEY ARE SPEAKING EVIL OF YOU!"

2 KINGS 19:6-7 - ISAIAH'S (GOD'S) RESPONSE

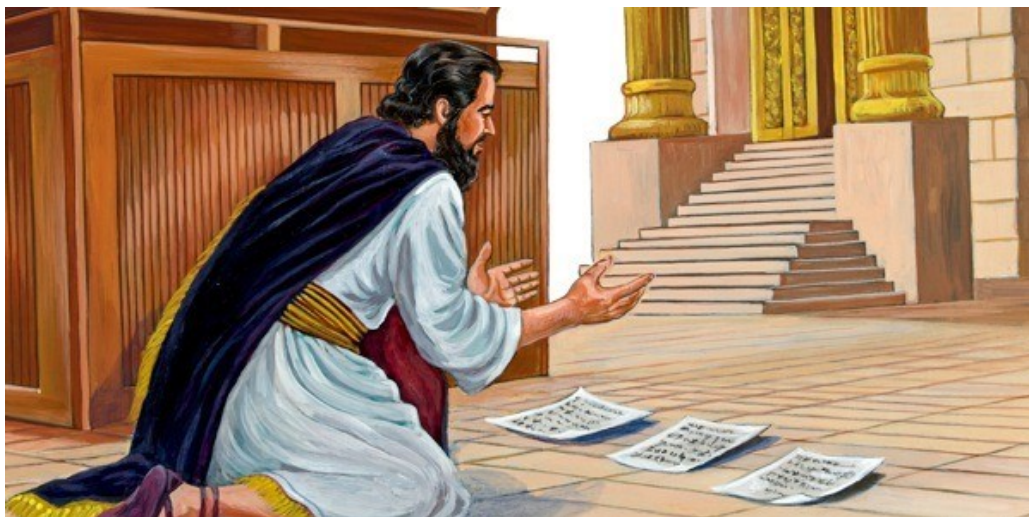
ISAIAH TELLS THE KING THAT THE LORD HAS INDEED HEARD THE BLASPHEMOUS BOASTS OF ASSYRIA. HE TELLS THAT THE LORD WILL CAUSE ASSYRIA TO RETURN TO THEIR LAND AND PREDICTS THEIR (RABSHAKEH & SENNACHERIB) DOWNFALL.

2 KINGS 19:8-13 - ASSYRIA'S FINAL THREAT TO HEZEKIAH

RABSHAKEH REJOINS THE KING OF ASSYRIA WHO IS LEADING FORCES ELSEWHERE. UPON ARRIVAL, THE KING RECEIVES WORD THAT THE KING OF ETHIOPIA (CUSH) WAS PREPARING AN ARMY TO COUNTER ATTACK ASSYRIA. THE KING PLANS TO MEET THIS ATTACKING ARMY BUT BEFORE HE DOES HE SENDS A FINAL MESSAGE TO HEZEKIAH (V. 10-13). IT IS A REPETITION OF THE PREVIOUS WORDS OF RABSHAKEH. BEFORE WE THINK THAT ISAIAH'S WORDS ARE COMING TO PAST AND THAT THAT KING IS TURNING HIS ATTENTION ELSEWHERE, ASSYRIA OPENS UP IT'S BIG MOUTH AGAIN LETTING US KNOW THEY AREN'T READY TO GO ANYWHERE.

2 KINGS 19:14-19 - HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER

THIS IS WHAT YOU DO WHEN YOU ARE AFRAID. THIS IS WHAT YOU DO WHEN YOU ARE IN TROUBLE. THIS IS WHAT YOU DO WHEN YOU DO NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO. YOU LAY YOUR BURDEN DOWN BEFORE THE LORD AND SEEK HIS FACE. HEZEKIAH LAYS OUT THE LETTER FROM RABSHAKEH BEFORE LORD.



HEZEKIAH IS NOT NAIVE NOR IS HE TAKING HIS ADVERSARY LIGHTLY. HE RECOGNIZES THE MIGHT AND ACTIONS OF ASSYRIA TO THIS POINT (V. 17-18). THESE VERSES INDICATE HEZEKIAH'S HUMILITY. HE KNOWS HE CANNOT WIN UNLESS THE LORD ACTS. AND SO HE APPEALS TO THE LORD'S ZEAL FOR HIS GLORY IN A KEY VERSE WHEN HE PRAYS:

"SO NOW, O YAHWEH OUR GOD, SAVE US, PLEASE, FROM HIS HAND, THAT ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THE EARTH MAY KNOW THAT YOU, O YAHWEH, ARE GOD ALONE." (2 KINGS 19:19, ESV)

JUST LIKE WE SAW ABOVE IN VERSES 4, HEZEKIAH WANTS GOD TO BE GLORIFIED IN THIS. EVEN HIS OWN RESCUE AND DELIVERANCE IS NOT HIS ULTIMATE DESIRE - THE HONOR OF THE LORD IS!

2 KINGS 19:20-24 (25-34) - ISAIAH'S ORACLE AGAINST ASSYRIA

THIS IS A MESSAGE FROM THE LORD, THROUGH ISAIAH, TO THE KING OF ASSYRIA. HIS MESSAGE SPEAKS OF WHO IS REALLY IN CONTROL.

THE ASSYRIANS THOUGHT THEY WERE DOING SO WELL BECAUSE THEY WERE POWERFUL. GOD SAYS, "ISN'T THAT CUTE...ASSYRIA, IT WAS ALL MY DOING, THROUGH YOU...YOU WERE JUST A PAWN IN MY HAND, DOING WHAT I WANTED YOU TO DO." AND NOW THE LORD DECLARES THAT BECAUSE OF ASSYRIA'S ARROGANCE, THEY TOO WILL BE BROUGHT DOWN LOW. YOU'VE PUSHED THING TOO FAR BY BOASTING AGAINST ME AND MY PEOPLE. THE NEW LIVING TRANSLATION SIMPLIFIES THE REMAINING MESSAGE:

2 KINGS 19:25-34 (NLT) - "BUT HAVE YOU NOT HEARD? I DECIDED THIS LONG AGO. LONG AGO I PLANNED IT, AND NOW I AM MAKING IT HAPPEN. I PLANNED FOR YOU TO CRUSH FORTIFIED CITIES INTO HEAPS OF RUBBLE. 26 THAT IS WHY THEIR PEOPLE HAVE SO LITTLE POWER AND ARE SO FRIGHTENED AND CONFUSED. THEY ARE AS WEAK AS GRASS, AS EASILY TRAMPLED AS TENDER GREEN SHOOTS. THEY ARE LIKE GRASS SPROUTING ON A ROOFTOP, SCORCHED BEFORE IT CAN GROW LUSH AND TALL. 27 "BUT I KNOW YOU WELL-- WHERE YOU STAY AND WHEN YOU COME AND GO. I KNOW THE WAY YOU HAVE RAGED AGAINST ME. 28 AND BECAUSE OF YOUR RAGING AGAINST ME AND YOUR ARROGANCE, WHICH I HAVE HEARD FOR MYSELF, I WILL PUT MY HOOK IN YOUR NOSE AND MY BIT IN YOUR MOUTH. I WILL MAKE YOU RETURN BY THE SAME ROAD ON WHICH YOU CAME." 29 THEN ISAIAH SAID TO HEZEKIAH, "HERE IS THE PROOF THAT WHAT I SAY IS TRUE: "THIS YEAR YOU WILL EAT ONLY WHAT GROWS UP BY ITSELF, AND NEXT YEAR YOU WILL EAT WHAT SPRINGS UP FROM THAT. BUT IN THE THIRD YEAR YOU WILL PLANT CROPS AND HARVEST THEM; YOU WILL TEND VINEYARDS AND EAT THEIR FRUIT. 30 AND YOU WHO ARE LEFT IN JUDAH, WHO HAVE ESCAPED THE RAVAGES OF THE SIEGE, WILL PUT ROOTS DOWN IN YOUR OWN SOIL AND WILL GROW UP AND FLOURISH. 31 FOR A REMNANT OF MY PEOPLE WILL SPREAD OUT FROM JERUSALEM, A GROUP OF SURVIVORS FROM MOUNT ZION. THE PASSIONATE COMMITMENT OF THE LORD OF HEAVEN'S ARMIES WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN! 32 "AND THIS IS WHAT THE LORD SAYS ABOUT THE KING OF ASSYRIA: "HIS ARMIES WILL NOT ENTER JERUSALEM. THEY WILL NOT EVEN SHOOT AN ARROW AT IT. THEY WILL NOT MARCH OUTSIDE ITS GATES WITH THEIR SHIELDS NOR BUILD BANKS OF EARTH AGAINST ITS WALLS. 33 THE KING WILL RETURN TO HIS OWN COUNTRY BY THE SAME ROAD ON WHICH HE CAME. HE WILL NOT ENTER THIS CITY, SAYS THE LORD. 34 FOR MY OWN HONOR AND FOR THE SAKE OF MY SERVANT DAVID, I WILL DEFEND THIS CITY AND PROTECT IT."

2 KINGS 19:35-37 - THE ASSYRIA'S DEFEATED, THE LORD'S WORD IS TRUE

SURE ENOUGH, THAT VERY NIGHT THAT THE LORD'S ANGEL STRIKES DOWN 185,000 ASSYRIAN SOLDIERS. 185,000 WHO HAD BEEN CAMPED AROUND JERUSALEM. AND THEN WHEN SENNACHERIB, THE KING OF ASSYRIA RETURNED HOME SOME TIME LATER TO HIS CAPITAL CITY, HE WAS KILLED AS HE WORSHIPPED HIS IDOL. THIS IS WHAT THE LORD SAID THROUGH ISAIAH, AND THIS IS WHAT CAME TO PASS.

HEZEKIAH DID NOT SHOOT ONE ARROW. THE GENERALS OF JUDAH DID NOT MOUNT THEIR HORSES. THE SOLDIERS OF JERUSALEM DID NOT LEAVE THEIR HOMES. THE LORD FOUGHT THE BATTLE BECAUSE THE NATION HAD PUT THEIR TRUST IN HIM. THIS IS HOW IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE - THE LORD WOULD FIGHT AND THE PEOPLE HAD FAITH. THE LORD WOULD WORK AS THE PEOPLE WORSHIPPED THE LORD. 185,000 ASSYRIAN SOLDIERS WERE CAMPED OUTSIDE THE CITY - AN ARMY THAT HAD DESTROYED EVERY FOE IT HAD FACED - AND THE PEOPLE OF JUDAH DO NOT EVEN LIFT A FINGER BECAUSE THE LORD SHOWED HIS POWERFUL HAND.

IT IS HARD NOT TO BE IMPRESSED BY THIS AMAZING AND MIRACULOUS RECORD...BUT THIS WAS ACTUALLY THE WAY THINGS WERE SUPPOSED TO BE!

DEUTERONOMY 20:1-4 - "WHEN YOU GO OUT TO BATTLE AGAINST YOUR ENEMIES AND SEE HORSES AND CHARIOTS AND PEOPLE MORE NUMEROUS THAN YOU, DO NOT BE AFRAID OF THEM; FOR THE LORD YOUR GOD, WHO BROUGHT YOU UP FROM THE LAND OF EGYPT, IS WITH YOU. 2 "WHEN YOU ARE APPROACHING THE BATTLE, THE PRIEST SHALL COME NEAR AND SPEAK TO THE PEOPLE. 3 "HE SHALL SAY TO THEM, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL, YOU ARE APPROACHING THE BATTLE AGAINST YOUR ENEMIES TODAY. DO NOT BE FAINTHEARTED. DO NOT BE AFRAID, OR PANIC, OR TREMBLE BEFORE THEM, 4 FOR THE LORD YOUR GOD IS THE ONE WHO GOES WITH YOU, TO FIGHT FOR YOU AGAINST YOUR ENEMIES, TO SAVE YOU.'

AN AMAZING DAY FOR JUDAH, AND A REMINDER FOR US.

AND WE ALSO CAN READ OF A COOL FOLLOW-UP OF THIS EVENT IS RECORDED IN 2 CHRONICLES 32. REMEMBER THAT HEZEKIAH HAD PRAYED THAT THE NATIONS WOULD SEE THE POWER OF GOD WHEN HE HELPED JUDAH - WELL, LOOK WHAT HAPPENED:

2 CHRONICLES 32:19-23 - THEY (ASSYRIA) SPOKE OF THE GOD OF JERUSALEM AS OF THE GODS OF THE PEOPLES OF THE EARTH, THE WORK OF MEN'S HANDS. 20 BUT KING HEZEKIAH AND ISAIAH THE PROPHET, THE SON OF AMOZ, PRAYED ABOUT THIS AND CRIED OUT TO HEAVEN. 21 AND THE LORD SENT AN ANGEL WHO DESTROYED EVERY MIGHTY WARRIOR, COMMANDER AND OFFICER IN THE CAMP OF THE KING OF ASSYRIA. SO HE RETURNED IN SHAME TO HIS OWN LAND. AND WHEN HE HAD ENTERED THE TEMPLE OF HIS GOD, SOME OF HIS OWN CHILDREN KILLED HIM THERE WITH THE SWORD. 22 SO THE LORD SAVED HEZEKIAH AND THE INHABITANTS OF JERUSALEM FROM THE HAND OF SENNACHERIB THE KING OF ASSYRIA AND FROM THE HAND OF ALL OTHERS, AND GUIDED THEM ON EVERY SIDE. 23 AND MANY WERE BRINGING GIFTS TO THE LORD AT JERUSALEM AND CHOICE PRESENTS TO HEZEKIAH KING OF JUDAH, SO THAT HE WAS EXALTED IN THE SIGHT OF ALL NATIONS THEREAFTER.

WE SEE IN HEZEKIAH THE MODEL OF A GREAT PERSON OF FAITH. A GREAT LEADER AND A HUMBLE GOD-DEPENDANT MAN. HE LAID HIS OWN CONCERNS BEFORE THE LORD AND PROTECTED THE HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE AROUND HIM THROUGH ENCOURAGEMENT AND TRUTH ABOUT THE LORD'S POWER. THIS IS A GREAT EXAMPLE FOR US. HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IN THE END, BUT HE KNEW THE COURSE OF ACTION HE SHOULD TAKE. HE SOUGHT THE LORD. HE WAS TROUBLED WHEN THE LORD WAS BEING TRASHED. AND HE PAINTED A VISION FOR THE PEOPLE HE HAD INFLUENCE OVER THAT THEY CAN AND SHOULD TRUST IN THE GOD WHO NEVER FAILS.

YOU MAY NEED TO MODEL THIS SORT OF BEHAVIOR TO THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU. THINK ABOUT YOUR CIRCLE OF RELATIONSHIPS. WHO NEEDS ENCOURAGEMENT? WHO NEEDS INTERCESSION THROUGH HONEST PRAYER? WHO IS AFRAID AND NEEDS TO KNOW WHERE TO RUN? WHO NEEDS A REMINDER OF THE POWER AND VICTORY OF THE LORD? LET HEZEKIAH'S EXAMPLE ENCOURAGE AND INSPIRE YOU SO THAT YOU CAN BE A "HEZEKIAH" TO SOMEONE TODAY.