

Calvary Chapel  Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY
TEACHER'S PACKET

Kindergarten

Sunday Morning

Study 41

King Hezekiah

King Hezekiah

The Objective is the key concept for this weeks lesson. It should be the main focus of the study

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The “Main passage” is the basis of the study, where the other verse support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the “reward box” found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God’s Word.

Objective The goal of this lesson is to teach the kids to bring their problems before the Lord by looking at Hezekiah’s example.

Key Verses

2 Kings 18:13-19:37—Main Teaching Passage

Memory Verse - Proverbs 3:12 (June Memory Verse)

“For whom the LORD loves He corrects,
Just as a father the son *in whom* he delights.”

Hook

Have all the students put one hand behind their backs. Tell them to clap with their remaining hand. Observe as they are unable to do it on their own. They may figure out that they need a partner in order to complete this task. If they don’t figure it out on their own, let them know they can use a partner.

In our example, we discovered something that no one can do on their own: clap with one hand. Today, we will see a story in which the characters could not do something on their own. However, instead of a partner, he needed God’s help.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

Remind the kids that in the past few weeks, we have seen that Israel was divided into two kingdoms. Last week, we saw that the Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom, Israel. Today, we see that the Assyrians are after the southern kingdom, Judah. The Assyrians sent Rabshakeh their general to Jerusalem where he threatened that his armies would destroy the city. Hezekiah, the new king, at first tried to satisfy the king by paying gold, but then he stopped and tried to make an alliance with Egypt to protect his people. The Assyrians laughed at Judah, boasting in their mighty defeats of the other nations. The people were terrified, and Hezekiah tore his robe in mourning, crying out to the Lord. However, the prophet Isaiah told him that things would be OK and that the king of Assyria would be killed. Next, the Assyrians heard of a problem in another land, but Rabshakeh sent Hezekiah a letter threatening to destroy Jerusalem. Hezekiah took that letter into the temple and laid it before the Lord. He prayed and asked God for help. Then the Lord sent Isaiah to Hezekiah again. Isaiah told the king that the Assyrians would be defeated and that Jerusalem would be saved. Not one arrow would touch the city. That night, the Lord sent an angel into the Assyrian camp, and that angel killed 185,000 Assyrians. The king of Assyria returned home to Nineveh, where he was killed by his sons. The Lord saved Judah.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK

Put yourself in Hezekiah's position for a moment: 185,000 soldiers from the most powerful army in the world were coming to attack your city. They have destroyed every city and nation in their path. Israel, your neighboring country, was defeated by Assyria. Now they are here for you. From an earthly perspective, this is a hopeless situation. Nothing you can do will save your people. You are going to die.

Different people might react different ways to this problem. Some might have tried to make an alliance with another nation. In 2 Kings 18, we see Hezekiah tried to do this, but eventually he realized that it wouldn't be enough. Others might try to fight back in their own strength, an effort that would surely be doomed. Still others could try to run and escape. All of these strategies have one thing in common: Hezekiah would be acting on his own strength and will.

Instead, Hezekiah ultimately does the best thing he could have done: he gave his problem over to the Lord. The image of Hezekiah laying the letter from the Assyrians before God in the temple is a beautiful picture of what

LOOK (Continued)

Hezekiah was doing in his heart. He was, in essence, admitting that he was powerless to stop the Assyrians and handing his problem over to God, asking and expecting Him to take care of it. And take care of it God did! Sending just one angel, God defeated the entire army in one night. Not one arrow or sword entered the city, just like God promised (2 Kings 19:32).

Hezekiah's response is a great model for how we should respond to the problems that face us in our lives. We face impossible challenges all the time. We are called to live holy lives in a world full of sin and temptation. We are told to preach the Gospel to every person on earth. Jesus asks us to follow Him wherever He might lead us. We face sickness, hardship, and death of friends and family. In our own strength, we cannot overcome any of these things. Like Hezekiah, we instead need to lay our problems before the Lord and allow Him to handle them for us.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

Review the lesson by asking the class how Hezekiah dealt with the problems he faced. Think of ways that the class can imitate his example.

Pray: Take prayer requests from students facing difficult circumstances. Lay these problems before the Lord and ask Him to take care of them. Thank God for taking care of us.

Parent Question: How did King Hezekiah respond to the impossible challenge he faced? How can we face challenges the same way?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on 2 Kings 18:13-19:37 by David Guzik

B. The Assyrian threat during the reign of Hezekiah.

1. (13-16) Hezekiah tries to buy peace from the Assyrians.

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

a. **In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them:** This was approximately five years after the fall of Samaria. Now the king of Assyria brought his force against Judah, who had successfully resisted him before ([2 Kings 18:7](#)). He captured all of the **fortified cities of Judah** and need to only take Jerusalem itself to completely conquer Judah.

i. The mention of **Lachish** is important historically. Lachish was thirty miles south-west of Jerusalem. Archaeologists have discovered a pit there with the remains of about 1,500 casualties of Sennacherib's attack. In the British Museum, you can see the Assyrian carving depicting their siege of the city of Lachish, which was an important fortress city of Judah.

ii. "An interesting wall relief taken from the excavation of Sennacherib's royal palace in Nineveh is preserved in the British Museum. It portrays the Assyrian king on a portable throne in his military camp outside Lachish. Prisoners of war are marching by on foot, and all the booty from the city is being displayed on ox-wagons." (Dilday)

b. **I have done wrong; turn away from me; whatever you impose on me I will pay:** This was a clear - though understandable - lack of faith on the part of Hezekiah. He felt it was wiser to pay off the Assyrian king and become his subject than it was to trust God to defend Judah against this mighty king.

i. We can suppose that Hezekiah thought that since the northern kingdom had been recently conquered and that all the **fortified cities of Judah** had been captured, that God had demonstrated that He *would not* intervene on behalf of Judah. Therefore Hezekiah felt he had to do something *himself*.

ii. Perhaps this idea was strengthened in Hezekiah when he remembered the wickedness of his own father Ahaz, and when he considered that because of their prior sin, Judah *deserved* such judgment.

c. **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:** Hezekiah hoped that this policy of appeasement would make Judah safe. He was wrong, and his policy only impoverished Judah and the temple and made the King of Assyria more bold than ever against Judah.

2. (17-20) The Rabshakeh tries to convince Judah to surrender.

Then the king of Assyria sent *the Tartan, the Rabсарis, and the Rabshakeh* from Lachish, 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. 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. Then *the Rabshakeh* said to them, "Say now to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria-

ia: "What confidence *is* this in which you trust? 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?"

a. **The Rabshakeh:** This actually is not a name, but a title. It describes the "field commander" for the Assyrian army, who represented the Assyrian King Sennacherib. "Rab-shakeh, an Assyrian title, possibly originally 'chief cup-bearer' but by this time some high officer of state." (Motyer, cited in his commentary on Isaiah)

b. **Stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool ... Eliakim ... Shebna ... Joah ... came out to them:** The Rabshakeh seemed to be in complete command of the situation. He could walk right into the city of Jerusalem, and stand at the crucial water supply - which was Jerusalem's life-line in a siege attack. As he stood there, three officials from Hezekiah's government came to meet him.

c. **What confidence is this in which you trust:** We might wish that Hezekiah trusted in the LORD, and that this is what the Rabshakeh mocked. Instead, Hezekiah put his hope in an alliance with Egypt, and the Rabshakeh wanted him to lose confidence in that alliance.

i. It was a great temptation for Hezekiah during this time to make a defensive alliance with Egypt, which seemed to be the only nation strong enough to protect Judah against the mighty Assyrians. As a prophet, Isaiah did everything he could to discourage Hezekiah and the leaders of Judah from putting their trust in Egypt ([Isaiah 19:11-17](#), [20:1-6](#), [30:1-7](#)). The LORD wanted Judah to trust Him instead of Egypt.

ii. In this sense, the Rabshakeh spoke the truth. God wanted Judah to have no **confidence** in Egypt at all. But the Rabshakeh did not do it to bring Judah to a firm trust in the LORD God, who can and will deliver them from the Assyrians. He did it to completely demoralize Judah and drive them to despair.

iii. Satan often attacks us the same way. Often, even when he tells the truth ("You are such a rotten sinner!"), he never does it to lead us to a firm trust in the LORD our God ("Jesus died for sinners, so if I am a rotten sinner, Jesus died to forgive and free me!"). Instead, Satan's strategy - even if he tells us the truth - is always to demoralize us and drive us to despair.

iv. From the perspective of the unbeliever, Sennacherib asked a valid question: **And in whom do you trust, that you rebel against me?** "Our life must to a large extent be a mystery, our peace pass understanding, and our motives be hidden. The sources of our supply, the ground of our confidence, the reasons for our actions, must evade the most searching scrutiny of those who stand outside the charmed circle of the face of God... We must be prepared to be criticized, because our behavior is determined by facts which the princes of this world know not." (Meyer)

3. (21-25) The demoralizing arguments of the Rabshakeh.

"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. 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'? 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! 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? 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.'"

a. **You are trusting in the staff of this broken reed, Egypt:** Strangely, the Rabshakeh could see the truth of Egypt's weakness better than many of the leaders of Judah could. Hezekiah's trust-in-Egypt policy would indeed be trouble for Judah.

i. "*Egypt* had made its one attempt to redeem its promises ([Isaiah 28:14](#)) and its army had been beaten at El Tekeh. The Rab-shakeh had himself seen this, but his words are more far-reaching and damaging, exposing the criminal stupidity of Judah's leaders: surely, he said, they knew that anyone who ever trusted Egypt suffered for it." (Motyer, Isaiah Commentary)

ii. "Since this is the same terminology Isaiah used to symbolize Egypt ([Isaiah 42:3](#)) some have suggested that Sennacher-

ib was familiar with Isaiah's prophecies and quoted here to imply he was carrying out Yahweh's will. Further support for this idea is found in [verse 25](#) where Sennacherib seemed to be aware of Isaiah's statement that Assyria was a rod which Yahweh would use to punish Judah ([Isaiah 10:5](#)). (Dilday)

b. **If you say to me, "We trust in the LORD our God":** The Rabshakeh anticipated the response of the leaders of Judah. "Rabshakeh, you say that we can't trust in Egypt. All right, we won't. But we can trust in the LORD our God."

c. **Is it not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away:** The Rabshakeh knew that King Hezekiah had implemented broad reforms in Judah, including the removal of the **high places** ([2 Kings 18:3-4](#)). Yet in the Rabshakeh's thinking, Hezekiah's reforms had really *displeased* God, so he should not expect help from the LORD God of Israel. The Rabshakeh would say, "Look at all the places there used to be where people would worship the LORD God of Israel. Now, since Hezekiah came in, there is only one place. More is always better, so the LORD God of Israel must be pretty sore at Hezekiah!"

i. The enemy of our souls has an amazing way of discouraging our disobedience. If Hezekiah was not careful, this argument of the Rabshakeh would start to make sense, when really it was demonic logic through and through.

ii. "The theological misunderstanding shown by the field commander at this point argues for the authenticity of the speech, which many critics have dubbed a free creation by the author of the narrative." (Grogan, Isaiah Commentary)

d. **Give a pledge to my master the king of Assyria:** This reminds us of the Rabshakeh's whole strategy, which was to *make Judah give up*. This was the *entire reason* the Rabshakeh was at the aqueduct, speaking to these leaders of Hezekiah's government. He had the vastly superior armies; he could have just attacked Jerusalem without this little speech. But the Rabshakeh would prefer it if Judah would simply *give up*, out of fear, discouragement, or despair.

i. The enemy of our soul uses the exact same approach. Many of us picture Satan as "itching for a fight" with us. Really, Satan doesn't want to do battle with you. First of all, there is the strong chance you will win. Second of all, win or lose, the battle can draw you closer to the LORD. Thirdly, what the LORD does in your life through the battle can be a great blessing for other people. No, Satan would much rather not fight you at all! He would much rather try to *talk you into giving up!*

ii. We see this exact strategy used against Jesus during His temptation in the wilderness. When Satan promised Jesus all the kingdoms of the world in exchange for Jesus' worship, Satan was trying to *avoid* the fight, and trying to *talk Jesus into giving up* ([Luke 4:5-8](#)). It didn't work with Jesus, and it shouldn't work with us.

e. **I will give you two thousand horses - if you are able on your part to put riders on them!** Here, the Rabshakeh mocked Judah's weak army. He said, "Even if we helped you with 2,000 horses, it wouldn't do you any good." His basic message is, "We could beat you with one hand tied behind our backs!" (**How then will you repel one captain of the least of my master's servants**)

f. **Have I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it?** The Rabshakeh saved his best thrust for last: "Admit it, Hezekiah. You know that *your* God is on *my* side."

i. Like all good deception, it would have been easy for Hezekiah and his men to believe this one. After all, hadn't the Assyrians been *wildly successful*? Surely, God must be on their side. Didn't they have the *most powerful army*? Surely, God must be on their side.

g. **The LORD said to me, "Go up against this land, and destroy it."** This was the finishing blow of a brilliant attack. "Hezekiah, *God told me* to destroy you. I'm just doing His will, and there is nothing you can do to stop it, so you may as well surrender."

i. Significantly, we can say that *the Rabshakeh was partially correct!* God was with him, and his attack on Judah fulfilled God's prophesied plan. In conquering Syria, in conquering Israel, and in bringing Judah to the brink, the Assyrians *did the will of God*. God prophesied that all this would happen ([Isaiah 8:3-4](#), [7:16-17](#) and many other passages in Isaiah). He allowed it to happen so His prophesied plan would be fulfilled.

ii. However, we should never think that God tempted an *innocent man* with an *evil plan*. In fact, even though God predicted and planned this invasion of the Assyrians, the Rabshakeh may have been lying indeed when he said, "**The LORD said to me.**" God did not have to do *anything special* to direct the bloodthirsty, conquest-hungry Assyrians to attack Syria, Israel, and Judah. He simply allowed the Assyrians to carry out the corrupt desires of their evil hearts. Therefore, the Assyrians could *never* excuse themselves by saying, "We were doing the LORD's will" even as Judas could never legitimately make that excuse regarding his wicked betrayal of Jesus.

4. (26-27) Hezekiah's men ask Rabshakeh to speak only to them.

Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, 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." 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?"

a. **Please speak to your servants in the Aramaic language, for we understand it:** We can just imagine how difficult this was for these leaders in Hezekiah's government. They must have thought, "It's bad enough we have to hear this. But since he is speaking in Hebrew, *everyone* will hear, and soon the people will become so discouraged they will rise up against us and make us surrender!"

i. "Aramaic became the diplomatic lingua franca of the Near East in the neo-Assyrian period. That a well-educated member of Sennacherib's staff could speak both Hebrew and Aramaic as well as Akkadian need no longer be doubted." (Patterson and Austel)

b. **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:** The Rabshakeh didn't care if the common citizens of Jerusalem could hear him. That was one of his goals. The more fear, discouragement, and despair he could spread, the better he liked it.

c. **Who will eat and drink their own waste with you:** The Rabshakeh pointed forward to what conditions would be like in Jerusalem after an extended siege. He wanted this to offend and frighten everyone who heard it, and magnify their sense of fear, discouragement, and despair.

5. (28-35) The Rabshakeh appeals to the people directly.

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! "Thus says the king: 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he shall not be able to deliver you from his hand; 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.'" 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; 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." Has any of the gods of the nations at all delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria? 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? Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?'"

a. **Then the Rabshakeh stood and called out with a loud voice in Hebrew:** Saying "don't do that" to the Rabshakeh was like saying it to a naughty child. He *couldn't wait* to speak to the people of Jerusalem.

b. **Hear the words of the great king:** The Rabshakeh's speech was intended to *glorify the enemy facing God's people*.

c. **Do not let Hezekiah deceive you:** The Rabshakeh's speech was intended to *make God's people doubt their leaders*.

d. **Nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD:** The Rabshakeh's speech was intended to *build fear and unbelief in God's people*.

e. **For thus says the king of Assyria: "Make peace with me by a present and come out to me, and everyone one of you will eat from his own vine."** The Rabshakeh's speech was intended to make *surrender an attractive option*.

f. **Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land:** Here, the Rabshakeh referred to the policies of ethnic cleansing and forced resettlement practiced by the Assyrians. When they conquered a people, they forcibly resettled them in far away places, to keep their spirits broken and their power weak. The Rabshakeh's speech was intended to make this terrible fate *seem attractive*.

g. **Has any one of the gods of the nations delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria?** The Rabshakeh's speech was intended to *destroy their trust in God*. His message was simple, and brilliant in its Satanic logic: "The gods of other nations have not been able to protect them against us. Your God is just like one of them, and can't protect you either."

i. For anyone who had the spiritual understanding to see it, Judah could have started planning the victory party right then. It is one thing to speak against Judah, its people and leaders. It was another thing all together to mock the LORD God of Israel this way, and count Him as "just another god."

ii. Typical of the work of the enemy of our souls, the Rabshakeh was going well until he simply overstepped his bounds. There was no way God would let him off the hook for this one. He had offended the LORD God in a way he would soon regret.

6. (36-37) The response from the officials and the people

But the people held their peace and answered him not a word; for the king's commandment was, "Do not answer him." 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.

a. **But they held their peace and answered him not a word:** They didn't try to argue with the Rabshakeh. Often, it is useless - if not dangerous - to try and match wits with this demonic logic. It is almost always better to keep silent and trust God, instead of trying to win an argument with Satan or his servants.

i. "Silence is our best reply to the allegations and taunts of our foes. Be still, O persecuted soul! Hand over thy cause to God. It is useless to argue, even in many cases to give explanations. Be still, and commit thy cause to God." (Meyer, on Isaiah)

b. **For the king's commandment was, "Do not answer him."** King Hezekiah was wise enough to make this command, and his officials and the people were wise enough to obey him.

c. **Came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn:** Though they were silent, they were still deeply affected by this attack. They had the same experience Paul described in [2 Corinthians 4:8-9](#): *2 We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.* Things were hard, but the battle was not lost yet.

God Delivers Jerusalem from Assyria

A. Hezekiah's prayers and Sennacherib's threats.

1. (1-5) Hezekiah seeks Isaiah in the time of great distress

And so it was, when King Hezekiah heard *it*, that he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. Then he sent Eliakim, who *was* over the household, Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. And they said to him, "Thus says Hezekiah: 'This day *is* a day of trouble, and rebuke, and blasphemy; for the children have come to birth, but *there is* no strength to bring them forth. It may be that the LORD your God will hear all the words of *the* Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to reproach the living God, and will rebuke the words which the LORD your God has heard. Therefore lift up *your* prayer for the remnant that is left.' " So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah.

a. **When King Hezekiah heard it, that he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth:** The tearing of clothes and the wearing of **sackcloth** (a rough, burlap-type material) were expressions of deep mourning, usually for the death of a loved one. Hezekiah received this report regarding Rabshakeh seriously, knowing how dedicated this enemy was to completely conquering Jerusalem.

i. Hezekiah's initial reaction was good. *He saw the situation for what it really was.* Often, when we are in some kind of trial or difficulty, we handle it poorly because we never see the situation accurately. Jerusalem's situation was desperate and Hezekiah knew it.

ii. There was good reason for Hezekiah to be so humble before the LORD. "City after city has fallen to Sennacherib and long lines of deportees are already snaking their bitter way into exile - and it is all Hezekiah's fault! He followed the lunatic policy of rebellion and was bewitched by Egyptian promises. He might as well have sold his people himself. But even when a matter is our own fault we can still pray about it. And the Lord can always be trusted to put his people." (Motyer, commentary on Isaiah)

b. **And went into the house of the LORD:** Hezekiah's second reaction was even better. He did not allow his mourning and grief spin him into a rejection of the LORD's power and help. He knew this was a more necessary time than ever to seek the LORD.

i. "The impudent blasphemy of this speech is without parallel. Hezekiah treated it as he ought: it was not properly against *him*, but against the LORD; therefore he refers the matter to Jehovah himself, who punishes this blasphemy in the most signal manner." (Clarke)

ii. When it says, **went into the house of the LORD**, we should not think that it means that King Hezekiah went into the holy place itself, which was forbidden for all except priests. It simply means that Hezekiah went to the courts of the house of the LORD, to seek God in the place which was open to him as a man of Israel.

iii. A previous king of Judah, King Uzziah, saw his reign tragically ended when he broke this command of the LORD to stay out of the holy place of the temple. [2 Chronicles 26:16](#) says, *But when he was strong his heart was lifted up, to his destruction, for he transgressed against the LORD his God by entering the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense.* In response, God struck Uzziah with leprosy and he was an isolated leper until his death.

c. **Then he sent Eliakim ... Shebna ... and the elders of the priests ... to Isaiah the prophet:** The third thing Hezekiah did was also good. The king sought out the word of the LORD, given through the prophet of the LORD.

d. **The children have come to birth, but there is no strength to bring them forth:** Hezekiah put these words in the mouth of his messengers to Isaiah to express the total calamity of the situation. This was a proverbial expression for a disaster - a woman so exhausted by labor that she could not complete the birth, so it is likely that both mother and child with die.

e. **It may be that the LORD your God will hear the words of the Rabshakeh:** Hezekiah knew that their only hope was that God would take offense at the blasphemies of Rabshakeh and rise up against him.

i. "The impudent blasphemy of this speech is without parallel. Hezekiah treated it as he ought: it was not properly against *him*, but against the LORD; therefore he refers the matter to Jehovah himself, who punishes this blasphemy in the most signal manner." (Clarke)

f. **Therefore lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left:** "Isaiah, pray for us. Our nation is devastated by this Assyrian invasion, and Jerusalem alone is left standing. Pray **for the remnant that is left.**"

2. (6-7) God's word of assurance to Hezekiah.

And Isaiah said to them, "Thus you shall say to your master, 'Thus says the LORD: "Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me. Surely I will send a spirit upon him, and he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.'" "

a. **Thus says the LORD:** Isaiah was aware he spoke as a prophet of the LORD. Without hesitation, he spoke as if he were speaking for the LORD God of heaven. We can be sure that Isaiah did not take this lightly. The fate of the nation, and his entire credibility as a prophet, was riding on what he said.

i. Isaiah, speaking for the LORD, was about to make a bold prediction. His prophecy would be entirely "provable." It would either happen or it would not happen; Isaiah would be known as a true prophet or a false prophet shortly.

b. **Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard:** Perhaps we can sense a gentle rebuke in these words from the LORD. "Hezekiah, it is good for you to seek Me so passionately. But the **words** of the Rabshakeh are only **words**. **Do not be afraid of them.**"

c. **With which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me:** How these words must have cheered Hezekiah! Before, he had hoped *it may be that the LORD your God will hear the words of the Rabshakeh ... to reproach the living God* ([2 Kings 19:4](#)). Now, the LORD spoke through the prophet Isaiah, saying He had indeed heard those words. It was evident that God took this offense personally.

i. **The servants of the king of Assyria:** **Servants** is "a deliberately belittling expression, 'the king of Assyria's lads/flunkies'." (Motyer, commentary on Isaiah) "He calls Rabshakeh and the other officers of the army the *slaves* or *servant boys* - we could say the *errand boys* - of the king of Assyria." (Bultema, commentary on Isaiah)

d. **Surely I will send a spirit upon him, and he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land:** Here, the LORD God assured Hezekiah that He would indeed deal with the Rabshakeh. He had heard his blasphemy, and would bring judgment against him.

i. Significantly, in this initial word from the prophet Isaiah, there was no mention of Jerusalem's deliverance or the defeat of the Assyrian army. God focused this word against the Rabshakeh *personally*.

ii. "The *rumour* was, that Tirhakah had invaded Assyria. The *blast* was that which slew *one hundred and eighty-five thousand* of them in one night, see [verse 35](#)." (Clarke)

3. (8-13) The response of Rabshakeh to King Hezekiah and Jerusalem.

Then *the* Rabshakeh returned and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah, for he heard that he had departed from Lachish. And the king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, "Look, he has come out to make war with you." So he again sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus you shall speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying: 'Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you, saying, "Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria." Look! You have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by utterly destroying them; and shall you be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered those whom my fathers have destroyed, Gozan and Haran and Rezeph, and the people of Eden who *were* in Telassar? Where *is* the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?'"

a. **So the Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah:** This must have seemed to Hezekiah to be the fulfillment of the LORD's promise through the prophet Isaiah. The Rabshakeh left Jerusalem and Hezekiah must have thought, "Now he'll go back to his own land and be killed, just like the LORD promised. Good riddance! Thank You LORD!"

b. **The king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, "He has come out to make war with you."** While the Rabshakeh was away, the Assyrians learned that Egyptian troops (under an Ethiopian king) were advancing from the south. This would be the Egyptian intervention Assyria feared, and that many in Judah trusted in. As Isaiah prophesied, it would come to nothing ([Isaiah 20:1-6](#) and [30:1-7](#)).

i. "Actually Tirhakah was only a prince at the time, but because he assumed the throne in 690 B.C., the title 'king' is used proleptically." (Wolf, commentary on Isaiah)

c. **Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you:** The Rabshakeh was not in Jerusalem, but that didn't stop him from trying to build fear, discouragement, and despair in Hezekiah. He sent a letter to the king of Judah to attack him

from a distance.

d. **Have the gods of the nations:** If read with an eye of faith, these must have been trust-building words of the Rabshakeh to Hezekiah. In counting the LORD God of Israel among the gods of the nations, the Rabshakeh blasphemed the LORD and invited judgment.

i. The Rabshakeh listed many cities that the Assyrian army conquered, **utterly destroying them:** "The list of city-states put to the ban (Hebrew *herem*; 'exterminated' or destroyed completely, RSV) reminds the reader that it was not only Israel who used this method in warfare (see [Numbers 21:2-3](#); [Joshua 6:21](#))." (Wiseman)

4. (14-19) Hezekiah's prayer.

And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. Then Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said: "O LORD God of Israel, *the One* who dwells *between* the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. 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 reproach the living God. Truly, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands, and have cast their gods into the fire; for they *were* not gods, but the work of men's hands; wood and stone. Therefore they destroyed them. Now therefore, O LORD our God, I pray, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You *are* the LORD God, You alone."

a. **Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD:** Hezekiah did exactly what any child of God should do with such a letter. He took it **to the house of the LORD** (to the outer courts, not the holy place), and he **spread it out before the LORD**. In this, Hezekiah boldly and effectively fulfilled the later command of [1 Peter 5:7](#): *casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you*.

i. "As a child bringing his broken toy to his father for repair, so Hezekiah laid the issues in God's sight for resolution." (Patterson and Austel)

ii. "In [verse 14](#), Hezekiah reacted to the second letter in a different manner. He didn't go to Isaiah. He went to the temple and prayed alone, taking his plea directly to the Lord. Both kinds of prayer are appropriate for a believer who is facing a crisis." (Dilday)

iii. "When therefore letters come to you, anonymous or otherwise, full of bitter reproach; when unkind and malignant stories are set on foot with respect to you; when all hope from man has perished, then take your complaint - the letter, the article, the speech, the rumour - and lay it before God. Let your requests be known unto Him." (Meyer)

iv. One old preacher received a letter with no sender or return address on the envelope. When he opened it, he saw a single piece of paper with only one word: "Fool!" He took it to the pulpit the next Sunday, and said: "I received an unusual letter this week. Never before have I received a letter where the writer signed his name, but forgot to write anything else!"

b. **God of Israel:** This title for God reminded Hezekiah - and the LORD also, in our human way of understanding - that the LORD God was the covenant God of Israel, and that He should not forsake His people.

i. As recorded in [Isaiah 37:16](#), Hezekiah also used another title when he addressed God, crying out "*O LORD of hosts*." This title for our God essentially means, "LORD of armies." Hezekiah was in a crisis that was primarily *military* in nature, so it made sense for him to address the LORD first according to the aspect of God's nature that was most needful for him. "LORD of armies, send some troops to help us!"

c. **The One who dwells between the cherubim:** Here, Hezekiah saw the great majesty of God. Surely, **the One who dwells between the cherubim** would never allow the Rabshakeh's blasphemies to go unpunished.

i. "He is our Judge, Lawgiver, and King, and is therefore bound by the most solemn obligation to save us, or his name will be tarnished." (Meyer)

d. **You are God, You alone:** **God** is a simple title for our LORD, but perhaps the most powerful. If He is **God**, then what can He *not* do? If He is **God**, then what is *beyond* His control? Hezekiah realized the most fundamental fact of all theology: God is **God**, and we *are not!* God is **God**, and the Rabshakeh or the Assyrians *are not!*

e. **You have made heaven and earth:** In recognizing the LORD God as Creator, Hezekiah saw that the LORD had all *power* and all *rights* over every created thing. We can almost feel Hezekiah's faith rising as he prayed this!

f. **Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see:** Hezekiah knew very well that the LORD did in fact hear and see the blasphemies of Rabshakeh. This is a poetic way of asking God to *act upon* what He has seen and heard, assuming that if God *has seen* such things, He will certainly act!

g. **Hear he words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God:** In his prayer, King Hezekiah drew the contrast between **the living God** and the false gods of the nations the Assyrians had already conquered. Those false gods were **not gods, but the work of men's hands; wood and stone**, so they were not able to save them from the Assyrians. But Hezekiah prayed confidently that the **living God** would save them, **that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the LORD God, You alone.**

B. God speaks concerning the situation.

1. (20-21) Sennacherib is worthy of scorn - not fear and trembling.

Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Because you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, I have heard.' This *is* the word which the LORD has spoken concerning him: 'The virgin, the daughter of Zion, Has despised you, laughed you to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem Has shaken *her* head behind your back!'"

a. **Because you have prayed to Me:** The glorious answer which fills the rest of the chapter came because Hezekiah prayed. What if he had not prayed? Then we are to think that no answer would have come, and Jerusalem would have been conquered. Hezekiah's prayer really mattered.

i. We should ask: How many blessings, how many victories, how many souls saved for Jesus' glory, lie unclaimed in heaven until the LORD can say, "**because you have prayed to Me**"?

b. **The virgin, the daughter of Zion, has despised you, laughed you to scorn:** The idea is that the Assyrians had come to ravish the **daughter of Zion**, the city of Jerusalem. But God would not allow it. "Jerusalem is represented as a young girl rebuffing with contempt the unwelcome advances of a churl." (Grogan, commentary on Isaiah)

i. Jerusalem could be called **the virgin, the daughter of Zion** for several reasons:

- She was unpolluted with the gross idolatry of the pagans
- God would defend her from the intended rape by Sennacherib and the Assyrians
- She had never been invaded or conquered by another since the days of David

2. (22-28) God's word to the King of Assyria and his representatives.

Whom have you reproached and blasphemed? Against whom have you raised *your* voice, and lifted up your eyes on high? Against the Holy *One* of Israel. By your messengers you have reproached the Lord, and said: "By the multitude of my chariots I have come up to the height of the mountains, to the limits of Lebanon; I will cut down its tall cedars *and* its choice cypress trees; I will enter the extremity of its borders, *to* its fruitful forest. I have dug and drunk strange water, and with the soles of my feet I have dried up all the brooks of defense." Did you not hear long ago *how* I made it, from ancient times that I formed it? Now I have brought it to pass, that you should be for crushing fortified cities *into* heaps of ruins. Therefore their inhabitants had little power; they were dismayed and confounded; they were *as* the grass of the field and the green herb, *as* the grass on the housetops and *grain* blighted before it is grown. But I know your dwelling place, your going out and your coming in, and your rage against Me. Because your rage against Me and your tumult have

come up to My ears, therefore 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.

a. **Whom have you reproached and blasphemed? Against whom have you raised your voice, and lifted up your eyes on high? Against the Holy One of Israel:** The LORD, speaking through Isaiah, simply said to the Rabshakeh, "Do you know whom you are dealing with?" The Rabshakeh obviously did not know.

i. Curiously, this prophecy may have never reached the ears of the Rabshakeh. After all, Isaiah didn't exactly have free access to him. But perhaps before his terrible end, God found a way to get this prophecy to him. Or, perhaps God had it for this blasphemer as a special message in hell. At the very least, this prophecy would have been hugely encouraging to Hezekiah and all of Judah, even if the Rabshakeh never heard it on this earth.

ii. Sometimes God speaks to the enemy more for the sake of His people than for the sake of the enemy himself.

b. **By the multitude of my chariots, I have come up to the height of the mountains:** Here, the LORD described the great pride the Assyrians had in their own conquests. But they forgot that the LORD was really in charge (**Now I have brought it to pass, that you should be crushing fortified cities into heaps of ruins. Therefore the inhabitants had little power**). Even if the Assyrians didn't know it, they owed their success to the LORD.

i. "God then confronted Sennacherib with that which he had apparently not considered: Sennacherib's successes were foreordained by God ... Sennacherib should not boast as though what he had done was either self-generated or self-accomplished." (Patterson and Austel)

ii. This was humbling for the Assyrians. All along, they thought it was because of their mighty power they had accomplished so much. Here, God made it plain that it was His power that did it.

iii. "*With the soles of my feet* was Sennacherib's boast that he commanded so many soldiers that when they marched across riverbeds, the literally dried up the rivers." (Dilday)

c. **I know your dwelling place, your going out and your coming in:** God knew how to find the Assyrians. And because Assyria went too far in blaspheming the One who made all their success possible, **therefore I will put My hook in your nose ... and I will turn you back by the way which you came**. This was an especially dramatic statement, because this is exactly how the Assyrians cruelly marched those whom they forced to relocate out of their conquered lands. They lined up the captives, and drove a large fishhook through the lip or the nose of each captive, strung them all together and marched them. God said, "I'm going to do the same thing to you."

i. "The Assyrian practice of leading foreign princes captive with a ring or *hook in the nose* is depicted on Esarhaddon's stela at Zenjirli showing him holding Tirhakah of Egypt and Ba'alu of Tyre." (Wiseman)

3. (29-31) God will prosper wounded Judah.

This *shall be* a sign to you: You shall eat this year such as grows of itself, and in the second year what springs from the same; also in the third year sow and reap, plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them. And the remnant who have escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant, and those who escape from Mount Zion. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

a. **You shall eat this year such as grows of itself:** "The invasion prevented sowing in 702 B.C., but when the threat lifted in 701 they would find sufficient growth to preserve life; in 701 the withdrawing Assyrians still inhibited agriculture, yet in 700 there would still be enough through 'chance growth'. Thus the Lord would confirm retrospectively that it was his hand that dispersed the threat." (Motyer, commentary on Isaiah)

i. "When in the harvest of the third year the people ate in abundance, they would know assuredly that God had been in the entire crisis." (Patterson and Austel)

b. **For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant:** As much as the Assyrians would like to crush Jerusalem and Judah, they will not be able to. God will preserve His remnant.

i. "The doctrine of *the remnant* ([vv. 4, 30](#)) left by God's grace through times of trial was demonstrated by Isaiah, whose son was named Shear-Jashub, 'remnant will return' ([Isaiah 7:3; 37:30-32](#)). Israelites fled to Judah so that in one sense Judah also included the remnant of Israel to carry on God's name and work." (Wiseman)

4. (32-34) God will defend Judah for His sake.

Therefore thus says 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 build a siege mound against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return; and he shall not come into this city," says the LORD. "For I will defend this city, to save it for My own sake and for My servant David's sake."

a. **He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there ... for I will defend this city, to save it:** God plainly and clearly drew a line. Although the Assyrian military machine was poised to lay siege to Jerusalem and ultimately crush them, they won't. The king of Assyria would not come into this city because God promised to defend it.

i. It is hard for modern people to understand the ancient horror of the siege, when a city was surrounded by a hostile army and trapped into a slow, suffering starvation. King Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem lived under the shadow of this threat, but God's promise through Isaiah assured them that Sennacherib and the Assyrian army would not only fail to capture the city, but would not even shoot an arrow or build a siege mound against Jerusalem. God promised that they wouldn't even *begin* a siege.

b. **For My own sake and for My servant David's sake:** This explains why God promised to defend Jerusalem. God would defend His own glory. Often, we unnecessarily think that we must defend the glory of the LORD. But that isn't really the case. God is more than able to defend His own glory.

i. God also does it "**For My servant David's sake.**" King David had died almost 300 years before this, but God still honored His promise to David ([2 Samuel 7:10-17](#)). God defended Jerusalem, not for the city's sake at all - Jerusalem *deserved* judgment! But He did it for His own sake and for the sake of David. In the same way, God the Father defends and blesses us, not for our own sake - we often *deserve* His judgment - but He often does it for His own sake, and for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

ii. **For I will defend this city, to save it For My own sake and for My servant David's sake:** "Jeremiah later argued that those who traded on this prophecy as meaning that the temple in Jerusalem would never be taken were superstitious and presumptuous ([Jeremiah 7:1-15](#))."

C. God defends Jerusalem.

1. (35) God strikes down the mighty army of Assyria.

And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when *people* arose early in the morning, there were the corpses; all dead.

a. **The angel of the LORD went out:** Simply and powerfully, God destroyed this mighty army in one night. 185,000 died at the hand of **the angel of the LORD**. Against all odds, and against every expectation except the expectation of faith, the Assyrian army was turned back without having even shot an arrow into Jerusalem. The unstoppable was stopped, the undefeated was defeated.

i. The prophet Hosea made this same prediction: *Yet I will have mercy on the house of Judah, will save them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword or battle, by horses or horsemen.* ([Hosea 1:7](#))

ii. "Herodotus, the Greek historian, recorded that one night Sennacherib's army camp was infested with mice (or rats) that destroyed the arrows and shield-thongs of the soldiers. He probably got this tradition from Egyptian sources, and it could well be a somewhat garbled version of the event recorded here." (Grogan)

b. **There were the corpses; all dead:** This was not difficult for God to do. In a manner of speaking, it was far harder for the LORD to get the heart and minds of His people in the right place. Once they were there, it was nothing for God to dis-

patch *one angel* to do this.

i. Some have speculated that there was a natural means that the angel used. "This has been thought to be a bacillary dysentery which had a three-day incubation period." (Wiseman)

2. (36-37) The defeated Sennacherib is judged in Nineveh.

So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned *home*, and remained at Nineveh. Now it came to pass, as he was worshiping in the temple of Nisroch his god, that his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. Then Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.

a. **Departed and went away:** This happened exactly as God said it would. But he left still full of pride. After this retreat from Judah, Sennacherib commissioned a record, which is preserved in the spectacular Annals of Sennacherib (the Taylor Prism), which can be seen in the British Museum. It shows how full of pride Sennacherib's heart still was, even if he could not even claim he conquered Jerusalem.

i. "I attacked Hezekiah of Judah who had not subjected himself to me, and took forty-six fortresses, forts and small cities. I carried away captive 200,150 people, big and small, both male and female, a multitude of horses, young bulls, asses, camels, and oxen. Hezekiah himself I locked up in Jerusalem like a bird in its cage. I put up banks against the city. I separated his cities whose inhabitants I had taken prisoners from his realm and gave them to Mitiniti, king of Ashdod, Padi, king of Ekron, and Zilbel, king of Gaza and thus diminished his country. And I added another tax to the one imposed on him earlier." (Cited in Bultema, commentary on Isaiah)

ii. "The Biblical account concludes with the much debated statement that the Assyrian army was struck down in some way during the night with considerable loss of life, following which the siege was called off ... The Assyrian Annals tacitly agree with the Biblical version by making no claim that Jerusalem was taken, only describing tribute from Hezekiah." (T.C. Mitchell, *The Bible in the British Museum*)

iii. "God spared *Sennacherib*, not in mercy, but in wrath, reserving to him a more dreadful and shameful death by the hands of his own children." (Poole)

b. **Now it came to pass:** Between [2 Kings 19:36](#) and [2 Kings 19:37, 20](#) years passed. Perhaps Sennacherib thought he had escaped the judgment of God, but he hadn't. He met the bitter end of death at the end of swords held by his own sons.

i. An old Jewish legend - and nothing more than a legend - says how it was that Sennacherib's sons came to kill him. Sennacherib was troubled at how God seemed to bless the Jews so much, and tried to find out why. Someone told him it was because Abraham had loved God so much that he was willing to sacrifice his son unto the LORD. Sennacherib thought he would be even more favored by God, and decided to kill two of his sons in sacrifice to the LORD, becoming even more blessed than Abraham and his descendants. But his two sons learned of the plan, and killed him before he could kill them, thus fulfilling the word of the LORD.