

2 CHRONICLES 32:20-33

REVIEW — Chapter 32 opens with Sennacherib king of Assyria invading Judah. This takes place on the heels of tremendous revival in Judah and amongst the remnant of the northern tribes.

In the face of this invasion Hezekiah shows up huge as a man of faith and a man of action. Hezekiah did not sit back and do nothing. He did all that he could. He commissioned men to dig a tunnel to transport water from the Spring Gihon, outside of the walls of the city, to the Pool of Siloam that was inside of the walls at the south-east end of the city — a distance of almost 6 football fields through solid rock. THAT was extraordinary action! He fortified the city (repaired walls and built an outer wall) — extraordinary action. He commissioned men to make weapons — extraordinary action. He appointed captains and set them in their station — extraordinary action. BUT he did not place his trust in his action! Hezekiah knew that ultimately success was dependent upon the Lord. There were some awesome takeaways for us as we looked at this man of faith and action!

- ¹ In the big picture — faith and action are not mutually exclusive.
- ² Hezekiah did not measure their chances for success against the brutal armies of Assyria against Judah's human resources or his considerable efforts and actions. His confidence was in the Lord. He measured the circumstance against God. The takeaway for us — We need to measure our circumstances against God. This has been a REPEATED theme through out the Bible in different moments of history, involving different individuals, in very different circumstances. As the perfect teacher, God repeats it because He knows it's going to be on the test!

Romans 8:31 ³¹*What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?*

- ³ He understood that there was a spiritual dimension in God's provision and protection. He essentially quotes Elisha (2 Kings 6:16-

18) *for there are more with us than with him.* From that we learned that we are not alone in the walk and warfare of the Christian life. The Bible says that God dispatches POWERFUL spiritual beings called angels to care for us as we seek to live for Jesus and live on mission for Him in this fallen world.

⁴ He understood the Immanuel nature of God — *but with us is the Lord our God, to help us and to fight our battles.*” God has not only commissioned these angelic beings to be our escorts on the way to heaven — God Himself is WITH US! Life is always going to have its Sennacheribs and its Assyrian armies bearing down on us.

QUOTE: Paul Tripp — *If you're God's child there is hope for you, not because of your wisdom and strength, but because Emmanuel is always with you.*

⁵ Big takeaway regarding leadership — ⁸ **And the people took confidence from the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.** KJV = *And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.* Hezekiah exercised his leadership by essentially telling them what God had said in His Word.

As we closed our time together last week we saw that as soon as those who were afraid and weak had been built up by the encouraging words of this godly leader — the enemy came along and tried to undermine their faith in all they had heard about God. It was a frontal assault on God. The **objective** was to frighten and terrify. The **goal** was the taking the city. The **means** to was to shout in the language of the people.

¹⁶ **And his servants said still more against the Lord God and against his servant Hezekiah.** ¹⁷ **And he wrote letters to cast contempt on the Lord, the God of Israel and to speak against him, saying, “Like the gods of the nations of the lands who have not delivered their people from my hands, so the God of Hezekiah will not deliver his people from my hand.”** ¹⁸ **And they shouted it with a loud voice in the language of Judah to the people of Jerusalem who were on the wall, to frighten and terrify**

them, in order that they might take the city. ¹⁹And they spoke of the God of Jerusalem as they spoke of the gods of the peoples of the earth, which are the work of men's hands.

²⁰Then Hezekiah the king and Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, prayed because of this and cried to heaven.

1 Kings 19 gives us a the details of **where**, **how** and **what** Isaiah and Hezekiah prayed Hezekiah about these letters —

***1 Kings 19:14** 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.*

This is awesome! Hezekiah goes with Isaiah up to the house of the Lord (the temple) and literally lays the letter out before the Lord. He essentially says — *“This is for you. It was delivered to the wrong address — they sent it to my house — but it’s for You. Just letting you know what Sennacherib thinks about you and how he’s going to whoop you. I thought you might want to know Lord.*

Then this what they prayed —

***1 Kings 19:15 -19** And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord and said: “O Lord the God of Israel, who is enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth. ¹⁶Incline your ear, O Lord, and hear; open your eyes, O Lord, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to mock the living God. ¹⁷Truly, O Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands ¹⁸and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone. Therefore they were destroyed. ¹⁹So now, O Lord our God, save us, please, from his hand, **THAT** all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O Lord, are God alone.”*

Bottom line — *Lord, it’s Your reputation that’s at stake. They want to kill us — but they want to kill us to prove that You are no different*

than the idols we just tore down. Metro — life is never just about us. When someone attacks us it is never a matter of defending our reputation for our own sake. Our lives are all about God's reputation! Our lives are all about the Gospel.

Philippians 1:20 *as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored (KJV = magnified) in my body, whether by life or by death.*

Ephesians 4:1 *I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,*

Romans 14:7-8 *For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. ⁸If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord.*

Philippians 1:27 *Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ,*

²¹And the Lord sent an angel, who cut off all the mighty warriors and commanders and officers in the camp of the king of Assyria.

Not an army of angels. Just ONE. One nameless angel from among the ranks of loyal angels — to dispatch an entire army!

Again — **2 Kings** give us some great detail. First we are told that as they set this before the Lord, and set his reputation before their safety the Lord gave a prophetic word to Isaiah.

2 Kings 19:32-34 *“Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the king of Assyria: He shall not come into this city or shoot an arrow there, or come before it with a shield or cast up a siege mound against it. ³³By the way that he came, by the same he shall return, and he shall not come into this city, declares the Lord. ³⁴For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David.”*

By the way — the Lord loves to speak to us when we seek Him in prayer. Pray with your Bible open — pray with your heart open to receive! He loves to speak when we gather with other believers to pour our hearts out before in prayer. While one prays the Lord can give a word of prophecy or a word of wisdom, or a word of exhortation to direct prayer and confirm prayer!

Then **2 Kings** gives us the details of the victory.

***2 Kings 19:35** And that night the angel of the Lord went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies.*

God had been listening to the threats of Sennacherib as he time and again referred to **his hand** —

*¹³Do you not know what I and my fathers have done to all the peoples of other lands? Were the gods of the nations of those lands at all able to deliver their lands out of **my hand**?.... ¹⁵Now, therefore, do not let Hezekiah deceive you or mislead you in this fashion, and do not believe him, for no god of any nation or kingdom has been able to deliver his people from **my hand** or from the hand of my fathers. How much less will your God deliver you out of **my hand**!*

Time and again Sennacherib set his hand in opposition to the hand of God — exalted his hand above the hand of God. God says — *Let Me see now — there's 185,000 of them out there.... That's a one-angel job.* Doesn't even tell us who the angel is. It could have been Stanley the angel that got the call! One angel. 185,000 vicious, brutal Assyrian soldiers.

Think about this — Do you remember what Jesus said to Peter when Peter drew his to defend Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemene?

Matthew 26:53 *Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?*

One Roman legion was made up of 6,000. Do the math — 12 legions of angels = 72,000 angels. If ONE angel killed 185,000 Syrians in one night — multiply that by 72,000 (= 12 legions) and you would have 13 billion, 320 million guys dead in one night. I thought you might be interested in that. So in answer to the prayers of Isaiah and Hezekiah the Lord sent an angel.

A few things come to mind here. ¹ God has commissioned angels — like this one — to be our escorts on the way to heaven. This is one angel. How many angels do we have caring for us? I don't know; but the Bible tells us they're around. In fact it says

Hebrews 13:2 *Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.*

² As we think about how awesome angels are — the Gospel declares that you and I are destined to be higher than the angels — sons and daughters of the most high God. ³ THERE IS A BIGGER PICTURE for us to see in this victory. As this one angle wipes out 185,000 Assyrians in one night the stage is set for Babylon to arise as a geopolitical force — and it will be Babylon, and its king Nebuchadnezzar, that will be the Lord's instrument to judge the Southern Kingdom of Judah that will fall back into full blown idolatry.

²¹And the Lord sent an angel, who cut off all the mighty warriors and commanders and officers in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned with shame of face to his own land. And when he came into the house of his god, some of his own sons struck him down there with the sword.

It sound like it happened as soon as Sennacherib got back. We know that the Assyrians were defeated outside of Jerusalem in 701 B.C. The Assyrian records tell us that his sons murdered him in 681 B.C. So this is 20 years later. I personally believe that this was 20 years of God's grace. It was grace that Sennacherib had 20 years to

think of how the God of Israel was not like any little “g” gods — think about how he had blasphemed the One, True and Living God and to repent of his idolatry and his pride. Sennacherib never repented! In fact, he died an idol worshipper. **2 Kings** tell us that he was murdered while he was worshipping an idol called Nisroch.

***2 Corinthians 6:1-2** Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ²For he says, “In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you.” Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*

²²So the Lord saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib king of Assyria and from the hand of all his enemies, and he provided for them on every side. ²³And many brought gifts to the Lord to Jerusalem and precious things to Hezekiah king of Judah, so that he was exalted in the sight of all nations from that time onward.

What would that look like in our culture? He would be on the cover of Time magazine — maybe Time Magazine “Person” of the Year! He would be the lead story on all the major news channels.

As we move forward to the close of the chapter we find that even a godly man like Hezekiah is not exempt from pride. That is why the Bible says

***1 Corinthians 10:12** Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. ¹³No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man.*

²⁴In those days

The *those days* refer back to the time of the Assyrian invasion of Judah (**2 Kings 20:6**). The events of this chapter are also recorded in Isaiah 38.

Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death,

We're not told **how** Hezekiah became sick. It may have been through something obvious to everyone around Hezekiah, or it may have been through something known only to God. Regardless of **how** Hezekiah became sick — or **what** the sickness was — it was certainly permitted by the LORD. It's interesting to note from the record of [2 Kings](#) that God used a medicinal treatment in healing Hezekiah. God can, and often does, bring about healing through medical treatments. By the way — I believe that barring some specific direction from God — medical treatment should never be rejected in the name of faith.

and he prayed to the Lord, and he answered him and gave him a sign.

[2 Kings 20:8](#) And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "What shall be the sign that the Lord will heal me, and that I shall go up to the house of the Lord on the third day?"

This sign that was to assure Hezekiah of his healing was that the shadow of the sundial would move backward — giving *more time* in the day — just as God was going to give Hezekiah *more time* to live (2 Kings 20:8-11).

God granted Hezekiah an additional *fifteen years*. Hezekiah died c. 686 B.C. That means that his healing can be dated from about the time of the siege of Jerusalem — Hezekiah's rescue from death was a beautiful picture of how Jerusalem would miraculously be rescued from what appeared to be sure destruction.

²⁵But Hezekiah did not make return according to the benefit done to him, for his heart was proud. Therefore wrath came upon him and Judah and Jerusalem. ²⁶But Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the Lord did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah.

This is radical — Hezekiah stands as a powerful proof of how the best of God’s men are ultimately just men — Sinners needing a gracious redeemer and a mighty Savior.

Hezekiah did not receive this miracle with the gratitude that he should have. The great news is that he was broken by the grace and goodness of the Lord — and he did humble **himself — and did repent of the pride of his heart**— and was saved a greater judgment.

DON’T MISS THIS — The Kingdom of God is so upside down from this world. The person who is lifted up in pride is the person who is brought low — Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall. It is the lowly person that is lifted up — *Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord and He shall lift you up.* God Himself delights to dwell with the humble and broken hearted person!

Isaiah 57:15 For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.

Jesus said that brokenness and humility before God is the starting point for life in the Kingdom

Matthew 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs (and theirs alone) is the Kingdom of God.

²⁷And Hezekiah had very great riches and honor, and he made for himself treasuries for silver, for gold, for precious stones, for spices, for shields, and for all kinds of costly vessels; ²⁸storehouses also for the yield of grain, wine, and oil; and stalls for all kinds of cattle, and sheepfolds. ²⁹He likewise provided cities for himself, and flocks and herds in abundance, for God had given him very great possessions. ³⁰This same Hezekiah closed the upper outlet of the waters of Gihon and directed them down to the west side of the city of David. And Hezekiah prospered in all his works. ³¹And so in the matter of the envoys

of the princes of Babylon, who had been sent to him to inquire about the sign that had been done in the land, God left him to himself, in order to test him and to know all that was in his heart.

The king of Babylon is very interested in the fact that the back of the Assyrian army had been broken.

QUOTE: G. Campbell Morgan — *“The real reason of the visit was political; Babylon desired to throw off the yoke of Assyria. What nation was more likely to help them than the one at the hands of which Assyria had been so completely defeated? Babylon sought alliance with Judah against Assyria.”*

He sends a delegation to Jerusalem, to Hezekiah **to inquire about the sign that had been done in the land**. We are not sure whether this is a reference to the 185,000 Assyrians being slaughtered, or the shadow of the sundial going backwards 10 degrees, or Hezekiah’s healing. Whatever this wonder was — people knew about it and that news reached Babylon. That was no small distance. The distance from Jerusalem to Babylon was 500 miles in a straight line. But that journey actually took 900 miles because they would travel northwest along the Euphrates River and then south to Babylon.

2 Kings 20 tells us this — *¹³And Hezekiah welcomed them, and he showed them all his treasure house, the silver, the gold, the spices, the precious oil, his armory, all that was found in his storehouses. There was nothing in his house or in all his realm that Hezekiah did not show them.*

CLOSE

The Holy Spirit makes a point of saying that the Lord left Hezekiah to himself concerning the envoys to show Hezekiah what was in his heart. This whole scene had to be incredibly flattering for King Hezekiah. By man’s reckoning Judah was a nobody on the geopolitical landscape — a tiny nation with tiny power. Babylon was a rising star; a superpower in the making. Notoriety on that stage

and recognition from the king of Babylon no doubt left Hezekiah with a sense of self importance.

QUOTE: Spurgeon — *This great prosperity was a great temptation, far more difficult to endure than Rabshakeh's letter, and all the ills which invasion brought upon the land.*"

The scary thing about this is that Hezekiah wasn't acting like the proud athlete pounding his chest after a dunk or a home run or a big tackle. He isn't like the musician drinking in the standing ovation. The unbelieving person with tons of "natural talent" feels they have the right to be proud. In their hearts and minds there is nothing divine or miraculous in what they do — in their mind they deserve all the notoriety and recognition.

The scary thing in all of this is that Hezekiah knew that all the news — all of his notoriety — was owing to God. But knowing that, somehow, somewhere in his heart — he began to think that he had some merit in all of this! After all — wasn't he connected with everything God had done? Wasn't he in the center of the great revival in Judah? Wasn't he the one who took such extraordinary action to fortify Jerusalem. Wasn't he the one who encouraging the people to trust in God? Wasn't he the man who went in with the mighty prophet Isaiah and prayed — leading to the supernatural route of the Assyrians? Wasn't he the man God healed — and even made the sun go backwards as a sign that he would be healed?

This passage is like a bucket of ice cold water dumped on me! I was sitting in my office today genuinely stunned — in my heart shivering because this is the man who was passionate about God being worshipped. This is the man whose priority was Gods Kingdom above his own. This is the man who longed to see men serve God. This is the man who longed to see people transformed by the reality of sinless lamb slaughtered for their redemption. This is the man who led the people in tearing down idols. This is the man who encouraged a nation to look to God in time of trouble. This is the man who pleaded with God when the Assyrians surrounded Jerusalem! This is the man who God granted 15 extra years of life to.

And when the Holy Spirit *left him to himself, in order to test him and to know all that was in his heart* there was something in his heart that loved the praises of man. By the way — God knew what was in Hezekiah's heart. God left Hezekiah to himself so that by way of this Babylonian envoy Hezekiah could know what was in his own heart!

This is scary because it is easy for those who believe God, believe His Word, serve God, and have seen God work in and through their life to fall into spiritual pride. There is something in us — that left unchecked — left out of the light of Scripture — not brought before the cross of Jesus — that wants to take credit for things that God has done. How many men and ministries have fallen in the same pit of spiritual pride? God blesses a man. God uses a man. God does things that the man could never — and would never — dare to take credit for. But then Babylon sends an envoy. Babylon says, *“We’re impressed!”* Suddenly that man is something in they eyes of those the world considers to be someone! There is something deep inside even the godly man, and godly woman, that wants to be recognized; and once recognized, will do anything to please and impress man! Like Hezekiah, that greatly graced man can't wait to give Babylon the grand tour of his domain — so that Babylon might be impressed with him — not God!

There are a lot of men and women who face failure and weakness in great faith and great humility — But then they fail in the face of success and strength. Think about this — Hezekiah never said that all of these things he showcased were owing to God. He simply showed them the blessings of God and by his silence took credit for it all — credit that belonged to God.

What a massive opportunity this otherwise godly man missed out on — the opportunity to speak to the Babylonian envoys about the greatness of God and the LORD's blessing on Judah. Though he showed the treasures of his own house — he never show them the Lord's house!

QUOTE: Knapp — “Why did he not show these learned heathen God's house? ‘Every whit’ of which showeth *‘His glory’* (Psalm 29:9,

margin). There he could have explained to them the meaning of the brazen altar, and the sacrifices offered thereon; and who can tell what the results might not have been in the souls of these idolaters?" That would be like the unbelieving world hearing about what God is doing at a local church and when the "envoy" shows up to the church that church's Hezekiah shows them the brilliant IT infrastructure and the use of Media and all the moving pieces without ever telling them that all of it is from God and for God's story and for His glory. **Without ever showcasing Jesus as the real hero!**

³²Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah and his good deeds, behold, they are written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz, in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. ³³And Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the upper part of the tombs of the sons of David, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honor at his death. And Manasseh his son reigned in his place.

Hezekiah was the good son of a rotten father. Manasseh is the most rotten son of the best father, since David. Manasseh will be the most wicked king that Judah would ever see — and his reign will last 55 years.

Read ahead — if you dare!