

Finishing Well 2022

Lesson #4

Trusting God Involves Preparation & Action January 26, 2022

In the rubble that filled the Jerusalem streets following the 1967 Six-Day War, archaeologists scrambled to see what the bombs had unearthed before the bulldozers came through and smoothed over the past once again. One group found a very, very old wall, buried so deep below the present-day city that it could hardly be called a wall anymore. This wall, far older than the Ottoman Old City wall or the Wailing Wall, dates back over 2700 years to the reign of King Hezekiah. Once it had been an enormous wall; 25' high by 20' wide.

The foundations that remain are 20' wide and 10' tall in some places. Today the wall is partially exposed in a small courtyard below apartment buildings and shops in the Jewish Quarter.

The miracle connected with the Broad Wall is so amazing that God included the account in 3 locations in His Word. II Kings 18-19 II Chronicles 32 Isaiah 36-37

Hezekiah The Commander	II Kings 18:17-37	II Chron. 32:1-19	Isaiah 36
➤ Preparation		II Chron. 32:1-8	
➤ Confrontation	II Kings 18:17-18		Isaiah 36:1-3
➤ Proclamation	II Kings 18:10-36	II Chron. 32:9-19	Isaiah 36:4-21
➤ Humiliation	II Kings 18:37-19:13		Isaiah 36:22-37:13

Hezekiah the Commander II Kings 18:17-37 II Chron. 32:1-19 Isa. 36

II Chron. 32:1 After these deeds of faithfulness, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and entered Judah.

"Deeds Of Faithfulness": Hezekiah's labors to cleanse and consecrate the temple, the priests, and the Levites, and to restore true worship in Judah. One would think that God would reward his service by giving him peace, but instead, the Lord allowed the Assyrians to return to Judah and threaten Jerusalem. After all, the king had done "that which was good and right and true before the Lord his God" and had done it "with all his heart" [II Chron. 31:20-21].

➤ Why didn't the Lord protect Judah from another invasion?

It's easy to understand why the Assyrians destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel; after all, the nation was worshipping idols and rebelling against the law of God.

But Judah had returned to the Lord under Hezekiah's leadership, and though the king had made some mistakes, his heart was sincere before God.

God had His divine purposes to fulfill in Hezekiah's life and in the life of the nation.

The king needed to learn he was second in command and the LORD alone was sovereign.

Note: Hezekiah reigned 29 years. His 14th year would be mean there were 15 years left. God granted him an extra 15 years in 702 BC.

➤ King Sennacherib captured the fortified cities in Judah during 702 BC.

➤ His march against Jerusalem is in 701 BC. Hezekiah has 14 more years to live. In 701 BC, Hezekiah and all of Judah faced a crisis. The Assyrians, the dominant world power at the time, invaded Judah and marched against Jerusalem.

When the Assyrian army was approaching Jerusalem, they were undefeated.

They put the fear of them in the hearts of the people. They were known to be brutal.

The Assyrian records state that their army took 46 fortified cities in Judah before settling in Lachish and planning the siege of Jerusalem. [Sennacherib's Annals & Stile] Bible agree?

Isa. 36:1 Now it came to pass in the 14th year of King Hezekiah, that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them.

Recall: After his grave illness, Isaiah told him Assyria would be coming against Jerusalem.

God's Promise: II Kings 20:6 I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for My own sake, and for the sake of My servant David.

Tiny Jerusalem vs Mighty Assyria:

Hezekiah has at least 3 major preparations to resist conquest by Assyria. [II Chron. 32:1-8] II Chron. 32:2-4 "When Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come, intent on making war against Jerusalem, Hezekiah consulted with his officers and warriors about stopping the flow of the springs outside the city and they did help him. ... for otherwise, they thought, the King of Assyria would come and find water in abundance."

1. Construction of Hezekiah's Tunnel > Block up the water supply outside the city
Hezekiah had already dug the tunnel between the Gihon spring and the city of Jerusalem. He diverted Jerusalem's water source by digging a tunnel from the Gihon Spring to the Pool of Siloam inside the city walls.

➤ The people in the city would not die of thirst in the event of siege or the closing of the gates. [II Kings 20:20]

➤ This prevented the invaders from having ample supplies of fresh water.

➤ Hezekiah refused to throw open the gates of the city to Sennacherib or even allow the enemy horses to drink the city's water.

Key: Destroy anything that would aid the enemy effort. Deprive the enemy of all supplies.

2. II Chron. 32:5 Also he strengthened himself, and built up all the wall that was broken, and raised it up to the towers, AND ANOTHER WALL WITHOUT, and repaired Millo in the city of David, and made darts and shields in abundance.

➤ Hezekiah had the wall of Jerusalem repaired & strengthened & put extra towers on it.

➤ He strengthened the Millo, the terraces that butted up against the walls.

Part of City of David; the rampart built by the Jebusites before David conquered it.

He constructed another outside wall = the Broad Wall

➤ Jerusalem needed a larger and massive wall of defense to protect it and withstand a coming siege.

The original city was enlarged to accommodate a large influx and population increase to 25,000.

- This was 5x the population under Solomon.

Jews from the northern tribes of Israel [Northern Kingdom] who had been overrun by the Assyrians in 721 BC, had migrated south to Judah and the city of Jerusalem for protection. Many settled on west side which was an area that apparently remained unfortified until Hezekiah built the wall.

- Hezekiah, king of Judah, had a massive Broad Wall constructed as a new defensive wall to protect the people living outside the city walls to the west on the Western Hill. [refuge] Hezekiah's Broad Wall, 25' high by 20' wide, connected the lower part of the City of David with the west side of the Temple Mount.

Assyrians began making their presence felt around Jerusalem. Hezekiah cried out to the people,

3. II Chron. 32:6-8 And he set captains of war over the people, and gathered them together to him in the street of the gate of the city, and spake comfortably to them, saying,

⁷ Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him:

⁸ With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.

- He organized the army, appointed officers, gave them weapons.
- Jerusalem was well stocked with provisions.
- The walls & fortifications were greatly strengthened.
- He was wise to use God's Word to encourage his soldiers and remind them of the past victories of God's people because they had trusted the LORD.

Our trust is never misplaced when it is placed in the Lord.

Ps. 56:3-4 When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.

In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I am not afraid; what can flesh do to me?

Remember: Isaiah's Prophecy to Hezekiah: God will deliver Judah and defend Jerusalem for the sake of King David. He had a great promise from God to believe in.

Truth: God's people should not live on explanations; we should live on His promises.

God would stand for Israel. Hezekiah trusted in the LORD. He KNOWS that if he consecrates his heart to the LORD, people will follow. If the people followed, God would preserve His people so that they could stand as a witnessing presence among the pagan nations that surrounded them. That was the whole point [Ex. 19:5-6].

The Confrontation: II Kings 18:17-18; Isaiah 36:1-3

It is not long until Sennacherib and the Assyrians had taken 46 fortified cities in Judah.

They settled in Lachish [30 miles southwest] to plan the siege and capture of Jerusalem.

They call upon Hezekiah to surrender: 3 of our officers will meet with 3 of yours
II Kings 18:17-18 And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsaris and Rabshakeh from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. Tartan = Supreme Commander Rabsaris = Chief Officer Rabshakeh = Field Commander
And when they were come up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is in the highway of the fuller's field.

¹⁸ And when they had called to the king, there came out to them Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder. Eliakim = Palace Administrator Shebna = Secretary Joah = Recorder

Sennacherib sent his Rabshakeh [field commander] to the walls as a messenger.

➤ The Rabshakeh addressed the soldiers manning the city wall in Hebrew in a loud voice to frighten them. (Enemy learned the Hebrew language to better wage war against them.)

The Proclamation: II Kings 18:19-36 II Chron. 32:9-19 Isa. 36:4-21

Note: There are 3 speeches.

1. The Field commander spoke & blasphemed the Jews' God. II Kings 18:17-36
2. Hezekiah went to the temple and spoke to God about what the field commander had said. II Kings 19:1-19
3. God spoke to Hezekiah through Isaiah the prophet about the judgment the Assyrians would receive at His hand. II Kings 19:20-24. God has the last word always!

1. The Field commander spoke & blasphemed the Jews' God. II Kings 18:17-36
Theme of his address was FAITH. II Kings 18:19-20; II Chron. 32:10; Isa. 36:4-5

II Kings 18:19a Then the Rabshakeh said to them, "Say now to Hezekiah,

'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria:

The Rabshekah didn't realize was that Jehovah is the Great King and that He heard every word the field commander was saying.

Ps. 47:2 "For the Lord Most High is awesome; He is a great King over all the earth."

Ps. 48:2 Jerusalem was "the city of the great King"

Mal. 1:14 The Lord Himself has said, "I am a great King."

II Kings 18:19b-20 "What confidence is this in which you trust?"

²⁰ You speak of *having* plans and power for war; [I have counsel and strength for the war. KJV] but *they are* mere words. And in whom do you trust, that you rebel against me? [Trust = 7x]

- Field commander belittled and promoted distrust of Hezekiah and blasphemed Jehovah.
- Who will deliver you from us? Repeats deliver and my hand several times.

II Kings 18:20b-22 Rabshekah: What are you trusting in? They will all fail.

- Are you placing your trust in Egypt? Your military resources? Your God? Your wall?

II Kings 18:23 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!

II Kings 18:25 Bold Claim: We have come here in obedience to the commandment of the Lord. He used us to destroy Israel - now you. [II Chron. 35:21; Isa. 36:10]

Note: God is in charge of all nations. No nation can do what it pleases & use God as the excuse. In II Kings 18:26, Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah interrupt the Rabshekah.

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."

II Kings 18:27 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?"

II Kings 18:28 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!

II Kings 18:29-30 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."

II Kings 18:35 Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?

Don't Forget: The year before [702 BC], the prophet Isaiah had told Hezekiah that God would defend Jerusalem and destroy the Assyrians [20:6; Isa. 38:4-6].

And the word of the LORD came to Isaiah, saying, ⁵ "Go and tell Hezekiah, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will add to your days fifteen years. ⁶ I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city.

➤ Rabshekah quoted this promise II Kings 18:29-30 [How much the enemy knows!]

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."

The Rabshekah did everything he could to tear down the people's confidence in their king.

If Hezekiah makes a bargain with Assyria, we will stop the siege and spare your lives.

Glowing Picture: You can live in peace until we deport you to Assyria, a land much like Judah.

➤ When the enemy makes an offer, there is always that fatal "until" attached to it.

If you don't surrender, the day will come you will be so thirsty and hungry, you will eat and drink your own excrement.

Isa. 36:21 But they held their peace and answered him not a word; for the king's commandment was, "Do not answer him."

That's the best way to respond to ignorant people who blaspheme the Lord and know nothing of His truth and greatness.

Isa. 36:22 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.

The Humiliation II King 18:37-19:13 Isaiah 36:22-37:13

Note: There are 3 speeches.

1. The Field commander spoke & blasphemed the Jews' God. II Kings 18:17-36
2. Hezekiah went to the temple and spoke to God about what the field commander had said.
II Kings 19:1-19

Isa. 37:1 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.

Ps. 50:15 And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

Isa. 37:2 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. [II Kings 19:2]

II Kings 19:3-4 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. ⁴ 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.'

Wiersbe: The king's metaphor about birth is a picture of extreme danger.

The child has come to the time of birth, but the mother hasn't strength enough to deliver it, so both mother and child are in danger of losing their lives.

The king knew that only a remnant of God's people from Israel and Judah were faithful to Him [II Kings 19:4, 30], but for their sake and the sake of David, the Lord would be willing to work.

Isaiah told Hezekiah not to be afraid [Ps. 46:1-3] because the Lord had heard the blasphemy of the Rabshakeh and would deal with Sennacherib.

II Kings 19:5-7 So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah. ⁶ 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.

⁷ 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."

God's Intervention: Sennacherib hears a report > God GIVES him a spirit of FEAR >

He temporarily abandoned the siege and returned to Lachish to prepare for war.

Problem: The field commander sent one last message to Hezekiah in a letter.

Isa. 37:9-13 'Thus shall you speak to Hezekiah king of Judah:

Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you by promising that Jerusalem will 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?'"

Response: Hezekiah tears his clothes, covers his head in ashes, and carries his cold and trembling heart into the burning presence of the LORD, lays the letter from Sennacherib before the LORD, and prays an honest and selfless prayer: Isa. 37:15-20

"O Lord of hosts, 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 all the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God. Truly, Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all 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, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the Lord, You alone." [also II Kings 19:19]

Consider: Scripture tells us Hezekiah sought the blessing and will of God at all times.

This gave him power in prayer. He didn't just seek God when he needed Him for a problem.

Solution: Hezekiah looked beyond the problem and focused on the throne of God.

Hezekiah became lost in his worship of God and His greatness.

Truth: When we focus on the Lord and realize how great He is, it helps put our problems in perspective.

Isaiah's Response: God's Promise: Prophetic Announcements

Isa. 37:21-22 Because you have prayed to me concerning Sennacherib king of Assyria, this is the word which the LORD has spoken concerning him:

1. God will defeat the Assyrian army and they will leave.

Isaiah prophesied that God will now treat the Assyrians like cattle with hooks in their noses and lead them away > the Victims.

II Kings 19:28-29 But I know your [King of Assyria] dwelling place, Your going out and your coming in, and your rage against Me. Because of your raging against Me, and your tumult that has come to Mine ears, will I put My hook into your nose, and My bridle, between your lips, and I will make you turn back on the way by which you came.

- Sennacherib boasted of his military might and his great conquests.
- No obstacle can stand in his way.
- If he so desired, like a god, he could even dry up the rivers.

Consider: Sennacherib forgot he was only God's tool for accomplishing His purposes on the earth and the tool must not boast against the Maker. [Isa. 10:5-19]

For many generations the Assyrians had perpetrated acts of unspeakable cruelty upon their victims, literally dragging many captive peoples into Mesopotamia, with hooks in their noses and muzzles in their lips. Now the Assyrian's turn has come. The spoiler will at last be despoiled.

2. God Will Provide For His People: They Will Not Starve Isa. 37:30

With the Assyrians in the land and Jerusalem under siege, the people could not work their farms. God promised: When the Assyrians left, food would grow of itself until the men could work. By the 3rd year, Judah will have enough peace to plant a harvest.

3. Sennacherib will not lay siege to Jerusalem in spite of his threats. Isa. 37:33-34

Prophecy:

Isaiah 8:7-8 Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks:

⁸ And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.

God's Promise -Isa. 37:33-35 "Therefore, he shall not come into this city, and he shall not shoot an arrow thereon; nor come before it with shields, nor cast up an embankment against it. On the same way by which he came, shall he return, and into this city shall he not come, says the Lord.

Isa. 37:35 God declares: For I will defend this city, to save it

For My own sake and for My servant David's sake

Promise & Prophecy Fulfilled:Isa. 37:36-38 Then the angel of the LORD went out and killed in the camp of the Assyrians 185,000; and when *people* arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned *home*, and remained at Nineveh. He was slain by his own sons while worshipping in the temple of his god, Nisroch.

Isaiah relates the enormous calamity which befell the army of Sennacherib as a result of divine intervention.

- Isa. 10:33-34 God would mow them down like a forest.
- Isa. 30:27-30 God would devastate them like a storm.
- Isa. 30:31-33 God would throw them into the fire like garbage on the city dump, Tophet.

God's Purpose Realized: The LORD God alone is sovereign.

II Chron. 34:6-9 Many of the Jews who remained in the land after the Assyrian conquest re-united with Judah in the south.

II Kings 25:21 Assyria was later conquered by Babylon, who went on to invade the Southern Kingdom of Israel, deporting the 2 remaining tribes: Judah and Benjamin

Ezra 1: Remnants of the northern tribes would have thus been part of the Babylonian deportations. Seventy years later, when King Cyrus allowed the Israelites to return to Israel many (from all 12 tribes) returned to Israel to rebuild their homeland.

Micah 2:12 "I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together like sheep of the fold, Like a flock in the midst of their pasture;

Isa. 37:32 "For out of Jerusalem will come a remnant, and out of Mount Zion a band of survivors. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this."