

2 Chronicles 32 – Thursday, April 20th, 2017

- So last week we ended off with the last two verses of chapter thirty-one, which really should be included with chapter thirty-two.
- It's for this reason that we're going to pick it up where we're told God had abundantly prospered and blessed king Hezekiah.

2 Chronicles 31 -- 20 Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah, and he did what was good and right and true before the LORD his God. 21 And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, in the law and in the commandment, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart. So he prospered.

- This is one of those places in God's Word where one can connect the dots between obedience to God and the blessing of God.
- Hezekiah not only obeys God, he seeks God, the result of which is that he's on the receiving end of this blessing of God.
- This is a textbook case of rewarding those who diligently seek God, (Heb. 11:6), seeking first His kingdom and righteousness.

Matthew 6:33 (NKJV) — 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

G. Campbell Morgan - "These words reveal his purpose, his method, and the result; and form a revelation of abiding value to all who are called upon to perform Divine service in any form. His purpose was 'to seek his God'; and the expression is exactly equivalent to that with which we are familiar: 'Seek ye first His kingdom.' His method was that of complete devotion, 'with all his heart.' The result was that of prosperity, that is, of success in the very work which was attempted."

Adam Clarke - "In every respect he was a thoroughly excellent man, saw his duty to God and to his people, and performed it with becoming zeal and diligence. May God ever send such kings to the nations of the world; and may the people who are blessed with such be duly obedient to them, and thankful to the God who sends them!"

2 Chronicles 32 -- 1 After these deeds of faithfulness, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and entered Judah; he encamped against the fortified cities, thinking to win them over to himself.

- Oh how I wish this verse wasn't in the Bible because it speaks to the attack that always comes on the heels of God's blessing.
- Here we're told that it was after Hezekiah's deeds of faithfulness the enemy, king Sennacherib of Assyria comes against him.
- I would like to think that instead of being attacked after, that Hezekiah would live happily ever after because of his obedience.

G. Campbell Morgan - "It would seem to be a strange answer of God to the faithfulness of His child, that a strong foe should at the moment invade the kingdom; and yet how of the experience of the people of God is of this nature."

2 And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come, and that his purpose was to make war against Jerusalem, 3 he consulted with his leaders and commanders to stop the water from the springs which were outside the city; and they helped him.

- Both here and again when we get to verse thirty, we're told about this tunnel that Hezekiah built to protect Israel's water supply.
- Those of you who went to Israel with us walked through Hezekiah's tunnel and know the story behind it, which is recorded here.
- To say that this was wisdom from on the part of Hezekiah would be a gross understatement, by virtue of how effective it was.

4 Thus many people gathered together who stopped all the springs and the brook that ran through the land, saying, "Why should the kings of Assyria come and find much water?" 5 And he strengthened himself, built up all the wall that was broken, raised it up to the towers, and built another wall outside; also he repaired the Millo in the City of David, and made weapons and shields in abundance. 6 Then he set military captains over the people, gathered them together to him in the open square of the city gate, and gave them encouragement, saying, 7 "Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid nor dismayed before the king of Assyria, nor before all the multitude that is with him; for there are 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 were strengthened by the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.

- This is further evidence of the wisdom that God gave Hezekiah in the sense that he knows that building the tunnel isn't enough.
- Hezekiah wisely knows that he must encourage and strengthen the hearts of his men to ready and steady them for the battle.
- The way that he does this is to have them turn their eyes to and put their trust in their God Who is able to give them the victory.

9 After this Sennacherib king of Assyria sent his servants to Jerusalem (but he and all the forces with him laid siege against Lachish), to Hezekiah king of Judah, and to all Judah who were in Jerusalem, saying, 10 "Thus says Sennacherib king of Assyria: 'In what do you trust, that you remain under siege in Jerusalem?'"

- The question that is asked of Hezekiah by the king of Assyria in verse 10 is a valid one that we would do well to ask ourselves.
- Namely, that of in what, or perhaps better asked, in whom do we place our trust? Hezekiah knows exactly what he's asking.
- The fact of the matter is Hezekiah had put his trust in his alliance with Egypt instead of putting his trust in God to deliver them.

11 Does not Hezekiah persuade you to give yourselves over to die by famine and by thirst, saying, "The LORD our God will deliver us from the hand of the king of Assyria"? 12 Has not the same Hezekiah taken away His high places and His altars, and commanded Judah and Jerusalem, saying, "You shall worship before one altar and burn incense on it"?"

- I find it interesting that the message Sennacherib's servants send is not only for Hezekiah, but for all in Judah and Jerusalem.
- Notice in verse twelve where he seeks to discredit and falsely accuse their king by way of this attack on Hezekiah's integrity.
- This is one of the enemy's most successful devices in the sense that he's the accuser of the brethren and the father of lies.

13 Do 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 in any way able to deliver their lands out of my hand? 14 Who was there among all the gods of those nations that my fathers utterly destroyed that could deliver his people from my hand, that your God should be able to deliver you from my hand? 15 Now therefore, do not let Hezekiah deceive you or persuade you like this, and do not believe him; for no god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people from my hand or the hand of my fathers. How much less will your God deliver you from my hand?" 16 Furthermore, his servants spoke against the LORD God and against His servant Hezekiah. 17 He also wrote letters to revile the LORD God of Israel, and to speak against Him, saying, "As the gods of the nations of other lands have not delivered their people from my hand, so the God of Hezekiah will not deliver His people from my hand."

- Here again we have another textbook case of how the enemy attacks us by using threats and fears to get us to doubt the Lord.
- Notice how repeatedly he uses this psychological warfare against them, not only to get them to doubt God but to just give up.
- I believe that the enemy, like Sennacherib, will opt to use this type of psychological warfare against us instead of fighting us.

- It's important to understand that Sennacherib could have just attacked Israel instead of going about it this way to defeat them.
- So too is this true with Satan's strategy and devices against us. Instead of just attacking us he uses discouragement and doubt.
- The reason being is that often times Satan is more successful in taking us down using this method than he is any other method.

- The truth of the matter is, Satan is very intelligent, so much so that he knows were he to engage in the fight, he may not prevail.
- In other words, he would much rather we just give up and give in to despair because there's a much better chance he will win.

One commentator had some very interesting insight into this as it relates to what Satan tried to do with the Savior Himself. "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. It didn't work with Jesus, and it shouldn't work with us."

- Notice also the way they go about trying to get them to give up first by stating that they were to hear the words of the great king.
- Then, to make matters even worse they take it further in verse fifteen where they tell them, "Do not let Hezekiah deceive you."
- Then, if this weren't bad enough, they go on to say, "Nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord to deliver you from our hand."

- They even go as far as blaspheming God in verse 17 saying, who among all the gods is the Lord that He should deliver you.
- This as we'll soon see will be the final straw as it were, by virtue of the fact that God will have the final word on their accusation.

18 Then they called out with a loud voice in Hebrew to the people of Jerusalem who were on the wall, to frighten them and trouble them, that they might take the city. 19 And they spoke against the God of Jerusalem, as against the gods of the people of the earth—the work of men's hands.

- If this narrative sounds familiar it's because we studied this when we were back in 2 Kings 18, which actually has more details.
- More specifically, and perhaps sadly, 2 Kings provides detail of Hezekiah's unsuccessful attempts at appeasing Sennacherib.
- While this will prove to be a very costly mistake to Hezekiah's credit, he does learn a lesson from making this peace agreement.

20 Now because of this King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, prayed and cried out to heaven. 21 Then the LORD sent an angel who cut down every mighty man of valor, leader, and captain in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned shamefaced to his own land. And when he had gone into the temple of his god, some of his own offspring struck him down with the sword there. 22 Thus the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all others, and guided them on every side. 23 And many brought gifts to the LORD at Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah, so that he was exalted in the sight of all nations thereafter.

- Here the Chronicler seemingly leaves out specific details and likely because it's assumed the reader knows it from 2 Kings 19.
- In 2 Kings 19, we're told that Hezekiah, in addition to crying out to God, also sought out the prophet Isaiah for the Word of God.
- I suppose it goes without saying, but this is without question, the best response we can have when we face our Sennacherib's.

2 Kings 19:20 -- 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 perhaps amongst the most powerful and profound verses in all the Bible as it relates to the Lord answering our prayers.
- Notice how that Isaiah tells Hezekiah, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'because you have prayed to me, ...I have heard.'"
- This begs the question of, what would have happened if Hezekiah did not seek out Isaiah and did not cry out unto the Lord?

24 In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death, and he prayed to the LORD; and He spoke to him and gave him a sign. 25 But Hezekiah did not repay according to the favor shown him, for his heart was lifted up; therefore wrath was looming over him and over Judah and Jerusalem. 26 Then Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah.

- Couple of thoughts on this as we near the end of this chapter the first of which has to do with why God shows Hezekiah grace.
- The reason God grants him this grace is that He's doing it for the sake of His people Israel, who still face threats from Assyria.
- In other words, God doesn't answer Hezekiah's prayer because he was a good king who merited it, as he prayed in verse 24.

- Actually, this sort of ties into the second thought, which is that of Hezekiah's prayer being in accordance with the will of God.
- It's thought that Hezekiah was about 39-years old when he learned of this and as such, his prayer is that he still has work to do.
- While this was in accordance with God's will sadly, it would prove to be the very thing that leads to his downfall due to his pride.

- Before we move on I should note that Isaiah 38 provides us with more details of this account, specifically Hezekiah's prayer.

Isaiah 38:9-10 -- 9 This is the writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick and had recovered from his sickness:
10 I said, "In the prime of my life I shall go to the gates of Sheol; I am deprived of the remainder of my years."

27 Hezekiah had very great riches and honor. And he made himself treasuries for silver, for gold, for precious stones, for spices, for shields, and for all kinds of desirable items; 28 storehouses for the harvest of grain, wine, and oil; and stalls for all kinds of livestock, and folds for flocks. 29 Moreover he provided cities for himself, and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance; for God had given him very much property. 30 This same Hezekiah also stopped the water outlet of Upper Gihon, and brought the water by tunnel to the west side of the City of David. Hezekiah prospered in all his works. 31 However, regarding the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, whom they sent to him to inquire about the wonder that was done in the land, God withdrew from him, in order to test him, that He might know all that was in his heart. 32 Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his goodness, indeed they are written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, and in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. 33 So Hezekiah rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the upper tombs of the sons of David; and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem honored him at his death. Then Manasseh his son reigned in his place.

- So the chapter ends with yet another one of the only nine good kings who didn't finish well in the end, when he fails and falls.
- If you're interested, you may want to revisit 2 Kings 18-20, which have the detailed account of what led to Hezekiah's downfall.
- Spoiler alert, it was his pride when he takes the credit for all his riches when showing them to the ambassadors from Babylon.

- If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the most dangerous temptations to become proud it would have to be success.
- So much so the greatest and godliest of men have fallen because of the very success that God had given to them to begin with.
- Such is the case here with Hezekiah, whom God had given health and wealth, prosperity and property to all for His glory alone.