

A DAY OF TROUBLE AND OF REBUKE AND BLASPHEME

2 KINGS 19:1 – 20:3

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~ Isaiah comes suddenly to the forefront of our Spiritual Safari in this report. In our previous report, we began examining the reign of King Hezekiah in the southern kingdom. This is a very troubling, uncertain and disturbing time in the history of the nation Israel. The northern kingdom has been taken away completely into Assyrian captivity. As we begin this report, the army of Assyria has arrived at the gates of the southern kingdom to take them away, too. Naturally, Hezekiah was terrified. The Assyrian henchman Rabshakeh had a filthy mouth, and he has made some disturbing statements to the Jews. He is right outside the gate taunting and insulting them; and boasting about all the unspeakable bad things the king of Assyria plans to do if they don't surrender.

The threats by Rabshakeh take Judah captive, as he had their northern brothers, scared them senseless. When he tells them God will not be able to deliver them, they questioned God – because He had obviously not delivered the northern kingdom. I think that disturbed them deeply. Rabshakeh recounts how all the other nation's gods had not been able to save them from destruction by the king of Assyria, either; which was all true. So, poor Hezekiah understandably wilts under the pressure. Hezekiah has been faithful to God, but he is now receiving a difficult lesson in trusting God. See, faith and trust are two different things; and it's easy to trust God when we have a pocket full of gold, good health and peace; but, when the enemy is staring down our neck, and making threats that they are perfectly capable of delivering – not so much! So, Hezekiah makes an appeal to God's man, Isaiah....

XIX

1 And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD.

~ The house of the Lord is a good place to turn to when you are experiencing the mental turmoil Hezekiah was in. The Lord Jesus Christ is our Great Physician today; and only He can heal us. Hezekiah trusted God completely. See, Hezekiah desired to hear directly from God. The church today seems to have lost sight of this. Our leaders, educators – and even the average man in the congregation – do not recommend turning to God and appealing directly to Him about our problems. Their religious philosophy is that God helps those who help themselves. It's always faith plus something with that crowd. Well, Hezekiah couldn't help himself here, friends. No one today is suggesting that this country – or this world – look to and trust the True and Living God for our solutions. Let's not kid ourselves.

Today, we have experts in the brain trust who assign themselves very high intelligence quotients and espouse they are well-advised and much learned. They are listened to intently as they disguise hypothetical theories as certitude. Mankind will follow any theologian who can form a sentence; as long as said sentence concludes with an allusion to '*everything is going to be just fine!*' This apostasy has been around since *WAY* before my time, too, friends. That's a long time ago, you may be sure; and we drift further and further into the darkest part of the night as our problems mount today. Difficulties are now, actually, overwhelming us; particularly in the form of misinformation and disinformation. Even so, we don't see a wholehearted appeal by anyone to turn to God – not even in the church. It's astounding. We're in a dark and late hour in the history of this world. America isn't even three hundred years old and we're already on our way out.

Even so, I still believe that if there were a sincere and genuine turning to God we could have revival. Unfortunately, that would require a proper, correct and complete return to the Word of God. Today, all the church seems to want to do is get together and sing a song – or hear an emotional testimony – or protest something – or form a self-help group – or form a committee – or call in an expert to evaluate our problems from a different angle. Anything except a competent and educated return to Scripture. The psychologist, medical, educational, governmental and prison correctional fields are overwhelmed with people who have a so-called mental disorder. We erroneously think the self-labeled professional can show society the

way out. What fools we are! These are the same people who have compounded our problems in the first place; to the point in which there are absolutely *NO* solutions remaining. And yet, we continue to assume we have our answers apart from God – all while claiming we love and worship Him. We're in big trouble, my beloved – don't kid yourselves. We desperately need God in this world....

2 And he sent Eliakim, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz.

3 And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth.

4 It may be the LORD thy God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God; and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left.

5 So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah.

~ Interestingly, when he calls on Isaiah, Hezekiah, doesn't say "our God" – he says "Thy God!" It seems he wants to make abundantly clear he is calling on the True and Living God! See, Hezekiah has no other place to turn to at this moment. As a result of faith and trust, everything that happens as we read on was literally fulfilled in a wonderful way. Also, notice the encouragement Isaiah sends back to Hezekiah. Isaiah tells Hezekiah to forget old man Rabshakeh; and that God is going to deal with him. If only we could learn to trust God to deal with our enemies today things would be much different in this nation and in this world – and in our individual lives! When we attempt to handle our problems in our own wisdom, we remove ourselves from the place of trust. When we do that, God will neither move nor act on our behalf, friends – you can just write that down. It's no great mystery why we usually end up with trouble in our personal dealings....

6 And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.

7 Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.

8 So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish.

9 And when he heard say of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, Behold, he is come out to fight against thee: he sent messengers again unto Hezekiah, saying,

10 Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.

11 Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly: and shalt thou be delivered?

~ Well, instead of receiving immediate deliverance by God, Rabshakeh returns and camps outside the walls of Jerusalem again. As we read on, this man proclaims his third diatribe reminding Hezekiah how the surrounding nation's gods had not delivered them from Assyria. Naturally, this is all very disturbing to Hezekiah. Assyria has swept the international map clean right before their very eyes at this time. Honestly, Hezekiah has absolutely no reason to believe he will escape this eminent existential threat, either. So, he takes that awful letter, and spreads it out before the Lord. Friends – that is the place you and I need to spread out anything disturbing us today, too! I have done it, and God worked the problem out – He's never failed. I have every reason to believe He will come through for me next time. Do you take your troubles and problems to the Lord in prayer? Do you *TRULY* trust Him with your life? Do you *HONESTLY* allow Christ to solve your problems? ~

12 Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed; as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which were in Thelasar?

13 Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivah?

14 And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.

15 And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth.

16 LORD, bow down thine ear, and hear: open, LORD, thine eyes, and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God.

~ If you can locate a copy of the prayers of Martin Luther you should acquire and study them carefully. That's the manner we should be praying after in our own lives today. He could lay hold of God's arm. He repeatedly asked God if He could actually hear him or not. Also, the ninth chapter of Daniel has a great intercessory prayer we should emulate, also. Have you ever cried out to God and felt like He wasn't listening to you? That's the way Hezekiah felt at the time in which we are studying. Well, when you actually mean business with God, I can promise you that He can and will hear you....

17 Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands,

18 And have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them.

19 Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD God, even thou only.

20 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard.

21 This is the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning him; The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.

22 Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel.

23 By thy messengers thou hast reproached the Lord, and hast said, With the multitude of my chariots I am come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon, and will cut down the tall cedar trees thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the lodgings of his borders, and into the forest of his Carmel.

24 I have digged and drunk strange waters, and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged places.

25 Hast thou not heard long ago how I have done it, and of ancient times that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste fenced cities into ruinous heaps.

26 Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded; they were as the grass of the field, and as the green herb, as the grass on the housetops, and as corn blasted before it be grown up.

27 But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me.

28 Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.

29 And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof.

30 And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.

31 For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this.

32 Therefore thus saith 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 cast a bank against it.

33 By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD.

34 For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

35 And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.

36 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.

37 And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.

~ So, God heard Hezekiah and did just as Isaiah said He would! God said not even one single arrow would land inside Jerusalem. That was a rather bold statement for Isaiah to make when there were a hundred thousand plus soldiers camped outside the wall! Remember, Ahab was killed by "a bow at a venture!" Here, the enemy that has conquered every nation around Judah is waiting outside the gates. Assyria was a feared and dreaded force to be reckoned with in the ancient world. See, Isaiah got his messages directly from the Word of God, friends! When Isaiah gave the prophecy that a virgin would bring forth a son, I think the people laughed and said, "we'll never know." Here – they knew; because guess how many arrows flew into Jerusalem – not one! This prophecy was literally fulfilled right before everyone's eyes! Verse thirty-four says God did this for His Own Names sake. It also says He did it for David's Sake; and David has a Son coming later – the Lord Jesus Christ. God will save sinners who will trust Christ. God does that for Him – not for us! Turn that over in your mind a few times and see what you come up with. This is a wonderful passage of Scripture. This is what it means to pray in Jesus Name....

XX

1 In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.

2 Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying,

3 I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.

~ Our safari ends this report with the opening of another great chapter in the Word of God. This section of Scripture has a whole lot of meaning to me, personally. I do love Hezekiah very much; and I hate to leave him sick and weeping sore like this. Well, Hezekiah has now become sick unto death and Isaiah has pronounced a death sentence; so, I think we can well understand his tears and fears. The Bible later tells us he had a boil; and I

have a feeling it was cancerous. When one develops cancer, they live under a cloud – irrespective of every other circumstance going on in their life – the cloud never dissipates. In our next report, we’re going to consider King Hezekiah’s illness and recovery. I hope it will be helpful to all of you. We certainly won’t be looking at it from a fanatical point of view – you may be sure – because that is never helpful. However, the way God deals with Hezekiah is fanatical; and it’s the way God deals with us today. God hears and answers prayers, friends. How wonderful He really is ~