

I Still Want More Series

**Lesson 5: God Has the Final Say!**

Written by Pastor Ken Patterson  
A Bible Study Lesson of  
The Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church



May 29, 2024

*Introduction:* Have you ever had a time in your life where you faced an opposition which seemed insurmountable? Perhaps you had a test in a class and did not know whether you would pass. You may have encountered a relationship issue that was overwhelming. Many of us meet these challenges and wonder how we will succeed. When such obstacles come our way, we must decide where to place our faith. We can either choose to struggle on our own or seek the guidance of The Lord who desires to help us through the challenges of life.

In the following lesson, students will learn how Hezekiah trusted God during a time of great challenge. His initial approach to the attack of a longstanding enemy was outside of God's plan and was leading him and the nation of Judah toward destruction. Hezekiah's faith moved him to stand firm even though destruction seemed imminent. The outcome was MORE than what he could have expected and showed that God is faithful when we trust Him. Enjoy!

### *Lesson's Scriptures:* 2 Kings 18 and 19

Background: The nation of Israel at this point was split in two. The Northern Kingdom and Southern Kingdom resulted from the punishment God brought on His people due to unfaithfulness. The kingship of Solomon, as seen in 1 Kings 11, identifies a repetitive breaking of the covenant relationship with God. Verses 6-9 show that even the wisest of men can succumb to temptation if they do not keep their focus on God's desires. By the time Solomon died, God decreed that the Kingdom would be split into two parts (10 tribes and 2 tribes) because of the disobedience of Solomon. Fast forward about 200 years and Hezekiah became king over the Southern Kingdom which consisted of Judah and Benjamin.

Within the region, the most powerful nation was Assyria. The historical texts identify Egypt, Assyria, Israel, and other smaller city-states in regular conflict. Due to the military strength of Assyria, 2 Kings identifies that in the early part of his reign, Hezekiah rebelled against Assyria in an attempt to return the people back to faithfully following God. During Hezekiah's 14 years of kingship in Judah, the Assyrians attacked with the intent to overthrow and destroy the kingdom.

## I. The Enemy's Attacks—2 Kings 18:13-15 and 19-32

The first five verses of 2 Kings 18 identify Hezekiah's resolve to serve the Lord. In doing so, God blessed all of his efforts and helped the nation to defeat those who were against them. This meant that Hezekiah was determined to stop paying tribute to Assyria. To begin understanding what Hezekiah faced students should consider



what it might feel like to be the leader of a country which was being invaded by a much stronger nation. Remember, the attack came as a result of Hezekiah deciding to rebel against the Assyrians not because of disobedience to God. This should remind each of us that when we are seeking to follow God, we will encounter enemies.

Within chapter 18, we find that Assyria attacked Hezekiah in multiple ways. First, verses 13-15 show us that the enemy begins by taking all the land away that God had promised to them. The fortified towns under Hezekiah's reign were besieged and fell to the strength of Assyria. Second, we find in verses 18-32 mental warfare whereby the enemy came and told the people that Hezekiah was not trustworthy (vs. 19), that no other nation would be able to help them (vs. 24), God was not on their side but on Assyria's side and that they had no power to protect themselves, and even suggested that it would be best if they gave up so they could be deported to a different land (31-32). In each statement, the Assyrian messengers sought to persuade the people to see their might and bow down in submission.

Modern Christians may face physical attacks and threats to their lives. This does still happen in many countries around the world. However, many places allow the practice of Christianity without threat of physical harm. In those locations around the world, the enemy has subtle attacks. The attacks may be in social settings where ungodly behavior occurs. There may be attacks on your integrity which cause you to decide to stand or to bend to the ideologies of the world. Whether physical or not, the ultimate reason we face opposition is that Satan desires us to turn our backs on our faith in Jesus.

- In what ways do you and I face similar attacks on our faith?
- How do you respond when you are faced with an overwhelming attack on God?

## II. Hezekiah's Response—2 Kings 18:14-16; III. 2 Kings 19:1-4 and 16-19

When the Assyrian threat came, Hezekiah's initial response was to take things into his own hands. He sought to pay his way out of trouble. The assessment was so great that it required the gold to be pulled off the doors of the temple (see 18: 14-16). Imagine the feelings they must have had as they gave all of their wealth away to an enemy that would not be appeased. Many of us can relate to this approach. We have looked for answers in our abilities only to find we have insignificant strength to produce the outcomes we need. When you and I realize our abilities will not work, we need to turn things over to our God who can do all things.

Hezekiah changed his approach. He prayed. More importantly, he prayed in a unique way. The specifics of his prayer reveal to us a deep understanding of the situation. In verse four, Hezekiah asks the prophet Isaiah to pray for a response to the words of reproach that were made AGAINST GOD. Notice, Hezekiah recognized that the enemy was primarily fighting God by making statements such as He cannot deliver, He is no different than the gods of the other conquered people, that the Assyrian king was as powerful or more powerful than God. This was an attack on the identity and credibility of God! The two prayers centered on how God would respond to the Assyrian king lying about God (blaspheming).

How did Hezekiah understand the totality of what was happening? He was close to God. Hezekiah's position with God is identified in chapter 18 verses 3-5

<sup>3</sup> And [Hezekiah] did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did.

<sup>4</sup> He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan.

<sup>5</sup> He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him.



- How are you intentionally building a close relationship with The Lord? What can you do better?
- How does the above answer impact your outlook on life?

Students will note that Hezekiah made God his priority and put his faith in The Lord. Therefore, when trouble came he understood God in a way that was more complete than most people understand God. Most of us see God as an emergency room doctor where we ask for help when things are falling apart. God, however, wants us to see Him as Father which is relational. The insults hurled at God pushed Hezekiah to ask, “God, you are King, and we need help, so, how will you respond to them lying about who you are and what you can do?”

The key to Hezekiah’s prayers is that he was in a close relationship with God. Of course, as the king he was worried for the people, but his first concern was for God’s name to be revered. Remember, “Our Father, who are in heaven, hallowed be thy name...” The attack is against God!

Do you ever perceive that people are attacking God when they reject you or despise your Christianity? Remember, Jesus said this would be the case in Matthew 10:22.

**You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.**

#### IV. God’s Response—2 Kings 19:6-7; 34-37

Isaiah prayed to the Lord and received a response. Interestingly, the response had nothing to do with fighting a battle. God responded by fighting with the same tools the Assyrian army fought with; words. It was as if God said, “Let me show you what power words really have when they are under my control.” The words of a rumor caused Sennacherib to withdraw from attacking Judah. This response came after the first prayer of Hezekiah.

The second prayer came with a response of power (the second threat from Assyria).

<sup>34</sup> “I will shield this city and rescue it for the sake of my reputation and because of my promise to David my servant.

God sent an angel to kill 185,000 soldiers in one night and the Assyrian army and king never overthrew Judah. They left and King Sennacherib went back to Nineveh to live. Chapter 19 ends tragically for Sennacherib on a day where he was worshipping his own false god. His sons assassinated him and one son replaced him as king in Assyria.

Students can conclude that the writer purposefully included what Sennacherib was doing to bring the reader's mind back to the idea of whose god is real. The obvious answer is that The God of Israel is real, for only he can save. The Assyrian king had a god who could not even save him from his own sons.

**Conclusion:** Hezekiah found that God does respond to the needs of His people. The situation was dire, but the enemy's power was small in comparison to God's. The closer we are to The Lord, the better we are able to understand how He is in control of the outcomes of life. The enemy may hurl insults and threats our way. We need not fear because what God says matters!