

## 2 Kings 19-20

### **The Deliverance of Jerusalem**

When Hezekiah heard the report of what the Assyrian field commander said, he immediately went into morning and entered the temple. He called for Isaiah the prophet to come and give him assurance from the Lord. Like us, when the world gives us bad news, we must seek the word of the God for comfort, assurance, and perspective. Isaiah prophesied, don't be afraid, I will cause the king of Assyria to hear a report that will cause him to return to his own country where he will be killed.

The Egyptians (Cush – from the upper Nile) marched against Assyria and this delayed the Assyrian response but he sent another messenger to Jerusalem to tell them not to trust in their God. Other nations trusted in their gods and they were defeated. So Hezekiah goes back to the temple to pray. He takes the letter and spreads it out before the LORD and appeals to the fact that God is different because he is the true Creator God and he will defend his reputation among the nations – that he alone is God.

Isaiah then prophesied against the King of Assyria because of his arrogance and said that he will be led home like an animal with a hook in his nose and a bit in his mouth. Finally Hezekiah is given a sign – that this year you will eat the food that grows by itself and the second year the food that naturally comes from that – then the natural sowing and reaping of agriculture will be restored to the land but Jerusalem will not fall.

That night the LORD sent a plague or some other form of death to the Assyrian army's camp and 185,000 soldiers died. The next day the king packed up and headed for home. A number of years later he was assassinated there in the capital of Assyria – never to return and conquer in Judah.

### **Hezekiah's Illness and pride – Chapter 20**

Hezekiah – during the time of the Assyrian crisis – became ill with some kind of skin disorder. Isaiah came to him and told him that he was going to die and to put his affairs in order. Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD and wept before the Lord. Before Isaiah could get out of the palace complex, the LORD sent him back in with a new message – The Lord would heal him and give him 15 more years and deliver him and the city from the Assyrians. He asked for a sign and the shadow went back 10 steps on Ahaz's staircase.

The next story has to do with a visit from foreign ambassadors from Babylon. They come to meet Hezekiah and he foolishly and arrogantly shows them all of the riches that he had amassed in the treasury. By trying to impress these foreign dignitaries, he reveals secrets that the LORD did not want revealed. Isaiah then came and told him that all that he foolishly showed these people would be taken away by Babylon and his own descendants would become eunuchs in the service of the king of Babylon. Hezekiah was fine with this as long as it was not in his lifetime.

Hezekiah was a good king – the best since David – but he was still not perfect. It seems to me that his sickness was an illustration of the judgment of the Lord that was facing Judah and Jerusalem. Because he prayed and humbled himself before the Lord – more time was given to him. In the same way Jerusalem would escape the judgement of God by the Assyrians but it would be a temporary stay of execution. The miracle of the shadow on the stairs has to do with time. God holds time in his hands and he can advance it or slow it down at will. Finally the pride of the king and the Babylonians is a foreshadowing of the eventual destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the judgement that will come because of their sin and rebellion against the LORD.

Hezekiah is famous for his work to make Jerusalem as protected against a siege as possible by securing the water supply through a tunnel that he dug from the Gihon Spring into the city to the pool of Siloam inside the walls. After his death Manasseh, his son succeeded him as king and he was a very evil king. He will undo all of the reforms of his father and set the people of Judah back on the path of judgement.