

2 Kings 18:1-12

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 06 November 2024

Preacher: Billy Joe Calvert

[0 : 00] 2 Kings 18. You should rejoice in turning to the 18th chapter. I will rejoice a little bit more when I get my glasses cleaned off and I can actually see the words of the 18th chapter.

But you should rejoice because we are leaving the 17th chapter, which is a chapter that is really not very encouraging. Let's put it in context. Some of you have been with me, some of you haven't, so we understand this. We're just making our way through scripture and we're now to this point in the Bible where we're in the book of 2 Kings, looking at the divided kingdom, the kingdom to the north of Israel, the kingdom to the south of Judah, knowing that God is using this as a discipline upon his people. Even the division of the kingdom was an instrument of discipline.

And we have seen the unfaithfulness of the kings of the north. Essentially, they decided they were going to worship the Lord God how they wanted to. They started worshiping a false god, started walking in all these ways. Warning after warning after warning after warning extended to God's people.

And they fall to the Assyrian empire in the 17th chapter. In the 17th chapter, the Assyrians, which are rather unheard of, at least in scripture, until we get to maybe the 15th chapter of 2 Kings, all of a sudden come on the scene and they become this kind of rise in power and authority.

Keep that in mind, by the way, when you study, because it's amazing their ascension to a place of authority. And it's also just as amazing their fall from such a place of, at least in that realm of the world, world dominion, because it doesn't last very long. And you know why, according to scripture, even though we don't always get to see that, but we will see that. So anyway, hey, they come onto the scene really quick and they lead the nation of Israel into captivity.

[1 : 57] Now, when we say the nation of Israel, we mean the 10 tribes of the North, the Northern kingdom, which leaves the two tribes of the South or the kingdom of Judah. And we've seen the fall of that.

Now, the Assyrians, just so we can understand it, when they conquer a nation, they don't annihilate a nation. They don't annihilate a people. They don't just kill everyone. Rather, they disperse the people among the lands they have already conquered. So God has used the Assyrians as judgment upon the people for their rebellion and rejection of him. And he has taken them out of the land. Now they're interdispersed among the Assyrian empire. And that alone is judgment because the promises of God in the Old Testament are connected to the land. People in a particular place are given the promises of God.

But that's behind us now. For the remainder of the book of 2 Kings, we look at the Northern kingdom. Okay? Because we look at the Southern kingdom. The Northern kingdom is no more. It's no longer there.

We are looking at the Southern kingdom. So we're looking at the kings of Judah. And we come upon a really good king and a king that is very welcome sight for us that are tired of reading kings which did wickedly. And that is we come upon the king Hezekiah. So 2 Kings 18 starting in verse 1. And let's just read to verse 12. We really get into more of that reign and rule of the Assyrian empire. And we start picking up verse 13. But we're not dealing with that tonight. So let's just read down to verse 12.

Now it came about in the third year of Hosea, the son of Allah, king of Israel, that Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, became king. He was 25 years old when he became king. And he reigned 29 years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Abby, the daughter of Zechariah. He did right in the sight of the Lord according to all that his father David had done. He removed the high places and broke down the sacred pillars and cut down the Asherah. He also broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made. For until those days, the sons of Israel burned incense to it. And it was called Nahushton. He trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel, so that after him, there was none

like him among all the kings of Judah, nor among those who were before him. For he clung to the Lord. He did not depart from following him, but kept his commandments, which the Lord had commanded Moses.

[4 : 20] And the Lord was with him. Wherever he went, he prospered. And he rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. He defeated the Philistines as far as Gaza and its territory from watchtower to fortified city. Now in the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea, son of Elah, king of Israel, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came up against Samaria and besieged it. At the end of three years, they captured it. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, which was the ninth year of Hoshea, king of Israel, Samaria was captured. Then the king of Assyria carried Israel away into exile to Assyria and put them in Hala and on the harbor, the river of Gozan, and in the city of the Medes, because they did not obey the voice of the Lord, their God, but transgressed his covenant.

Even all that Moses, the servant of the Lord commanded, they would neither listen nor do it. Okay. I want you to see this evening Hezekiah ruling with the strength of Jehovah. And we say he's ruling with the strength of Jehovah because the name Hezekiah literally means strength of Jehovah. Now it is the strength of the Lord God Almighty, and it is the ruling of Hezekiah, which we want to focus on this evening. We can see it in greater context. If we were to turn into second Chronicles, we'll allude to that a little bit tonight. I want to get you into that because that will be for when the Lord, if he carries and allows us to go that further, we'll really dissect when we get into the first and second Chronicles. But we are introduced here to the rain and what is happening here during his reign is really the foundation of the events which will follow, and that is the besiege of Jerusalem and the faithfulness of God. And we just see how the Lord is moving there. But it really comes back to this reality that here is a man who is ruling in and with the strength of Jehovah rather than ruling with the strength of man. Be reminded that the kings of the north, the nation of Israel, which has just been carried away into captivity. Some of those kings were good kings politically. Some of them raised great, powerful military forces, and they captured lands, and they extended borders, and they built fortified cities, and they built these very elaborate palaces, and they were good men from the world standards. The one thing that was against them was they did not love the Lord their God. They had no devotion towards him. They had no ambition towards him. Their worship was construed, not only twisted, because they began with the erection of the golden calves, and they built these golden calves and worshiped God in a wrong manner. But they also began worshiping false gods, and it says causing their children to pass through the fire. That's a good way for the Bible to say child sacrifice. So they were doing as everybody else in the land around them were doing. So while they were successful, according to the world standards, they stood in judgment before the Lord God. And so he judged them. Now Hezekiah here in the southern kingdom of Judah is going to rule and reign with the strength of Jehovah living up to his name. And he is a very unique individual. There is much that we can read about him, and he does a number of wonderful things, but I just want you to see four things that lead to his ruling and reigning in this way. Number one, we see the difficulties he faced. We see the difficulties he faced because it is not easy to walk faithfully before the Lord at any time. But notice what it says. Now it came about in the third year of Hosea, the son of Elah, king of Israel. So there was the difficulty of the season in which he reigned. He is reigning in a time when the people of God are anything but the people of God. The nation of Israel to the north are just a few short years away from being removed within the Assyrian empire. That is, there had been open rebellion, there had been rejection. That has trickled down into the land of Judah as well. Worship of God is not a popular event at this time. So at that time, it was not really even socially acceptable, if you will, to walk faithfully before the Lord because those days people were doing it as they wanted to, as they desired to.

So it was during this season in which he made a decision to reign. Not only was there the difficulty of the season, there's also the difficulty of his heritage because look at what it says. He was the son of Ahaz, king of Judah. Now we would have to go back to the 15th and 16th chapter and see the ascension of Ahaz, king of Judah. But I want you to notice that Ahaz is one of the most wicked kings of the southern kingdom of Judah. And the reason I want you to pay attention to that is because while they are all descendants in Judah of David, God is so faithful to preserve the Davidic dynasty there.

He is so faithful to maintain that lineage. Not everyone in the household of David is a man after God's own heart or even does what is right. Ahaz is one such person who does not do what is right.

[9 : 35] As a matter of fact, he goes to the land of Assyria and he sees their false altar and he constructs a false altar. He sends it back to the priest which builds one. He takes the altar of the Lord and pushes it aside. He cuts the gold off of the doors of the house of the Lord. He tears down the awning that's over the house of the Lord. By the time Ahaz is done, they're not only worshiping falsely, they have locked the doors of the temple. Ahaz is probably the most wicked king of Judah. So what I'm saying is that Hezekiah didn't serve the Lord and love the Lord because it was easy or because it was modeled for him.

He was 25 years old when he came to the throne. So for 25 years of his life, he has seen his dad living in such a manner that was very displeasing and doing wickedly before the Lord. So this, we cannot say it is a heritage faith. We cannot say it's an inherited faith. We cannot even say that it is a popular faith because these are difficulties that go before him. Now there is one bright spot that we tend to look over sometimes. I don't know if you've noticed it, but when we read the kings of Judah, the kings of the south, we're always also introduced to who their mother is. It is not so, so much in the land of Israel. We do not always know who their mother is unless the mother is Jezebel. We know who Jezebel is because her name keeps being repeated all the time. But we don't always know who the mother is of the kings of the north, but we do of the kings of the south. And then we also know here that this mother is the daughter of Zechariah. Now possibly, we don't know for sure, possibly this Zechariah is one of those faithful men that is referred to in the book of Isaiah, Isaiah chapter 7, that God was going to give those faithful. And I say that because this is that time period, the Isaiah 7 prophecy, which you should know, Isaiah 7, 14, you know, a child will be born to you. That prophecy that the virgin will conceive and bring forth a child and a child will rule. So that Isaiah 7 passage also says that Isaiah is going to entrust these sayings to some faithful men. And one of those faithful men's name is Zechariah. And it is during this time that that would have happened. So possibly there is in Hezekiah's family tree, at least a bright spot, but it's not in his dad, right? His dad is doing what is wicked. His dad is setting up false altars.

His dad has locked the doors of the temple. So he does not inherit a faith. It is not easy to live out a faithful faith because the society around him is rejecting this God. And when we turn to 2 Chronicles chapter 29, which you don't have to, you'll notice that even the doors of the temple were locked. So he had to unlock the doors of the temple and he had to reestablish the Levites and the priest. So what I'm saying is that Hezekiah wasn't faithful because it was easy. Right? He didn't all of a sudden one day just, it came easy to him and he walked before the Lord, his God, and did what was right. This was not modeled for him. This was not even put out there.

[12 : 50] There wasn't even an avenue for him to worship because the temple was locked and the priests and the Levites were gone. He had to reestablish every one of those in the first year of his reign.

So there's the difficulties he faced. Number two, we see that in this reign and the strength of Jehovah, there are the decisions he made. In spite of those difficulties, he made some very clear decisions.

Look at what it is. It says that after he became king in verse three, he did right in the sight of the Lord according to all that his father David had done. Okay? So now all of a sudden he's not doing as his fathers have done. Now we've gone all the way back to David. This should catch your attention.

If you are a student of scripture, which I really agree with that. A.W. Tozer used to say, you know, we read newspapers with more thought and more curiosity than we do our scriptures at times. Now I know in today's day and time, not many of us are reading newspapers, but maybe we read our news feeds with more thought and more curiosity than we do scripture at times. But we ought to be students of the word of God. So when we read this and we come to, he did what was right as his father David had done. We need to pay attention to that because now all of a sudden we're going back to David. If you remember in the lineage of the kings of Judah, they say he did faithful as his father so-and-so has done. He did faithful as his father so-and-so had done.

[14 : 12] But very, very few of them, maybe only two others are described as doing faithful as David had done because David was kind of the standard. Okay. But so we see here that he's doing what is right, but look at what he does. Look at the decisions he makes. He removed the high places and broke down the sacred pillars. In the original wording, it is he literally went down and knocked down the high places and smashed to pieces all the sacred pillars that were there. Okay. So it is wording that implies force. He went there to destroy them. Now the high places, we've

looked at this.

Ahaz was the first king that was described as going to worship at the high places. And we acknowledge the reality that those things which we permit, we will eventually practice. Right. If we allow something to remain in our life long enough before too long, we will begin to do that thing. Whatever we permit, we practice. And my family, if sweet tea is sitting in the fridge, I'm going to drink the whole gallon. Right. So that's why your pastor's wife had to quit making so much sweet tea, because if it is permitted, I will practice it. And it's just like that way with everything else. I think I told her the other day, I walked by, she had made two chocolate pies and she sent one to someone's house that was coming home with a baby. And the other one was sitting on the counter I said, you know, that's very unfair to tell me not to eat sweets, but to leave a chocolate pie. So I practice eating chocolate pie until she sent it home with somebody else last night. So, um, you know, what we permit now we say those jokingly, but it's that way with everything else in our life, you allow sinful things to hang around long enough. You will begin to do them. That's just the simple reality. What you permit, you will eventually practice. Ahaz is the first king described as going to the high places. Prior to that, we read of the Kings that they did this right, but they just didn't destroy the high places. They did this, but they didn't destroy the high places. They did this, but they didn't destroy the high places. They allowed them to remain. Hezekiah is the first king that we find that shows up to enough of this. Let's cut down the high places. Now, what are the high places? This is not false gods being worshiped. The high places were the places that God said in Deuteronomy that when you get into the promised land, don't have these high places. There's going to be one place where I cause my name to dwell, and I want you to come to my place and worship there, right?

I want you to come to the temple and worship me. The high places were man's way of worshiping the true God how they wanted to. Now, pay attention to that. It is, I will worship God, but I'm going to worship him on my own terms. Now, those were allowed by Samuel, David, Solomon, everybody, though God had said, don't do it. Everybody knew they were there, but they just said, I'm not, I'm not fighting that battle.

I'm not fighting that battle. I'm not fighting that battle. Now, is God fair? Is God so unfair to say, well, you just can't go to any hill and worship me. You have to come to the temple. Well, no, because he's not unfair in that because God also knows that you need to worship with other people. Fellowship is important, and if you look at temple worship and even church worship, what's essential is the coming together because it is there, the presence of God is manifested. Man was created for a community.

[17 : 27] We understand that, but these things were permitted until Hezekiah said, I've had enough of that, and he tore them down. So, he tore down the true, or the worship of the true God by man's chosen manner. So, that is, he said, man can't just worship however he wants to, and then not only did they do that, he said, he cut down the Asherah. So, that's a false God, lowercase g, the way everybody else was doing it. So, he has torn down man's way of worshiping the true God. He's torn down man's worship of the false God, and it says, and he broke to pieces the bronze serpent. This is the first mention we have of the bronze serpent since the nation of Israel has been, you know, been killed by snakes there in the wilderness wanderings, and Moses was commanded to make a bronze serpent. You know the image of it because it's on the side of every ambulance that passes you by. You see it there on the ambulance, and that's why it's there. If you remember the imagery, Jesus even refers to it, right? Those who looked at the serpent were healed, right? He didn't say that everyone was healed.

He said that those who looked. So, in my mind, there were people being bit by a snake. They said, that's foolish to tell me all I have to do is look at a bronze serpent by faith and be healed. I'm going to go find my own healing. They died because God said, if you look. But the imagery was to point to the cross of Christ, right? Looking to the cross for the healing of the disease that is our sin nature. Well, this thing, which was to point to Jesus, began to point to itself, and it became an idol among the nation of Israel. So, they were burning incense, and they even renamed it. You know what that name means, that really fancy name, Nehushtan means? It means bronze thing.

So, what do they refer to it as? That's the bronze thing. We're going to worship the bronze thing. And it became so essential to them, they gave it the bronze thing name, and they were burning incense. Hezekiah said, that's enough of that. I'm going to tear that down. So, now, he's even taken God-ordained matters that were being used in a false way and destroyed them. So, man can't

worship the true God how they want to. Man can't worship a false God at all, and now man cannot be misguided by that which was to point to the true God. Here's a question I have for you. A lot of information I've given you, but I've got a simple question. These matters did not come naturally to Hezekiah, so how was he able to make those decisions? Well, the answer for you is in scripture. If you open up the book of the minor prophet, Micah, you will find in the first chapter of the book of Micah that Micah prophesies in the days of

Ahaz and Hezekiah. If you go to the book of Jeremiah, you will find the reference that when they were plotting to kill Jeremiah, that during the council of let's kill Jeremiah because he says that God is going to judge us, that one of the matters of counsel that is given regarding sparing Jeremiah's life is, did not Micah prophesy during the days of Hezekiah that God would judge them?

Yet Hezekiah did not kill Micah, but repented, and the Lord has been faithful. When you read the prophet Micah, you see God's declaration of judgment for the rebellion. So I put before you, in spite of the difficulties, the reason he could make such radical decisions and make them quickly is he heeded the word of God. Micah began his prophecy during the reign of his father. His dad wouldn't listen. All of a sudden, Hezekiah took notice. The temple was shut. Worship wasn't going on, but the word of God was being declared by the prophet Micah, and he paid attention to it. This empowered him to make these bold decisions to do that which no one else would do. Why? Because the word of God gave ample warning.

[21 : 19] You go read about it in 2 Chronicles 29 and following, and you'll see that Hezekiah looks around and says over there, the nation of Israel, they did not heed the warning. Look what happened to them.

But I'm going to heed the warning. Now, I love, just for reference, I love the last chapter. I know I did this to you the other night, too. When you read these prophetic books, I always tell you, you know, they're like doom and gloom. You're like, yeah, God's going to judge. God's going to judge. God's going to judge. Sometimes He calls people fat cows. Sometimes He tells them they're, you know, they're harlots.

Sometimes He calls them all this other stuff, and it's just like, man, God's just judging, judging, judging, judging, judging. But I tell you to stay in it, stay in it, stay in it, because in every prophetic book, all of a sudden you get this ray of hope, and it's just so glorious and so astounding. You're like, oh yeah, there it is. And Micah's the same way. You get to that last chapter, and you'll get to that last chapter where Micah's just declaring all this judgments, and then Micah says, but I cannot wait, and I cannot wait. And then he makes this statement. He says, because I stand in judgment and am condemned. Now, this is Billy Joe's paraphrased version, right? He says, but I am

condemned of the Lord until He pleads my case. Until He redeems my soul. Then He will raise me up. Then He will set me on a secure place. See, Micah says, it's not about us. You know who heeded that warning? Hezekiah. In spite of the difficulties, in spite of all the hard decisions he had to make, he said, I believe it enough. I trust it. And Hezekiah made the decisions that completely changed everything. Things that even David wasn't doing. He tore the high places down. Why? Because he wants to restore this worship. He even, you have to get this in 2 Chronicles, he even reinstated the Passover meal. And I'll take it a little bit further. Not only did he reinstate the Passover meal, he invited all of Israel, even the people of the north to come back and eat the Passover meal with them. Why? Because he knew that in the economy of God, there's no such thing as a divided people. Now, most of them laughed him off. But some of them came. And those that came, they fellowshiped around the table together, celebrating Passover, rejoicing.

[23 : 41] These are decisions he made. Number three, look at the defining character of his life. How is he defined? Look at what it says. He did right in the sight of the Lord according to all that his father David had done. We go down a little bit further. Look at verse five. He trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel, so that after him there was none other. So he did right. He trusted in the Lord God, the God of Israel. Verse six, for he clung to the Lord. Really, the wording there is he hugged and he would not let go.

He clung to the Lord and he did not depart from following him, but kept his commandments, which the Lord had commanded Moses. You know, there are only three kings in all of Judah that that's described as. Hezekiah is one of them. And then go down to verse seven. And the Lord was with him wherever he went, he prospered. The only other king that that said about David. And the Lord was with him wherever he went, he prospered. These are the character traits of Hezekiah, a man

who heeded the word of God, made decisions contrary to popular opinions, and made the commitment to follow him with all of his heart. He was a man who did right. He was a man who loved the Lord. He's a man who clung to the Lord. He's a man who would not depart from the Lord. And he's a man that the Lord was with. He's one of the few kings, there's maybe three, that stayed faithful to the Lord until his death. There's one hiccup in which he shows some people from Babylon, everything that's in his kingdom. And the prophet said, you shouldn't have done that. But he never denies the Lord. Hey, at that time, nobody had heard of the Babylonians. Okay, they were way over there on the other side of the desert. They're not going to do anything. It's the Assyrians that were worried about. You would have showed them your stuff too.

Okay, because nobody had heard of the Babylonians. But what we understand here is Hezekiah stays faithful. He's not one of those kings who starts right and ends wrong. He's one of those kings who starts right and stays right. Why? Because he is defined by his commitment to the Lord, his God. He's defined by faithfulness. He's not perfect. He's not perfect. I'm thankful for the for the hotel of the fact that he he was sick. He almost died. God spared him. And then when he was spared, he ended up messing up and showed the Babylonians all the treasuries. I'm thankful that we have those hiccups in an individual's life. Why? So that we know there's no perfect one in scripture until we get to Jesus Christ. But what we do see is he is ruling with the strength of Jehovah. And he is defined as that person that the Lord is with and goes with him wherever he's at. And how great it must be to be that person. It says that he prospered. He was a set apart person. He was different because of his commitment.

Now, the final thing, the fourth thing, and the question that we have to ask is, well, what difference does it make? We notice the difficulties he faced. You know, it wasn't a good time in history.

[26 : 33] It wasn't even a good time in his family. It wasn't even a good time in society. We notice the decisions he made, things that nobody else would do. We know how he was defined as being a person who loved the Lord, clung to the Lord, would not leave the Lord. Now, what difference does it make?

We go back to the 17th chapter and we read of the fall of the Northern Kingdom, but we read it again in the 18th chapter. Now, I've told you this before. When scripture says something, we need to set up and pay attention to it, right? Wow. The word of God is true. Let every man be found a liar. Whatever scripture says, we ought to pay attention to. When scripture repeats itself, we might want to stand up and look into it, especially when it is so close to the event that just transpired.

When we have an author telling us in the 17th chapter about the fall of the nation of Israel to the north and why they fell, and then we come to the repetition of that same event in the 18th chapter, we need to know why. And the reason why is because there is a contrast of ruling powers here.

Now, for context, you remember that Hosea, who was the king of Israel when the Assyrians took them captive, Hosea was not as bad as the other kings who went before him.

In the economy of man, Hosea was pretty good. He didn't do what was right, but he didn't do everything that was wrong either, right? He made some reforms. It was what we would say man's best effort at being good. He tried his best.

[28 : 13] But man's best effort falls woefully short. And so we see that Hosea, even with his best efforts, cannot maintain the kingdom of Israel. But in contrast to him, there's Hezekiah.

Hosea, Hosea's father did wickedly as well. Hezekiah's father did wickedly. But look at verse 7, and the Lord was with him wherever he went. He prospered. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. Now, wait a minute here. He is rebelling against the king of Assyria.

The same king that is leading captive all the nations around them. Now, just for context, Judah is comprised of two tribes, right? It's not a very large military. It's not even a very large geographical region. They are surrounded on all sides by enemies. And yet in the midst of that, it is the Assyrians who are coming down from the north and they're taking everyone around them captive.

They have taken captive first those on the eastern side of the Jordan River. We call those Transjordan tribes. Remember those tribes that said when they came in from the promised land, like, look, there's a lot of good land here. We have a lot of sheep and cattle. Let us stay here. And I told you all the way back way then, if you were still with me and we were going, if you were here whenever we were going through the book of Deuteronomy, I told you there's danger in falling short and stopping short of the promised land. And they stopped short. They were the first king tribes to be led into captivity. Well, the Assyrians got them first. Why? Because they're on the wrong side of the river. And, you know, they were very exposed. And then the Assyrians come across and

they besieged Samaria. Shalmaneser starts to besiege. He's not the one who ends it. [29 : 55] He dies. That's why the scripture does not say that Shalmaneser carried them captive. It says they fell to the Assyrian king. That is Targon I, I think, in history. Some of you historians can fix me on that later. It's either Sargon or Targon. I can't remember. I think it was Targon. But anyway, maybe Sargon, they led him away captive. And now this king is expanding his empire and he's expanding his empire and he's expanding his empire. And he's looking and hey, there's just one little country, if you will, that stands in the way. And that's Judah. It's right there. Well, guess what? Hezekiah opposes him. Resists him. He doesn't pay tribute to him. Why? Because he's mightier, because he's stronger, because he has more military force, because he has power. We'll get all of that later as we move into this chapter. No. It's because Hezekiah is not looking to himself or to his army for his deliverance. He's looking to one greater than the king of Assyria. And he has a greater confidence.

So what difference does it make? Well, number one, we don't give in to what everybody else in the world gives in to. The Assyrians were almost essentially welcomed into Israel. They began paying tribute to them long before they besieged the city of Samaria. The only reason they besieged the city of Samaria is because they stopped paying tribute to them for a while. They said, you know, that's enough of that.

We asked you for help. Now we don't really need your help anymore. And the Assyrians kind of got used to that land. They wanted to take it. They didn't do that. Hezekiah didn't want that. Why? Because he said, I don't rely on kings. I don't need anyone to set me free from my enemies around me. Not only did he not pay them tribute, but he was also on the offensive. It says that he defeated the Philistines as far as Gaza and his territory from watchtower to fortified city. So we just have this reiteration that what God had said through Moses in the book of Deuteronomy, that if you will follow me with all of your heart, you will be the head and not the tail. No one will be able to stand before you, though you are small in number, large armies will fall before you. Man, all of a sudden that's becoming a reality, right? But if you do not follow me, though you have a multitude of people and though you have horses and chariots and though you have all this army, you will be the tail and not the head, you will not be able to stand because few will put you to flight. It doesn't really matter the strength of the army with you. It doesn't really matter the strength of your bank account.

It doesn't really matter the strength of all of your physical resources. What matters is the strength of the commitment you have to the Lord God. And that is what Hezekiah is showing. There is a grand difference because now in the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hosea, we have this besiege. And it says in verse 11, the king of Assyria carried Israel away into exile to Assyria and he put them throughout his land. Why did he carry them away? Because they were weaker?

Because they didn't make good decisions? No, because they did not obey the voice of the Lord, their God, but transgressed his covenant. Even all that Moses, the servant of the Lord commanded, they would not listen. They would neither listen nor do it. But guess who was doing it?

[32 : 59] Hezekiah. What difference does it matter? Or what difference does it make? Obedience changes a lot. Was it easy? No. We're about to get to when the Assyrians besieged Jerusalem and they're mocking them and there's all this other stuff. There's falling on your face. There's crying out to God.

There's dependence, right? It's not easy, right? There's this going to Isaiah, the prophet saying, what are we supposed to do? But it is a reality. It makes all the difference. Hosea had nowhere else to turn. Hezekiah has went greater than the king of Assyria to turn to. And he does. He didn't have to listen to the mocking. He doesn't have to listen to the fighting. He doesn't have to listen to, by the way. I'll go ahead and give you just this kind of teaser to what's going on, for lack of a better word. Not only do they resist the Assyrians, they become the one, one standing testimony to a watching world of the strength of the name of the Lord their God. They become a testimony to the reality. Because everyone else around them, every other God, lowercase g, is falling to the Assyrians, but Judah. And then God rebukes the Assyrians. I told you their fall is also biblically noted.

God said, I rose you to power and I'll take you away from power. Why? Because the Assyrians are literally an instrument of God for the judgment of his people. And he displays his glory, his strength, and his might through removing them from the power they thought they were. And then on comes the Babylonian empire out of nowhere. Because God holds the hearts of the kings in the palm of his hands and turns it where he wants to. Friend, it makes all the difference in the world, our

commitment to the Lord God, even in the greatest of difficult days. 2 Kings 18 verses 1 through 12.

Thank you, brothers.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[37 : 01] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[40 : 01] Thank you.