

2 Kings 18:13-37

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[0 : 0 0] Kings 18, 2 Kings 18, we're going to pick up in verse 13, we'll go to the end of the chapter that gets us down to verse 37. So 2 Kings 18, starting in verse 13 and going down to verse 37.

Just continuing to make our way through scripture, we're at this point, really astounding, it's taken us eight years, nearly eight years to get to this point in scripture, starting in Genesis.

We're here during the reign of Hezekiah, of the southern kingdom, the northern kingdom has already fallen to the Assyrian Empire.

So let's see, in date and time in this chapter, we are up to 701 B.C. So that's the time that we're up to, about 701 B.C.

Okay, so really not making our way through a lot of time, but we're here, and it's a lot of things to be learned from our text. Hopefully, things we'll see together.

[1 : 0 8] It's pretty astounding, the text we have for us tonight, we'll see it, and it's a rather lengthy one. You'll understand, by the way, Hezekiah is one of those good kings, right?

He does what is right in the eyes of the Lord, his God. He walks in all the ways of his father, David. So it takes all the way back to David, not just in the ways of his father. Hezekiah leads in national reform.

They observe the Passover for the first time in ages. Not only do they observe the Passover, they extend the invitation for the Passover observance, even to the occupants of the northern kingdom region.

Now, the northern kingdom, Israel is no longer there, but there are still people living in that region, so they extend the invitation. So they see this Passover as a national celebration, not just two tribes, but all 12 tribes.

They reinstate the priesthood there. They cleanse the Levites, the priests. They open up again the tabernacle or the temple. And really, the worship of the Lord is there, and it's an amazing thing that Hezekiah does.

[2 : 1 0] He is one of the good kings that we find in the southern kingdom of Judah. He is faithful. He does a lot of great national reform as well, so you can read that.

But this particular account, we see a lot of what goes on because Hezekiah is introduced to us in 18 verses 1 through 12. We don't get all that there, right? We get most of that found in 2 Chronicles, but we also read a lot of His life in the book of Isaiah.

But the passage before us tonight is repeated here. It's stated here. It's repeated in 2 Chronicles, and it is almost verbatim repeated in the book of Isaiah.

So this same account has three references in the Old Testament. So it makes us, again, we stand up and say, okay, why is it there? I mean, you think Isaiah, you don't think much historical writing, right?

But there are portions in Isaiah where you get into some historical writing. That's chapters, I believe it's 35, 36, 37, 38, which kind of tell some things that are going on during the reign of Hezekiah.

- [3 : 16] One of those is this account here. We read the beginning of it and the close of the 18th chapter here. We read the rest of it in the 19th chapter, the opening of the 19th chapter, because actually Isaiah is consulted in the 19th chapter.
- So we do this so that we can understand, too. Carrie tells me I need to put visuals up, and I should at times because some of us are very visual learners. But understand that these things are happening during the prophetic ministry of Isaiah the prophet, okay?
- So, again, Isaiah is the prophet of the what? The coming king, right? Jeremiah is the weeping prophet.
- You get that? In the book of Lamentations, you don't read Jeremiah if you want to feel good, right? You read Jeremiah if you want a broken heart and you want to weep and those things that feel good in there, sure. But Isaiah is the prophet of the coming king.
- He's the one who prophesies Isaiah 7, 14, right? He's the one who prophesies that the rod of iron should never depart from his hand, that he was set upon the throne forever. It's the king is coming. The king is coming.
- [4 : 21] The king is coming. Isaiah is the one who foretells of the suffering servant who will be the king. We read so often during the Christmas season. But Isaiah is prophesying of this coming king during the reign of a good king, right?
- Or partially because his prophetic ministry overlaps a number of kings. So he knows what a good worldly king looks like, but he also knows that there is a better king coming. So we see that.
- But let's pray. That's a long way of introducing where we're going to be at. But let's pray and then let's read our text together. Father, we thank you so much. Thank you for this day. I'm so thankful to have the opportunity to gather together with your people.
- I'm thankful to be able to open up your word and pray, Lord, that your word would speak to our hearts and minds. Lord, may the truth of it, God, just captivate us and may it instruct us in the ways of godliness. And may it call us to walk closer together with you and with one another.
- And we ask it on Christ's name. Amen. 2 Kings 18, starting in verse 13. We are introduced to Hezekiah in verses 1 through 12 of this 18th chapter.
- [5 : 25] There's one reference that you need to know that it tells us in chapter 7, I mean verse 7, that the Lord was with him wherever he prospered. And he rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him.
- So keep that in mind. Okay. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. Now, the king of Assyria at this time is the one who has just led the northern kingdom away.
- The one who is being used of the Lord really is sweeping across the land. He's kind of the world power, superpower at this time. But Hezekiah rebels against him. So now we catch up with that.
- Now, in the 14th year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and seized them. Then Hezekiah, king of Judah, sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, I have done wrong.
- Withdrawal from me. Whatever you impose on me, I will bear. So the king of Assyria required of Hezekiah, king of Judah, 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold. Hezekiah gave him all the silver which was found in the house of the Lord and in the treasuries of the king's house.
- [6 : 30] Side note, that's like 20,000 pounds. Okay? It's a lot. It's a lot of stuff right there. Anyway, they were found in the treasuries of the king's house. At that time, Hezekiah cut off the gold from the door of the temple of the Lord and from the doorpost which Hezekiah, king of Judah, had overlaid and gave it to the king of Assyria.

Then the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rapsaris and Rapshaka from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a large army to Jerusalem. So they went up and came to Jerusalem. And when they went up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is on the highway of the fuller's field.

When they called to the king Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, and Shebna, the scribe, and Joah, the son of Asaph, the recorder, came out to them.

Then Rapshaka said to them, Say now to Hezekiah, Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria, What is this confidence that you have? You say, But they are only empty words.

I have counsel and strength for the war. Now on whom do you rely? That you have rebelled against me. Now behold, you rely on the staff of this crushed reed, even on Egypt, on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it.

[7 : 41] So is Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to all who rely on him. But if you say to me, We trust in the Lord our God, is it not he whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away and has said to Judah and to Jerusalem, You shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem?

Now therefore come, make a bargain with my master, the king of Assyria, and I will give you 2,000 horses, if you are able on your part to set riders on them. How then can you repulse one official of the least of my master's servants and rely on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen?

Have I now come up without the Lord's approval against this place to destroy it? The Lord said to me, Go up against this land and destroy it. Then Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah and Shebna and Joah, said to Rabshakeh, Speak now to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand it.

And do not speak with us in the Judean in the hearing of the people who are on the wall. But Rabshakeh said to them, Has my master sent me only to your master and to you and to speak these words, and not to the men who sit on the wall doomed to eat their own dung and drink their own urine with you?

Then Rabshakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in Judean, saying, Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria. Thus says the king, Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you from my hand.

[8 : 58] Nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord, saying, The Lord will surely deliver us, and this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Do not listen to Hezekiah, for thus says the king of Assyria, Make your peace with me and come out to me, and eat each of his vine, and each of his fig tree, and drink each of the waters of his own cistern, until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive trees and honey, that you may live and not die.

But do not listen to Hezekiah, when he misleads you, saying, The Lord will deliver us. Has any one of the gods of the nations delivered his land from the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad?

Where are the gods of Shepharvim, Hannah and Eva? Have they delivered Samaria from my hand? Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their land from my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?

But the people were silent, and answered him not a word, for the king's commandment was, Do not answer him. Then Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, and the recorder came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn, and told him the words of Rabshakeh.

Here we have 2 Kings 18, 13-37. I want you to see the desire of the enemy. The desire of the enemy. Now, you need to understand, and I think Bible scholars do us a good justice by pointing this out to us, that the events of Hezekiah's life are not necessarily recorded for us in chronological order in Scripture.

[10 : 39] Sometimes we get a little upset about that, but when we open up Scripture, the authors of Scripture were not always interested in making sure and ensuring that they were writing chronologically.

That is, that wasn't their purpose. They were writing, again, God's interactions with His people, and they were showing us these events. So, with that being said, most people are in agreement that what we will read later, that is, the visitors coming from the region of Babylon, to which Hezekiah shows them all of his treasures, following Hezekiah's deathly illness, of which he was given an extended period of 15 years, because the shadow of the steps moved up, right?

So, he gets sick, he about dies, the prophet comes in, he's given the sign, and then the people from Babylon come, and he shows them all of his riches. Those things happened before this, okay?

So, he's giving this promise that he'll live 15 more years at that time. The very next year, that would have been in 702 B.C. The very next year, these events happen, 701 B.C.

So, what we have is, Hezekiah knows he has a promise of at least 14 more years. Okay? So, he understands that. But he also understands his own weakness. So, God is doing something with Hezekiah.

[11 : 56] He's hearing a lot here already. We see a lot of these matters being recorded for us in the book of Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, in the book of Isaiah. We see a lot that's going on. We've seen some of his weaknesses, why he's a good king, and he's doing many good things, right?

He has this weakness of showing the Babylonians all of his treasures. Because we know that had to happen before. There would be no treasure to show them after he sent all of his treasury to the Assyrians.

Right? That's not there. That's not relevant. He sends all that. He empties his treasures and sends it to the Assyrian king. So, that had to precede this event.

But anyway, God is showing Hezekiah kind of some things and leading him and growing him. But what I want you to see, we'll get to that really in the 19th chapter where it really becomes firm what God is doing there.

He is showing himself powerful, showing himself strong, showing himself able. But before we can get to God's response because of Hezekiah's brokenness and Isaiah's prophetic word, we need to see the enemy's intention or the desire of the enemy.

[13 : 02] Because what we have here is we have the enemy of God's people, in this case the Assyrian Empire, coming in and besieging the people of God. And they come with this really great purpose. And the purpose is not to do them good.

So, the first thing we notice is that the enemy comes. By the way, this is not just the Assyrians. This is something we need to understand because we all fight this spiritual battle, right? We all are fighting this warfare. We are promised in the book of Matthew, as a reference to the church, Matthew 16, that the gates of hell will not prevail against the forward march of the church.

So, there is the implication that the church is on the offensive, fighting the battles, going against the enemy, pushing back darkness, raising up the truth as we've been seen. So, when we have this enemy confrontation, we need to know what it is the enemy is doing.

The thing that I love about Scripture is that we can read the historical realities found in the Old Testament, but we can find the spiritual applications that pertain to today, right?

So, they're recorded for us not just so that we know some Assyrians at one time circled around a city called Jerusalem, and God delivered them. There's something we need to learn from that. So, we see these, what we call these application points for us recording Scripture.

[14 : 12] Number one, we see that the desire of the enemy, number one, is to deceive. It is to deceive. So, we set it up with this way. Hezekiah has rebelled against the Assyrians.

Prior to this, the Assyrians just come onto the scene out of nowhere. The kings arise to power. They start going through this land. Now, we know from the minor prophets and major prophets that really what God is doing is he's using the Assyrian Empire.

They don't know that there, right? The Assyrians are not hearing the prophetic word. The Assyrians are not reading the writings of Hosea or the writings are listening to what Amos has to say.

They're not doing any of those things, right? So, they just know. All they know is, man, we're the big people of the world right now. We are on the offensive. And they're going around just at this time in history taking captive after captive after captive after captive.

One region that they did was the ten tribes to the north referred to as Israel. Now, we know that God handed his people over to the Assyrians because of their rebellion. That is, that unless God had handed them over, the Assyrians had no authority to take them captive.

[15 : 13] So, we understand that. They don't. So, they're going here and then they're just continuing to push south. And they're pushing into this region. If you read extra biblical writings like Josephus and other writings, you'll see that they begin to push south and getting to this Judean region.

And they are a little bit victorious for a season. And then, all of a sudden, this king named Hezekiah shows up and he strengthens his people. And they rebel against him. So, he reclaims some of the land back from the Assyrians.

He reclaims some of the region. He sets up kings in other areas. And he empowers them by his presence. Because the man of God ruling among the people of God has a great impact.

Right? So, by the way, what does Hezekiah's name mean? Do you remember? Jehovah is my strength. So, Jehovah is my strength. You need to pay attention to that. So, He's ruling in the strength of Jehovah.

So, He's there. And God is doing some amazing things. Well, the Assyrians get a little upset because they've lost territory. And we get this from verses 7 to verse 13. He rebels against them.

[16 : 16] Quits paying tribute to them. Takes some of the land back from them. Reestablishes smaller vessels around him. And sets up a pretty good land. And if you read 2 Chronicles, you know that he also has all these conduits that are coming there.

And you'll see it here that they're out there in the fields next to the conduit. And all these springs bringing water. Hezekiah. Just reading the history. It's pretty amazing. You know, he brings water into Jerusalem. He has all these tunnels.

Hezekiah's tunnels. Which they've excavated in, you know, recent years. All these really cool things. Well, he blocks those up. Stops the water. He said, if the Assyrians are coming into the land, we don't want them drinking all the water.

They won't. Right? We did all the work, so we're going to block it up. So he's rebelling against it. He's making it hard on them. But the Assyrians are strengthening themselves. And they come in, and it tells us in verse 13, that they began to go against all the fortified cities of Judah.

And they were overcoming them. So those are like the small towns. Their major fortification is Jerusalem. So Hezekiah, by this time, has built the wall up.

[17 : 16] The millow is just that fortification of Jerusalem. We see that again in 2 Chronicles. He knew they were coming. And He is putting a front out there that you're not taking Jerusalem. And all of a sudden, He has this moment of what we would call weakness of the faith.

And maybe it's compassion because He sees the people in the outlying areas of the land that are being captive. The Assyrians are overrunning those cities out there.

And so the king of that land reaches out to the Assyrians and says, just what tribute do you want me to give you? I'll pay you if you just go home. Right? Now, this is, we had to hold something against Hezekiah.

This would be one of them. It's a very weakness in the faith because David never did that. David would say, I'm coming out and I'm going to fight. Right? Right? He went out in the strength of the Lord and fought the battle. But Hezekiah here, I mean, again, the Assyrians, I mean, they're just really slash and burn going across the land.

You just need to know what's going on. And so he reaches out to the king. He says, okay, you name the price. I'll pay it. Now, his father had done that and emptied the treasuries of the house of the Lord and emptied everything and closed the temple.

[18 : 26] But now Hezekiah asks again and he has to reempty. He cuts the door handles off the temple doors. He cuts the posts down because he had overlaid them with gold.

All these reforms he had brought and brought all this ornamentation back to the temple. He pays it back. He empties his own treasury out. The very things that he showed the Babylonians.

Is that God's judgment for doing that? We don't know. But we also know this is a moment of weakness. But we can understand that. He's the king in the fortified city of Jerusalem and he's looking out across his land and the towns are getting ransacked.

Right? But the enemy, by the way, this is what we need to understand. The enemy comes to deceive. Because the king of Assyria names the price and it is a hefty price. And Hezekiah pays the price.

But what happens? He takes the money and sends his troops there anyway. Right? He takes the money that Hezekiah sent him.

[19 : 25] And then it says in verse 17, Then the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rapsaris and Rapshaka. Rapshaka, by the way, is probably a title, not a name. It means the commander of his army. Sent him from Lachish.

Because the king of Assyria is over here in the city of Lachish in the region of Lachish fighting other battles. But he sends one big major branch of his armed forces. I took his money. But now go ahead and go fortify the city.

Why? Because, friend, listen to me. You don't cut deals with the enemy. The enemy doesn't want peace.

It wants control. And it is the deception of the enemy to say, Well, if you'll give me this, then I'll leave you alone. Hezekiah gives that amount and pays a hefty fine.

But the battle keeps coming. Too often, the people of God, when they're in this midst of spiritual battle and this warfare against themselves or on for the sake of others, they want to cut deals with the enemy.

[20 : 29] They want to try to make terms of peace. You can't make terms of peace with an enemy that is out to destroy you. Listen, they don't want peace with you. They want you.

It's astounding. And I don't know why God has deemed that I was this person. There's a dear elder saint.

I was her pastor years ago down in Normandy. I haven't talked to her. I called and checked on her. Her husband died a couple years ago. And I called and checked on her then. He was in poor health.

And I checked on her then. She's entered into a little bit of period of dementia. She's having a very difficult time. I've kind of heard that. She doesn't even live in Normandy anymore. Last I heard, she was living in Murfreesboro.

Really haven't seen her. I mean, I've been here eight years. Prior to that, there was almost about two years before they really weren't involved in church. It was Friday night. Carrie and Braden and I were out.

[21 : 23] And we were actually in Murfreesboro. My phone rang. And it was a telephoma phone number. If you're a pastor, you answer every call, right? Just because your phone number is out there. So I answered. And she said, I bet you didn't expect to hear from me.

And she called me. And I didn't even know. I didn't have her number. I don't even know how she remembered my number. Right? And you know what? She asked me. I couldn't really understand her.

And she said, I just need you to talk to me right now because I see people. They're all around me. They're not doing me any harm.

But there's people all around me right now. What do you do there? I've got those calls a lot, by the way. Right? What do you do? She said, they're not hurting me.

It's just I don't have anybody to talk to. She said, if my daughter's here, she'll talk to me and makes it better. But she's not here right now. This was late night. And I don't even know how she remembered my number. But she remembered me.

[22 : 23] And she called me. So I said, well, can I pray with you? So I was standing in the middle of a store. And we had this great telephone exorcist prayer. And I don't say that laughing.

I mean, I really did. We prayed over the phone. Me and Carrie and her and Brayden there. I know everybody around me probably thought I was nuts. But in the name of Christ.

It's very packed where I was at. Because, listen, the enemy doesn't. You don't make bargains with the enemy. Right? You don't. But there's an authoritative power there.

And I don't say that because it's, you know, they're not there just to make peace with you. There's really this reality. And some people say, oh, well, she's crazy. But she was really fearful at that moment.

And it's just a reality that was going on. And it was real. And it was near to her. And she needed a moment. Well, she didn't need it. Somebody said, it's going to be okay. Right? She wants somebody to pray with.

[23 : 21] There's an anchor to the soul we find. And that anchor to the soul, the book of Hebrews tells us, is Christ. But understand this. The enemy's desire is to deceive you.

Because you know who one of the people around her was? Her late husband. And when I understand scripture, he's gone to glory.

So we understand this. We know this reality here. Right? The enemy comes to deceive. We don't make deals with the enemy. Rather, we confront them. Number two.

The desire of the enemy is to deceive. And the desire of the enemy is to diminish. To diminish any confidence and any expectation that we may have of trust and hope and faithfulness in the Lord.

Because look at what it says here. It says that when the rabshakeh came and he stood there next to the conduit in the Fuller's Field. And he asked Hezekiah to come out. Hezekiah sent his really political leaders out there and met with him.

[24 : 26] And Hezekiah's leaders went out there and they were standing in the Fuller's Field next to the conduit. And they were having this meeting. And he says, what's this confidence that you have? What is he doing?

He's diminishing what he thinks, what they believe are their capabilities. Now, some of it rightfully so. He says, because you say that you have counsel for war, which is really just empty words. And you need to know historically what Hezekiah was doing was reaching out to see if he could get help from Egypt.

And he needed a little chastening for that. Because God says you don't ever reach back out to Egypt. He got that chastening, by the way, chastening. Because Isaiah declares, before he records this, Isaiah says, don't go to Egypt.

Egypt's no help. And that's a good way of saying it. There's a whole lot of verses where he talks about the foolishness of reaching out to Egypt. And that there's no help from Pharaoh. Their help is from the Lord.

So here they begin to diminish that. And then they begin to even belittle. They say, you say, if you say you're going to let Egypt help you, then that's a bruised reed that will crush your hand. But if you tell me that the Lord, your God, is going to help you, he said, that's not going to happen.

[25 : 27] See what they're doing? They're diminishing or seeking to diminish the confidence of the people in what they are counting on to deliver them. Now, it's causing doubt, right?

And it's causing doubt that it gives the individual the confidence to know. He says it can't be the Lord. The Lord's not going to help you because Hezekiah has torn down all these altars. Hezekiah has torn down all these high places.

Hezekiah has torn. They didn't know anything about what the prescribed worship of the Lord was. God had ordained that they were to worship in one place. It is the temple. But from the Assyrians' point of view, Hezekiah has been tearing down all the altars.

So you're really not worshiping, right? More altars, more power in the world's point of view. So what they're doing is they're diminishing. They even belittle them to the point that they say, we'll give you some horses if you have enough people to set up on them.

But we know you don't. So really in the wording, he's implying you don't even have 2,000 soldiers to make up a cavalry. And your strongest men can't resist our least men.

[26 : 24] See what they're doing? They're diminishing the capabilities of the people to resist them. Because the enemy of God's people always seeks to diminish their confidence by telling them they can't do it.

You don't have the ability. You don't have the power. You don't have the resources. You can't. You can't. You can't. You can't. You can't. The early church. Guess what happened?

The enemy of the early church was constantly telling the church what they couldn't do. Right? You can't. You can't. You can't. Don't preach. Don't teach. Don't pray. Don't do that. Don't do this.

You can't do it. If you do that, we're going to, we're going to beat you. If you do that, we're going to imprison you. If you do that, we're going to kill you. You can't. You can't. You can't. We're going to diminish you. We're going to diminish you and diminish you.

What do they say? Do it anyway. We think we can. greater is he that is in me than he that is in the world right because the enemy seeks to diminish the hope we have in christ and here the enemy is seeking to diminish the hope of the people from any outside help or really any help of all he's causing them to doubt the reality and doubt that is cast leads to hope that is lost too often we see that where people believe get to this point and they begin to doubt not only that they can't do it but that god is willing to do it for them and this comes because the enemy of their souls just constantly constantly constantly barrages them with this diminishing words of you can't you won't you can't you want number three not only does the enemy desire to deceive and to diminish the enemy desires to divide the leaders of hezekiah who are meeting out here are very scholarly individuals so it says that they tell him now speak to your servants in aramaic so if we're going to conduct business let's do business in aramaic right says it in verse 26 for we understand aramaic don't speak judean because there are people on the wall so you need to understand the conduit and the folder's filter right outside the walls of jerusalem so the encampment of the armies they're having this this meeting right here there are people up on the walls that are you know doing what everybody would do looking on seeing what's going on uh they're onlookers and they say speak to us in aramaic and what we find here is the rabbi shaker says he said i'm not just here to talk to you i'm here to talk to all these people who are going to be uh to this doom that is coming to them they're doomed to eat their own dung and drink their own urine with you so i'm not just saying these truths for you i'm coming to tell them as well so then it says that he stood and he cried with a loud voice in judean that is he spoke so that everybody could hear him and he started speaking very divisive words right he comes to divide the people it says in verse 28 thus says the king the great king he says do you see this quite often the reference here in scripture to the king of assyria as his people are speaking to him or about him always refer to him as the great king the great king the great king little do they understand there is a greater king and that greater king is not hezekiah but there is a greater king who holds the kings in the palm of his hand to whom they will give an account but it says hear the word of the great king the king of assyria thus says the king do not let hezekiah deceive you you see what he's doing now he's not talking to the political party that's come out to meet with him now he's talking to the people of the city right so he's seeking to divide the allegiance of the people no longer are we working out a treaty now we're trying to divide the city and we're trying to set the people against the leader of the city we're trying to set them against the people it says he will not be able to deliver you from my hand nor let hezekiah make you trust in the lord so he's seeking to create a divisive spirit and he wants to divide them because he knows that by dividing them he will weaken them the intention of the enemy is to bring division it happens in our homes it happens in our churches and it happens in our society the intention of the enemy is to bring division the god who declares that people ought to be united and to walk in oneness and fellowship and in love and in sincerity with one another but yet the enemy comes seeking to divide it's so amazing how quickly we can be divided over very very small matters why because the enemy wants to divide us

[31 : 14] the barrage against the early church was first external right because they were going to beat them they were going to beat them and when the enemy could not do anything externally and they were still strengthened then he began to work internally acts chapter 6 we have what we often refer to as the origination of the office of deacon as they would serve why did that happen because there was a grumbling that arose amongst the congregation right there was a divisive spirit that began to happen some widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of the food and so there began to be this divisive the church that began to happen and so there began to be this divisive spirit thankfully the church responded to that what we find is the enemy comes with the desire to divide us division is not of the lord so whenever we come upon something that is causing us to be divided now if it's a matter of truth we stand firm if it's a matter of interpretation then we can walk alongside one another division is not of the lord fourth and finally not only does the enemy come to deceive diminish divide the enemy comes to degrade and careful here what we see them degrading the enemy comes to degrade verse 31 says do not let hezekiah or do not listen to hezekiah for thus says the king of assyria look at this make your peace with me and come out to me and eat each of you his vine and drink of his fig tree and drink each of the waters or eat of his fig tree and drink each of the waters from his own cistern so the first thing you need to notice the enemy says if you come and you make peace with me not much is going to change everything's going to be okay you're going to eat from the fruit of your own vine you're going to eat from the fruit of your own fig tree you're going to drink from the water of your own cistern until don't forget the until and this is where the degradation starts look at what he says until i come and take you away now if you are a jew at this time and you're in this land a red flag ought to come up until i come and take you away the reason why is because the abrahamic covenant or the abrahamic covenant was connected to a people in a place with a promise the place matters right not so much in our day and time because we are not confined to worship in a particular place that is the glory of the covenant we have in christ the new covenant right it extends beyond the place but these people at that time it was connected to a particular place it is referred to as the promised land but look at what it says until the time comes i take you away to a land like your own land a land of grain and new wine a land of bread and vineyards a land of olive trees and honey that you may live and not die now here's the degrading thing the enemy is stating that what i give you is equal to or better than what god has given you i'm going to bring you to a different land but that land is just like this land that land has everything look at the explanations there right how does god define the promised land it is a land flowing with milk and honey right it is a land with grain and and wine it is a land with water abundant right how does the enemy define the land that he will bring them to it's a land just like your land it's a land that has all of these things all these abundant things if you make peace with me what i give you will be just like if not better than what you leave behind

because the very first temptation in the garden was a temptation of degrading what god was given the enemy in saying that god was unfair that you ought to take from the tree that what i give you when you eat from the tree is better than what god is giving you because he's keeping something from you it is degrading the gifts of the lord now hear me out if they were living in the promised land but there was a land just as good or better than what you're telling me is that god didn't give me the best right if there's somewhere that is better than this and i can live there or somewhere that has everything this land has then god did not give me the best and it degrades the gifts of god now this happens to us not in land but it happens to us i love the psalmist that cries out in so much honesty and the psalmist says and you have to forgive me because i cannot remember the psalm number but the psalmist calls out and says when i considered the ways of the ungodly that their bellies were fat and their mouths were full their cheeks were robust that they were healthy that they had gold chains around their neck that they had no want no displeasure they lived in all comfort and all security my heart was almost despaired because they looked i looked at them and everything with them was going good the psalmist says my heart was despaired and i was almost downcast until he says i considered the end of their days that they will stand before the lord their god and they will be judged for their wickedness unrighteousness and their end will be ruined i love the fact that the psalmist says that when we look around too often it looks like the gifts that the enemy are giving the unrighteous is better than what the lord god has given us and it degrades what god has promised us but the reality is is that the peace that passes understanding the assurance of eternal eternal life in his presence the salvation of our souls is more than enough we must never let the enemy degrade the realities of what god has given us and never let the enemy tell us that he can give us equal to or better than what we have already been given in christ because he can't touch it the enemy comes to deceive to diminish to divide and to degrade how do we respond like this no one answered a word for hezekiah had told them to be silent the king said i'll take care of it when the enemy attacks you go to the king about it what did they do they went to the king they tore their clothes you can tear your clothes you can mourn you can weep you can you can be brokenhearted but they went to the king they didn't try to defend themselves they didn't try to argue with the enemy they didn't try to do anything they didn't say well wait a minute that's not no they were silent they didn't say a word they were mourning they were broken but where did they go they went to the king they went to king hezekiah hezekiah goes to isaiah there's a prayer that's offered to the king of kings friend listen to me when the enemy attacks we don't have to answer him we can be silent but we can go to the king of kings and lord of lords and talk to him about the enemy we can be broken we can rend our clothing physically or hypothetically we can be broken of spirit and we can go to the king we don't have to answer the enemy this is something i've had to learn uh the hard way i don't always have to answer everyone sometimes the best thing i can do is just be quiet and go talk to the king about it because the king knows what to do

the king has the answer he's on the throne something we're learning in our our home right not my job not my responsibility i'm not in charge there something we're having to try to teach braden in certain aspects of his life he tries to take trust that's not your job not your role you're not in charge right but dad i saw them they were doing this wrong so i corrected that not your role you're not in charge there's somebody else being charged there not your job it's not always our job we know the king who's already defeated the enemy he did it for 40 days in the wilderness remember that we read three culminating temptations but there literally were 40 days of temptations and he defeated them in each and every one of them we have a king who's already fought the battle for it's not our job not our job so we'll be quiet we're silent and we go to the king and say did you hear what they said and we see how he responds because we know the desire of the enemy but we need to know how we can live out our lives let's pray and we'll be dismissed father thank you so much for this wonderful time we've had together thank you for your word i thank you for the truthfulness of your word lord that it brings us to the reality that we have an enemy that is camped around us so often lord we know his desires we know his ambitions but lord we want to walk faithfully with you we come before you the king of kings and lord of lords asking that you give us not only wisdom but you give us security you give us an assurance and you give us peace in the midst of the battle lord we pray for those needs around us there are so many physical needs so many in our own congregation so many in our own community needs that could only be met by you so father we ask this week that you do a wonderful work thank you for the opportunity we've had as a church to be able to pour into people but lord now we ask that you do the grand work that you may be glorified and honored through it be with us as we leave here tonight may we live as tools in your hand for your glory and your honor and we ask it all in christ's name amen thank you guys so so so