

We just started a new series entitled *Hezekiah, Then and Now*, and today is going to be *Part 2* of that series.

We've been covering the story of king Hezekiah of Judah during a period that the northern kingdom of Israel was in the process of being conquered, of being taken captive into Assyria. We'll be discussing some of those verses here today. Now, that's the northern 10 tribes, basically, that were to the north in Samaria, the region that's called Samaria later in time. But again, the 10 tribes that were taken captive by Assyria, this is during the time of king Hezekiah's reign then in the area of Judah at Jerusalem. This is the story about him.

As we've been going through this story we've been looking at some of those things happening along a physical plane during his reign that parallel some of the things that we have gone through in the Church and are still going through and experiencing. There are a lot of examples in scripture like that, where things are written that we can learn from spiritually. This one here, I think there are probably some more, in that respect, considering the time that they were in, considering some of the things that came upon the nation there of Judah as well at that particular time of Hezekiah, and all the lessons that are there that are always good and inspiring that we can learn from on a spiritual plane, to be admonished by, to be encouraged by.

As I mentioned last Sabbath and in *Part 1* as well, I guess that was *Part 1*. This is *Part 2* today. I'm already in *Part 3* ahead of all this. I've been working on that one. I don't know if it's going to be four parts but definitely three. There is so much material here. In the beginning I thought it was just going to be one sermon but there is really so much here that we're going to spend a little more time going into this. Again here, sometimes it's hard for me to go back and forth in this.

I thought I'd mention as well this week I'm going to start focusing a little bit on the Feast sermons so I'd appreciate everyone remembering that because it's that time of year where we need to begin thinking about the Feast of Tabernacles coming up and the messages are going to be there. It is necessary because some things have to be prerecorded because of New Zealand and Australia starting the Feast over there and they have to have material. Also for all the translations, all the translators and so forth as well, trying to get some of those things for them in advance in the different languages.

So again, there are things to be learned from here, as I mentioned in *Part 1*, that we can learn from on a spiritual plane, to be admonished, to be encouraged, and to be strengthened even with greater resolve in what we're doing and what we're going through in our lives.

So we're going to pick up toward the end of where we left off in *Part 1*. 2 Kings 18 is where we were. Speaking of Hezekiah, **2 Kings 18:5**, it says **He trusted in the Eternal God of Israel, so**

that after him there was no one like him among the kings of Judah, nor were there before him. For he had held fast to the Eternal; he did not depart from following Him but kept His commandments, which the Eternal had commanded Moses. Candidly, this is the way it should be from us from the moment of time that we're baptized. We make a commitment with God, we enter into an agreement with God, in that respect, absolutely, that we are repenting of our sins, that we want His way of life, that we don't want ours, that we give ourselves to Him to mold and fashion us, to do with us as He will. Our desire from that point forward should always be one of being close to God, of obeying His way of life, of seeking to grow and change, and to be transformed of the mind as we grow, because that's a lifelong process.

Sadly, that doesn't always happen. Sadly, many give up. Most have given up through time. Even in the last 2,000 years since the Church began it says, "Many are called," many have this opportunity, have been given this opportunity for this way of life, God has opened their minds, they've been baptized, they've come up out of the water, they've had the impregnation of God's holy spirit, "but few have been chosen" in the sense of what takes place. It's not just a matter of God's choosing, it's what the individuals choose. It's really all about that, one's choosing and that context, "Many are called," God has to do the calling, He brings us into the Church, "but few are chosen." That is a process, especially in the past 2,000 years, that has been a process of a sealing that's been taking place over 2,000 years in preparing the government that will come with Christ, that will be with Christ for the next 1,100 years.

So that choosing has depended upon the choices others have made because God has called everyone, when we're baptized, when we receive the impregnation of His holy spirit, He has called us to succeed. He has called us to excel, to do well, for this mind to be transformed, to be born into His family. But then people make choices in life and those choices have led many away from the truth, have led many back into the world, and they give up for whatever reasons it might be. You don't want that for others. You get to know others. You spend time in fellowship with others. But I've seen everything imaginable that I can think of that's happened in people's lives and choices people have made. It's because of their choices that determines how God is going to work or continue to work with them, whether He will or whether He won't.

Again here, this should be in our heart, this should be in our mind to obey God, to draw closer to God, to work on this, to conquer and overcome this. The words in scripture that talk about overcoming, it's a Greek word for conquering. It's about a battle. It's about a war. It's something we have to do. Christ made the comment, in essence, in paraphrasing some of it, he overcame, he conquered, and he's given us the ability to do the same. When we're called we're given the ability to conquer. God gives us His help, He gives us His holy spirit, but we have to make right choices along the way. It isn't something that just because we're baptized or because we go to the Feast of Tabernacles or we keep the Sabbath that it's owed to us by any measure. There are things we have to do in our lives over and over again, day by day, week by week, month by month, year by year and be consistent in it, strive to be consistent in it.

Verse 7—The Eternal was with him and he prospered wherever he went. Well, we can say the same thing about us. If we obey God, if we do what God tells us to do we're going to be blessed. He has called us to bless us. Candidly, the greatest blessings of all, if we come to understand them, it's what we have in the mind. Everything else is a means to an end. That's all. That's what it's about. We live a physical life. We live in a physical world. We live with physical surroundings. There are certain things we have to do in life and learn how to do in life, and God will be with us along the way to bring us through all that, to give us something better. That which is better has to do with the mind. Because once this body is gone, once it dies, it's what exists. It's the mind. It's whatever has been transformed to that moment in time that one dies as to whether or not God will resurrect it and give it a spirit life, give a person spirit life, or whether as will happen to most who have been called since the time of Christ in the Church, they're going to be resurrected in the Great White Throne.

That's an amazing thing to think about! Most who have ever been called through time, the majority are going to be resurrected in the Great White Throne and be able to continue on from the point in their life, if they haven't come to a point where they have fully rejected God in the sense of the mind becoming so messed up, so twisted and distorted (which has also happened to some, and I believe even toward the time of the Apostasy), that God will not resurrect them because they've already been judged. They've so corrupted their mind that if He gave them life again in a physical body they're not going to choose Him. They don't want Him. They don't want His way of life. God knows that, when the mind has come to that point in time where it's so corrupted it doesn't want Him. So that mind can't be helped.

So the mind is a powerful thing and we're the only ones that can make the choices that have to be made in life concerning God's way of life and what He's offering to us. So again, astounding things to think about at times, what has happened in the past and what we've been given. The most valuable thing we have in life is the mind. It's how we think. Because that's what we take with us, that's what we have, and the agreement we have with God and God's way of life and choosing Him and wanting Him and fighting for Him, we have to go through that testing, that trying of life because God has to know. We have to come to a point in time where He says, "Now I know you." In other words, "If I give you spirit life I know you. I know what you're going to do. You're to the point where with My spirit always dwelling in you we are at one. We are at one." What an incredible thing!

So again, **The Eternal was with him and he prospered wherever he went. And he rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him.** So there were times when other nations would come down upon Israel or upon Judah, both, and sometimes in order not to be conquered and overcome, in that respect, as far as a nation is concerned, they would pay tribute. They would pay high taxation to whatever power was greater, whether it be to Egypt, whether it be to Assyria, or at different times that they had to contend with different ones, Babylon later on, some of the things that were taking place in life. Basically, that's what his rebellion was about. He came to a point where he was looking to God to lead and guide and direct His people, His

nation, him, and basically he quit doing that. He quit paying tribute. So it says there, “and did not serve him.” Well, that’s how they were serving him. They were supporting them.

He defeated the Philistines as far as Gaza and its territory, from watchtower to fortified city. There were watchtowers before you’d come to a fortified city that would go to warn and so forth. So they conquered these areas and then gradually went in and took the fortified cities as well.

Now it came to pass in the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea the son of Elah, king of Israel, that Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, came up against Samaria and besieged it. And at the end of three years they took it. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, that is the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. Then the king of Assyria carried Israel away captive to Assyria. So again here, took them captive and to that region of the world.

We know the story then about the lost ten tribes; in time they lost their identity. They were taken farther north, continued to migrate into the northern parts and central parts and finally western part of Europe and the things that have taken place there. They didn’t know who they were in time. They’d lost their identity. God said that would happen to them as a nation because they turned from Him. They wouldn’t keep His Sabbath, they wouldn’t keep His holy days, so, basically, they weren’t even going to know who they were as a people.

Judah, on the other hand, though they rebelled against God at times and disobeyed God and served other Gods, they still had a mixture there of things concerning the Sabbath. They didn’t lose track of some of the things concerning the Sabbath and the holy days, though they filled it with garbage at times. God had mercy upon them, and because of that they indeed were taken captive, but they didn’t lose their identity. They have always known who they were, the Jewish people, as a whole. Some haven’t realized that they were Levite or some of the other scattered tribes that were with them, but primarily Levi was there as well and they’re mixed in with Judah.

...the king of Assyria carried them away captive to Assyria and put them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes, because they did not obey the voice of the Eternal their God but transgressed His covenant and all that Moses the servant of the Eternal had commanded; and they would neither hear nor do them. So again, it was that rejection, just as it is today and has been for a long, long time, that when the truth comes along they don’t want to hear it. That attitude is still there...has been over the centuries.

So an incredible story here about what happened to Israel, and Judah here then to the south of them and the story then going on about Hezekiah. So at this point here it’d be good to switch over to 2 Chronicles now. Some of the story goes back and forth. Some of it’s in Isaiah but most of it’s recorded exactly the way it is in Isaiah and Chronicles.

But here in **2 Chronicles 31:20** it says, **Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah...** So this is a part of the story in Chronicles here, up to this point, about cleansing it of the false worship, of

false religious objects and so forth, and they've just gone through all this in the previous verses, and of strengthening the priesthood and the Levitical system that we read last week. **...and he did what was good and right and true before the Eternal his God.** It's a great statement to say. What a great thing to say about anyone, "Did that which was good." Well, what is that? God's way. God's way is good. Our way isn't. So it's striving to do things God's way, to do it the good way. If we do that then that's the only time we're able to do good, when it's in agreement with God.

"...and right." It's good because it's right. If it's right because it agrees with God and we learn how to judge righteous judgment, if you will, there are things we have to learn in life as time goes along, how to judge in matters of relationships. Most of it's about the world and dealings we have and so we have to learn how to judge matters God's way.

"...and true." What a blessing to know what is true, to be able to speak what is true, to be able to share what is true now more than ever before. I think of this being said of him back then with what he had and realizing he didn't have a whole lot, in that respect, considering what the Church was given later on in 31 AD, from that point forward. Incredible what people have lived through in different periods of time.

Verse 21—And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law and in the commandment, to seek his God... You know, that's something that each person has to decide what they're going to do and how they're going to do it and what their commitment is. And that commitment? I've seen the whole gamut - where people have absolute commitment down to no commitment whatsoever and everything in between. Because it's a battle. It's a matter of the way one thinks. But if you are convicted of what God is offering and what He's placed before us you'll fight for it. The more convicted of that that you are the more you're going to fight for it, the more you're going to seek it. Nobody can give that to you. It has to come out of you.

...in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandment, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart. That's basically where we stopped last week. Did it with all of his heart. Everyone has to decide that on their own. What is your heart? Where is your heart toward God, toward God's way of life, toward God's Church, toward God's people? That's between you and God, truly.

So going on here now. It was in the fourth year, again, of king Hezekiah that Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, came up against Israel. In the next couple of years Israel was fully conquered by Assyria and taken captive. Later another king of Assyria, Sennacherib, his son, led an army to invade the land of Judah. So that follows then on the heels of this and this is where we come in on the story in **2 Chronicles 32:1**. This is where Hezekiah began to confront some incredible trials in his life.

After these deeds of faithfulness... So set through 2nd Chronicles then to this point it's listed all these things that he's done, as we talked about, the reestablishing of the priesthood, the

Levitical system, and cleansing the temple, and all the other things they were involved in that it talks about here, getting rid of the high places and the like. Now it goes on with another part of the story.

It says, **After these deeds of faithfulness Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came and entered Judah; he encamped against the fortified cities thinking to win them over to himself.** So his father had taken certain things as far as the northern kingdom was concerned, and now his sons coming to get a little bit more. That's what this story is about here. He had his eyes on Judah and the riches that were there.

...he encamped against the fortified cities thinking to win them over to himself. And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come, and that his purpose was to make war against Jerusalem, he consulted with his leaders and commanders, literally is, the scripture says, "the mighty men," which has to do with the commanders of the armies and so forth, **to stop the water from the springs which were outside the city; and they helped him. Thus many people gathered together who stopped all the springs and the brook that ran through the land, saying, Why should the king of Assyria come and find much water? So if they're going to come down let's make it more difficult for them, and that's what they did. They started enclosing those things and blocking them up. Then it'd take time for them to dig for them again, to open them up again, which they did through time, but it made it harder for Assyria to come down into the area of Judea.**

It goes on to say then in **verse 5—And he strengthened himself...** So that's what you would do if you see an army coming down that's as mighty as they are. You want to strengthen the army. You want to strengthen everything that you can. **He built up the wall that was broken, and raised up to the towers, and built another wall outside; and repaired the Millo in the City of David, and made weapons and shields in abundance.** So again here, preparing for battle the best they could. Highly outnumbered.

Then he set military captains over the people, gathered them together to him in the open square of the city gate, and gave them encouragement, saying... Isn't it amazing? Same story that we read not too long ago here then about what they were told when they came into the promised land. Same thing. It's the message that God's people through time, especially when you're up against something that is great and massive, and battles that you have to fight, to know you're going to have to fight certain battles. It's the same: **Be strong and courageous.**

That comes from God. It's a matter of focusing on God, to know that He is with you, to have that confidence, especially in God's Church, to know the truth, to know how we're able to know and keep the truth. That should be an awesome thing that's encouraging to people as well because people go through doubts and have questions that come up naturally in the human mind from time to time. That's why you have to continue to go back to what God has given you - the truth. Because the only way to see it and the only way to have it and hold on to it is that God is working with you.

You say, "Well..." in your own mind, "Well, I've done this and this." Well, God is having mercy on you, too. There are times when you may have done the stupidest things, you may have fallen flat on your face and gone back to some sin, whatever it might be (you've repented because you want God's way of life), and you can become discouraged by that and begin to question whether God's working with you. Because this has happened to God's people. That's when you have to be reminded of... Do you know the truth? Do you still see the truth? Then you had better fight with all of your being to continue to repent and thank God and understand He has a purpose for you. He has not given up on you though you may have given up on Him or given up on yourself. You keep pressing forward and God will bring you through. If He's offering that to you then He's extending mercy to you for some reason, some purpose that He has. Just thank God that He is. I've seen a lot of mercy come from God in my own personal life and in other people's lives. A lot of mercy. Because God first and foremost is a very merciful God. Incredibly so. We need to understand that.

So the message to them was, **Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid nor dismayed.**

Sometimes people are afraid, "Is God still working with me? There are times God says just don't be afraid. If you're doing what you're supposed to do, if you're repenting and your sincere and you're truly seeking God and you're crying out for God's mercy and God's help, move forward and be thankful that you have that opportunity. Don't question. Don't question God's mercy. Don't question His patience. On the contrary, just be every so thankful for it. He wants you to learn that.

Do you know why He wants you to learn that and why sometimes you have to go through some of those kinds of things? So that you can change and become merciful to others. So that you can change and become patient toward others. Because God has called us to change and He wants us to see Him, He wants us to see how He has worked with us in our lives so that we will seek to begin living that way of life because that's the way of life He wants us to live toward others. To be merciful. To be patient.

Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid nor dismayed before the king of Assyria, nor before all the multitude that is with him... Beautiful statement here - **for there are more with us than with him.** It may be a massive army and that's all you can see. There may be times when you feel overwhelmed in your life. It should come back to this, "Greater is He that's in you than he that's in the world." You know, that's a thing of faith and belief, whether you really believe that or not. If you realize "I have the truth. I am blessed to still see the truth. I have not lost it; God has blessed me so I can keep it." Because I'll tell you what. When God closes the door, when you come to a point where judgment has come from God and you're cut off from God's holy spirit you lose the truth, you begin to lose the truth. You can't think right spiritually. It's impossible. Because the ability to see things on a spiritual plane come from God. They don't come out of us. They don't come from you.

I have seen many, many, many, many, many, many, many, many people, many in the ministry, many (I'm not talking about 10-20-30-40), I'm talking about a lot of people who lost it and they

couldn't see straight anymore. Especially during the Apostasy, we all understand that or know about it at least. We'd seen a science fiction movie a long time ago, a lot of people had in my period of time, maybe some of you. It's really old. It was about the body snatchers (aliens), and it was like that in the Church.

I remember talking to different ministers. I think of one in particular I was talking to at one point that was going to come through, and talking to him one night about this battle we have and what we're addressing, and what's taking place, and what they're doing at headquarters, and what Mr. Tkach had done, and his son - and the next day talked to him again I didn't know him. I didn't know him! He wasn't the person I knew. It was like the invasion of the body snatchers. His mind was different. He had lost everything - everything that was true. He now believed everything that they were giving him, that they were pumping into his mind. He was no longer able to think right.

That's an astounding thing to experience but it shows the power of God's spirit when you make a choice and you talk to someone like that who is feeding you full of garbage and telling you that it's okay to eat unclean food, it's okay to worship God on every day, to worship Christ on any day... "We're going to do it on Sunday, but you can do it on any day." Think, why are you doing it on Sunday? Why don't you just keep doing it on Saturday like you always have been, on the seventh day, on the Sabbath? Well, there are reasons. Anyway. And on and on it goes. They swallowed that stuff.

How can that happen to a human being that's been in God's Church, that's gone through Ambassador College, that's gone out and given sermons for years and years, and sermons that were inspired by God, and then all of a sudden couldn't speak anything right concerning God. Now, that's a thing to fear. It's a thing to fear, falling away from God and making choices that lead in an opposite direction, and coming to a point in time where God says, "No more. Now you've gone too far. No more patience. No more mercy. You're cut off." Wow! And they lose it.

So if that happens, has happened to many who have gone before, who have been extremely well educated in God's word and way of life and truth, it ought to show as a powerful testimony, a witness, it can happen to anyone if you make those kind of choices.

The point being in all this - if you see the truth and you know it, thank God for that because it means that God is giving that to you and God is sustaining that in you. Because as soon as that's cut off, you will start losing it. You might do certain things physically because you were taught about clean and unclean foods, so you just can't go back to eating catfish or shrimp or lobster or whatever it might be, because many people have left, but they can't do that one because they've lived it so long. That's a physical thing. They've lived it so long they just can't go out and do it. It's not because they're convicted of God saying it, it's just they can't do it. So in their minds, well, this is God. It's the Jesus God, that side. They don't understand what that is. Sad.

...there are more with us than with him. What an incredible thing. (I hope you understood what I meant by that other statement, but I'll leave it at that.) Sometimes we don't understand there is

an angelic realm. There is an angelic realm around us, around God's people. There are things they do that we don't even have any idea of in our lives, around our lives - watching over us, caring for us, blessing us. Then the greatest thing of all then is God and His Son blessing us with the mind, with the spirit, with His spirit, and able to dwell in God and God dwelling in us.

But there are many things that I have seen that have happened around God's Church, things that have happened to people in time, and there are times that there have been angelic beings that have intervened for them. Some people haven't been fully aware of, others they have. I could spend an hour just telling you different stories of intervention that people have had that are awesome, incredible, astounding where that's happened.

So we don't see that world around us. We don't see a spirit world around us. There is that other spirit world - in other words, that which is fighting against God, that which has chosen to go a different way, and they're all over this earth. Demonic beings, including the one who leads them, Satan, you know, the devil. They're real beings. Something the world doesn't really grasp very well.

But there is nothing to fear in any of those kinds of things. They have no power over you whatsoever. And yet the world, especially Hollywood, would like people to have a fear of certain kinds of things like that. The more you learn, the more you know about God, the more you can see those things as absolutely idiotic, stupid, ridiculous.

But again here, it's about how you live toward God. There are more with us than with him. The main thing is to understand that "Greater is He that's in us than he that's in the world," than that being that I was just talking about, the spirit being. He had no power over God's people. That's why it's wise to stay close to God. It says, "Draw near to Him and He will draw near to you." It speaks of that being then who will flee from you because he can't stand being around God's spirit. He can't stand being around God. He can't stand that kind of thinking. He can't stand that kind of a mind. So he may try at different times to come at you, but if you remain firm and remain strong he won't stay around that. He can't take that. Incredible!

Verse 8—With him is an arm of flesh; all he has is what's physical, though he has this incredible army that's coming down against us. **...but with us is the Eternal our God.** Now, that's strong faith. That's boldness in every way. **...to help us and to fight our battles.** There is something he understood in that full well. "They've already taken the ten tribes in the north. We're nothing against them." Judah was small in comparison as far as a military was concerned. Basically, that's much of the story here: "They are coming down and we have to keep our eyes on the only thing that is going to save us. We can't save ourselves. It's God Almighty."

...He will help us and He will fight our battles. And the people... There are going to be times in the future when you're going to need to think this way more. It's either real and living within you or not, because you can't make it up. You can't work it up. It's just a matter of what you believe

and how you act upon it. There are going to be things happen where you're going to know we're there, we're in that time we've been told about for a long time now.

We were having a conversation this morning how this is all we've ever lived, is waiting for that time when Christ comes, when he's returning. We've been in that age because we know we've been in the end-time here because of what was given to Mr. Armstrong and understanding Europe and what was going to happen there and some of the signs of things that God gave us to look at, to know that we're approaching that. Now that we've had the Apostasy that was the greatest sign ever given to God's Church. That was the one God gave to Paul to understand, "This is it. That's when a countdown begins. That's when Christ is going to return."

We have always believed, thinking our children aren't going to grow up. Our children have grown up. Now we're into the grandchild stage. Many have lived through that, have experienced that in God's Church. I've mentioned many a time, every car we've ever had, it's our last one. I really hope what I have right now are the last ones.

But we just keep moving forward because we know we're in the end-time and we know that God's working with the world and working with the Church and preparing a people and until that's fully prepared, Christ isn't coming. But when everything is in its place and God only knows that, and God knows the timing of those things and what it will take and what it does take.

I thought it was an astute comment here the other day, about how that someone made a comment, a minister made a comment in a report stating that he found it very interesting that the U.S., basically, through its president, pulled back from a strike that was going to hold against another nation. Because the potential of what will happen with that one, if it ever happens, or when it ever happens, if it's with that country, involves a lot of nations and involves something along the scale that very possibly, very likely would lead us into an end-time. Somewhere in the Middle East it's going to start, a spark is going to start somewhere over there at some point in time, that after it does there is no pulling back, the world is committed.

So, anyway, no, it's not time yet. When it's God's time things will happen, things will fall into place and we'll know it.

So when you're living through that things happen that are worse than what you could really imagine in the world around you because we can't comprehend what it's like when there is no electricity, when there is no natural gas flowing through pipes, through lines from region to region across the country. When you don't have these conveniences, when there are no semis going up and down the freeways - and there are a lot of them anymore - carrying good, and you have no ability to go and pump gas out of a gas station anyway because there is no electricity. You're going to have to rely on God and understand this is a particular time we're living in, we knew it was coming, it's here, and we're going to go into some of the most incredible times in a short period of time here that mankind has waited on, and suffered through incredibly, for 6,000 years

waiting for this time. We can make it. God has called us to make it! Be strong and courageous. Don't be fearful of it, God will bring you through.

So again here, this particular story here about Sennacherib, king of Assyria, and what he was being told here. I'll just read part of this again, **and the people were strengthened by the words of Hezekiah, king of Judah.**

Verse 9—After this Sennacherib, king of Assyria, send his servants to Jerusalem, (but he and all the forces with him laid siege against Lachish). So in other words, there were certain emissaries, high ranking individuals that were sent down to Jerusalem to give a message to Jerusalem and to king Hezekiah. And basically, at this point in time, the king of Assyria, Sennacherib, and his main force was fighting in Lachish to conquer it. This is where these individuals leave him, because it comes back to the story later.

So again, they sent these individuals, servants down to **Hezekiah, king of Judah, and to all Judah who were in Jerusalem, saying, Thus says Sennacherib, king of Assyria...** Now, they would come up toward the walls and they would holler. They would scream, if you will, holler these things out so that people would be able to hear them. They would come right up to the front gate and the main leaders then, or the different ones that the king would send out, would hear these messages and take the message back to king Hezekiah. This is what was happening. Anyone up on the wall could hear it as well.

It says this is the message: **Thus says Sennacherib, king of Assyria, In what do you trust, that you remain under siege in Jerusalem? Does not Hezekiah persuade you to give yourselves over to die by famine and by thirst?** So, in other words, they're trying to build up this siege is coming upon them, you better be fearful of what's coming to pass, and here are your options. They would mock and ridicule the king and what he might tell them, and basically trying to demoralize them in every way possible by telling them the kind of force that's getting ready to come down upon them and it's best to surrender. So that's easier for them than coming down against them but that's their objective here, to cause them to fear so much that they will even rebel and turn against the king if necessary.

So that's why they're asking this, **Doesn't Hezekiah persuade you to give yourselves over to die by famine and by thirst saying, The Eternal our God shall deliver us from the hand of the king of Assyria?** So it's like it's mocking God, making fun. "Is this what he's telling you, that your God is going to save you and so you're given over to thirst, you're given over to famine that's going to come upon you? How long can you stand out against this army, this military?"

Let's turn over now and pick this up, the story here. There is a more thorough account in 2nd Kings. Let's turn back there. So we need to jump around a little bit at times here and see how it states some of it here because every once in a while something is added that isn't in another place and every once in a while it does tend to jump back and forth a little bit so you've got to follow it closely in parts here.

2 Kings 18:13—Then in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah... Now, you remember how old he was when he started reigning? Twenty-five. So how old is he now? Thirty-nine. This was a big year. A lot happened here at this time in his life. Thirty-nine years old. That's just almost impossible to comprehend, that he began to reign and had been taught when he was younger, mightily so, about God and about God's way of life, prepared to become the king. God prepared him. God prepared him to do what he was going to accomplish because God had a purpose in that. So God raised him up. This didn't happen just by coincidence, by chance. God had a purpose in why He did this at this time.

A great part of that purpose was because of what God was going to do to the tribes to the north, that there would be a king in the south, in Judah, who would be very strong at this time so that they wouldn't be overrun or judged in a matter to be conquered. Because God was going to do things with Judah for a lot longer period of time here because they continued to keep the Sabbath and the holy days, and though they had all these things that Hezekiah got rid of, the high places and trying to mix things with the name of God, like has happened to this day in the world, though they did that they still observed the Sabbath and understood or kept the holy days to a certain point. Not like they should have by any measure, but they knew these things, especially the Sabbath.

Then in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:13), Sennacherib, king of Assyria came up against the fenced cities of Judah, and took them. So time passed. It didn't happen immediately. Those things don't happen overnight so it's talking about a process here. This is why as this began to happen here he made it very clear, he sent these people on down to Jerusalem because that's where he was headed. First he was zeroed in on Lachish but he'd already conquered many cities, fortified cities of Judah, and so that's this massive military that's starting to come down toward them.

So it says here in **verse 14**—**Then Hezekiah, king of Judah, sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying...** Notice what he did. So this is in the midst of the military that starts to come down. Now, this story isn't put together in a chronological way really well as far as being able to go to Isaiah or 2nd Chronicles or 2nd Kings and do it perfectly, because there are parts where it goes backward and then comes forward, which we'll get into especially in the next part. We'll strive to do that and you'll be able to see the picture then of what's taking place. But there is something else taking place here when he first begins to come down because his father had already conquered Assyria, and now his son, this Sennacherib is coming down now. I'm trying to think of the other king's name; it started with an 's.' Shalmaneser.

Here Sennacherib is coming down, and he knows it's the same army, and they have a tremendous might and they've been conquering different regions anyway, and so it's a force to be reckoned with because their objective is to conquer. The Assyrians, God says that about them. That's just the way they are. They have that kind of a mind and different times in their life they're going to be stirred up again to do those kinds of things. God said in time they would be the ones, the

Assyrians. He told the Israelites many times that it would be the Assyrians. If they didn't repent and change that they would be taken captive, so finally God brought it to pass during this period of time. But it's also there are prophecies about that which is going to happen in the future where the Assyrians will be used again. Because that's their mindset, that's their thinking; it's a war type mentality to conquer.

So it's telling here, again, about this thirty-ninth year of Hezekiah, in his service as king, that it's talking about them coming down.

...verse 14—Then Hezekiah, king of Judah, sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish saying, I have done wrong. Wrong about what? Well, he had rebelled against him. He wouldn't serve him. He quit paying tribute in the early part of his reign so now it's fourteen years into his reign. Very early on it made comment that he quit serving the king of Assyria. He quit serving Sennacherib's father, and so now Sennacherib is coming down and so now he's saying, "I made a mistake."

Now, all this still speaks very powerfully, very highly of him, Hezekiah, through all this and because his heart, his mind was unique toward God. It never changed, in that respect, but it's like on a spiritual plane with us there are times in our lives where we may do something dumb, we may do something foolish – none of us are perfect by any measure and we've all done stupid things. It's just the way our nature is. And candidly, the longer you're in God's Church there is going to be some period where you're going to do something stupid. It'll tell you a little bit later on why especially. We'll get to that later, maybe in the next part.

But it's a process that God allows us to go through for a purpose and by design. When we're left to ourselves in certain situations we just have certain tendencies as human beings. I don't want to get ahead of the story here, but again, it's just interesting to hit this point in time here where it says this is what he does then.

So he makes a choice, he makes some choices here. It isn't that he's turned away from God, but he's at a point of a weakness, okay, he's at a point here where he's being tried mightily. You can't know what that's like unless you lived in that. There are things you can't know in people's lives unless you actually live in that moment in time with them and what they're going through. That's why judgment, we have to be very careful about judging others in situations they may be going through. We don't know their life. We don't know what made them the way they are. God does. God knows what's in the mind and He'll bring those things out and He'll work with them in order to change, to transform the mind. There are certain things that can happen in life then where God uses that opportunity then to change someone if they don't make the wrong choices. A lot of times when that happens or has happened in times past people have made the wrong choices and gone away from God. So these things are a matter of design, just to say that.

Then Hezekiah, king of Judah, sent to the king of Assyria in Lachish saying, I have done wrong. Turn away from me. "I'll start paying tribute again." That's what he was telling him. "I've done wrong. I should have been paying this. I'll pay it, whatever you say, just turn away

from us.” If you’re king of a nation and you know that a massive army is coming down that’s already conquered the ten tribes to the north, and now they’re coming down against you, it’s going to try you in a way that is hard to understand. So was it wrong? It’s not a matter of a right and a wrong, it’s a matter of what can happen in this respect. Not the wisest of choices in what he decided to do here, obviously. Let’s read the story.

Whatever you impose on me I will pay. And the king of Assyria assessed Hezekiah, king of Judah, three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. Now, in the story here, as you go through it, he’s just going to make it easy to get some of this anyway. He really wasn’t going to change his mind. He’s going to take them. He’s going to conquer them. That’s his attitude. He’s going to conquer the nation, but “This is what I’m assessing you.”

So Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the Eternal, and in the treasuries of the king’s house. At that time Hezekiah stripped the gold from the doors of the temple, now, some of this is added on there but that was what was on the doors so that’s why they know it’s of gold, **of the temple of the Eternal, and from the pillars which Hezekiah, king of Judah, had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.** So immediately upon some of these happening at the very beginning, at the very onset in the story here, in his fourteenth year, he’s sending this up to, then, doing this quickly, sending it up to Sennacherib hoping indeed that he’s going to turn away from Judah and return back to Assyria. That’s what he’s hoping and desiring. He makes this admonition then to Sennacherib that “I was wrong and I’ll do whatever you charge us, charge me in this. I’ve made a mistake.”

So again here, there are things that come upon people’s lives and every situation in life that people come up against it’s unique to them between them and God—truly is—in how you handle, how you deal with various things. God’s desire is, is that we come through whatever trials, whatever hardships, whatever things that happen in life, putting God first. But anyway, let’s go on with the story.

Verse 17—Then the king of Assyria sent the Tartan (it’s an officer), the Rabsaris, and the Rabshakeh from Lachish. So these are emissaries from the king, directly from the king, various positions of government or whatever under Sennacherib, and these are the ones he sends down then to Jerusalem.

So it says here, **with a great army against Jerusalem.** If you remember the story we read before it’s about he stayed in Lachish fighting against it, besieging it, so basically here then the story is telling us, the gold and the silver was sent up and then he sends down these men because he’s not stopping. He’s going to come on down so he sends this group on down here to confront or to speak to the people there in Jerusalem, to speak to king Hezekiah.

And they went up and came to Jerusalem. And when they had come up they came and stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool, which was of the highway of the fuller’s field. And when they had called to the king, Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household,

Shebna the scribe, and Joah, the son of Asaph the recorder came out to them. So here are these individuals in the government there of Judah.

Then Rab-shakeh said to them, **Go tell Hezekiah, Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria...** So this didn't take too long. This happened pretty quickly. By the time he sent the silver and gold up there and said, "I was wrong," and the king had already told him what he expected him in pay, he wasn't changing, he's going to come on down and conquer them anyway, so this is the evidence of that. **What confidence is this in which you trust? You speak of having plans and power for war but they are mere words. And in whom do you trust that you rebel against me? Now, look, you are trusting in the staff of the broken reed Egypt.** There is that affiliation then that was known with Egypt at this particular point in time as if Egypt might come up and help you. Well, they weren't going to come up and help. But anyway, another story. These back and forth things with Israel, with Judah, they've gone on for a long time.

...of which if a man leans it will go in his hand and pierce it. So again here, they're tearing down anything, any hope they might have or think that might be possibly there that the king Hezekiah could be thinking or the people could be thinking at that moment. They're trying to break down everything, every hope they might have, whether it be a trust in God, whether it be the words of Hezekiah and what he's telling them, or the fact that Egypt might actually come up and help them.

Again here, **it will pierce your hand. So is the Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to all who trust in him. But if you say to me, We trust in the Eternal our God: is it not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away?** So you can see here they didn't quite understand what they believed in Judah because when he took away the high place it was like, "Well, these were your gods, this is how you worshipped, and Hezekiah has come through and taken all these things away." So it shows they lacked a lot of understanding then in what was being said.

...and they said to Judah and Jerusalem, You shall not worship... in other words it was said here, **You shall not worship before this altar in Jerusalem?** Question. It's asking a question. **Now, therefore, I urge you, give a pledge to my master, the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses...** So if you pledge you're going to do this, you're going to surrender, and as a sign of this we'll give you two thousand horses **if you are able on your part to put riders on them.** So they're mocking them at this point. "We'll give you two thousand horses if you can find people that can actually ride them." So they're just making fun of Judah now at this point. **How then will you repel one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put your trust in Egypt for chariots and horsemen?**

Have I now come up without the Eternal against this place to destroy it? So now he's actually saying, "The Eternal God has sent me here." That's what he's telling them "The Eternal God has sent me down here to destroy you." **The Eternal said to me, Go up against the land, and destroy it.**

Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah... You know sometimes when you're bombarded with things, it's happened to people where they're bombarded by various things. I think about this along a spiritual plane within the Church. Someone will come along and start chirping away at something and "Well, don't you know this and don't you know..." Sometimes it's people not in the Church, it's relatives and whatever, people come at you in different ways. But when it starts happening within the environs of the Church, which people have been around for a period of time know happens, and may not have happened in your region, different ones who are listening out there today wherever you are. It's happened a lot around Cincinnati because that's the main place where God's been working with the remnant group here. It happened a lot in Toledo where it first got started.

But these things happen over and over again where people come along and they'll start working to put doubts. There is a being behind that kind of thing. There is a being who thinks that way, who wants to put doubt in people's minds so that you'll begin not being strong and courageous, so that you'll begin to be fearful and trust in human things, physical things rather than keeping your eyes on God.

It's to distract you from keeping your eyes on what you know, keeping your eyes on the truth. That's why so often when things come along I've told people over and over go to the truth. Understand, look at what you know. Hang on to that. That is your strength. Some have and many haven't. This is a method always used to tear down, to mock, and if you can start mocking and making fun of it's like if you can start doing this then someone will start thinking the same way. "Yeah! Yeah, I believe that," then or whatever it is that people do sometimes.

Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, Shebna, and Joah said to Rab-shakeh, Please speak to your servants, "us," is what he's saying here, **Please speak to us in the Syrian language for we understand it, and don't speak to us in Hebrew.** So basically they're telling those out there, "Don't speak to us in Hebrew, in what we all speak here." So it said, "Speak to us in the Syrian language." In other words, so that others on the wall there can't understand what's being said.

You know, you think, is that really going to work, that if they'll start speaking in a different language and that only three or four of them who are there to take the message back to Hezekiah, they're the only ones who are going to know what's being said, therefore they were concerned. They were afraid. That's why they were saying this, "Don't speak to us..." You think, how are the others going to do? Just like what's happened around the Church, you tell someone... Oh, I don't want to get into it. "Don't do this. Don't do that. Don't tell me. I'm not going to listen to that anymore." They don't stop. They just get stronger in what they're doing. So this is basically the story going back and forth here.

But Rab-shakeh said unto them, Has my master sent me to your master, and to you, to speak these words and not to the men who sit on the wall who will eat and drink their own waste with you? So pretty strong language here. They didn't mince words. They were coming at them with everything they could and telling them how bad this is going to get. When you're in famine, **Hezekiah, Then and Now, Pt. 2**

when you have no water, when you have no supplies and you start thinking like this, this is what you're going to be like. You see, because these things have happened in war, candidly.

Then the Rad-shakeh stood and called out with a loud voice in Hebrew, and spoke 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 his hand. Nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the Eternal, saying, The Eternal will surely deliver us; this city shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. So don't believe Hezekiah. "Don't believe what he says about God, about the Eternal, because the Eternal sent us down here in the first place."

Verse 31—Do not listen to Hezekiah: for thus says the king of Assyria, Make peace with me by a present, and come out to me, and every one of you eat from his own vine, and every one from his own fig tree, and every one of you drink of the waters of his own cistern. Now, sometimes in war people get to a point where they're so overwhelmed by what they see coming at them they do surrender. Some haven't. How is that? Mossad, the name of the city, the town, that's how they got their name. Might have been Masada. But whatever it was one of them dropped part of the letters. But it's an incredible story here of some who during a specific period of time determined to fight to the death, and they did until there wasn't anyone left. That's how, in Israel, the Mossad basically got its name. That's what they took it from.

Here, a lot of times what people do then is no matter what they think the outcome might be, knowing that they're going to go into slavery or whatever, they choose slavery rather than choosing death. Basically, this is what's going back and forth here because they already know what's happened to the northern tribes. They've already been taken captive. It says, "If you'll make peace right now we're basically going to let you free to a certain extent. You're still going to be servants of the king." Anyone who believes that? Well, anyway. You think, they've been lying all along; they're going to keep lying. But anyway, sometimes people don't understand that. They don't understand what's coming at them is a bunch of lies, twisting and distorting.

That's all I've ever seen happen around God's Church. I learned that as I heard what people said toward Mr. Armstrong, about Mr. Armstrong, about what he was doing and why he was doing it, and how it affected people's minds. Because the reality is if people give audience to that and they talk their eyes off of God and what they see and what they know is true then they start using human reasoning, people will take in anything in life. I've seen anything and everything take place in God's Church, around God's Church, what people are capable of believing.

Verse 32—so if you do this 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 groves and honey... It's like, "Why bother taking me out, because we already have that?" It's amazing what people will believe sometimes. I could spend several sermons here just telling you some of those kinds of stories. **...that you may live, and not die.** So if you do this at least you're going to live. Yes, we're going to, in this case here, I guess it does get to tell them we will be taking you into

another area, but it's a rich area, it's prosperous, it has all this in it and you can begin to rebuild there.

...but do not listen to Hezekiah lest he persuade you, saying, The Eternal will deliver us. You know, if you read a story like this, if you don't think that works on a human mind you're sadly mistaken. You've never been in a situation like that. It's hard for us to read stories like this and put ourselves there because we have never been there. You have never been on a wall in a city, confined in a city knowing that your rations are short, that they can't last forever, knowing how armies worked at that particular time. They would lay siege to a point where you had nothing left. That's what their objective was, to where when they begin to come up against you then it would be easier for them. This is a history of warfare. They're aware of these things. They fought many wars.

So again here, and if you're not in that position it's hard for us to read through a story like this and think this didn't affect people. I wish I could go through and could have gone through things in times past to help people to see what they were coming up against in God's Church when they came up against some of these things and the foolish things people will choose to do and choose to believe that lead them away from God's Church. Because it's happened over and over and over again and people forget that it's a matter of conquering. They forget it's a battle that they're fighting. They forget that this is a matter of warfare and you have got to fight with all of your being for God's way of life. You are in a battle. You are in a war. It never ends as long as you're in God's Church. It doesn't stop.

Anyway, **verse 33—Have any of the gods of the nations at all delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria?** They were telling the truth. No one stood up against them. No gods have been able to save anyone yet. Look at the north, what happened to them. That's what they're saying. **Where *are* the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where *are* the gods of Sepharvaim, and Hena, and Ivah? Indeed, have they delivered Samaria from my hand?** So they knew all these things were true. They knew what Assyria had done.

Who among all the gods of the lands, have delivered their countries from my hand, that the Eternal should deliver Jerusalem from my hand? So he's gone back and forth in some of this in what he's telling them but it's always to throw them off guard, always to try to cause them to be fearful and so forth, when he's contradicting himself. How many times in God's Church if people were just close to God they'd be able to catch the contradictions of other people who try to persuade them of something different than what is true? But a lot of you haven't lived through those kinds of conditions and it's hard sometimes to grasp and understand what that's like until you're confronted with those kinds of battles.

Verse 36—But the people held their peace and did not answer him a word, for the king's commandment was, Do not answer him. So they didn't, which was good. **Then Eliakim, the son of Hilkiyah...**

I think of if people had just listened to Mr. Armstrong at different times and the ministry when they would tell them, "Don't go out here and read other books that are against the Church. Don't go filling your minds with a bunch of arguments out here of what people are saying." In other words, basically the story is, the message is, "Hold on to the truth, what you know is true. Because if you allow crap into your mind that's what your mind is going to become." If you start thinking that way and you allow doubt and different things to come in that's how Satan works. He wants to plant a seed of doubt in your mind so that when some problem comes along then you can justify your actions by saying, "Oh yeah!" I have seen this happen over and over and over. People will latch on to the smallest of things to give them excuse to turn away from God, to turn away from the Church. "This way is just too hard." It gives them an excuse to do something different that's in their mind easier and they actually can justify it in thinking God's in it. The mind can be a sick, sick thing. That's why you have to fight for this way of life.

So, "Do not answer him." So it's always blown my mind when people will say, "Well, the church won't let me read this or read that." "The church won't let me do this or let me do that." "Oh, that's a tough church! Man, the church won't let you do this?" Or "Mr. Weinland" or "Mr. Armstrong," whatever it might be, "says we shouldn't do this or shouldn't do that." "Oh, man, who do they think they are?" "The church won't let me do this." I've always loved that one. I boil. I've boiled every time in the past I've ever heard that expression, "The church won't let me do it." It's like it's really a bad church because it won't let me do what I want to do.

So relatives or friends or people who are already of that negative kind of a mindset who have left or in the process of leaving, "Yeah, the church says we can't do this." "Who are they? What is that minister to say something like that, that you shouldn't do this or you shouldn't do that? That you can't wear makeup," or "that you can wear makeup," or "that you can't..." I'm sorry. But anyway. We've gone through that. It's like, "Who has the right to say that?" Well, if they really understand God and understand what they've been given they'll see some things; they'll learn about government, they'll learn about how God works to try us sometimes as well. There is one simple scripture that comes to my mind every time when I ever heard anything like that. It's, "whatever is bound on earth is bound in heaven." That's powerful!

God's Church and those who follow God, and especially in the government of God and the leadership of God, if they're following God, in unity with God, if something is stated and done that's it. Now, not something that's against the law, not something that's about going from the Sabbath to Sunday or changing a high day; not something that conflicts with God's law. But when there are decisions that aren't written in scripture that have to be made for the sake of unity of the Body, like make-up or not make-up, because it's really not a scriptural thing it's about a guideline given to see what people are going to do when it's stated. If the church says that no, speaking of the government of the Church, says no, we shouldn't do this. This isn't good at this time that we should do that. This is how we should present ourselves as servants of God, as members of God's Church regardless of what the community or people think, you do it.

Think, “Well, man, that’s a lot of control. You just gave yourself over to that kind of control to control you? The church tells you, you can’t and you don’t?” It’s a matter of whether you’re convicted of where God is. It’s a matter of your own conviction. It’s not, “The church won’t let me do it.” It’s, “I won’t do it because I believe something different. I believe what God has given to me and this is what I have chosen to do or not to do, to live by or not to live by. Nobody is making me do this! I do it because I choose to do it, because I’m convicted of it, because I want to do this.” Does that make sense? I hope it does, because if it doesn’t you’re going to be tried in that exact area.

So again here, quite a story that’s going back and forth along a physical plane that really has far more in it spiritually than what we have time to go through or that we’re going to spend time going through.

So they held their peace because they were told by the king, don’t do it. So they were convicted of doing it the way the king said. They did it on a physical purpose, on a physical plane. We do it for a spiritual one.

Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn, and told him the words of the Rab-shakeh.

So going on here, **2 Kings 19:1—And it was so, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he tore his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Eternal.** Now, this was a moving moment for him, and by all indications here, by the way it’s stated, when you tear your clothes and you do something like this it’s a matter of fasting. It’s a matter of turning to God. It’s a matter of looking to God for guidance, for direction, and it’s an attitude of mind toward God.

So again here, it says, “covered himself with sackcloth and went into the house of the Eternal.” So again here, incredible thing here that when you’re going through trial, hardship, and especially when it’s really a big battle, you turn to God. You turn to God quickly and fast first and foremost. This is a part of the story here. So he tore his clothes. There is, generally, obviously a repentance involved here and there is no doubt here that Hezekiah began to see some things or began to grasp some things on a higher plane and it took him back to God. He realized this is a confrontation of something that is now it’s a matter of God; it’s a matter of God’s intervention. They have said certain things about God and this brought him back to this heart that was his in a way that stirred him up. He realized that it wasn’t the best or the wisest thing to have stripped the silver and the gold and given that away. He came to a point of realizing and knowing in a convicted way this is in God’s hands, this is God’s battle. This is where he came to.

He humbled himself and so did the people at this point in time, and they turned to God in a way that they really hadn’t been doing to this point in time. They’d gone through many things that were very, very good, but this is a matter of a trust and a reliance that is something that you

have to live. This is something they were living and so this is what they did. The king did it, these individuals were doing it. They had already been under king Hezekiah's reign long enough to be moved by this. And really, God was behind it all anyway. When God pours out His spirit and brings people to a certain point then they can respond. They were responding to something that had happened. They took it personal. They took it personal because you're talking about our God. You're talking about what we have been doing over the past several years here, of cleansing the temple, of fortifying, strengthening the priesthood and the Levitical system. This was all coming at them very powerfully so at this moment in time.

So it was a very moving thing to them. For some, like Hezekiah, it was moving spiritually because God was working with him in a very powerful way. So again here, it's talking about some of this, of what was taking place.

Then he sent to Eliakim (verse 2), who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. So now even more so they are turning to God, because Isaiah is the primary one through whom God is working at this particular time and they know it. He knows it. So here is God's prophet, Isaiah. It's another way of showing here, very powerfully so, they're looking to God in a way that they have never looked to God. They want guidance and direction and they know this is the place to turn. On a physical plane there are things to accomplish something spiritually, and there are times in our lives when things happen. I think of what God says when you get sick. He reminds you, "Look to Me. But look to Me in a specific manner. Call on the elders of the Church." Because that's how God works.

With the nation of Israel, of Judah, let's say, because you have to go back to David and Solomon when you look at Israel, but after that and you look at Judah, it was still a system that was not God's. God allowed them to have the government. God allowed them to have a king. But the king had to choose to be in subjection to whomever God put over them - the high priest, a prophet, whatever it might be. In this case it's Isaiah. This is what he's doing and he's submitting to that; he's showing he understands that.

This is the way God has given through time. It's a matter of realizing that God works through human beings. We learn that through time. I'm ever so grateful I had the opportunity of learning from Mr. Armstrong, of being under that government, of learning things that I would never have been able to learn, to know. But God worked with him to begin restoring things to the Church so that finally when I came along, as an example, in life, I was able to benefit from all of that. What an incredible thing, to benefit from all that he had gone through, was brought through, to have what was given to him, to have molded and fashioned in me. This is how we grow and this is how God molds and fashions us. It's an awesome thing to experience, how God works, and to be thankful for that. But we have to be able to see that, too, and to know that it's real.

It's not just me and God. Because we've had too many people in God's Church it's like, "God has given me this gift and there is this thing that I know that God's given to me to see." I've read **Hezekiah, Then and Now, Pt. 2**

some of the craziest of things! I've seen some of the craziest things! Where people have gone off on such tangents they've given themselves over to demonic beings. I've seen things written... Anyway. You know what it is that's working with them to that point in time when they go that far. But it's a very dangerous state. It's a matter of realizing how God works. There is only one way that God works. Always has been that way. But too many in God's Church have left that.

That's why if some, even of recent time, going back to, I think I have the date right, 2013, they had Mr. Armstrong as their apostle, they were there under that leadership, under that guidance and direction, under those things they could have learned and received through time. But they came to a point in time where somehow they forgot God's government, they forgot how God worked, and they thought they could go off and have these little private bible studies. "Let's come over and let's study the word of God together. Let's study our Bibles. Let's look at these scriptures and what he's saying." I mean, even to get to a point where you allow yourself to do something like that? Exceedingly dangerous spiritually. So many cases, it depends on where people are, they get cut off by God immediately and they're allowed to go off on their little tangents and "begin seeing things that they never saw before" because God allows them to believe whatever they want to believe. If somebody wants it bad enough that's a horrible state. Only by God's mercy and by God's grace can some sometimes escape some of those things.

I hope you understand what I'm saying. A lot of you have never had to experience that, and how blessed you are that you haven't, because it's a powerful, deceptive tool that sometimes can be used, because oftentimes it includes long, long time friendships and other such things that sometimes can pull someone in then pull them away from God. That's how a demonic being works out there.

But anyway, that's some of the story through some of this, things that you can learn from that, again, on a spiritual plane that's profitable that so many in God's Church have failed by.

I'll go back a little bit farther - most all who sat at Mr. Armstrong's feet at Ambassador, the first Ambassador College, when Ambassador College got started, and so many of them who became evangelists, as a whole the overwhelming majority turned against him, which, who really turned against God because they turned against what they were taught and they began to think that God gave them some ability to understand certain things that was different from what God gave to His apostle. They began to be lifted up by their position, by their place, and they began to see themselves in ways they shouldn't have, and they began to take things upon themselves they should never have done. That's a dangerous state, obviously, but it's happened. Sad when it does.

People have to stay close to God and live spiritually the kind of life that Hezekiah reflected in what he did. When you come to a certain point and you're moved, when God shows you something, that you repent when you're able to see things to repent of, that you repent with all of your being before God and ask for help to think right and to be convicted of what's right. Because you have to be convicted of something that's right. It's a choice you have to make in your life, that you agree with God.

Going on here. They went to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, as it says here. **Verse 3—And they said to him, Thus says Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and rebuke, and blasphemy.** So he's saying, in essence here, there are so many things involved in what's happened here today, and a part of it was correction that he was taking upon himself, to realize, to come to a point in time where he realized there were some choices and decisions here where he didn't really put God first. Now, his heart was he always wanted to, his desire was to do so. He had proven already by that that he did, but God let him experience something else, which we'll come to later. God let him experience something else that he had never yet experienced in his life, and he came through it, powerfully so, as the story goes on to say here.

And they said to him... In part. That'll come out as well. **And they said to him, Thus says Hezekiah...** Because he had more to learn yet. You know, because sometimes God lets us see certain things in our life because you know what? The mind has to be remolded. It has to be transformed. It has to be changed. It has to be changed in every person, every human being, and none of us are right. There was only one who was right from the beginning to the end - right with God, at one with God because he was the Word of God made flesh. Awesome!

Every human being has made mistakes. Every human being has error. Every human being has done things in a relationship with God because the bottom line is that the mind is what God is molding and fashioning and changing and every human being has to yield to that process. We've all gone through things, and we'll continue to go through things until we are where God wants us to be. Because He's molding and fashioning different things within each and every one of us and it takes time to get there. These are good things that happen when the person responds by making the right choices, because most don't.

He says, **This is a day of trouble and rebuke and blasphemy...for the children have come to birth, but there is no strength to bring them forth.** Kind of an awkward phrase here but one translation states it a little more closely. In other words, what it's saying, it's like when a child is ready to be born but the mother has no strength to deliver it. He's expressing some things here that show that there's a battle here. This is hard. This is not easy. This is difficult. And basically, he's brought to a point of being without strength, and yet has done so many things, seen so many things, spiritually, if you will, and yet realizes at this point in time here, "I need to make some greater changes." So he was brought to that. He was humbled. He came to a point of humility in his life that he hadn't experienced to this level before. He came to a point where he was looking to God for deliverance and help in a way that he never had before.

That's why all of you will be tried in those things in the time to come. This isn't over by a long shot. What you're being prepared for is not just the return of Joshua the Christ. What you're being prepared for is to go through what lies between now and then, okay? And that's a lot. To do it faithfully. To do it in trust. At a time like that should be the greatest time of trust and reliance upon God because you've heard all these things would come to pass.

That's why there are going to be people out here who are going to be shaken because they've heard these things fifteen years ago, twenty years ago, whatever it might have been when they were sitting in Sabbath services Sabbath by Sabbath by Sabbath, okay? And there is going to be some of them who were little children who grew up, and it's going to come back in their minds, "I was told this was going to happen and it's happening. Look at what's happening in the world." There are going to be some being brought back to a level and depth of repentance they've never experienced in their life.

Verse 4—It may be that the Eternal your God will hear all the words of Rab-shakeh, whom his master, the king of Assyria, has sent to reproach the living God; and will rebuke the words which the Eternal your God has heard. His heart and his desire was God has heard this and this is said against Him, He is the God I serve, He can take care of this. That's basically their hope, that God will have heard this and respond to this king that's coming down to conquer them.

Therefore, lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left. That fits well. "Lift up your prayer for the remnant." That means a lot to us. Think about that which is left even now. We are small compared to what we have been at a particular point in time. Then if you look farther back in time we were nothing. We were brought to a point in time where there was no one, basically, in God's Church, until God shook us up and started waking people up at different points in time from sleep. So again, we've gone through many different things but this is an awesome thing here when he uses a particular phrase here which means what it is.

I think of those who are still out there, who just have to wait to a moment in time when they're awakened. It's coming. It's going to happen. That's going to be an incredible time. Because I've seen it in different people's lives. When you see someone who has been spiritually asleep awakened, especially after a longer period of time, those are awesome things. There is no doubt you see God in it, you see what's happening, and for the mind to be opened up to those things, one thing after another, we're going to get to experience that. Some of you who have lived through periods of time have never been in that period of time are going to experience that in others. It's an exciting thing to see a mind awakened, whether it be fifteen, twenty, thirty, whatever it is, and all of a sudden, it's awake and it sees everything and it's changing and is right where you are, and in many cases are going to pass you up quickly.

You think, how is that possible? Well, it is because some of them have had many, many, many more years of training and molding and fashioning and they just fell asleep. Then they're awakened they still are who they were then but now they have so much more to add to it and they can see it in ways that you have learned but you haven't experienced. They will have experienced it. Powerful. Awesome. We're all one family and God puts us in that family where He chooses us to be in that family. What an awesome thing to understand. Give thanks to God.

So he says, **Lift if your prayer for the remnant that's left.** I think of, first of all, us. Do we truly pray for one another? Do we truly have one another's interests at heart, remembering trials and difficulties—we all have different things in different regions—and that we pray for each other

because you get to know people well and you have a right mind toward them because you want to see everyone succeed. You want to see everyone come through whatever is there, to make the right choices, and so forth, and to learn to love each other more. As well, that body that's out there that's asleep.

So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah. And Isaiah said to them, Thus you shall say to your master, Thus says the Eternal, Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard...

Learned a lot over time that there are things that God has given to different ones, and just like to Isaiah, there are things that happen at times instantaneously where God just puts it in the mind, as I am truly convicted that He did to Isaiah in this case, that are just there. It's not a matter of God had some kind of private conversation, "Well, these individuals are going to come to you and this is what you're to say to them and blah, blah, blah..." Not as time went along.

Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard, and which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Surely, I will send a spirit upon him... Powerful that He let Isaiah see this, to know this. A spirit. What does that mean? It's a demonic spirit. That's what it's talking about, an evil spirit. ...and he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land. So God's going to allow something to get stirred up here, going to be a spirit world involved in this, and then it's going to cause him to do something as a result of all this. So, God's in control. Don't worry, God's going to take care of this because it's about Him and it's about your relationship with Me. That's what God is telling them.

Surely, I will send a spirit upon him, and he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land. And I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land. "Don't worry, I've got this." Awesome for God Almighty to say that. "Don't worry, I've got it. I'll take care of it. This is what's going to happen to him."

Then the Rab-shakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah. So again, he'd come down there, now he had gone back up to look for him, and it says, **For he, Rab-shakeh, heard that he had departed from Lachish.** So he wasn't laying siege against Lachish, he was now up to Libnah working against it. **As the king heard concerning Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, Look, he has come out to make war with you. So he again sent messengers to Hezekiah...** So again, it's talking about a story. Here are some of the things taking place. It's already starting to happen. Here is another people and hearing that they are going to come out and make war against you as well, at this particular time.

He says here, **So he again sent messengers to Hezekiah saying, Thus you shall speak to Hezekiah, king of Judah, saying...** So now it's in a different mode. It's almost to a panic mode, in one respect, because he still wants them to surrender. He wants them to give in so he can take them back to Assyria, but things are starting to happen a little faster around him now, around Sennacherib. So here he's out here fighting in a different area. He's starting to hear some of these things. He's starting to get a little more concerned, leading his army and so forth, and so he sends them back down to Jerusalem again to Hezekiah.

So he sent messengers again to Hezekiah saying (verse 10), Thus you shall speak to Hezekiah, king of Judah, saying, Do not let your God in whom you trust, deceive you saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Look, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by utterly destroying them, and shall you be delivered? So again, it's this one last attempt here to try to get at them. Have the gods of the nations delivered those whom my fathers have destroyed; Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the people of Eden who were there in Thelasar?

And then finally in verse 13 it says, Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivah? And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it. And Hezekiah went up to the house of the Eternal, and spread it before the Eternal. Then Hezekiah prayed before the Eternal, and said, O Eternal God of Israel, the one who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone... Now, he was already strengthened and resolved because of what had happened earlier and because of repentance and because of what he was seeing, of what was said the first time around and what Isaiah had told him. Now he's following through with what he should have followed through with, indeed, and that is to take this before God immediately and show God and talk to God about it.

It's not that God doesn't know it already. It's just that he is discussing it with God and seeking to have a right mind and right thinking toward all this and making his plea. Which, we all pray about different things; though God knows it, God wants to hear it from us. Think, "Well, God already knows that." Pray about it! Talk to God about it. God wants a personal relationship with each and every one of us. Spread it out before God, whatever it is. Yes, God knows what you're going through. Yes, He knows every thinking in your mind. But He wants to hear it from you what you think about it all and how you're responding to it. It's got to be from you, from inside of you to let it out, to talk to Him about it. That's a powerful thing if we understand it.

You are God. You know, sometimes just by stating those things to God it strengthens us. Being reminded of those things, it's a spiritual thing. That's sometimes hard to grasp. You have to follow through physically to experience that which is spiritual.

You are God. You alone of all the kingdoms of the earth; You have made heaven and earth. That's not news to God but He wants to hear it from you from time to time. He wants to know what's in your mind, what do you think? Because it's not there until it comes out, until you've said it. Okay? You've got to express it.

Incline Your ear, Oh, Eternal, and hear. Open, your eyes, Eternal and see, and hear the words of Sennacherib, who was sent to reproach the living God. Truly, Eternal, the kings of Assyria have laid waste to the nations and their lands, and have cast their gods into the fire, for they are... Even here it brings out a human weakness, because still he's not gone. He's still up there fighting. He's still up there fighting and now he's sent messengers down. He doesn't intend to leave so there is still that what if in the mind. Again, motive, reason at times just to continue to go before God.

You don't quit going before God. There are certain things that may last a long time in your life but you don't quit going before God. You keep going before God expressing your heart, your mind, your desire toward God for intervention and to have a right mind in your thinking. He's repeating things about God that should be obvious in our minds, but again, they need to be said.

Truly, Eternal, the king of Assyria has laid waste to the nations and their lands, and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods but the work of men's hands, wood and stone, therefore, they destroyed them. Now, therefore, Eternal our God, I pray, save us from his hand... "That's what we want to be, saved. He's not out of here yet." ...**that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you are the Eternal God, You alone.** Powerful. There are times we just have to remind ourselves and pray about that before God. Say it. Speak it. How often do you thank God for being the Creator? For making you? For giving you everything you're able to experience in the world around you day by day? For the life you're able to breathe? That you're able to have life? We tend to take it for granted as human beings, but to thank God that He's given us that? It reminds us God is Creator.

You know, that's one of the reasons for the seventh day Sabbath. Every week we're to think about, or to at least have it in front of us - whether we think about it or not is another matter - God is Creator. In the seventh day He rested. He wants us to remember He put us here. He gives us everything we have! Incredible!

I didn't know I was rattling on so long here. I went way past what I intended to. We're getting ready to stop here so I'll read a few more verses.

Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus says the Eternal God of Israel, Because you have prayed to me against Sennacherib, king of Assyria, I have heard. Now, what does He mean? That He couldn't hear it? No, it's, "I've heard you and what is your heart, your desire." If he hadn't expressed this then He may not have intervened in the same way or in the same timing or given him the kind of strength and help he was desiring and wanting. There was more, in that respect, that Hezekiah was desiring.

Just like we do when we pray, we want to be strengthened. We want to have that resolve, that strength of mind and attitude toward God that He is God, that we have been called to His purpose, by His design, unique and special in every way. You do that through prayer. When you're up against a battle you take that before God because you want God's help and intervention in knowing how to deal with various situations or people or whatever it might be. If you don't ask for that why should God hear you? Why should God intervene then for you? We want Him to hear, but if you do then you want Him to intervene in your life and help you in your battles, but you've got to express that to Him with all your heart, reminding yourself and telling Him, "You alone are God Almighty, You alone have called me, You alone have given me of Your holy spirit. You have called me for a purpose and I choose you and I have from baptism. You know that." You keep fighting.

He says, **Because you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib, king of Assyria, I have heard. This is the word which the Eternal has spoken concerning him: The virgin, the daughter of Zion...** I'm just going to tell you, some of this is more than Hezekiah right now. This is prophetic, okay? This has gone above and beyond. He's giving something here as a matter of encouragement to Hezekiah but it's prophetic from Isaiah that God gave to him.

The virgin, the daughter of Zion... Who is that? ...has despised you, and laughed you to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem has shaken her head behind your back. Whom have you reproached and blasphemed? Now, in part this is telling Hezekiah this is what has been said against God, this is what has been done against God, this is what has been done against you... but there is more that's involved here that will come out with the whole story. **Against whom have you raised your voice, and lifted your eyes on high, against the Holy One of Israel.**

So we're going to stop there and come back to the story flow, because all this fits together later on here in what Isaiah has to say and why God gave him this to say. It actually goes into another period of time. It's not just for Hezekiah's time. So, food for thought. We'll come back to it two weeks from now.