

1 AND 2 CHRONICLES: GAINING DIRECTION OUT OF THE AIMLESSNESS OF APOSTASY
Part V: Gaining Direction From God's Work In The Rest Of Judah's Davidic Dynasty, 2 Chronicles 13-36
N. Heeding Scripture Fully Amid Humanly Overwhelming Opposition
(2 Chronicles 32:1-23)

I. Introduction

- A. Obeying God under trial is sometimes easier than heeding Him in peaceful times, for then we must cleave to Him to aid us. However, if the trial becomes a humanly overwhelming one or if we face a humanly overwhelming foe, the temptation can arise to abandon all faith for the sake of instant self-preservation!
- B. Judah's king Hezekiah faced a grave threat from a humanly overwhelming foe in Assyria's Sennacherib, and Hezekiah had to learn to trust in the Lord *completely* at such a time for blessing (as follows):

II. Heeding Scripture Fully Amid Humanly Overwhelming Opposition, 2 Chronicles 32:1-23.

- A. We are told from the companion passage of 2 Kings 18:9-16 that, in the wake of the fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel to Assyria in divine judgment for Israel's apostasy, when Assyria's king Sennacherib moved against Judah to conquer it, good king Hezekiah vacillated in his faith in God, and paid a heavy tribute to Sennacherib from God's temple treasures for the purpose of self-preservation.
- B. Though we can understand why Hezekiah would fear Sennacherib, his tribute to the Assyrian king was an unbiblical act, for Deuteronomy 17:16 implied Judah's kings were to rely on God for help, Deut. 28:1, 10.
- C. Accordingly, 2 Chronicles 32:1-23 reveals how Hezekiah was allowed of God to face a great, direct threat from Sennacherib and his forces, impressing him to cleave fully to the Lord to find great deliverance:
 - 1. The author of 2 Chronicles noted Hezekiah faced the invading threat of the great Assyrian army after his extensive acts of faithfulness to reform Judah for the Lord, 2 Chronicles 32:1 NIV, ESV.
 - 2. As we noted, there is an explanation for this from 2 Kings 18:9-16: God was pleased with Hezekiah's reforms, but his consequent vacillation of trust in the Lord as he tried in his own strength to placate Assyria would not have pleased the Lord, 2 Kings 18:16. God thus let Sennacherib's forces brazenly confront Hezekiah to force him to make a firm decision to trust God to handle his overwhelming foe! Thus, the Assyrian king came, and Hezekiah initially did all in his human power to build up his city and protect his water resources to discourage the Assyrian army from attacking him, 2 Chron. 32:2-5.
 - 3. Hezekiah then [inconsistently] mustered his army to trust in the Lord, for in the spirit realm, God had more power in His army to help Judah than the Assyrians had with them, 2 Chronicles 32:6-8a.
 - 4. Judah's army heeded Hezekiah's word, and rested upon it, 2 Chronicles 32:8b.
 - 5. Sennacherib apparently heard about this rally of Hezekiah's troops, and so had his officials confront Hezekiah and his men at their city wall, trying to demoralize them so he could defeat them, 32:9-10.
 - 6. In the process, Sennacherib's officials blasphemously defamed Judah's God, 2 Chronicles 32:11-19:
 - a. Sennacherib's officials spoke loudly in the Jewish tongue (versus Aramaic) in order to demoralize the Hebrews who heard him from following Hezekiah's advice to trust in God, 2 Chron. 32:16, 18.
 - b. They claimed that Hezekiah's call for them to trust in the Lord was false, for Hezekiah had destroyed God's "high places", 2 Chronicles 32:11-12. In reality, Judah had wrongly used the high places instead of worshiping God only in at temple, cf. 2 Chronicles 31:1; Deuteronomy 12:2-5.
 - c. Sennacherib's officials then blasphemously declared his message that the gods of other nations he defeated had not helped them, so neither could Judah's God deliver them from him, 32:13-17.
 - 7. Pressured by this threat, Hezekiah with Isaiah the prophet cried out to God for help (2 Chron. 32:19), and God judged Sennacherib in contrast to His blessing of Hezekiah: (a) God's Angel slew the Assyrian army (2 Chronicles 32:21a), and (b) Sennacherib returned in shame to his land where his sons killed him in the temple of his god where he was unable to stay alive by the power of his own god in recompense for his blasphemy against Judah's true God, 32:21b, 14. (b) In contrast to Sennacherib's boast of his conquest of the nations at 2 Chronicles 32:15, God gave Hezekiah lasting respect before the other nations who sent him gifts in his honor, 2 Chronicles 32:22-23.

Lesson: For finally trusting in the Lord to the FULL in the face of a feared foe versus vacillating in faith, God gave Hezekiah great deliverance and honor at the expense of that formerly feared foe.

Application: May we face even humanly overwhelming trials or foes by FULLY trusting God's Word.