

II KINGS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to II Kings chapter 17 as we continue our study through the Word of God. As we have seen in our studies, the Northern Kingdom of Israel has been spiraling downward out of control. They moved farther and farther away from God and I don't think when it began they would have imagined it would have gone this far.

When the kingdom was divided into the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, Jeroboam was the first king in the north and he had the choice to make in what he was going to do and he decided to do what he thought was right instead of what the Lord wanted. He set up these two golden calves, one in Dan in the north and one in Bethel in the south to worship the Lord by. It was not, at least in his mind wrong. They were worshipping the Lord but they were doing so in a way that God had instructed them not to and this little compromise kept growing until they had completely turned away from the Lord. I wonder how many churches are doing that very thing, never thinking it will lead them away from the Lord and yet, when you go against God's Word, that is exactly where it will lead!

And as you have seen in our studies of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, there has not been one good king. Yes, some were better than others but none had the heart like David, none truly sought after God and thus, judgment was coming for the nation. Out of the 19 kings that reigned in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, 7 of them were assassinated! For just over two centuries the Northern Kingdom of Israel was in existence, from 931 to 721 BC.

And tonight the judgment of God is at the door; the Assyrians will come upon them and bring the Northern Kingdom of Israel into captivity for their idolatry. With that said, let's begin reading in II Kings chapter 17, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

II KINGS 17

VERSES 1-2

1. Now this is interesting because it says that Hoshea was not as bad as the other kings in the Northern Kingdom of Israel but keep in mind that he led a conspiracy against Pekah and killed him, and that is what placed him on the throne in Israel in the first place.

(II Kings 15:30). That just tells me things were so bad that the Lord did not think his actions, as compared to the other kings in Israel was that bad, but it was compared to the standard of God!

VERSES 3-4

1. Shalmanesar succeeded Tiglath-Pileser as the king of Assyria and he is putting pressure on Israel to either pay tribute money to him or be invaded by him. And for a time, Hoshea pays this tribute money to Shalmanesar but then Hoshea begins to revolt. And the reason he does this is that he made an alliance with the Egyptians to help him fight off these Assyrians if they attack the Northern Kingdom. But both these kingdoms were no match for the Assyrians and Hoshea is put in prison and as we will see, they will come upon the Northern Kingdom with a fury!

2. Keep in mind that Egypt in the Scriptures is a type of the world and where does Hoshea go for help, to the world, to Egypt instead of the Lord! And think about this, they were delivered from the world, from Egypt some 724 years earlier, around 1446 BC and now they make an alliance with them! And guess what, it does not work. What a lesson for us. We can look at what Israel did and see how foolish they were, but how often do we make alliances with the world instead of bringing it to the Lord? Remember what John said in I John 2:15-17, **“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”** That is the perspective we are to have no matter what we are going through. Don’t run to the world for help, run to the Lord!

3. One more point before we move on. When it says that **“he had sent messengers to So, king of Egypt”** it is probably referring to a location, “So” and not a king and many feel it is a reference to Sais, which was at that time the capital of Egypt. And thus, he sent messengers to the capital of Egypt and to the king, that is how it should read.

VERSES 5-6

1. For three years the Assyrians came against Samaria and finally they broke through the wall and took Israel captive! And the Assyrians would leave the weak behind but took the strong, the educated back with them to be assimilated with their people so they could not rebel. And they were a brutal people. According to Amos 4:1-3 we are told, **“Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who are on the mountain of Samaria, Who oppress the poor, Who crush the needy, Who say to your husbands, ‘Bring wine, let us drink!’ The Lord God has sworn by His holiness: ‘Behold, the days shall come upon you When He will take you away with fishhooks, And your posterity with fishhooks. You will go out through broken walls, Each one straight ahead of her, And you will be cast into Harmon [palace],’ Says the Lord.”**

In other words, the Northern Kingdom thought they were fat cats or cows I guess and God said that He would bring them down because of their wickedness. And the Assyrians did just that. They would line them up and put fishhooks in their jaws and carry them away captive! And, as I have said, the Assyrians were exceedingly cruel people. They would cut off their captives ears, noses, gouge out their eyes. They would put hooks in their captive’s noses and lead them back to Assyria that way. And Nineveh was no different. In fact it was called the “sanctuary of savagery.”

Listen to what one Assyrian king did to his defeated foes and I think you will understand why Jonah had such a hard time going to Nineveh to preach to them about repentance before God's judgment came and wiped them out, for Jonah wanted them destroyed! This is what one of their kings did: "Three thousand captives I burned with fire . . . Their corpses I formed into pillars . . . Their governor I flayed, his skin I spread upon the wall of the city . . . From some I cut off their hands and fingers and their noses . . . Of many I put out their eyes . . . I formed a pillar . . . Of heads against the city gate, and 700 men I impaled on stakes." Not a nice people to say the least!

And besides all that physical cruelty, they would also break the spirits of those they captured. They would take those they captured and place them in other cities, some here and others there, never leaving enough to cause a revolt. Thus, they would be in cities that were foreign to them. They could not speak the language. They did not know the customs. It would be a struggle just to survive, let alone cause a revolt.

2. Now it seems that Sargon II, the brother and the successor of Shalmaneser completed this siege of Samaria for we are told of this man Sargon II, "The men of Samaria with their king were hostile to me and consorted together not to carry out their vassal obligations and bring tribute to me, so they fought me . . . I clashed with them and took as booty 27,280 people with their chariots and their gods in whom they trusted. I incorporated 200 chariots into my army. The rest of the people I made to dwell within Assyria. I restored the city of Samaria and made it greater than before." (*Inscribed Prisms of Sargon II from Nimrud*, cited in Wiseman).

VERSES 7-8

1. Now God gives to us a little history lesson, showing us why the Northern Kingdom of Israel went into captivity and it is a good lesson for us to learn from. You see, it was not that the Assyrian nation was stronger, it was that they turned from the Lord and served other gods who could not help them, never could and never will be able to because there is only one true God! And God warned them not to follow after these nations that were in Canaan before them because they were evil, even practicing human sacrifice! But they did not listen and they followed after these pagan practices and the Lord is judging them for their actions. They followed after the desires of their own hearts instead of the Lord!

VERSES 9-12

1. Look at how their sin, their rebellion against God clouded their judgment so much that they thought they could do these things and God would never know, they did them secretly! Really, because we are told in Psalm 33:13-15, **“The Lord looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men. From the place of His dwelling He looks On all the inhabitants of the earth; He fashions their hearts individually; He considers all their works.”** And in Hebrews 4:12-13, **“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”** God sees everything, even what is in your heart!

2. One more point before we move on. Here in II Kings 17:11 we are told, **“as the nations had done whom the LORD had carried away before them.”** In other words, if they would just look at their own history and how the Canaanites were judged for their actions it might have caused them not to go down this path, but they refused to listen, they refused to see they were wrong and God is judging them as He did the Canaanites!

VERSES 13-15

1. I am sorry, but just like back then, people can't say, "I didn't know!" You see, God sent prophets to warn them just as He sends people today to warn those in this world that judgment is coming. They can listen and turn to Him or they can reject what the people are saying and be judged by Him. But make no mistake about it, judgment is coming whether they believe it or not! But before God sends His judgment, He sends them the warning! Remember what the Lord said in Ezekiel chapter 18, **“Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?’ says the Lord God, ‘and not that he should turn from his ways and live? . . . Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies,’ says the Lord God. ‘Therefore turn and live!’”** Ezekiel 18:23, 31-32. That is the heart of God, to see people live but if they refuse to turn, it is because they are stiff-necked and have refused the Lord's love and compassion for them, they did not heed the warning!

2. The phrase, **“they followed idols, became idolaters”** can be translated, “and they followed vanity, and became vain” as the NASB translates it. Or, “they followed emptiness, and became empty.” The NIV translates it like this, “They followed worthless idols and themselves became worthless.” In fact, Russell Dilday makes this point regarding this verse, “The original is more accurate at this point: ‘They worshipped emptiness and became empty.’ The word here is hebel meaning ‘air,’ ‘delusion,’ or ‘vanity.’ The idea is that they became like the gods they worshipped. They bowed down to nothingness and became nothing.”

You see, they went after empty things, and you will never be filled when you try to fill yourself apart from God. Everything else is empty. The Psalmist said in Psalm 115 that we become like the god we worship. If we form god with our hands, molding him and shaping him, we then will become like that god we have formed. And many of the pagan gods, if not all, were heavy into sexual orgies and all kinds of wickedness. Thus, that is how we will become. On the other hand, if we follow after a Holy and Righteous God, following after not what we have created, but the One who has created us, then we will become like Him in our actions.

VERSES 16-23

1. Notice what the Lord is saying here regarding the Northern Kingdom. They made themselves molded images and two calves, speaking of the idolatry that their first king, Jeroboam introduced into the nation. They sacrificed their sons and daughters to the god Molech, burning them alive in the heated outstretched arms of this idol. They practiced witchcraft and soothsaying. And thus, the Lord is judging them for their sin!

2. This leaves us with a great question that many people are confused about today. That is “Are the 10 tribes of Israel really lost?” No they are not! Yes many claim to be the lost tribes of Israel, but they are not. Remember during the time of Baasha, king of Israel, he tried to stop his people from heading down to the Southern Kingdom. Many were heading southward because of the spiritual revival that was taken place under the reign of king Asa. And many ended up staying down in the Southern Kingdom. (I Kings 15:16-22). Also, there were some left in the land after the Assyrians attacked, not all were carried away. And even during the time of Jesus the people were aware of what tribe they were from. Remember the woman Anna, a prophetess, who was from the tribe of Asher, a Northern Tribe. (Luke 2:36). James even addresses all 12 tribes in James 1:1, when he says, **“James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings.”** He did not write to the two tribes or one tribe, but all 12 because they are not lost!

And yes, today we are not sure what tribe the Jews are from for those records were destroyed in 70 AD when Titus and the Roman army destroyed the Temple and the city of Jerusalem. Now only God knows and during the tribulation period He will seal 12,000 witnesses for Him from each tribe. If you don’t believe me, check out Revelation 7:5-8, for in those verses God names each tribe, not symbolically, as some would have you think! And I do realize that some believe that they migrated to Britain and are thus, British-Israelites, but that is foolish and wrong! So when someone tells you they are from one of the lost tribes of Israel, just know they may be lost, but they are not of Israel!

VERSES 24-26

1. As I said, not all of Israel was removed from the land, for some did remain. And the Assyrians placed other people to live in Samaria, and thus Israel intermarried with them. Out of all this came the Samaritans. They were nothing more than a mixture of Israelites and various other near eastern people. That is why the Jews hated them so much; they were half-breeds in their minds. In fact, if the Jews wanted to go up to Galilee, they refused to go through Samaria; they did not want their feet even to touch the ground of that city. So they would circle around the city to get to Galilee. Remember when Jesus met the woman of Samaria by the well; she could not understand what he was doing there. In John 4:9 we read, **“Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, ‘How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?’ For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.”**

2. Like it or not, this is still God's land and thus, the people now living in Samaria did not know the Lord, and their actions have caused the Lord to bring judgment upon them. God sends lions in to kill them. Thus, they make a plea to the king of Assyria to send someone to teach them the ways of this God to stop this judgment. Spurgeon makes these interesting remarks regarding this. He wrote, "He did send lions among them, and it was these lions that converted them. Their teeth and fangs and fiery eyes and the thunders of their roars converted them. They must have a god to deliver them: they could not bear the lions, therefore they must fear the Lord who could send lions, and who perhaps would cease to send them. Now, dear friends, always be somewhat diffident [insecure] of your own conversion if you can trace it only and solely to motives of terror." That is what was going on here with these people in the land of Israel!

VERSES 27-33

1. Now here is an opportunity for this priest to show these pagan people the true and living God, but this priest that the king sent was probably just as bad as the people he was going to instruct. Yes he was a Jew, but he was also an idolater. And what does he teach them? He teaches them the rituals of a relationship with God but no love for God. He teaches them of the Lord but does not want to offend them by telling them they need to stop worshiping these other gods, sacrificing to them. Why? Because he was probably worshiping these other gods himself! I guess he was seeker-friendly!

And think about this. These pagan people who were placed there by the Assyrians from other nations were polytheists, and thus, they did not hesitate to add another god to the many gods they were already serving and brought with them.

And the tragedy that we see here is going on today. We have not learned the lesson. What is that tragedy? Listen carefully, “**they feared the Lord, yet served their own gods.**” Many believe in God’s judgments, they believe in hell, and fear God in that respect. They thus try to appease God by doing all kinds of rituals, which God is not interested in. He wants your heart. He wants you to love Him and out of that love, obey Him. The judgment of God will not be appeased by the work of our hands, but as we apply the cross to our life. It is the blood of Christ that causes God’s judgment to pass from our lives. And think about this. When you truly come to Christ, when you receive the true and living God into your life, you will not worship these other gods because this new life in Christ will affect the way you live, or at least it should!

F. B. Meyer hits this hard as he wrote, “Are you sure this is not a true description of your own position? You pay an outward deference to God by attending his house, and acknowledging his day, whilst you are really prostrating yourself before other shrines.” And listen carefully to what Spurgeon wrote, “Is not worldly piety, or pious worldliness, the current religion of England? They live among godly people, and God chastens them, and they therefore fear him, but not enough to give their hearts to him. They seek out a trimming teacher who is not too precise and plain-spoken, and they settle down comfortably to a mongrel faith, half truth, half error, and a mongrel worship half dead form, and half orthodoxy.”

It truly all boils down to this, as Spurgeon wrote, “Let me be right, and let there be no mistake about it; but do not let me try to be both right and wrong, washed and filthy, white and black, a child of God and a child of Satan.” God is not looking for a half-hearted relationship.

It is as Joshua told the children of Israel before he died in Joshua 24:14-24,

“Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord! And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.’ So the people answered and said: ‘Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods; for the Lord our God is He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way that we went and among all the people through whom we passed. And the Lord drove out from before us all the people, including the Amorites who dwelt in the land. We also will serve the Lord, for He is our God.’ But Joshua said to the people, ‘You cannot serve the Lord, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you, after He has done you good.’ And the people said to Joshua, ‘No, but we will serve the Lord!’ So Joshua said to the people, ‘You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord for yourselves, to serve Him.’ And they said, ‘We are witnesses!’ ‘Now therefore,’ he said, ‘put away the foreign gods which are among you, and incline your heart to the Lord God of Israel.’ And the people said to Joshua, ‘The Lord our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey!’” Who are you going to serve? May it be the *LORD!*

VERSES 34-41

1. From verse 34 through verse 40 I believe the Lord is speaking of the Jews that remained in the land, they did not follow after the Lord, they did not fear the Lord like they should have been doing. Then, in verse 41 I believe it is speaking of the foreign nations that the Assyrians placed in the Northern Kingdom and they did fear the Lord, but they did so as they feared their other gods that they worshiped! It is not a pretty picture at all and yet, it did not have to be that way for in verse 39 we are told, **“But the LORD your God you shall fear; and He will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies.”** You see, they had nothing to fear if they returned to the Lord, but they didn’t and thus, the captivity! We see here the death of a nation and it did not have to be that way.

2. Now, as we move into chapter 18 of II Kings we are going to be focusing on the Southern Kingdom of Judah through the rest of the book. And again, there will be some good kings and then some bad leading to their captivity by the hands of the Babylonians!

II KINGS 18**VERSES 1-2**

1. Out of all the kings that reigned in the divided kingdom, Hezekiah was probably one of the best. He brought spiritual revival back into the land. He tore down the high places. He was trying to bring true reform to a nation that was in need of reform. He wanted to go all out and not just bring a partial reform to the land, and thus, he removed the high places, something the other kings did not do. And Hezekiah became king prior to the Northern Kingdom going into captivity, at the very end of the Northern Kingdom and this was a powerful lesson for Hezekiah that God means what He says and says what He means and thus, we must listen!

VERSES 3-6

1. Not only did Hezekiah take down the high places but he broke in pieces this bronze serpent that Moses had made during their wilderness wanderings! Now this is interesting to me. That brass serpent that was held up in the wilderness by Moses some 800 years earlier is now being worshipped. It becomes an idol to them. Jesus spoke of this serpent on a pole in John 3:14-15 when He said, **“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”**

Now what was this all about? Brass spoke of judgment and the serpent of sin. Thus, that pole that Moses lifted up in the wilderness was symbolic of Christ. It was a symbol that their sin had been judged and all they had to do was look at that provision that God had given to them, and they would be healed. In the wilderness they were healed physically from the poisonous snake bite, and now we are healed spiritually from our sin through Christ. All we have to do is accept that provision that God has provided for us.

But here is the problem. Now they were worshipping that serpent on a pole which tells me that they had lost the consciousness of God and the presence of God. Thus, they looked at this idol to remind them of God. And Hezekiah breaks it into pieces and tells them that this is not God but a thing of brass, *NEHUSHTAN!*

“By the way, if you go to St. Ambrose Cathedral in Milan, Italy, you will see a brass serpent on display. It is said that in 941 A.D. an envoy from Constantinople brought the pieces of the brass serpent as a gift to the Emperor. It was reassembled and set on a column in the nave [central approach to the high altar, the main body of the church].” Not only that, but there is a legend that tells us, on the Day of the Judgment, the snake will take life, and will announce the end of the time. Then it will slither back to the Jehoshaphat valley where Moses once forged it, leading the whole Humankind to its final judgment. And do you know what I say to that? **NEHUSHTAN!** Why worship an object, a thing when you can worship the true and living God! Why believe fables when you have the Words of God from the lips of God!

VERSES 7-8

1. Notice who and not what Hezekiah clung to! It was not his military strength, not his wealth, not his brains, not anything but the Lord and because of that he prospered. It is exactly what David said to his son Solomon as Solomon became king, **“Now the days of David drew near that he should die, and he charged Solomon his son, saying: ‘I go the way of all the earth; be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man. And keep the charge of the Lord your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn; that the Lord may fulfill His word which He spoke concerning me, saying, ‘If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul,’ He said, ‘you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.’”**” I Kings 2:1-4.

Now we see that come to pass in the life of Hezekiah as he is prospering in the Lord. The Assyrians were a mighty power and yet, no match for the Lord. Even that perennial enemy, the Philistines had no power over the Southern Kingdom of Judah because they walked in the ways of the Lord! What a great lesson for us! If you want victory in your life, in your Christian walk, cling to the **LORD!**

VERSES 9-12

1. The problem for the Northern Kingdom of Israel and for people today is that they refuse to hear and obey the Words of God and thus, judgment comes upon them! They were warned, they just refused to listen and obey and the judgment was severe but God’s desire is that people would turn to Him and not be judged!

VERSES 13-16

1. Approximately five years after the fall of the Northern Kingdom by the Assyrians, the Assyrians flex their muscle and start invading the Southern Kingdom of Judah. They only needed to capture Jerusalem to completely conquer Judah! And we have historical evidence of the city of Lachish being invaded by the Assyrians during this time. Russell Dilday tells us, “An interesting wall relief taken from the excavation of Sennacherib’s royal palace in Nineveh is preserved in the British Museum. It portrays the Assyrian king on a portable throne in his military camp outside Lachish. Prisoners of war are marching by on foot, and all the booty from the city is being displayed on ox-wagons.” Also, they have discovered a pit where the remains of 1,500 casualties of Sennacherib’s attack were buried!

2. Now what happened to Hezekiah here? What we see here is what can happen even to godly men, their faith can buckle under pressure. He tells the king of Assyria that he has done wrong and wants to pay that tribute tax to him and he does so by stripping the house of God! And what we are going to see is that this is not going to be enough money, but why? Because, whenever you give in to the enemy, whenever you compromise your faith, it will never be enough, the enemy will want more, he will always want more!

VERSES 17-20

1. Besides sending a large army to Jerusalem, Sennacherib sends his representatives to meet with Hezekiah. These were not the names of these men, but their titles. The Tartan was the commander and chief. The Rabsaris was the chief officer. And the Rabshakeh was the chief of staff. Their mission was to get Hezekiah to surrender and if he refused, then they would destroy the city and take the people captive. Of course it is always easier to try and talk things out, for it cost you no men if they agreed to the surrender. And if they do agree, then you have just captured the city without waging war upon it. And remember, it was not just these three guys standing at the wall of the city, behind them stood the Assyrian army, a sort of incentive to surrender. And what the Rabshakeh is going to do is try to demoralize the people by showing them the power of the Assyrians and their weakness. Let's read on and see what he has to say to them. And keep in mind that Hezekiah does not go out to hear the Rabshakeh, he sends his men to listen and report back to him.

VERSES 21-25

1. Notice the attack by this man. He starts out by saying, "Do you really think Egypt will be able to help you? They are like a broken reed, able to support no one." This illustration of a broken reed was well known in those days. Along the Nile River stood many reeds that looked very strong and very sturdy until you tried to lean on them, and then they would break. So Egypt won't be able to help you!

The next thing he does is say, “Look, if your strength is in the Lord, why is your leader, Hezekiah tearing down the high places?” They want the people to turn against their king. You see, he thought these false places of worship were true places of worship, he did not know the God of Israel and that what Hezekiah was doing was right. And keep in mind that before the Assyrians would attack a city they would send in spies who would report on the cities weakness. It seems they knew what was happening in Jerusalem but had no clue to the God they served. Again, they thought the king was wiping out the things of God but he was being obedient to the Word of God by destroying the high places as I have said.

Next, he starts to play mind games with Judah, trying to scare them. It is kind of like the trash talking they do in basketball, in which you try to intimidate your opponent and weaken them. And here the Rabshakeh tells them, “Just pay the tribute money and if you do we will give you 2,000 horses, but that will do you no good, for you can’t even put enough riders on them. You are pitiful. Just give in.”

And lastly he makes this bold statement. He tells them that the Lord has sent him to destroy them. Again, playing mind games to try and weaken your enemy before the battle even begins. He wants them to surrender!

2. The enemy of our souls does the same thing. He tries to weaken us, discourage us, get us to look at our failures and give up. What can we do? We can draw near to God and He will draw near to us because He hasn’t moved, maybe we did! Don’t let him mess you up but cling to the Word of God and believe what the Lord is saying to you!

VERSES 26-27

1. By this time a crowd was gathering on the wall and hearing all that was going on. And the representatives of Judah were concerned that the people would become discouraged by hearing these threatening words. So they tell the Rabshakeh to speak in the Aramaic language and not in Hebrew. Do you think this guy will really oblige to their wishes? Of course he won't. He yells out to the people, "Hey, these words are not for you alone, but for all who are in the city. They too will have to eat human waste to survive if you refuse to surrender to the king of Assyria." He is not going to speak to them in Aramaic, but Hebrew so all would hear what he had to say! Again, the trash talking to intimidate the people with the hope they will turn against their king or force him to surrender!

VERSES 28-35

1. Like I have said, he is trying to get the people to distrust their king and trust the king of Assyria! He gives them an incentive saying, "If you surrender now we will take good care of you, you will have food and drink, it will be nice!" Keep in mind these were the Assyrians and they were brutal people, we saw what they did with their captives and it wasn't pretty. And then he tells them, "No other gods of these other nations were able to stand against the king of Assyria, not even the God of Samaria, not even the God of Israel could stand against him!" Pretty bold words and the only reason he could defeat the Northern Kingdom was because God was using him to bring judgment upon them!

VERSES 36-37

1. They were in trouble; their backs were up against the wall. At this time 185,000 Assyrians had surrounded the city and were ready to carry out the threats of these three representatives. The people were silent as the king instructed them to be. They did not try to argue with the Rabshakeh or throw out Scripture verses, they just kept silent. Of this F. B. Meyer wrote, “Silence is our best reply to the allegations and taunts of our foes. Be still, O persecuted soul! Hand over thy cause to God. It is useless to argue, even in many cases to give explanations. Be still, and commit thy cause to God.” What a great lesson because I know for myself, when I speak without bringing it before the Lord it is many times just the works of the flesh that comes forth and it is not pretty or helpful.

And thus, Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah present themselves before the king with their clothes torn, a sign of mourning. Yes, things looked bad but it is as Paul said in II Corinthians 4:8-9, **“We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed — always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.”** May we not forget that!

What will happen to the Southern Kingdom? Will Hezekiah give in like he did before and surrender to the Assyrians? We will find out next week, so stay tune!