

1. Today we came to the sad end of the Northern Kingdom, which had turned from God under their first king Jeroboam and had never come back to Lord.

2. The specific sins were idolatry, practices associated with heathen religions, like passing their children through the fire, divination, and sexual immorality.

3. The Assyrian records of this time period, which archaeologists have unearthed in the ruins of Nineveh, agree exactly with the Biblical account we read today.

4. Israel, over a 200-year period that included 9 dynasties and 19 kings, refused to do what was right in God's eyes and finally, "he cut them off".

5. The people the Assyrians put in Israel after they removed the Jews to Assyria were from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath and Sepharvaim; they mixed with the few Jews that were left, combined their pagan religions with Judaism, and these people are the ones we know as the "Samaritans" of the New Testament.

6. Israel fell; Judah still remained and wicked Ahaz was followed by his son, a surprisingly good king, named Hezekiah.

7. Hezekiah's #1 priority when he took the throne was religious reform.

8. Something that is both urgent AND important is a top-priority item.

9. The worship of God can only truly be done in his manner and according to the principles God Himself has laid down... "in the way prescribed by David and Gad... and Nathan the prophet."

10. Hezekiah's reign was governed by 2 principles from the outset: the worship of God took precedence and that was done in the manner prescribed by the Lord.

11. The Levites and the priests were called upon to purify themselves. "It was one thing to be a priest or Levite, but quite another thing to be fit, at any given time, to act as such."

1. There was a full-scale revival of true religion under Hezekiah.

2. True revival is our society's great need today.

3. Conditions which led to this revival:

There was a good and godly king leading the people.

The people were willing to follow him.

They had noted God's judgment on Israel.

4. Was it a revival? - Here are the facts concerning this festival (all marks of revival):

There was a sovereign moving of God among His people.

Large numbers responded.

People humbled themselves before God.

There was confession of sin.

There was an atmosphere of holy joy.

The festival ended and the "service" went on for another 7 days.

They went out and changed their society.

There was unprecedented giving...you cannot out-give God!

5. Hezekiah's invitation to the nation of Israel to join them in the festival in Judah was scorned and ignored, for the most part. Even after the deportations had begun, God was still willing to forgive repentant hearts.

6. "God's concern for the outward keeping of the Law is primarily a barometer for the inward attitude toward the Law." Therefore, He answered Hezekiah's prayer and did not judge the participants who were truly seeking Him but were not yet ritually clean.

1. "Some trust in horses, and some trust in chariots, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. They are brought to their knees and fall but we rise up and stand firm" - just what happened in the case of Hezekiah and Sennacherib of Assyria.

2. This account is recorded in 3 places - 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, and Isaiah. It was also put into a poem by the English poet Lord Byron, and one by the poet Shelley entitled, "Ozymandias of Egypt" is also appropriate. Kings fall and nations disappear, but God and God alone remains.

3. Isaiah's prophecy concerning Sennacherib was fulfilled to the letter, right down to his death at the hands of his own sons.

4. Hezekiah is promised 2 years of food growing all by itself and the third year of sowing seed and eating its abundance, in the security of knowing Sennacherib will not win.

5. The building up the defenses of Jerusalem at this time can still be seen today.

6. Hezekiah's response to the external pressure of this attack is a great model for us. He spread Sennacherib's threats out before the Lord in the Temple and prayed.

He prayed.

Isaiah prayed.

The people prayed.

God answered their prayers.

"Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may lift you up at the proper time."
(1 Peter 5:6)

7. The Assyrians tried to use psychological warfare against Hezekiah by speaking their threats in Hebrew so all the population could hear and be afraid.

8. The bronze serpent on the pole that Moses had made at God's command in the wilderness had begun to be worshiped - so Hezekiah destroyed it.

9. Speaking of Hezekiah: "There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah either before or after him."

1. The passages we read today probably occurred before the destruction of Sennacherib's army.
2. The envoys from Babylon came to inquire about Hezekiah's miraculous cure, the sign of which was the sundial moving backward 10 steps.
3. The envoys most likely wanted an alliance with Judah as well.
4. God was displeased with Hezekiah for showing the envoys everything in his storehouses - what was behind that display was pride.
5. Even righteous kings are susceptible to the sin of pride. After God healed him, he appears to have felt that he was more special to God than others.
6. Two lessons:
 - 1) Experiencing God's blessing can carry the danger that we become proud - and pride is a devastating enemy.
 - 2) Any of God's servants are susceptible to sin. (1 Corinthians 10:12)
7. God answers Hezekiah's prayer to prolong his life after Isaiah delivers the message from God that he was going to die so he should get his house in order.
 - a. The mysterious connection between God's sovereignty and the activity of prayer
 1. God ordains the means (our prayers) as well as the ends (our futures) - "the former really do effect the latter."
 2. As we pray, we freely align ourselves up with His purposes.
8. When God agreed to heal Hezekiah, He sent Isaiah to order a poultice - medical help and divine healing are not exclusive of one another.
9. Hezekiah's reaction to the fact that God's judgment would fall on Judah after he was gone is very human - it is one we can relate to....relief.
10. There is a group of 15 Psalms, beginning with Psalm 120, which are called the Songs of Ascent. Hezekiah may well have written some of these Psalms.

1. The 8 Psalms we read today have sometimes been attributed to the authorship of Hezekiah, but we have no certain knowledge of that. We only know that the writing of them would have been in character for Judah's greatest king.
2. The Songs of Ascent (120-134) along with 135 and 136, came to be known as the "Great Hallel".
3. Psalm 121 - "I lift up my eyes to the hills; where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip. He who watches over you will not slumber. He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep..."
4. "Do not be discouraged because of the King of Assyria and the vast army with him...with him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and fight our battles." Now let us sing Psalm 121!
5. The antidote to fear and insecurity is the certain knowledge that "He who slumbers not preserves thee..." (William Jenkyn, a Puritan writer)
6. Psalm 123: "...Have mercy on us, O Lord. Have mercy on us." A very Biblical and powerful prayer... "O Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us." This is the one of whom we ask mercy:
 - a. Lord - absolute, sovereign, powerful master of the universe
 - b. Jesus - Savior - brother - the one who brought us into relationship with Him
 - c. Christ - The Messiah - the anointed one of God
7. Psalm 125: The ones who trust the Lord are "like Mt. Zion which cannot be shaken."
8. Psalm 128: "Let it be a settled principle that God honors those who obey and honor Him. The devil also challenges those same people just like Sennacherib challenged Hezekiah, but God honors them nonetheless."
9. Psalm 129: "...But the Lord is righteous. He has cut from me the cords of the wicked."
10. Psalm 130: When Christ's blood is applied to the "record of sins", the sins are erased and we stand forgiven forever.
11. Psalm 132: It highlights the promise of God that a descendant of David will sit on the throne.
12. Psalm 134: "Praise the Lord, all you servants of the lord, who minister by night in the house of the Lord. Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and praise the Lord. May the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth, bless you from the sanctuary."

Lifting up our hands signals 3 things universally"

1. Surrender
2. Love and trust
3. Excitement