

Once upon the time!!



The kingdom of Israel (Northern)

- King Jeroboam, was worried about his people going up to Jerusalem every year to worship the Lord as it was the commandment. They needed to go three times a year, the Passover along with The unleavened Bread week, The feast of weeks and the feast of tabernacles.
- Jeroboam's concern was that his people will gradually have compassion towards the house of the great, king David and abandon him! Politics
- So, he erected two golden bulls one in the north and one in the south and said "here's your God Israel" and since then people were just worshipping the idols until 200 years later!

Some 700 years before Christ

- Place; the promised land, now Israel and Palestine.
- The people of Israel were divided into two kingdoms for over 200 years now, since king Solomon died.
- The Northern kingdom, Kingdom of Israel, of 10 tribes and the Southern Kingdom, kingdom of Judea, of 2 tribes (Judah and Benjamin)
- The Kingdom of Judea, Jerusalem was the capital city which had the Temple of God.
- The founder of the Northern Kingdom was Jeroboam I

The Kingdom of Judah (Southern)

- At that time, 700B.C., things were not any better at Jerusalem but even worse! It had an evil king called Ahaz!
- The Temple was closed, doors shut! No offering, No worship, No feasts. Actually, people turned the temple into a rubbish heap!!
- People stopped giving priests the tithe so priests left the closed temple and their job and found themselves any other job!
- People worshiped the idols everywhere in Jerusalem. Burned incense for them and gave sacrifices. The law, the Lord's had become a history!!
- Assyrians invaded the land and captured some people.

Who can swim against the flood?

- In the middle of this darkness, people away from God, moralities down the drain, everyone is doing it! Military invasion, killing and prisoners of war were taken away.
- Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, a young man of only 25 years of age, reigned in the place of his father. Hezekiah grew up with all the sins around him. He saw his dad building the temples for idols one by one. Everyone around him was doing nothing but evil. There was not even a priest around to ask what is right to do!
- However, he swam against the flood of evil!!

2 Chronicles 29

- *“29 Hezekiah became king when he was twenty-five years old, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem... ³ **In the first year of his reign, in the first month**, he opened the doors of the house of the LORD and repaired them. ⁴ Then he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them in the East Square, ⁵ and said to them: “Hear me, Levites! Now sanctify yourselves, sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry out the rubbish from the holy place. ⁶ For our fathers have trespassed and done evil in the eyes of the LORD our God; they have forsaken Him, have turned their faces away from the dwelling place of the LORD, and turned their backs on Him.”*

A Covenant

- *“¹⁰ “Now it is in my **heart** to make a **covenant** with the LORD God of Israel, that His fierce wrath may turn away from us.”*
- *“²⁰ Then King Hezekiah rose **early**, gathered the rulers of the city, and went up to the house of the LORD. ²¹ And they brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven male goats for a sin offering for the kingdom, for the sanctuary, and for Judah. Then he commanded the priests, the sons of Aaron, to offer them on the altar of the LORD.” ^{2nd} Chronicles 29*
- No time wasted for repentance, 1st month of the 1st year, early riser and all from his heart.

Full repentance

- Hezekiah realized that true repentance, a real change of the heart is almost impossible to maintain while all causes of stumbling is around him and his people.
- *“⁴ He removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars, cut down the wooden image^[b] and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan.” 2 Kings 18*
- How would this apply to us? Any thoughts?

The fruits of true repentance

- Hezekiah, not just turned his kingdom 180 degrees but he was a *preacher* as well. He remembered his brethren who lived in the Northern kingdom. People who had been worshipping idols for over 200 years!!
- *“30 And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover to the LORD God of Israel....⁶ Then the runners went throughout all Israel and Judah with the letters from the king and his leaders, and spoke according to the command of the king: “Children of Israel, return to the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel; then He will return to the remnant of you who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria.” 2 chronicles 30*

- ***“ My son, if you draw near to serve the Lord, prepare you soul for temptation.” Wisdom of Sirach 2:1***

- The devil has been watching Hezekiah.
- It seems Hezekiah’s reforms aggravated him.
- The devil will not just watch it happening!
 - Would that apply to us too in any way?

The great trial!

- *“¹³ And in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. 2 kings 18*
- The Assyrian king invaded many nations on his way from north to south. He defeated the kingdom of Israel (the Northern Kingdom) and took a lot of people captives. Only Judea is now left, Jerusalem, before getting to his dream of invading Egypt.
- As for us, sometimes we think that if we follow the Lord life will cruise! And if it get messy with trials or temptation , we wonder, where is the Lord? And what’s the point of following Him? Can we really fight the devil? Keep these questions in mind as story unfolds.

- Read 2 kings 18:1 to end of chapter
- Now, see what Rabshakeh, the Assyrian commander, intimidate the people in Jerusalem by? It doesn't seem that the military power of Hezekiah was of any concern to him. Rabshakeh challenged the people saying *"²³ Now therefore, I urge you, give a pledge to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses—if you are able on your part to put riders on them!"*
- Not just that but he said *"But do not listen to Hezekiah, lest he persuade you, saying, ***'The LORD will deliver us.'***"*
³³ Has any of the gods of the nations at all delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria?"
- How would this apply to us?

How did Hezekiah react to the threat?

- *“19 And so it was, when King Hezekiah heard it, that he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. ² Then he sent Eliakim, 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.” 2 kings 19*
- *“¹⁴ And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. ¹⁵ Then Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said: “O LORD God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. ¹⁶ Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God.” 2 kings 19*

Sounds similar?

- *“¹³ And Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. ¹⁴ The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.” Exodus 14*
- *“³⁵ And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel^[b] of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead. ³⁶ So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned home, and remained at Nineveh. ³⁷ Now it came to pass, as he was worshiping in the temple of Nisroch his god, that his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. Then Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.” 2 Kings 19*

How does that apply to us?

- Remember these questions; where is the Lord? And what's the point of following Him? Can we really fight the devil?
- What happened in Exodus, happened with Hezekiah and still happens every day for everyone of us.
- See how Hezekiah won the war, you just need to do the same but remember, **REPENTENCE** was the first step of attracting the lord's majestic help.

Hezekiah, again, asks and receives. Why?

- *“20 In those days Hezekiah was sick and **near death**. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, went to him and said to him, “Thus says the LORD: ‘Set your house in order, for you shall die, and not live.’”*
- *2 Then he turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the LORD, saying, 3 “**Remember now**, O LORD, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done what was good in Your sight.” And Hezekiah **wept bitterly**.”*
- *4 And it happened, **before Isaiah had gone out into the middle court**, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 5 “**Return** and tell Hezekiah the leader of My people, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: “I have **heard your prayer**, I have **seen your tears**; **surely** I will heal you. **On the third day** you shall go up to the house of the LORD. 6 And I will add to your days fifteen years.” 2 kings 20*