

2 Chronicles 32

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[0 : 00] 2 Chronicles 32. We are going to read the whole chapter. It's narrative, so it's a bit longer than some passages, but bear with me. 3 Chronicles 32.

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4 Chronicles 32. 5 Chronicles 33. 6 Chronicles 33. 7 Chronicles 33. 7 Chronicles 33.

8 Chronicles 33. 8 Chronicles 33. 8 Chronicles 33. 8 Chronicles 33. 9 Chronicles 33. 9 Chronicles 34.

9 Chronicles 34. 10 Chronicles 34. 10 Chronicles 34. 10 Chronicles 34. 11 Chronicles 34. 12 Chronicles 34.

[1 : 43] 12 Chronicles 34. thirst when he tells you the Lord our God will deliver us from the hand of the king of Assyria has not this same Hezekiah taken away his high places and his altars and commanded Judah and Jerusalem before one altar you shall worship and on it you shall burn your sacrifices do you not know that what I and my father have done to all the peoples of other lands were the gods of the nations of those lands at all able to deliver their lands out of my hand who among all the gods of those nations that my father devoted to destruction was able to deliver his people from my hand that your God should be able to deliver you from my hand now therefore do not let Hezekiah deceive you or mislead you in this fashion and do not believe him for no God of any nation or kingdom has been able to deliver his people from my hand or from the hand of my fathers how much less will your God deliver you out of my hand and his servant said still more against the Lord God and against his servant Hezekiah and he wrote letters to cast contempt on the Lord the God of Israel and to speak against him saying like the gods of the nations of the lands who have not delivered their people from my hand so the God of Hezekiah will not deliver his people from my hand and they shouted and they shouted it with a loud voice in the language of Judah to the people of Jerusalem who were on the wall to frighten and terrify them in order that they might take the city and they spoke of the God of Jerusalem as they spoke of the gods of the peoples of the earth which are the work of men's hands then Hezekiah the king of the king and Isaiah the prophet son of Amoz prayed because of this and cried to heaven and the Lord sent an angel who cut off all the mighty warriors and commanders and officers in the camp of the king of Assyria so he returned with shame of face to his own land and when he came into the house of his God some of his own sons struck him down there with the sword so the Lord saved

Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib king of Assyria and from the hand of all his enemies and he provided for them on every side and many brought gifts to the Lord of it of to the Lord to Jerusalem and precious things to Hezekiah king of Judah so that he was exalted in the sight of all nations from that time onward in those days Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death and he prayed to the Lord and he answered him and gave him a sign that Hezekiah did not make return according to the benefit done to him for his heart was proud therefore wrath came upon him in Judah and Jerusalem but Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem so that the wrath of the Lord did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah and Hezekiah had very great riches and honor and he made for himself treasuries for silver for gold for precious stones for spices for shields and for all kinds of costly vessels storehouses also for the yield of grain wine and oil and stalls for all kinds of cattle and sheepfolds he likewise provided cities for himself and flocks and herds in abundance for God had given him very great possessions the same Hezekiah closed the upper outlet of the waters of Gihon and directed them down to the west side of the city of David and Hezekiah prospered in all his works so in the matter of the envoys of the princes of Babylon he would have been sent to him to inquire about the signs that he had done in the land God left him to himself in order to test how he could test him and to know what was in his heart now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah and the good

deeds behold they are written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz in the book of the kings of Judah and

Israel and Hezekiah slept with his fathers and they buried him in the upper part of the tombs of the sons of David and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honor at his death and Manasseh his son reigned in his place this is God's word please pray with me father we thank you for your word we thank you that we can come before it this afternoon that we can learn of it we pray in this time you would open our hearts by your Holy Spirit to receive the word that you have given us today bless us we pray in Christ's name amen the kingdom in which we were yes yes we're going to talk about that in a moment actually the kingdom in which we reside matters doesn't it we know this intuitively even in our modern day if the dwelling in the united kingdom is very different from dwelling in the kingdom of Saudi

Arabia or the kingdom of North Korea if that's a kingdom I don't know I didn't study geography but what really matters is which kingdom you reside in this is actually the the point of our passage and it's really the point of of the whole bible it's a it's a recurring theme throughout scriptures what kingdom do you reside in where do you live the people of Judah and Assyria would have naturally understood this in ancient times that your kingdom and where you lived dictate what kind of life you would live if you lived in Assyria then you lived pretty confidently you're you're living in the superpower of the day you're living in the greatest superpower at that time that the world had ever seen nothing could touch you you enjoyed peace you enjoyed prosperity if you lived anywhere else in the world at the time you probably lived in fear you lived in deep insecurity because you were you were faced you were a target for the Assyrians this is the world that Hezekiah lived in this is the world of Judah to understand this passage we have to place ourselves not in the place of Hezekiah but as a normal person living in Judah sitting up on the wall fearing for our lives where do we look for hope we look to the king don't we the kingdom you reside in matters because the king who rules it matters who is who is your king last week we saw the juxtaposition of of two kings we saw Hezekiah and his father Ahaz if you were with us you remember Ahaz represented every kind of of worldly weakness he he lived in fear he ruled out of political convenience he set up idols for his people to worship hoping that they could save him from from the rising tide of the Assyrian military force Hezekiah on the other hand displayed faith in God the God of the Bible the God of his forefathers

David this week we meet another king Sennacherib who is the epitome of worldly power so we've seen worldly weakness today we see worldly power he's rich he's got military might and he oozes confidence doesn't he he can talk a good game we see him do that here Sennacherib's military machines been rolling through the the surrounding countries uh systematically taking control of more territory eating up the nations taking control taking people into slavery uh and destroying everything in its path and now they come to Judah with their superior power and their superior might and they're on the doorstep of the capital Jerusalem imagine if you were there imagine if you're one of the people of the city sitting up on the wall that you've just finished building preparations for a siege have been made uh the people have gathered uh have have closed up the water supply people have gathered in to the walls gates have been secure and your king is in command but you're still looking out and bearing down on you is the greatest military force in the world how confident are you how sure are you and then on top of all that the chatter begins doesn't it hezekiah tells his people first be strong and courageous he gathers them together and says be strong and courageous do not be afraid or dismayed before the king of Assyria and all the horde that is with him for there are more with us than with him with him is an arm of flesh but with us is the lord our god to help us to fight our battles and the people took confidence from these words of hezekiah the king but then we hear the message of of the king of Assyria sennacherib don't we can you really trust your king can you really trust your king are you sure he isn't deceiving you he has you worshipping only only one god and look at all the gods that the other nations have worshiped and we've taken all of them over and he makes actually an interesting point doesn't he hezekiah has spent years bringing spiritual reform to judah he's brought about a great reformation in that land he's repaired the temple and restored worship he tore down the altars to idols and he made sacrifice to one god the god of israel he he celebrated the passover feast he gathered people from from lands even outside of judah to come and worship the god of creation see the assyrians actually in their propaganda speak truth don't they they have the facts right but they draw the wrong conclusions from those facts look at at verse 19 and they spoke of the god of jerusalem as they spoke of the gods of the peoples of the earth which are the work of men's hands which kingdom do

you trust in verse 19 uh draws a distinction between the nations the assyrians look at every god as exactly the same that there that every god there's no there's no difference between the gods every god is the same every god is weak and every god is something that we can easily overcome the bible makes a very different claim though doesn't it all the various gods of the nation are the same in that they're they're rubbish made by the hands of men but the god of jerusalem is different there's a direct claim that the god of jerusalem the god of hezekiah and his people is the one true god and as a result there are only really two kingdoms the the kingdom of the one true god and then the kingdom of of everyone else see the fatal mistakes the assyrians make is the same mistake that we make in our own culture today our world today isn't all that different from 2500 years ago [12:21] we might think it's different we might be technologically more advanced but we still want to believe that all the gods are created equal and that the person who wins the cultural battle for relevance must be right that all religious belief is just the creation of the imagination of ancient traditions and it's only useful to you if you find it useful but the god of the bible makes a very different claim he claims that it is him and then everyone else this hasn't changed in 2500 years since the days of hezekiah there are only two kingdoms the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of god in which do you reside see the mistake made by the assyrians is every bit as fatal today as it was then we see that in the the next paragraph how how does hezekiah respond to sennacherib he doesn't confidently respond what back bring it on we're ready good luck finding some water and he doesn't just turn around and surrender either does he but he turns to the very god that sennacherib has just finished mocking hezekiah prays in verse 20 and then a funny thing happens his prayers answered isn't it verse 21 and the lord sent an angel who cut off all the mighty warriors and commanders and officers in the camp of the king of assyria so he returned with shame of face to his own land and when he came into the house of his god some of his own sons struck him down there with the sword the book of second kings and of isaiah say that the angel of the lord struck down 185 000 in the assyrian camp this is an incredibly dramatic deliverance for judah and the natural question on our minds is do we believe this do we believe this actually happened the way of the bible says it happened let's step away for a moment from our story and let's talk about that question for a minute do we believe this actually happened i think there's there's two compelling reasons i'll give you today why i believe this and i think you should too the first of all and the best reason is it's the god's word if it's god's word uh spoken to his people then we should believe it i believe it is god's word it's consistent between the accounts and the message is consistent with the character of god as he's presented himself previously it's a message that is different from that of any other god isn't it he is a god who saves and delivers his people from his enemies and their enemies he's a god who's living and active in his creation that's what he does throughout scripture that's what he does here in this passage that's exactly what what we should expect him to do and want him to do see the quality of the overall message is different and it speaks a truth that is unique but the second reason some of you will still say maybe that's great but i still find that hard to believe and that's fine let's look at at the external evidence that's already been mentioned if you go up the road to the british museum you'll find an extensive collection on the assyrian empire and in amongst this collection you're going to find a pair of of they call them prisms they just look like little little stone towers and on these prisms is is writing one of them is called the taylor prism you can look it up and on this is is an account of sennacherib's military uh exploits and how he all the places he went and took over all the the the treasure and things that he brought back and he mentions in passing jerusalem and he mentioned the tribute that was paid to him by hezekiah earlier in hezekiah's reign it's not mentioned in this passage but it is in others but oddly enough there's no mention of conquering jerusalem and there's no reason given for him stopping there

and going home he just basically says you know what we we got to jerusalem and we turned around and went home if you actually uh look at at the map next to this exhibit you see the little line of of the kingdom of assyria and it stopped just short of jerusalem so let me ask you this why would the greatest military power of the day a power that had been unstoppable a power that up to that point had been eating up smaller kingdoms like candy suddenly stop at one of the weakest nations in the world why would they stop and not take it something happened and what i'm suggesting to you is that the historical data in our museum is exactly what you would expect to see if the biblical account is true it's a basic law of human nature we magnify our triumphs and we minimize our defeats don't we everyone does this for example just to give you a couple modern examples first of all george washington george washington is the real life harry potter of america my my home

country he's the boy who lived every child growing up in that nation knows his name and what he did a few weeks ago i received a meme if you don't know what a meme is it's a picture from the internet with funny words written on it usually an observation about life and on this it was a picture of george washington and it said i was for brexit before it was mainstream i found that funny like you did and so i sent it off to uh we'll just say an english friend of mine he's a member of our our congregation and his response he texted back to me immediately with who's that who's that who's that i was shocked you know this is a guy everybody knows uh everyone knows his name what he did but it makes sense when you think about it the american revolution is probably taught very differently here than it is in the states because we we magnify our victories we've minimize our defeats it's natural to humanity i do this myself in my home we like to play board games and there's a game that i'm particularly good at it's called candy land you don't want to play me in candy land what happens when i win at candy land i jump up i dance around and i start singing songs about how i'm the greatest daddy who ever was and there's never been a daddy like me because i can beat a four-year-old at candy land what happens when i lose at candy land i don't know i don't recall that ever happening you see how this works sennacherib is the daddy who's been defeated by a four-year-old the thing that that never should happen happened and he's no and he has no reasonable explanation for it so he just ignores it but on the other hand the bible actually gives us a very clear and very reasonable explanation for it doesn't it the god of the universe is present and active in his world and he intervenes to save his people he does the very thing that we would want our king to do verse 22 the lord saved hezekiah and the inhabitants of jerusalem from the hand of sennacherib king of assyria and from the hand of all his enemies and he provided for them on every side which kingdom are you living in which kingdom do you want to live in do you want the kingdom of the strong but arrogant or do you want the kingdom that rests on the god who saves see what we ultimately see here is that the kingdom where you reside matters because the king that you serve matters the reason this story speaks to us is because it it speaks to the deep truths about how our world works and how our world has always worked in life you will serve a king and that king will in turn serve you what do you hope your king will do we hope that our king will conquer don't we we hope that our king will rule and that he'll reign that he'll destroy all of his enemies that he'll offer us safety and security and meet all of our needs that's what humanity has longed for since adam that's what we still long for today when you're when you look at our world and you're you're disgusted by white supremacist marching in america you're really longing for a better kingdom aren't you when you look at brexit and you're angry no matter which side of the issue you fall on you're really longing for a better kingdom when you're grieving the loss of a spouse or a child you're longing for a better kingdom when you're pursuing power popularity money relationships or anything else in this world you're really longing for a better kingdom we spend our lives trying to to make our world what we think it should be we have good intentions but it never seems to work out does it but the good news for you today is that the god of the bible offers us a better kingdom and it begins with a better king we see at the the very end of of this passage in the closing verses that hezekiah did a lot of other good things but he also struggled with his own pride he was by all human standards a good king but by the standards of god he still fell short and if the residents of judah were trusting in hezekiah then they had missed the point of his kingship hezekiah was a signpost that was pointing forward to a greater king a king he trusted in and prayed to in his darkest hour hundreds of years after hezekiah god would send the ultimate king and his son jesus christ to deliver his people from their our greatest enemy the enemy that dwells in each and every one of us our sin and with our salvation christ promises us that new and better kingdom the kingdom that we've longed for if you've tried if you're tired of longing for a better kingdom then christ invites you today to enter into his kingdom and he makes a great promise about this kingdom and at the very end of the bible in the book of revelation chapter 21 he says this uh this is the the vision of of john the apostle i heard a loud voice from the throne saying behold the dwelling place of god is with man he will dwell with them and they will be his people and god himself will be with will be with them as their god he will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore for the former things have passed away and he who was seated on the throne said behold i am making all things new and he said write this down for these words are trustworthy and true what kingdom are you living in what kingdom do you desire the promise of the gospel is the promise of a new and greater kingdom a kingdom that that fills uh and heals and meets the deepest longings of our hearts if you're here this this afternoon and and you want to enter this kingdom then trust in christ jesus the king he offers you hope he offers you uh the the the promise of forgiveness

of sins the cleansing of sin and to meet your deepest longings please pray