

## Q1 L07 - Defeat of the Assyrians - 2021-02-13

Jean Ross: Good morning, friends. We'd like to welcome you to Sabbath School Study Hour, here at the Granite Bay Seventh-day Adventist Church in Sacramento, California. We always want to welcome our online members who are joining us across the country and around the world, as well as those who are viewing us maybe on a television network a little later, maybe you're watching this live. Welcome, we are so glad that you are studying with us.

We're studying through a great series of lessons on the book of Isaiah. The prophet Isaiah is sometimes referred to the gospel writer of the Old Testament. There's a number of great themes and important lessons that we find in our study. Today, we're on lesson number seven. It's entitled, "Defeat of the Assyrians," and there's a lot of information we've got to try and cover today.

But before we get to our study, we'd like to remind you of our free offer. We have a study guide, one of the "Amazing Facts" study guide, entitled, "Saved from Certain Death." And if you have not yet read the study guide, we want to encourage you to do so. It is a great resource. To receive it, just call the number, 866-788-3966, and you can ask for offer number 109 and we'll mail the study guide to your home. If you'd like to receive a digital download of the study guide, you want to text the code "SH060" to the number, 40544, and you'll be able to receive a digital copy of the study guide, "Saved from Certain Death."

Well, before we get to our lesson, we want to invite you to join us as we lift our voices in song. We're singing that great hymn, "My Hope is Built on Nothing Less."

♪♪♪

♪ My hope is built on nothing less ♪

♪ Than Jesus' blood and righteousness ♪

♪ I dare not trust the sweetest frame ♪

♪ But wholly lean on Jesus' name ♪

♪ On Christ the solid rock I stand ♪

♪ All other ground is sinking sand ♪

♪ All other ground is sinking sand ♪

♪ When darkness seems to veil His face ♪

♪ I rest on His unchanging grace ♪

♪ In every high and stormy gale ♪

♪ My anchor holds within the veil ♪

♪ On Christ the solid rock I stand ♪

♪ All other ground is sinking sand ♪

♪ All other ground is sinking sand ♪

♪ When He shall come with trumpet sound ♪

♪ Oh, may I then in Him be found ♪

♪ Clad in His righteousness alone ♪

♪ Faultless to stand before His throne ♪

♪ On Christ the solid rock I stand ♪

♪ All other ground is sinking sand ♪

♪ All other ground is sinking sand ♪

Jean: Let us pray. Dear Father in heaven, we thank You for our beautiful Sabbath that You've given us here in northern California. We thank You for the opportunity that we have to open up and study Your Word in such an important book, such an important lesson that we need to be looking at today. So we invite Your presence. We ask the Holy Spirit to come and speak to each of our hearts wherever we might be, Lord, and impress upon us the things You would have us to know. For we ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

Our lesson today is going to be brought to us by Pastor Rod Thompson.

Rod Thompson: Good morning, everyone. I want to invite you to open up your Bibles to Isaiah chapter 36. We are continuing our study in the book of Isaiah and today we're going to be looking at four chapters, chapter 36 through 39, and we've got a lot to talk about. Pastor Ross prayed for us but let's offer another prayer up quickly to the Lord.

Father in heaven, thank You that You have pulled us up out of the mud, the muck, the mire, the clay, and You have set us on a firm foundation and, Lord, You have begun a good work in each of us and we pray that You would continue that work and bring it to completion. Give us ears to hear now as You speak to our hearts in Jesus' name, amen.

The Bible tells us that Solomon was the wisest man that ever lived. And in the book of Ecclesiastes he tells us there is nothing new under the sun. In Romans chapter 15, verse 4, the apostle Paul tells us that everything that was written in Scripture was written for our learning. In 1 Corinthians he tells us that it was written for us, those who are alive in the last days, that we might have hope. And in the book, "Christian Experience and Teachings," chapter 33, Ellen White tells us that we have nothing to fear for the future, except that we forget how God has led us in the past.

The prophets in Israel were called to proclaim and interpret the actions of God in the events of history. They tried to keep alive the memory of the exodus and all of the miracles that God had done for them, and they were to interpret the meaning of their ancient faith and they were to try and help the people in their day to understand and to apply God's Word to their lives in their time. They were to identify to the people God's will in a national crisis and when that crisis was over, they were to bring hope and comfort.

And Isaiah was one of those prophets that had served God and had been a--had been an advisor to the kings for over 60 years, and he had his ministry throughout four kings of Judah. That is, Uzziah who is called--also called Azariah; his son, Jotham; his grandson, Ahaz; and his great-grandson, Hezekiah. The fact that he doesn't talk about Hezekiah's son, Manasseh, indicates to us that his prophetic ministry was done right about the time of the end of Hezekiah's life. And so it's very interesting that we have these four kings and you can see in 2 Kings chapter 15, verse 3, it says that Uzziah was the king and he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord.

And then in 2 Kings chapter 15, verse 32, it tells us that his son, Jonathan--Jotham, became king and he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. And then we see his son, Ahaz, become king and he does not do what's right in the eyes of the Lord. And then his son, Hezekiah, becomes king and he does what is right in the eyes of the Lord. And so we see this up-and-down rollercoaster of Israel, sometimes following the Lord, sometimes not.

And it's interesting, friends, that when we look at a son and a grandson and a great-grandson, if you have a godly man and you would expect that his children would follow the Lord too. But it's not automatic. Every single one of us has to choose whom we are going to serve. And even when we see Ahaz, who is a wicked king, his son, Hezekiah, when he comes on the scene, he follows the Lord. So even though a person may not be following the Lord, their children can.

Every single one of us has a choice to make: whom are we going to serve? So our study today is in Isaiah chapter 36 through 39. Look with me at verse 1. It says: "Now it came to pass." This chapter marks the beginning of a new section in the book of Isaiah, and chapters 36 through 39 are actually more historical than they are prophetic. And as we look at that, we might think, "Well, that's a nice history lesson but what's that got to do with me?" But, friends, we want to apply the Word of God to our life and there's actually a lot for us to learn from these four chapters.

In these four chapters, we're going to see three very important historical points. We're going to see the war that Israel has with Sennacherib in the Assyrian army. We're going to see and talk about the illness of Hezekiah, and then the visitation of the Babylonians to Israel. And in these four chapters in Isaiah 36 through 39, they actually have parallel chapters in 2 Kings chapter 18 through 20, and then in 2 Chronicles chapter 29.

So there is a lot more information that we can pull into these four chapters and we're going to take a look at that. And so let's read verse 1 again: "Now, it came to pass in the 14th year of King Hezekiah that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them." History shows us that Sennacherib became the king in 705 BC and four years later, in 701, is when he comes up and makes his first campaign against Israel, and specifically the cities of Judah. And in his own account of this campaign, he tells us and he claims that he had captured 46 fortified cities of Judah. Forty-six cities. And he lists many reasons why he comes against them, but three of them we want to look at in particular. Number one is the fact that Hezekiah refused to pay tribute.

Now, Sennacherib's father had already come against Judah and he was already forcing them to pay tribute, but now Hezekiah is rebelling against him. Number two, because Hezekiah has called on Egypt and he has called on the Ethiopians to join him in rebelling against Assyria, and number three, because Hezekiah had gone up against the Philistines and he had imprisoned their king who was loyal to the Assyrians. And so for those three reasons, he says, he came up against them.

But I would add a fourth reason, and we're going to read about that in a minute. It says because the children of Judah and Israel were not following the Lord. So let's look at verse--look at verse 2. Chapter 36: "Then the king of Assyria sent the Rabshakeh with a great army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. And he stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller's Field."

Now, I want to point out to you that the Rabshakeh is not a name but rather, it is a title. And the Rabshakeh is the cupbearer of the king. In other words, he's the person that tastes the food and drinks the cup before the king does in case someone has been trying to kill the king and poison him, that person would die rather than the king. How'd you like to have that job? But we tend to look at that and we think that that may be the lowest person in the kingdom, someone that's easily replaceable, right?

But, in fact, in the Assyrian kingdom, the Rabshakeh was a very important military official. He was the assistant to the king, if you will. And I want you to notice what he says. I want you to hold your place here in Isaiah chapter 36, but let's go back and let's look at the parallel passage in 2 Kings chapter 18. 2 Kings chapter 18, and I want you to notice what it says, starting in verse 1.

The Bible says: "Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea the son of Elah, king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, began to reign. He was 25 years old when he became king, and he reigned 29 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abi the daughter of Zechariah. And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father David had done. He removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars, cut down the wooden image 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.

He trusted in the Lord God of Israel, so that after him was none like him from among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. For he held fast to the Lord; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord had commanded Moses. The Lord was with him; he prospered wherever he went. And he rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. He subdued the Philistines, as far as Gaza and its territories, from watchtower to the fortified city.

Now it came to pass in the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea the son of Elah, king of Israel, that Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria and besieged it. And at the end of three years they took it. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, that is, in the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. Then the king of Assyria carried Israel away captive to Assyria, and put them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes, because they did not obey the voice of the Lord their God, but transgressed His covenant and all that Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded; and they would neither hear nor do them.

And in the 14th year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. Then Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, 'I have done wrong; turn away from me; whatever you impose on me I will pay.' And the king of Assyria assessed Hezekiah king of Judah 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold. And so Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the Lord and in the treasuries of the king's house. At that time Hezekiah stripped the gold from the doors of the temple of the Lord, and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.

Then the king of Assyria sent the Tartan, the Rabsaris, and the Rabshakeh from Lachish, with a great army against Jerusalem, to King Hezekiah. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. And when they had come up, they went and stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool, which was on the highway to the Fuller's Field."

And we read already in Isaiah chapter 36 where it talks about him coming to the Fuller's Field. But here we see a lot more information added to the story. And so there are some very interesting things there that I want to point out to you. Number one, Hezekiah did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. And we see here, it's talking about how he tore down the high places, how he tore down the altars, how he told the people of Israel that they needed to go to Jerusalem, to the temple, to worship there. And so he was trying to bring about a reform in the land of Judah.

We see that he also rebels against the Assyrian oppression of God's people. But then we see that the Assyrian king defeats him and so Hezekiah says to him, "I will pay to you whatever you ask." And so he gives him this great tribute to be paid. But then we see that the Assyrian king still comes up against Jerusalem to besiege it even after he has paid him this tribute.

Now let's go back to Isaiah chapter 36. You see, the king sends the Rabshakeh to the children of Israel to directly speak to them and he asks them a very important question. And if I could paraphrase that question, it's simply this: "In whom are you going to place your trust?" In whom are you going to trust? And he starts telling them, "You are putting your trust in the king of Egypt but he can't help you. And you are putting your trust in the king of Israel but he can't help you either." And then he says, "You're putting your trust in your God and He's not going to be helping you either," because, after all, Hezekiah is taking down His high places. He's taking down His altars. He's killing false prophets and he is--he's telling people that they have to worship in Jerusalem at the temple, and so "your God is offended and He's not going to help you either."

Now, of course, that wasn't true, but that's what he's saying. And then he comes and he says something very important. He says, "And oh, by the way, it is your God who has told me to come up and destroy this place." But then he adds one more thing. He says, "You can't trust Egypt, you can't trust your king, you can't trust your God, but you can trust me. You can trust me, that if you pay me a tribute I'll protect you from me."

Brothers and sisters, does that remind you of someone else? That should--we should recognize in that argument that the Rabshakeh is making that there's something else going on here. There is a spirit behind all of this, isn't there? And we know that that is the spirit of the enemy of our souls. He is promising peace and safety, and he cannot provide it.

Look with me here in Isaiah 36. Look at verse 12 through 16: "But the Rabshakeh said, 'Has my master sent me to your master and to you to speak these words, and not to the men who sit on the wall, who will eat and drink their own waste with you?' Then the Rabshakeh stood and called out with a loud voice in Hebrew, and said, 'Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria!'"

Thus says the king: "Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you; nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord, saying, 'The Lord will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.'" Do not listen to Hezekiah; for thus says the king of Assyria: "Make peace with me by a present and come out to me; and every one of you will eat from his own vine and every one from his own fig tree, and every one of you will drink the waters of his own cistern.""

Here we see the enemy of God's people and what he's trying to do. First of all, I want you to notice that he makes it appear that he is--has your best interests at heart, that he is more interested in the welfare of God's people than God Himself is. And then notice that he is also portraying Hezekiah as being vainglorious. He is portraying him as someone who is a self-interested deceiver who does not have God's people and their interests in his heart. And he says: "Don't let the king deceive you into thinking that your God can save you."

And so here we see that the issue is directly and distinctly drawn. Are you going to give your loyalty to God or are you going to give your loyalty to me? Now, brothers and sisters, we know the prophetic Word, don't we? We know that history is going to repeat itself. In fact, we are living in some pretty strange times, aren't we? And as we look at our situation today, we could ask ourselves, "Are we going to put our trust in doctors that they can save us from COVID-19? Are we going to put our trust in the governor that he has our best interests at heart when he tells us that we shouldn't gather together for worship on a Sabbath morning? Are we going to trust those leaders of the nations around us that are telling us we all need to do this thing?"

And so, we have a very important question: in whom are you going to trust? I want to point out to you something that it says in Psalm 91, verse 5 and--5 through 7, and thinking about the present time in which we live, and this pestilence all around us. Notice what it says: "You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday. A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near to you."

The question that we want to answer is, "In whom are we going to place our trust?" Are we going to place our trust in doctors? Are we going to place it in the governor, in the president, in the nation. And the nations around us, are they going to be able to protect us from what's going on in the world today? And I know that there might be someone out there right now that's thinking to himself, "Pastor Rod, are you telling me that if I put my trust in God that I will not get COVID-19?"

Friends, please understand. That is not what I'm saying. I'm simply saying this: In whom are you going to place your trust? Are we going to put it in the government? Are we going to expect that the government who has our best interests at heart, they're the ones telling us to stay at home and are you going to expect them to bail you out financially? And so whom are we going to trust?

I want you to think about those three Hebrews boys who were told by the government, "You either do it our way or we're going to throw you into the fiery furnace." And, friends, what did those three boys say? "Our God is able to save us. But even if He doesn't, we're still going to put our trust in Him." I love the way Job put it. Job chapter 13, verse 15: In the midst of all that was going on with Job, he said, "Though You slay me, yet will I trust You."

You see, friends, Sennacherib's challenge is in reality a direct defiance of God. "Your God is not able to save you." And the Rabshakeh makes this grandiose promise that if you trust him and you are disloyal to your king, you're disloyal to your God, then he will do something for you. Let's look at it again. Look with me--we're still in chapter 36. Look at verse 16: "Do not listen to Hezekiah; for thus says the king of Assyria: 'Make peace with me by a present and come out to me; and every one of you will eat from his own vine and every one from his own fig tree, and you'll drink from your own cistern.'"

Think about this for a minute. He is saying, "If you give me a present, I won't attack you." But guess what? He already had and Hezekiah had already given him a tribute so that he wouldn't attack them. You know, friends, the enemy of your soul never has enough. If you give him an inch, he'll take a mile. And if he--they give in to him, they pay that tribute, and now he's coming for another tribute. Isn't that what the enemy of your soul does?

But notice, what he says in the next verse, verse 17. He says, "You're going to get to stay in your house, you're going to get to stay in your own land, you're going to eat from your own garden, until I come and take you away." Here we see this mockery of the words that he had just said. Here we see a vain promise: "I'm going to let you stay there until I come and take you away." The enemy is never satisfied with what you've given him; he always wants more. Look with me, verse 19 and 20: "Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Indeed, have they delivered Samaria from my hand? Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?"

Samaria had fallen to the Assyrians years earlier, and the fact that the capital of the northern kingdom had fallen into their hands was, in their eyes, proof to them that the same thing was going to happen to Judah in Jerusalem.

But, friends, let me read you a verse that you're very familiar with. Revelation chapter 13, verse 4, talking about the first beast of Revelation 13: the Antichrist. This is what it says: "So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, 'Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?'" We see it repeat in history here, don't we? Because that's exactly what the king of Assyria was doing. And we really know the spirit behind the king of Assyria, we really know who this is. This is the dragon, right? And the Rabshakeh is essentially saying the exact same thing: "Who can make war against the king of Assyria? He's too powerful for you."

But notice, verse 21: "But they held their peace and answered him not a word; for the king commandment was, 'Do not answer them.'" Friends, there was no effective answer that the people could have given to the Assyrian leaders. There was nothing that they could do to turn Sennacherib away from his purpose. Nothing they could do to turn the real enemy behind that from his purpose. And so, wisely, the king said to them, "Say nothing."

Friends, don't ever try to get into an argument with the devil because you are not going to win. Don't think that you're going to be able to convince him that he is wrong. And so the king wisely tells them not to say a word but Hezekiah trusted--he had faith that God would be able to deliver them. And so, the people come to Hezekiah and they tell him what the Rabshakeh has said. And if you look at chapter 37, verse 1, it tells us that when Hezekiah heard it, he tore his clothes, he put on sackcloth, and he went into the house of the Lord.

You see, friends, the king had done everything that he could do to prepare the people to protect themselves in this confrontation with the enemy of God's people. He strengthened his fortifications. He further equipped and organized his army. He increased the security of Jerusalem's water supply, and you can go back and read that for yourself, how he did that. But when he was done doing everything humanly possible, he goes to the one who can truly help him.

And, friends, we find ourselves in the same situation today. We have a global pandemic and we want to do everything that we can to protect ourselves. Yes, we need to social distance, yes, we need those masks, yes, we need to wash our hands. But when it's all said and done and we've done everything humanly possible, whom are we going to trust in? Who are we going to go to and trust that He is able to help us? And so, Hezekiah goes to the Lord and he prays and while he is in the temple, pouring out his heart to the Lord, I imagine that the Lord impresses him with something because he does something very important.

Look with me, chapter 37, verse 2: "Then he sent," that's Hezekiah 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. And they said to him, 'Thus says Hezekiah: "This day is a day of trouble and rebuke and blasphemy; for the children have come to birth, but there is no strength to bring them forth. It may be that the Lord your God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to reproach the living God, and will rebuke the words which the Lord your God has heard. Therefore lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left.'"

Friends, I don't know about you, but I see that Hezekiah's doing something very important here. He is trying to bring about reform. He is taking down the high places. He is tearing down the altars. He is telling the people to come to Jerusalem and worship the one true God. And he says, "We are about to break out of this idolatry and we have come to the point of birth but we don't have the strength to go out. We need God." And he does something very important.

Friends, I don't know about you, but when I am in trouble, I spend more time on my knees than I normally do. How about you? And he does something very important and I do this too. Because when I'm in trouble, I want to seek out those prayer warriors that I know that God listens to them, because I've seen God working in their lives in the past and I call that friend and say, "I'm in trouble. You've got to pray for me."

And that's what Hezekiah's doing. He goes to the man of God, he goes to the prophet of God, and he says, "Pray for the remnant." And notice what happens. Look with me in verse 5. Chapter 7, verse--37, verse 5: "So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah. And Isaiah said to them, 'Thus you shall say to your master, "Thus says the Lord: 'Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me. Surely I will send a spirit upon him, and he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.'""

Friends, when you pour out your heart to God, when you pray to Him, God is already there with an answer. And here we see that Isaiah tells him, "Your God is with you. He is going to save you." Now, the Rabshakeh asked a very important question: "In whom are you going to trust?" And friends, we might ask another question: "Can God be trusted?"

Can God be trusted? I love what it says in the parallel passage that we read earlier in Isaiah, or, excuse me, in 2 Kings chapter 18, verse 5. Do you remember it? It said that "he," that is Hezekiah, "trusted in the Lord God of Israel so that after him was none like him among the kings of Judah nor none before."

Friends, how would you like that said about you? That you trust God so much that there was no one like that before you and there ain't gonna be anyone after you like that but you have put your complete and total trust in God. And Hezekiah believes the word of Isaiah and he sees that prophecy immediately fulfilled. Sennacherib gets the word that Ethiopia is attacking Assyria, and so he takes his army and he goes back to Assyria to fight him. Like a hook in his jaw, God just pulls him away and there is relief in Israel.

But, friends, your enemy doesn't give up that easily. I think this was an opportunity for Sennacherib to repent of his blasphemy. It was an opportunity for him to give his heart to the Lord, but he doesn't take God up on that opportunity because then, right after this, he writes a letter to Hezekiah and he essentially tells him the exact same thing. He reiterates what he has already said through the Rabshakeh, that your God is not able to save you. And so Hezekiah returns to the house of the Lord and this time he spreads out that letter before the Lord and he prays a beautiful prayer. Let's look at it.

Look with me, chapter 37. Look at verse 33. Or, excuse me, look at verse 16. He says, "O Lord of hosts, 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. Incline Your ear, O Lord, and hear; open Your eyes, O Lord, and see; and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God. Truly, Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations and their lands, and have cast their gods into the fire; for they were not gods, but the work of men's hands--wood and stone. Therefore they destroyed them. Now therefore, O Lord our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the Lord, You alone."

Well, friends, you know the story. God sends Isaiah to Hezekiah, and notice what God says. Look at verse 33: "Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the king of Assyria: 'He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with a shield, nor build a siege mound against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return; and he shall not come into this city,' says the Lord. 'For I will defend this city, to save it for My own sake and for My servant David's sake.'"

Here we see God already there, already ahead of Hezekiah, He is there to immediately respond to his need and He says to him, "I'm going to take care of this because the real enemy behind this is blaspheming Me and I'm going to do it for my name's sake. And I'm going to do it for David's sake as well." Friends, in whom are you going to place your trust? Is God the kind of King that you can trust?

And then there's a third question, and that is where is God in your calamity? You remember the story of Job. Job is unaware of all that's going on, but Satan and God come together and God says, "Have you considered My servant Job?" And Satan, if I could paraphrase it, he simply says, "Well, of course, Job loves You, You've blessed his little Hebrew socks off. But You take away that hedge of protection, You take away everything he has, and surely he will curse You to Your face."

And of course, you know what happens. He allows Satan that activity. He takes away everything that Job has, but Job hangs on to his integrity. Job does not curse God. He said, "God has given; God has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." And so the enemy of his soul just walks away and says, "Well, I guess I was wrong. I'm going to have to repent and You were right, God." Is that what happens? No, he continues on the attack. He says, "Well, okay, You got me there, but You take away his health and surely he will curse You to Your face."

Now, friends, that's exactly the same thing that we're seeing here. Hezekiah has had this high spiritual mountaintop experience. And usually after a mountaintop experience, trouble comes. Do you ever notice that? He has this great victory. I'm not going to read it to you but you go back and you look at the story and you'll see that God sent an angel of the Lord and in one night 185,000 Assyrians are slaughtered. God took care of the matter.

There was this mountaintop victory because this is the great controversy that's going on. This war between Christ and Satan. And we see that God has won the victory here and there's this high mountaintop experience and so the devil just says, "Well, I guess I can't do anything about that," and he walks away, right? No, no, now he's going to attack Hezekiah's health, right? And Hezekiah has this illness that is going to take his life. In fact, God sends Isaiah to him to tell him, "Put your house in order. You're about to have an end of life," and, of course, Hezekiah does what we all should do. Rather than going and trusting the doctors, rather than trusting the government to help him, he goes to the one who truly can help, and he goes back into the house of the Lord and he pours out his heart to the Lord, and the Lord immediately answers that prayer and sends Isaiah back to him, and tell him that God is going to give him 15 more years. And He's going to give him a supernatural sign that He is going to do this.

I want you to look with me in Isaiah chapter 38, starting in verse 6. Notice what God says. ""I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city." And this is the sign to you from the Lord, that the Lord will do this thing which He has spoken: Behold, I will bring the shadow on the sundial, which has gone down with the sun on the sundial of Ahaz, ten degrees backwards.' So that the sun returned ten degrees on the dial by which it had gone down."

Now jump with me to verse 21. Verse 21 and 22 say: "Now Isaiah had said, 'Let them take a lump of figs, and apply it to a poultice on the boil, and he shall recover.' And Hezekiah had said, 'What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the Lord?'" So here we see that Hezekiah is told that he is going to get 15 more years of life. And Hezekiah essentially says, "How can I be sure of this?" And so God says, "I'm going to do something very important. I'm going to do something supernatural here to prove to you that you can trust Me."

Friends, in whom are you going to place your trust? Can God be trusted? Where is God in the midst of your calamities? God had revealed Himself to Hezekiah in a very powerful way. And perhaps He's done the same thing for you. I can tell you from my own experience, God has done some miraculous things, some supernatural things, for my behalf. But, friends, Hezekiah makes a critical mistake. Friends, even those who belong to God, even those who love God, can make mistakes. We see that in David with Bathsheba. And now we see it with Hezekiah, but remember how we started our message this morning. There's nothing new under the sun. Everything that was written down was written for our learning and we have nothing to fear from the future except that we forget how God has led in the past. And, friends, we don't want to make the same mistake that Hezekiah did.

Because God did something supernatural, this was the perfect opportunity for Hezekiah to share his amazing God. You see, the Babylonians, you'll remember that later in history several hundred years that the wise men from the



East, from Babylon, are going to follow a star to Bethlehem and worship Baby Jesus. The Babylonians were very interested in the stars, in astrology, and it would not have been beyond them to notice something supernatural had happened. And they have heard about this great victory and the Assyrian army slayed and so they send an envoy to Israel to find out the story. What has truly happened here. And this is the perfect opportunity for Hezekiah to share his great and amazing and powerful God. But Hezekiah takes the glory for himself. And when they come, he shows them all the splendor of his kingdom.

Friends, in whom are you going to place your trust? Can God be trusted? Where is God in your calamities? And number four, when God delivers you from all of your troubles, are you going to give Him the glory or are you going to take it for yourselves? Friends, we want to learn from history so that we don't make the same mistake. Is that the desire of your heart?

You want to make sure that you learn from these things so that you don't make these mistakes, because, friends, we are heading into some difficulties. Do you think that this is the end of it with COVID-19? No, we are heading into some very challenging days. And are you going to give God the glory when He delivers you or are you going to try and take it for yourself? Well, while you're thinking about that question, we're out of time so let's pray.

Father in heaven, Lord, You are truly amazing and we are so grateful and thankful for all that You've done and all that You are doing, but, Lord, there are certain things that we have to do ourselves and then there are things we can't do. And so, Lord, it's in those times that we pray that You would work mightily with an outstretched arm and a powerful hand, and You would deliver us from the enemy of our souls. And we ask in Jesus' name, amen.

Friends, I want to remind you that our free offer today is "Saved from Certain Death." And you can get that by calling, 866-788-3966, or you can--and ask for number 109 or you can text the code "SH060" to the number, 40544. God bless you and have a great day.

Announcer: Don't forget to request today's life-changing free resource. Not only can you receive this free gift in the mail, you can download a digital copy straight to your computer or mobile device. To get your digital copy of today's free gift, simply text the keyword on your screen to 40544 or visit the web address shown on your screen and be sure to select the digital download option on the request page. It's now easier than ever for you to study God's Word with Amazing Facts wherever and whenever you want. And most important, to share it with others.

Andrew: When I was eight years old, I brought home a 5-foot rattlesnake and it's gone downhill ever since. Rattlesnakes, sharks, cliff diving, free diving, I wouldn't call myself an adrenalin junkie; I just realize that the closest that I've ever been to being alive is when I'm so close to death. I was raised in the northern mountains of Mexico. I learned English because there was missionary groups that were coming from Colorado and then going to the northern mountains of Mexico. And they were all changed in these short-term mission trips and they had these unbelievable experiences and there were close encounters with God, and I would share their testimony and I would translate for them.

And I was jealous. I was jealous because I didn't have a testimony. I didn't have something like that. I didn't have that life-changing experience, that close encounter with God. I knew He was there; I just--I couldn't understand Him and I didn't really want anything to do with Him and part of me wanted Him not to want anything to do with me.

I felt like I was unworthy of God's love. I left Mexico to come to college. Once I got to college, I realized how expensive college was. And so, in order to pay for college, I became a commercial salmon fisherman in Alaska. And the first time that I stepped on a boat, I knew I was going to be a fisherman for the rest of my life. I met this man in Tennessee, in one of the rivers, and I found out that he had an orphanage in Honduras. And he said, you know, "You can come down to Honduras. You can help us put a support video together." And you know, he was like, "Maybe you can get some college credits out of it." I said, "You know, that would be great. I would do that. I would love to do that."

And so I flew down to Honduras and one of the conversations that we had during dinner, we were talking about this and that, and somehow I brought up Rapture and they said, "Well, find us a place in Scripture where it talks

about Rapture." And I said, "It's all over the Bible." They said, "Is it, really, though?" So they gave me a DVD that said "Amazing Facts," and I remember coming back to America and I started watching it and it said, "Amazing Facts Presents." And Doug Batchelor started talking. One of the things that he said is the word "rapture" wasn't in Scripture. And that was the first time that I actually heard Pastor Batchelor speak. And then I run into YouTube, a video series called "The Prophecy Code," and I said, "Oh, this is going to be good, sweet."

But it was just torture because everything I knew, it was just getting tossed out the window. He was just using Scripture after Scripture to take away everything and all--everything that I thought was normal and everything that I knew about the book of Apocalypses.

Ever since I've learned scriptural truth and I've seen the light, I feel like there's been a fire rekindled in my heart. And I have this knowledge that I want to share with people. It brings me peace and I think that it does that for other people we've managed to share with.

My name is Andrew. I am a fisherman and a dreamer. I want to thank you for changing my life.

Announcer: "Amazing Facts Changed Lives."

Bill Powell: Well, we lived in pretty much a secular household up until Mom started sending us to Sunday school. Pretty soon my mom started getting caught up in it and she started coming too. But, unfortunately, about the time that my dad started getting interested, I started becoming less and less interested.

It finally came to a head one day where I just told him I wasn't going anymore. My attitude was just I could party and do what I wanted to do and have fun and as long as I'm not hurting anybody, it's nobody's business.

The whole time I was in high school, the Vietnam War was going on and I just assumed that I was going to be in Vietnam. Five days after I graduated high school, I was in the Navy. I became more and more secular. I went from occasionally drinking to drinking almost every night. When I came home from the Navy, I started going to school and gained an IT degree so I could get into being a database administrator. Was willing to work hard but I was going to party just as hard.

I remember one day having a conversation with myself after a particularly rough night and I realized that I was going to a dark place so I stopped drinking for a while, but I still looked to solve things on my own. I remember very vividly 9/11/2001. I was very conservative, politically, and I began thinking that there was something really, really satanic about the forces that had attacked us.

So I began to accept that there might be a Satan. I came to the conclusion that if there was a Satan, there must be a God. Sometime around 2005, my dad had a heart attack. It was devastating to me, and my wife was kind of feeling the same thing. So she started going to church. I was a very firm believer in evolution and the science of the world. She came home one day and brought a brochure and begged me to read it. And the brochure was about creation science. And I realized as I was reading through this that evolution wasn't cut and dried like they had led me to believe.

You know, I wanted to learn more and, at the back, I saw a logo that said amazingfacts.org. So I got on my computer and went to amazingfacts.org and I found Bible studies. So I'm reading the Bible now and doing these studies and I get to a point in the study that he was talking about hell. And I began to understand that if I went to hell, that it was going to be a second death. I just fell down and asked God's forgiveness. I accepted Christ to be my Savior. I know that God is good and that He has saved me from myself in that sense. The Holy Spirit is not your enemy. He's your friend and you just need to listen.

My name is Bill Powell and Amazing Facts played an amazing role in changing my life.