



2 Chronicles 31-32

Tape #7141
II Chronicles 31-32
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn in our Bibles now, to I Chronicles, chapter thirty one, II Chronicles please. II Chronicles, thirty one. We'll soon be out of Chronicles and I'll quit making that mistake. After Hezekiah had opened again, the doors of the temple, had the place clean up, cleaned out, and reinstituted the worship within the temple, they decided to begin again, the observing of the Jewish feast. They were too late to observe the feast of the Passover. They didn't have time to go through all of the ritual cleansing for it. According to a special provision in the Mosaic law, if they weren't able to observe it in the first month, they could observe it in the second month.

So they called for a special observance of the Passover, in the second month. The people were invited to come from the northern kingdom of Israel, because at this point, Israel had already been conquered by Assyria, and were more or less captive. They didn't completely wipe them out as yet, but they were subjugated to the Assyrians already.

So those that remained, were invited to come down. To turn again to the Lord. Some scoffed at the invitation, others came. It was a glorious movement of God among the people! There was tremendous spirit of revival. During the week of the Passover, that they were celebrating together, it was so glorious, so wonderful, they said, "Let's go on for another week!", and so in sort of a spontaneity, they continued the observance for the second week. That brings us to the beginning of chapter thirty one.

Now when all of this was finished, ["All of this", of course was this observance of this Passover, this glorious work of God's Spirit in their lives, this time of spiritual renewal, when this was finished, the second week.] *all of Israel* [Those from the northern kingdom that were present.] *went out to the cities of Judah, and they broke the images in pieces, they cut down the Ashoreim, and they threw down the high places and the altars out of all of Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim also and Manasseh, til they had utterly destroyed them all.* [Again one of those glorious times of God moving upon the hearts of the people, and with a renewed commitment to God, the abhorring of those things that had drawn them away from the Lord, and had brought them into captivity. So not only in Judah, and in Benjamin, but on up into Ephraim and Manasseh, they were destroying the false gods, the places of the worship for the false gods.] *And so all of the children of Israel returned, every man to his possession, into their own cities. And Hezekiah appointed the courses of the priests and the Levites in their courses*, [Now if a person were a Levite, a priest, then the difference of course, the priest came from the house of Aaron, whereas the Levites were all of the priesthood, the house of the Koathites, and the Merarites, and they would serve in a two week period out of the year. Now they had a pretty nice job. A little better than school teachers, in fact. In that they only had to serve in the temple two weeks out of the year. Then they would live out in the various cities, that were appointed for the priests. They would live sort of regular type lives, they would farm their own fields and so forth. But two weeks out of the year, they had to fulfill the priestly duties. So they would come to Jerusalem for that two weeks. Sort of you know, like the National Guard, where you've gotta go two weeks, and do or, for thirty days, or whatever. They had the two weeks where they would come in, and when they would come into Jerusalem, then they would be given their particular duty. They'd sort of draw straws for who was to do what. So your particular job would be designated by the lots that were drawn. So they would refer to them as, "serving according to their course", that was the two weeks specified time. Then the duty was also something that was just sort of specified by the casting of lots. We remember in the new testament, and this of course, continued on into the new testament times, Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, was ministering in the temple as was his lot. Or his lot was. He was ministering according to his course, and his lot was to offer the incense before the altar of the Lord. So that was where of course, the angel Gabriel came to him and told him that his son, or his wife would have a son, in her old age, and that he would be the forerunner of the Messiah. So, they reinstituted the temple worship, on a regular ongoing basis. It had ceased under the reign of Ahaz,

and so they are again telling the priests, “Okay, you’re gonna get your two weeks”, and they began to set the whole thing in order, bringing the priests in for their two weeks of duty, and establishing the various duties.] *according [it says] to his service, every man according to his service, the priests and Levites and the service was in the offering of the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, [and then] to minister, [And that is, the word “minister”, is “to serve”, and I think that we have sort of made a sad mistake in thinking that the term “minister”, is something that puts people sort of above the others. In reality it’s something that puts us below the others. The word minister is that of a servant, and to serve. Thus, a man shouldn’t say, “Well I’m a minister”, in a sort of a arrogant haughty, kind of carry my bag, tone. But it should be you know, the other way around. “I am the servant”, and picking up the other person’s bag, and carrying it for them, and realizing that God has called us to serve the Lord by serving His people. That’s really our task. By serving you, we serve the Lord, and God has called us as servants. So they were to minister,] and then they were to give thanks, [I love this! They, they had hired a certain number whose duty was just to give thanks to the Lord. They would stand in the house of the Lord singing praises, and giving thanks. Wouldn’t that be a neat job? Just to be paid for giving thanks to the Lord, and just to serve Him by singing and so forth? Then also,] to praise in the gates of the tents of the Lord (31:1-2).*

So they, they established the whole temple worship again.

And he appointed also the king’s [substance, or] portion of his substance for the burnt offerings, [Hezekiah became very prosperous, very wealthy, and so he, of his own substance, gave the animals for the daily offerings that were to be offered unto the Lord. Back in Numbers, chapters twenty eight, twenty seven and twenty eight I guess it is, where it details the daily offerings, and the monthly offerings, and the new moon offerings, and the various sacrifices. So for these normal, regular, daily offerings, they were provided by Hezekiah the king, himself.] for the morning and the evening burnt offerings, and for the burn offerings for the sabbaths, and for the new moons, and for the set feasts, as it is written in the law of the Lord (31:3).

That law of the Lord is Numbers, twenty eight, and twenty nine. I was wrong with twenty seven. It’s twenty eight and twenty nine. Came to my mind. So you can go back and read those sacrifices that are referred to here, as they are detailed in the book of Numbers.

Moreover he commanded that the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the Levites, that they might be encouraged in the law of the Lord (31:4).

Now there were certain of the offerings that the priest got to keep himself. When he offered the heave offering, he got to keep the offering. It was usually grain that they would offer to the Lord, but then it became the priests. Usually it was a tithe, or a tenth of the person’s crop. A person would harvest their crop, they’d bring in a tenth of the harvest. Rather than bringing in money, they would actually bring in the grain. They would bring in the lambs and so forth, one tenth of their increase, they would give to the Lord, and this provided for the needs of the priest. So Hezekiah encouraged them again, in the giving of these offerings, so that the priests would be encouraged in their work. The people whose hearts had been touched in this spiritual renewal, began again to tithe of their first fruits.

And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance the firstfruits of their corn, of their wine, of their oil, of their honey, and of all of the increase of the field; the tithe of all things brought they in abundantly. And concerning the children of Israel and Judah, that dwelt in the cities of Judah, they also brought in the tithe of their oxen, the sheep, the tithe of the holy things which were consecrated unto the Lord their God, and they laid them by heaps (31:5-6).

They were bringing in mainly the grain, the tithe of the corn, and the wheat and the barley, and so forth, and they would just lay them in heaps or in piles, as you would pour your grain on the pile, it would just become a heap, a pile of grain. So, “They laid them by heaps”.

And in the third month they began to lay the foundation of the heaps, and they finished it in the seventh month (31:7).

What that means, of course the third month is the month of June, when they harvest the grain crops. That is when they harvested the barley, that’s when they harvested the wheat, and it was the beginning of the harvest season over there, and still is. As you begin to harvest your winter grains, in the month of June. So that’s when they began building up these heaps of grains, of course on during then, the summer season, the

corn and so forth, so that by the seventh month. Of course in the third month, the month of June, they had the feast of the Passover, which was the feast of firstfruits, bringing them unto the Lord. In the seventh month, they had the feast of the tabernacles, which was again, the Thanksgiving time of the year.

The harvest is now completed, and thus from the third month to the seventh month, the summer months, as the crops are producing, they would bring in the tithe, the tenth, and so they began to heap up. The foundation of the heaps, were made in the third month, in the beginning of the grain harvest and they continued to just pile it on, until the seventh month, and the harvest was completed. Thus, by the end of the seventh month, there was just a tremendous amount of grain, and food supplies, and all. Enough for the supporting of the priesthood.

So when Hezekiah came with the princes, and they saw the heaps, they blessed the Lord, and his people Israel (31:8).

It's always a blessing to see people respond to God. To respond with a willing heart. To, to respond in generosity to the things of the Lord, it's just always a blessing. They came down, and they saw all these heaps of grain and corn, and dried fruits, and all. "Alright! Lord, bless those people!" You know, and you just spontaneously and that is true praise. That which just spontaneously arises from your heart, when you see the work of God. Especially in the hearts of the people. You say, "Oh Lord, that's, bless them Lord!"

And Hezekiah questioned with the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps. ["What are we gonna do with all this?"] And Azariah the chief priest of the house of Zadok answered him, and said, Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the Lord we have had enough to eat, we have plenty left over: for the Lord hath blessed his people; and that which is left is this great store here (31:9-10).

"I mean we've got plenty, and we've got all this left over."

So Hezekiah commanded that they make [bins] chambers in the house of the Lord; in which to store all of this surplus grain, and all that it brought in. [And so they prepared these little chambers, these little bins for the, or the large bins I guess, for the grain and all.] And they brought in the offerings and the tithes and the dedicated things faithfully (31:11-12):

And then it tells us the names of the priests that were set to take care of this abundance, and we're not gonna bother with their names. Verse sixteen.

And beside their genealogy of males, from three years old and upward, even to every one that entereth into the house of the Lord, his daily portion for the service in their charges according to their courses; [They had plenty to take care of all of them. The little fellows from three years old, who began to follow their dads on into the whole group.] And both the genealogy of the priests by the house of their fathers, and the Levites from twenty years old and upward, in their charges by their courses (31:16-17);

So the charge was the duty that they had, the course was the two weeks time and they began that ministry, actively, at the age of twenty.

And unto the genealogy of all their little ones, their wives, their sons, their daughters, through all the congregation: for their set office they sanctified themselves in holiness: [So the Levites, again dedicated themselves to the task of ministry unto the Lord, and unto the people.] Also of the sons of Aaron the priests, which were in the fields of the suburbs of their cities, in every city appointed to the priests, [Which was called,] the several city, [A city of refuge.] the men that were expressed by name, to give portions to all of the males among the priests, and to all that were reckoned by the genealogies among the Levites. [Thus they were distributing the food among the priesthood.] And thus did Hezekiah throughout all of Judah, he wrought that which was good and right and truth before Yahweh his God (31:18-20).

So the record of Hezekiah, as he started his reign. He was doing that which was good, that which was right, and truth before the Lord.

And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all of his heart [So we see here, first of all, the purpose of Hezekiah was to serve the Lord, in all the work that he began in the service of the house of God. To keep the commandments of God, and to seek God. That was his purpose, but he did it with all of his heart. That was his method, of just going wholeheartedly for it. The result was,] he prospered (31:21).

Always so. Put the Lord first in your life, seek the Lord, and God will bless you.

Chapter 32

Now after these things, [This, this reestablishing of the priesthood, the spiritual renewal among the people. "After these things",] and the establishment thereof, [Having established again this whole worship for the people.] Sennacherib the king of Assyria came, and he entered into Judah, and he encamped against the fenced cities and thought to win them for himself (32:1).

Having established the people again in their relationship to the Lord, then comes the testing. The Assyrians had been successful in conquering over Syria, over the northern kingdom of Israel, and over many other kingdoms. They were cruel people, they were vicious people. History records them as some of the cruelest. They would brutally mutilate those that they would take captive, disfiguring them deliberately. They would repopulate the people. They would take them from their home land and separate them into small little groups, in foreign countries, totally demoralizing them.

That is why, when the Lord called Jonah to go to Nineveh, which was the capital of Assyria, and call on them to repent, or God would destroy them, Jonah headed the other way. For Jonah knew that God was merciful, and Jonah was afraid that he might have a successful mission to Nineveh. He was afraid that the people hearing of the impending judgement of God, they might repent, and God would not destroy them. So Jonah decided that he was going to get out of there. He would rather die than go to Nineveh, because Nineveh was a threat. Assyria was a threat to Israel. It ultimately did take Israel. So historically, we're in about the time of Jonah, the time of the Assyrian power, and the call of God to Jonah, to go warn them, concerning the judgement of God that will come within forty days.

Of course we know the story of Jonah, how that God intercepted him on his way to Tarsus, and brought him back, and how that he then went to Nineveh, and just as he feared, the people repented in sackcloth and ashes, right up to the king. God spared the city, and Jonah went out and sat under the tree, and just pouted. God said, "What's wrong with you?", he said, "I knew you were kind, and loving, and gracious. I knew that! Now look! You're not bringing your judgement on them!". He really wanted them wiped out. God said to Jonah, "Look, there are sixty thousand little children in that city, who are so small they don't even know their right hand from their left hand yet".

Interesting to me that God's mercy really was extended because of the little kids. The heart of God for the little children, seeing those innocent little children, He spared the city really, for their sake, as much as anything. But, Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, has now targeted Judah, and he intends to destroy, and bring Judah into captivity. So he came down and he began to war against the fenced cities, and thought to win them for himself.

And when Hezekiah saw Sennacherib was come, and he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem, He took counsel with his princes and his mighty men to stop the waters of the fountains which were without the city: and they did help him (32:2-3).

Now, basically what this is referring to is the conduit that Hezekiah built from the spring of Gihon, on into the pool of Siloam. The city of Jerusalem, of course you'd have to almost be able to visualize it in your minds, and you that have been there can. Where the hillside comes on down from the temple mount, it's called Ophel, in the city of David. The city in those days, was down really more in the Kidron valley. The temple mount was sort of the extent of the city northward, and down into this valley, this sort of a ridge, comes on down. The Tyropian valley on the right hand side, and over here on the left hand side, you had the Kidron valley. This ridge comes on down and there at the bottom, the Tyropian and the Kidron meet.

Now the walls were more or less protecting this abutment that comes down, this mount that comes down, and the walls were built around it. But when the walls were built, the water supply, the spring of Gihon, it has a good supply, it's a great spring, good supply of water, it was outside of the walls.

Now during the period that the Jebusites had the city of Jerusalem, they ingeniously dug a tunnel down through the rock, a shaft. At the spring of Gihon, they diverted the waters into this cave, and then at the interior of the cave was this shaft, that came right on up, about a hundred feet or so, and it was to them like a well. They had the pool, and the spring was diverted into this pool, and they would just let their buckets down, like it were a well, into this water. Thus they were able to supply their city with water from the spring

of Gihon, even though the city was under siege.

Within the wall of the city they had this shaft that went on down. When David finally took, and of course because of this, the children of Israel were unable to take Jerusalem, the Jebusite city, for many, many years, until actually the time of David. Here was a alien city right within the middle of the nation of Israel, the city of the Jebusites, and they were unable to take it. But David, when he became king, and came to Jerusalem, offered a special reward. "The man who you know, opens the gates so that we can take the city will be my chief general." Joab went into this cave at the spring of Gihon, into the pool, and then he scaled up this shaft on the inside.

If you'd see it, you'd realize that this guy really, I mean it was a good feat. Because the thing is probably oh, four feet wide, so you'd have to you know, brace his feet and climb like a rock climber up this shaft. He got into the city, went out and opened the gates, and all of the guys came in, and they were ultimately able to take the city of the Jebusites that way.

Now, Hezekiah, where the Jebusites had built this little tunnel in, he began to tunnel through this whole mountainside that comes down. At this point, where the mountain is coming together, is coming down like this, it's about seventeen hundred feet across, laterally. So he had a group of fellows start at the spring of Gihon, chipping through this solid rock. He had others, over at the pool of Siloam started there, chipping through the rock from that side, chipping towards each other. Now remember, no jack hammers, no electrical lighting systems. Torches and candles, and these guys are down there under these, under this massive rock, in this, when you go over there, and when you see it, you'll wonder, "How in the world did they ever do it?". When you bump your head on the rock, you realize it's hard. I mean it's really good, solid rock that these guys chipped through. Yet, seventeen hundred feet. They made it oh about, eighteen to twenty four inches wide, and an average height of about five feet or so, so that when you walk through you have to remain sort of in a crouched position.

Now there are areas where they did get off a little bit. They started working up, and so when they realized their mistake, then of course, they'd have to bring it on down, so there are some areas where the ceiling is about twelve feet high. Where they got off, and then of course they had to, to bring the thing on down, because water you know, has gotta flow, and the gravity flow of the water. So you can see the areas. Inside you go inside, and man you can just imagine all kinds of things, as they were working on this project.

When they got near each other, tremendous excitement! Because they could hear the sounds of the picks. So then when they could hear the sounds of the other fellows, with their picks, they began to come towards each other. Thus, as you're coming in the tunnel from Gihon, you get to this right angle turn, and it comes about seven feet across, and then you get the right angle again, and that's where they met.

Where they met, they put this monument, which told about the digging of this tunnel. The monument was cut out and taken to the British museum, but uh, it was a tremendous feat, engineering feat. Where they diverted the spring. Of course, the purpose, "Why should we let them come and have this supply of water? So ingeniously they, they covered the spring of Gihon, so that the Assyrians wouldn't know where the water supply was.

So the stopping up, is actually the covering of the spring from the outside, and the water then flowed on through this conduit that they made, this tunnel through the rock, and emptied out in the pool of Siloam. So that during the siege, not only would the Assyrians be kept from the water, but they would have a sufficient supply of fresh water to maintain themselves during the period of the siege. Part of the preparation that he made for the siege of Jerusalem, under the Assyrian army.

So they gathered a lot of people together, and they stopped up all the fountains, and the brook that ran through the midst of the land, [Which would of course, been the brook Gihon, or that came out from the spring of Gihon.] for he said, Why should the kings of Assyria come, and find a lot of water (32:4)?

You can imagine how much water it would take for an army of several hundred thousand. The Assyrians did have an army of several hundred thousand. So he was gonna make them work for their water. Probably the closest supply outside of the spring of Gihon, was the Wadikelt, and that is down towards Jericho. But you'd have to have several thousand men daily, just carrying water for the tremendous army that he had. We can't imagine in our days of modern convenience, roads, and trucks, and buses, and so forth, we can't

imagine what it must have been like in those days. In moving these masses of people over land. They've got to have food supplies. They've got to carry food with them. They've got to have food preparation, sanitation, and everything. We, you just can't imagine.

When you go down to Masada, and you think of Masada being taken by the Roman legion, it was the tenth Roman legion? And, you see, how that they were out there in this dry, barren wilderness. The closest water was about twenty miles away at En-gedi. So even to the present day, you can see the path that goes from Masada! You can stand at the top of Masada, on the north portico there, and you can see the path going up to En-gedi, where the Roman soldiers had to go to get water and all, for the troops that were besieging this fortress, there in the middle of the wilderness. The logistics of such an operation are just mind boggling.

So Hezekiah is doing a wise thing. He's gonna make it tough on these guys. "You're gonna conquer us man, you're not gonna do it easily!"

So he also strengthened himself, and built up all the wall that was broken, [During the reign of his father, there was an area of wall that was broken down, and so he rebuilt the wall that was broken.] *he raised it up to the towers,* [Now there's a little bit of ambiguity in the Hebrew language there. They don't know exactly if he heightened the towers, or if he brought engines of war into the towers. In the Hebrew, it's a difficult thing to really translate, or to know what they were saying. So here, he "raised it". "He raised", and notice, the "it" is in italics. So the translators added that, but "and raised to the towers". Raised what to the towers? We don't know. Raised the towers? That's what most of the commentators, and those who study those things believe. That he raised the height of the towers. The towers of course were the strong fortresses. The idea is get the advantage of shooting down, and you're up too high for the guys to throw their spears that high, so you have a tremendous advantage. You're shooting down, or throwing your spear down at them, and they can't reach you. So build these towers. Actually, in the city of Babylon, the wall was three hundred feet high. Eighty seven feet thick, and then it had towers that were another hundred and fifty feet higher than the wall. So you can imagine how it would be to try and take that kind of a city! You couldn't even shoot your arrows to the top of the towers! So those guys up in those towers would have a tremendous advantage. They were sort of just you know, untouchable up there, and yet they were able to shoot down, or throw the rocks down and so forth, to you. But they were pretty impervious to your attempting to get back at them. So he "raised the towers", or "raised up to the towers".] *and another wall he built without, and he repaired Millo [or Millo] in the city of David,* [And that again, is something that you can reference with Samuel, II Samuel, five, nine.] *and he made darts, arrows, spears, shields in abundance (32:5).*

All of this was preparation against the invasion of the Assyrians.

He then set the captains of war over the people, gathered them together to him in the street of the gate of the city, and he spoke comfortable words to them (32:6),

Or encouraging words to them. Now as we noted this morning, he did more than pray. He was making active preparations, from a physical standpoint, to withstand the Assyrians. He didn't say, "Oh God, deliver us from the Assyrians", and leave the walls broken down, and didn't make any you know, preparation at all from a physical standpoint. Always, God expects us to do certain things. There is God's work, always. But there is always also the human responsibility that God requires.

Being a Christian should not give you an excuse for irresponsibility. "Well I'm a Christian, I'm just gonna trust the Lord to take care of my family, and I've decided to quit my job, and we're just gonna live by faith." Ha, ha! Well, faith without works is dead. "I'm just gonna trust the Lord to educate my kids." You know. No. There are certain responsibilities and practical things that we need to do. Christianity is very practical. You do what you have to do, and you trust the Lord to take care of you. But there is that combination, always that combination. God's work, man's work. Man's responsibility.

The bible teaches the sovereignty of God, but it also teaches the responsibility of man, the necessity of our responding to God. That is an important thing to note, because there are some who misread the scripture, and become very careless and irresponsible and then they try to blame it on God. You know, because their family has just been evicted, and their hungry, and you know, "When I was, decided to just trust in the Lord, and quit my job, and just believe God to supply. Why did God let us be evicted?" Well, you know, you're not using good judgement, you're not being responsible. Christianity does not make you irresponsible, but it

does make you a very responsible person. But the whole while, we realize, "Hey, God is my source, God is my help, God is my strength, God is gonna take care of me". But He's gonna take care of me, by giving me the opportunity to work.

For many years, over seventeen years of our ministry, when we first began the ministry, and actually, uh, this is my fortieth year. I began to pastor in Prescott, Arizona back in July of 1948. So, I'll be celebrating forty-eight, forty years in the ministry this July. In the pastoring, before that, I was an evangelist. So, I sought to be an evangelist, but, I traveled around to different churches, whatever that makes you. But for the first seventeen years, oh nineteen years I guess, or twenty years, when we first came to Calvary Chapel, I worked in outside types of jobs, to support the family needs. Because when we first came here we were only making a hundred and fifty a month from the church, and that wasn't sufficient for a family of four with kids in high school, and junior high and all. So we worked for the first few years in outside type of employment. But I looked at it as God's providing for our needs. I just figured, "Hey that's the way God's providing, giving me an opportunity of employment in different types of jobs".

I, I think that we make a mistake when we think God's just gonna drop stuff into our lap apart from an effort on our part. God gives us the wisdom, God gives us the guidance, God gives us the abilities, He gives us the strength, and then that's the way He provides. He provides so often. You know, I think that where we make a mistake is we are often expecting God to work in such supernatural ways, that we don't recognize the work of God in very natural ways. When we were pastoring in Huntington Beach, one of the jobs we had, of course I was working with Alpha Beta at the time, but then we were also working for the Smith Brother's Mortuary. My name was Smith, so I fit in real well, and so Howard Smith had back problems, so he couldn't make the first calls anymore, so they called me, in the middle of the night especially, to go out and make the first calls. Go out and pick up the bodies. I got five dollars a body, and it was great. You know, the kids would need a pair of tennis shoes, and you don't have money for tennis shoes, and I'd get a call. And, I'd say, "Well praise the Lord! The Lord provided tennis shoes for the kids!". Sometimes you get to pick up multiple, you know, two, you get ten bucks! Lots of interesting experiences.

I remember the night we picked up Mr. Umarian, he'd had a prayer meeting in his home, with a group of Armenian people. Beautiful people there in Huntington Beach, beautiful Armenian families, the Parnachians, the Amerians, and all. They had this prayer meeting in the home, and Mr. Umarian, after they had prayed around the circle, and as he said, "Amen", he had a heart attack and just fell back on the floor, and that was it. I mean, he just finished his prayer up there. You know, just right in prayer, and that was it, just as he said, "Amen", he just went over on the floor. So we were called to go over there, and of course I knew the families, so we went in, and picked him up. As we were heading back, I said to the fellow that was with me, about Mr. Umarian, I knew the family, I knew Mr. Umarian quite well, and I said to him, "Oh that lucky stiff, he's with the Lord right now". You've got to have a humor in that job, or it'll get ya.

So God works in very natural ways. We need to learn to look for the supernatural in the natural. You think, "Well, God is leading me", well you know, is there some beep, beep, beep, do, do, do, you think of sort of electronic types of sounds, and vibrations, and all. No it doesn't work that way. It works in a very natural way.

I was heading up to Ventura, to hold a meeting up there on Sunday evening, and I was heading up the Ventura freeway, which wasn't a freeway at that time, and I, as I got to Sunset Boulevard, I got this, it was a beautiful day. I had a convertible, and I thought, "What a beautiful day. I you know, don't have any real deadlines", I was going up on a Saturday, I was not going to speak until Sunday, and so I thought, "Hmm, I'll just drive up by Malibu", that's one of my favorite routes anyhow, it's going up Malibu, on a sunny day, in a convertible. I mean that's just, that's living! So I wound all the way down Sunset Boulevard to Pacific Coast Highway, to go through Malibu, and just as I pulled onto Pacific Coast Highway, there was a couple there hitchhiking. So, I thought, "Well here I am all by myself, beautiful day, might as well give them a ride". So invited them into the car, they were from Montana, the kid was a farmer, came out to Hollywood to look for a job. I said, "You'll never find any farm jobs in Hollywood", you know. So they decided they'd head for San Francisco. I said, "They don't have any farms in San Francisco man! You need to stop along the way. Ventura, Salinas, or somewhere to get a job".

So as we were riding along, we had the opportunity of sharing the Lord with them, they both accepted Christ. We pulled over to the side, and they prayed, accepted the Lord. I let them off in Ventura, and the poor kids were down on their luck, and so I gave them money for a motel that night. I took them by the church where I would be speaking the next evening. I said, "Hey I'm speaking here tomorrow night. Come on out to church and we'll see what the Lord will do". Well, um, it so happened that the foreman of the Del Mar Lymonaire Ranch was there that night, sat next to these kids, started talking to them, and they did come to church. I thought, "Ah probably never see them again, you know, they got my bucks", and "they'll move on". But they were in church the following night, and they happened to sit right next to Mr. Jenkins, who was the uh, foreman at the Del Mar Lymonaire Ranch, he got to talking to them, he said, "Well, I can use some hands out on the ranch". So they had housing, and the guy hired them right there from church. But they came forward that night to make a public profession of their faith in Christ.

But I got to thinking you know, impulse said, "Why don't you go Coast Highway?", you know, I was already committed to the interior route, and just that crazy impulse. You think, "Oh it's just my love for the beach, my love for the ocean, you know the ride up", no it was God directing. And you begin to see this, because God saw these two kids down there who were needing help, who were hungry, who needed to know Him. So God just made me wind down. While I was going down Sunset Boulevard, I began to think, "Oh what am I doing, these crazy signals, and this long windy drive", and beginning to crumble, until I came out to Pacific Coast, and then you see God's hand, and think, "Oh alright!". God is so good! But you don't think, do, do, do it, "God's leading me", you know. It doesn't work that way.

It's always a very natural way in which God works in our lives, and leads us, and guides us. Quite often, we're not even aware that it was God that was speaking to us, until the whole thing was over, and then we look back, and we say, "Wow! Did you see that? Do you realize what just happened?", then the realization, "God was directing me. God was leading!". You get then the excitement and all, of realizing that God's hand was upon you, after the fact so often, not during the experience. So the parts that we have to play, God's part, our part. Hezekiah did his part. Now he's gathered the people together to encourage. So as he is encouraging them, he says...

Now be strong and courageous, don't be afraid or dismayed [Interesting encouragement, but wait a minute Hezekiah, these guys are tough. These guys have bludgeoned the world into submission. They have a vast army. "Hundreds of thousands have marched against us. You're telling us don't be afraid or dismayed?" But he gives them the reason. "Don't be afraid or dismayed",] *for the king of Assyria, or for all of the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him (32:7).*

Not numerically, because all he has is the...

arm of flesh, but with us is Yahweh our God to help us, and to fight our battles. ["Now God is with us to fight our battles. We made the preparation, we built up the walls, we stopped up the fountains, we've appointed the captains, we have the spears, and the shields and all. But Our God is with us to fight our battles."] *And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah the king of Judah (32:8).*

They, they just were comforted by his words.

And after this Sennacherib the king of Assyria sent his servants to Jerusalem (while he was laying siege to Lachish,) [Which is down in the Philistine country towards Gath.] and he sent this message to Hezekiah the king of Judah, and to all of Judah that were in Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith Sennacherib the king of Assyria, Whereon do you trust that you abide in the siege in Jerusalem? ["How come you haven't fled from Jerusalem, where is it you're just trusting? What are you trusting that you would stay there in Jerusalem, which is about ready to be besieged?"] Does not Hezekiah persuade you to give yourselves over to die by famine and by thirst, ["This Hezekiah, king of yours, he's encouraging a man to die! He's encouraged you to die by famine, and by thirst!" Of course, he doesn't know that Hezekiah's diverted the spring into the city. They may get hungry, but they're not gonna get thirsty. They've got plenty of water.] saying that Yahweh our God shall deliver us out of the hand of the king of Assyria (32:9-11)?

"You know, don't kid yourself! Who do you think Hezekiah is?"

Hath not this same Hezekiah taken away his high places and his altars, and commanded Judah [to worship] and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall worship before one altar, and burn incense upon it (32:12)? That

shows how little he knew about the God of Hezekiah. For Hezekiah was only commanding, uh fulfilling the command of God, to destroy the high places and the other places of worship, and bring the central worship right into Jerusalem. It's interesting how that people talk about our faith, who know nothing about our faith. I'm amazed at what some supposedly knowledgeable people say about the Bible. How totally ignorant they are of the bible, and yet they talk like they're authorities.

We had a debate here one night, and we had some professors from Cal State Fullerton who were debating against Dr. Morris, and Dr. Gish. This one professor of Cal State, was talking about Eve, and the garden, and he said, "And the people said she ate an apple", he said, "That's so funny, because in the Hebrew, it's pomegranate". Well in the Hebrew it's nothing, it's just fruit, and it doesn't say what kind it is, and he turned out to be the fruit, you know. But I mean that's the way people are! They talk so knowledgeably like you know, and pompously about the bible, and they really know nothing about the bible! Sennacherib says, "He had you break down the high places and all, to worship this Yahweh and just said to offer the incense". Well that was God's command, he didn't know it.

Don't you know what I and my fathers have done to all of the people in the other lands? ["Don't you know what Assyria is doing?"] were the gods of those nations and those lands in any way able to deliver their lands out of my hand? [Notice the "I"'s, the "my"'s and so forth.] Who was there among all of the gods of the nations that my fathers utterly destroyed, that could deliver his people out of my hand, that your God should be able to deliver you out of my hand (32:13-14)?

The whole idea was to destroy faith, to inspire fear. Satan so often uses the same guise today against us. He tries to plant fear in your heart and destroy your confidence and faith in God. By getting you to look at the circumstances, getting you to look at the problem. The power of the enemy, and if you get your eyes on the enemy, now what Hezekiah was doing was focusing the people's eyes on the Lord. "All they've got is the arm of flesh, with us is Yahweh our God", you know, "Get your eyes on the Lord. He will fight this battle for us!" Now Sennacherib's trying to get their eyes on him, the power of his army.

Now therefore don't let Hezekiah deceive you, or persuade you on this manner, neither yet believe him: for no god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people out of my hand, and out of the hand of my fathers: and how much less he [is deprecating now, the God of Israel. "How much less",] shall your God deliver you out of my hand? And his servants spoke yet more against Yahweh the God, and against his servant Hezekiah (32:15-16).

In I Kings it gives quite a bit of the blasphemous speech of the Rabshakeh against the Lord.

He also wrote letters [in which he threatened Hezekiah, and threatened the people, and spoke against Jehovah God. So, "He wrote letters",] to rail on Yahweh the God of Israel, and to speak against him, saying, As the gods of the nations and the other lands, have not delivered their people out of my hand, so shall not the God of Hezekiah deliver his people out of my hand. And they [guys outside] cried to the people on the walls in loud voices in the Hebrew language seeking to frighten them, and to trouble them; in order that they might take the city (32:17-18).

So it was a whole psychological warfare going on here, as these guys were calling up the threats, telling the people on the walls of what they were gonna do to them, how they were gonna mutilate them, and all, if they dared to resist. Seeking actually to get them to capitulate.

And they spoke against the God of Jerusalem, as against the gods of the people of the earth, which were the [works, or the] work of the hands of men (32:19).

They talked about God as though He were like the other gods. Gods that were created by men's hands. Little idols and so forth, they didn't know who they were contending with. Hezekiah took the letter in before the Lord, and he put, he stretched the letter out before the Lord, and he said, "Lord look how they're blaspheming you, look what they're saying! And Lord it is true, we don't have the strength to go against this army. They, they, they're stronger than we are, but Lord they're not stronger than you! So we're gonna trust in you, we're gonna rely on you, take care of them Lord, because look what they said."

So for this cause Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah, [This of course is the prophet Isaiah who has written the book of Isaiah, and he gives us extra details on Hezekiah, and upon this period of time. In fact, Hezekiah, I mean, Isaiah tells us at this period, that when God wiped out the Assyrian army, that a great

fear gripped the hearts of the sinners in Jerusalem, and they saw the power of God against the Assyrians, they said, "Wait a minute, this is a pretty powerful God! Who are we to stand before Him without getting wiped out? Who of us can approach this fire without being destroyed? So Isaiah,] *and Hezekiah prayed and they cried to heaven. And the Lord sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valour, with the leaders, and the captains in the camp of the king of Assyria.* [In one night a hundred and eighty five thousand were slain by the angel of the Lord! Died mysteriously in the night, so that when the rest of the troops awoke and looked around, they were surrounded by the dead corpses of their brethren.] *So the king returned with shame of face to his own land. And when he would come into the house of his god,* [He had been you know, boasting about it.] *they that came forth out of his own bowels slew him there* [His two sons actually assassinated their dad.] *with a sword (32:20-21).*

Then they fled, themselves to Armenia, according to history.

Thus the Lord saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all others, and guided them on every side (32:22).

God delivered them out of the hands of the Assyrians, the Assyrians, because of the weakened position soon fell to the Babylonians. This was the, this broke the back of the Assyrian power. There had been this constant fighting between the Babylonians and the Assyrians for strength and power and the Assyrians had the upper hand until God destroyed these forces, and then Babylon immediately took the upper hand, and Assyria no longer was a world dominating power. But Babylon rose to this. Of course Assyria was just north of Babylon, and thus they had greater conflicts with each other, than with other nations. So in those days, well...

Thus the Lord saved Hezekiah and guided him on every side. And many brought gifts unto Yahweh to Jerusalem, and they brought presents to Hezekiah the king of Judah; so that he was magnified in the sight of all of the nations from then on (32:22-23).

They all of the nations say, "Wow! Hezekiah wiped out the Assyrians!", you know.

And in those days Hezekiah was sick to the death, [He was deathly sick.] *and he prayed unto Yahweh: and he spake unto him, and gave him a sign.* [The Lord spoke to him, gave him a sign.] *But Hezekiah was healed* [God gave him an extra ten years or so, little bit more.] *But Hezekiah* [in the healing, and we'll deal with this when we get to, to uh, well we'll get next week, when we deal with Manasseh, we'll deal with Hezekiah's recovering from the sickness. In Isaiah he describes his prayer. How he mourned like a dove all night long. He chattered, and he was probably you know, had chills and was chattering, and mourning like a dove. Yet God healed him and extended his life. Fourteen years, but it was, it was not good. "But Hezekiah",] *rendered not again* [After this, he did not render,] *according to the benefit that was done to him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem (32:24-25).*

After this he became prideful. It's sort of tragic, after God has done such a spectacular work in a man's life, that the man sort of gets lifted up. That is the danger always! We see it today. We see it today demonstrated in the ministries, where God will bless a man's ministry. The man gets lifted up with pride, and uh, how God then brings them down. But you begin to think, "Well it's my ability, or it's my personality, or it's my...", you know, and so with Hezekiah. "I've got this power with God, I...", boy I'll tell you, bad news! So, "He did not render to the Lord, according to the things that God had done." He was lifted up with pride. When God then began to deal with him...

he humbled himself for the pride of his heart. [He did respond, which is good, unto God]. *he, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the Lord did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah. Now he was exceedingly wealthy, and he had a lot of honor: he made for himself treasuries for the silver, and for the gold, and for the precious stones, and for the spices, and for the shields, and for all manner of pleasant jewels; He had storehouses also for the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and then he had these stalls for all manner of beasts, and cotes for flocks (32:26-28).*

These, remember David said, "You took me out of the sheep cote". A cote is a enclosure, a stall, for the sheep. So he had these stalls for, it's called cotes, we don't think of that word today, but it's stalls.

Moreover he provided him cities, and possessions of flocks herds in abundance: for God had given him a great amount of substance. This same Hezekiah also stopped the upper watercourse of Gihon, [And we've

talked about this already] *he brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David. And Hezekiah prospered in all his ways. Howbeit in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart (32:29-32).*

There came after the Assyrians were wiped out, the Babylonians were so happy they sent emissaries to him, to congratulate him you know. On the recovers, if any one was sick unto death, and he was healed, and so they sent these emissaries, to say, "Ah great guy! Wonderful". So in his pride, he began to show off the wealth. Took them in, showed them all the jewels, all the gold, all the silver and all. The prophet came to him, and said, "Who were these guys that came that were just leaving?" He said, "They were the Babylonians", he said, "What did you show them?", he said, "I showed them everything", he said, "You have planted the seeds of disaster. They have seen the wealth, and now greed will fill their heart. They'll go back and they'll talk about it, and soon the Babylonian army will be down here to rip off this wealth". Of course, it did happen. But it was sort of a prideful thing. "Gonna show off how wealthy I am." And, "Pride cometh before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall." So it was a testing of God he failed.

Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, his goodness, behold they're written in the vision of Isaiah [And we'll get it when we get to the book of Isaiah.] the prophet, the son of Amoz, and in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. [Which we've already covered.] And Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the chiefest of the sepulchres [Good king. Got a good burial in the chiefest of the sepulchres.] of the sons of David: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did honour him at his death. And Manasseh his son reigned in his stead (32:32-33).

Interesting thing now. His father was a horrible king, a wicked king. He basically was a good king. His son Manasseh, was horrible. Interesting. Just flip flop. From a bad king to a good king, now to a horrible king, and then we'll come back to a good king again, Josiah. So it's a period of, of real yo-yoing, really for the nation, as far as the leadership is concerned.

It was the purpose of Hezekiah to basically get the people to focus their eyes, not upon the problem, not upon the enemy, but upon the Lord. This is what dispels the fears. This is what takes away the anxiety. This is what gives you strength and courage, as you look to the power of the Lord. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" The glorious truth is this, "God is for you, if you will be for Him, and if you seek Him, you'll find Him, but if you forsake Him, He'll forsake you."

May this be a week of our seeking God. May the Holy Spirit focus our attention upon the power of the Lord. His ability to take care of whatever problem you are facing. So, with your eyes focused on Him, we will go forth, and see God do battle for His people. We'll see the Lord close the mouth of the enemies. We will see God triumph, as we place our trust and confidence in Him! God bless you, give you a beautiful week as you serve our Lord.