What to Do and Not Do When You are Surrounded

The Story of Hezekiah

1. Hezekiah becomes king of Judah and trusts in the Lord

2 Kings 16:20 Ahaz rested with his ancestors and was buried with them in the City of David. And Hezekiah his son succeeded him as king.

2 Kings 18:5-**8 Hezekiah trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel. There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him.** 6 He held fast to the Lord and did not stop following him; he kept the commands the Lord had given Moses. 7 And the Lord was with him; **he was successful in whatever he undertook**. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. 8 From watchtower to fortified city, he defeated the Philistines, as far as Gaza and its territory.

2. King of Assyria captures cities of Judah. Hezekiah gives him silver and gold.

2 Kings 18:13-15 13 In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah's reign, Sennacherib king of Assyria attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them. 14 So Hezekiah king of Judah sent this message to the king of Assyria at Lachish: "I have done wrong. Withdraw from me, and I will pay whatever you demand of me." The king of Assyria exacted from Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. 15 So Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the temple of the Lord and in the treasuries of the royal palace.

3. Once again, they are attacked by Assyria, commander taunts the people of Jerusalem

2 Kings 18:19,22-37 The field commander said to them, "Tell Hezekiah: "'This is what the great king, the king of Assyria, says: **On what are you basing this confidence of yours**? …

22 But if you say to me, "We are depending on the Lord our God"—isn't he the one whose high places and altars Hezekiah removed, saying to Judah and Jerusalem, "You must worship before this altar in Jerusalem"? 23 "'**Come now, make a bargain with my master**, the king of Assyria: I will give you two thousand horses—if you can put riders on them! 24 How can you repulse one officer of the least of my master's officials, even though you are depending on Egypt for chariots and horsemen? 25 Furthermore, have I come to attack and destroy this place without word from the Lord**? The Lord himself told me to march against this country and destroy it.**'"

26 Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah, and Shebna and Joah said to the field commander, "Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, since we understand it. Don't speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people on the wall."

27 But the commander replied, "Was it only to your master and you that my master sent me to say these things, and not to the people sitting on the wall—who, like you, will have to eat their own excrement and drink their own urine?"

28 Then the commander stood and called out in Hebrew, “Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria! 29 This is what the king says: Do not let Hezekiah deceive you. He cannot deliver you from my hand. 30 **Do not let Hezekiah persuade you to trust in the Lord when he says**, ‘The Lord will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.’

31 “Do not listen to Hezekiah. This is what the king of Assyria says: **Make peace with me** and come out to me. Then each of you will eat fruit from your own vine and fig tree and drink water from your own cistern, 32 until I come and take you to a land like your own—a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive trees and honey. Choose life and not death!

“Do not listen to Hezekiah, for he is misleading you when he says, ‘The Lord will deliver us.’ 33 Has the god of any nation ever delivered his land from the hand of the king of Assyria? 34 Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah? Have they rescued Samaria from my hand? 35 Who of all the gods of these countries has been able to save his land from me? **How then can the Lord deliver Jerusalem from my hand?”**

36 But the people remained silent and said nothing in reply, because the king had commanded, “Do not answer him.”

37 Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary, and Joah son of Asaph the recorder went to Hezekiah, with their clothes torn, and told him what the field commander had said.

4. Hezekiah repents and seeks the Lord, Isaiah prophesies the army will go, they do

2 Kings 19:1 **When King Hezekiah heard this, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and went into the temple of the Lord.**

2 Kings 19:5-7 When King Hezekiah’s officials came **to Isaiah**, 6 Isaiah said to them, “Tell your master, ‘**This is what the Lord says: Do not be afraid of what you have heard**—those words with which the underlings of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. 7 Listen! When he hears a certain report, I will make him want to return to his own country, and there I will have him cut down with the sword.’”

2 Kings 19:9-10 9 Now Sennacherib received a report that Tirhakah, the king of Cush, was marching out to fight against him. So he again sent messengers to Hezekiah with this word: 10 “Say to Hezekiah king of Judah: **Do not let the god you depend on deceive you when he says, ‘Jerusalem will not be given into the hands of the king of Assyria**.’

5. Hezekiah spreads the letter before the Lord, intercedes for help

2 Kings 19:14-19 **14** Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it. Then he went up to the temple of the Lord and **spread it out before the Lord**. **15** And **Hezekiah prayed** to the Lord: "Lord, the God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. **16** Give ear, Lord, and hear; open your eyes, Lord, and see; listen to the words Sennacherib has sent to ridicule the living God.

17 "It is true, Lord, that the Assyrian kings have laid waste these nations and their lands. **18** They have thrown their gods into the fire and destroyed them, for they were not gods but only wood and stone, fashioned by human hands. **19** **Now, Lord our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone, Lord, are God."**

6. The angel of the Lord destroys the Assyrian army, King of Assyria is killed by his sons

35 That night **the angel of the Lord went out and put to death** a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies! **36** So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there. **37** One day, while he was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisrok, his sons Adrammelek and Sharezer killed him with the sword, …

Recap:

The first things Hezekiah did right – trusted in the Lord, he held fast to the Lord, and he followed God's commandments. There were great victories against the Philistines.

His first mistake: submitting to the king of Assyria instead of seeking the Lord for victory.

His next thing Hezekiah did right: In the midst of great army attacking him and the commander taunting him and his God, Hezekiah sought the Lord with repentance and prayer, he listened to the Word of the Lord from the Prophet Isaiah, he extoled God and His power.

Then God moved on Judah's behalf. 186,000 Assyrians were killed by the angel of the Lord and the commander was killed by his own sons.

This story teaches us the importance of listening to God's voice over all the other negative voices. Trust God, seek Him, pray to Him, exalt Him, and He will give you deliverance from your enemies.

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