Lesson 21: 2 Kings 18:1 to 20:21 Hezekiah's Reforms

The *siege of Samaria began* under the Assyrian king Shalmaneser V. occurred between 726-721 BC . However, he died just before the city was conquered. The conquest of the Northern Kingdom of Israel was finished by Sargon II. When Sargon became king in 722, he incorporated Samaria into the Assyrian empire. He deported 27,290 citizens of the Northern Kingdom to Assyria. **Hezekiah** became king of Judah ~715 B.C. During his reign, all of Hezekiah's actions, his political and economic reforms, and his alliances with Egypt were preparation for his revolt against Assyria.

1. Read 2 Kings 18:1-12 and share any footnotes with your group.

- a. Hoshea is king of Isreal. Who is king of Judah in these verses?
- b. Was he a good king or a bad king?
- c. What do we learn about this king in 2 Kings 18:2?

d. List the accomplishments of this king of Judah as noted in the following verses:

- 18:3-4
- 18:5-6
- 18:7-8
- e. What is happening in Israel in 2 Kings 18:9-10.

f. Who was king of Assyria at this time?

g. What happened to the Israelites? See 18:11.

2. Read Deuteronomy 28:15, 20, 25 here and 2 Kings 18:12.

¹⁵ But if you do not obey the voice of the Lord, your God, carefully observing all his commandments and statutes which I give you today, all these curses shall come upon you and overwhelm you:

²⁰ The Lord will send on you a curse, panic, and frustration in everything you set your hand to, until you are speedily destroyed and perish for the evil you have done in forsaking me.

²⁵ The Lord will let you be beaten down before your enemies; though you advance against them from one direction, you will flee before them in seven, so that you will become an object of horror to all the kingdoms of the earth.

Why has Israel fallen at the hands of their enemies?

3. Read 2 Kings 18:13-16 and footnotes. Share any helpful footnotes.

Assyria had turned against Judah in these verses and captured several Judean cities. Hezekiah paid a tribute to his enemy hoping he would leave Jerusalem alone. What is it that he pays to the Assyrians?

4. Read 2 Kings 18:17-25 and footnotes.

a. The Assyrians now intend to conquer Jerusalem. A great army is assembled near Jerusalem and they call King Hezekiah out. Who is it that responds on behalf of Judah/Jerusalem instead?

b. *Compare translations* of 18:21-22 with the NIV translation here.

18:21-22 Look, I know you are depending on Egypt, that splintered reed of a staff, which pierces the hand of anyone who leans on it! Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who depend on him. 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"*?

c. Who has Judah sought assistance from according to the Assyrians? (18:21-24)

- d. Why is it suggested that the LORD might *not* be on Judah's side now? (18:25)
- 5. Read 2 Kings 18:26-37 and footnotes. Share any footnotes.
 - a. Why do the men from Judah ask that the Assyrians not speak in Hebrew?
 - b. What *promises* does Assyria's spokesman make in the following verses?
 18:31
 18:32
 - c. The language of 18:33-35 rises to the level of psychological warfare. What arguments are being made here by the Assyrians?
 - d. How do the people of Judah respond to these comments?
 - e. How do Eliakim, Shebnah the scribe, and Joah, son of Asaph react?
- 6. Read 19:1-8 and footnotes.
 - a. How did King Hezekiah of Judah react to the threats from Assyria? (19:1-4)
 - b. What message does the prophet Isaiah send to King Hezekiah? (see 19:6-7)
- 7. Read 19:9-37 and footnotes.
 - a. What threat is Assyria sending to Hezekiah in 19:9-13?
 - b. What does Hezekiah do with the letter he received from the king of Assyria? (See 19:14-19)
 - c. The prophet Isaiah sends the word of the LORD regarding Assyrian threats to King Hezekiah. What does he say in the following verses?
- 19:2819:30-3119:32-34d. What actions did the LORD take on behalf of King Hezekiah and Judah? (19:35-37)
- 8. Read 2 Kings 20:1-21 and footnotes. Share any helpful footnotes with your group. a. Some scholars believe that these first verses actually occurred before the attack of Assyria in chapters 18 and 19. King Hezekiah is mortally ill, and he prays to the LORD. How is his prayer answered? (20:1-6)
 - b. Isaiah calls for a treatment of the king's boils. Hezekiah looks for a sign that this treatment will work. What is the sign? (20:8-11)
 - c. With the Assyrians threatening, an entourage from *Babylon* visits Hezekiah. Why might Hezekiah be so open and welcoming to the Babylonians?
 - d. What is Isaiah's prophecy to King Hezekiah? (20:16-18)
 - e. How does Hezekiah react to Isaiah's prophesy?