

“Judgment Upon the Assyrians”
2 Kings 19:20-37
(Preached at Trinity, October 2, 2022)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. The Assyrians were sweeping across the land and facing little resistance. We saw the fall of Israel in Chapter 17.
2 Kings 17:5-8 NAU - "Then the king of Assyria invaded the whole land and went up to Samaria and besieged it three years. ⁶ In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and carried Israel away into exile to Assyria, and settled them in Halah and Habor, *on* the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. ⁷ Now *this* came about because the sons of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up from the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and they had feared other gods ⁸ and walked in the customs of the nations whom the LORD had driven out before the sons of Israel, and *in the customs* of the kings of Israel which they had introduced."
2. With their success, Assyria thought they were invincible. They were proud and arrogant. King Sennacherib sent his official Rabshakeh to discourage and taunt Judah. He spoke blasphemous words declaring the impotence of God to help them. As we entered **Chapter 19** his words have come to the hearing of Hezekiah. Hezekiah was distraught, not only because of the threat upon the safety of Jerusalem, but because the name of God was being blasphemed.
3. Hezekiah was discouraged and fearful, but to his credit, He turned to Isaiah to hear a word from God. When he received a letter from Rabshakeh bringing a further reproach upon God he set it before God and humbled himself in prayer.
2 Kings 19:16 NAU - "Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and listen to the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God."
 - a. It is as if Hezekiah is saying, “Do they dare blaspheme the living God!”
 - a. This was not the self-centered prayer that too often characterizes our prayer life. If Sennacherib was merely insulting Hezekiah that he could bare. But he was insulting God. Hezekiah went before God with particular boldness.
4. God was honored by Hezekiah’s humble prayer.
2 Kings 19:20 NAU - "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Because you have prayed to Me about Sennacherib king of Assyria, I have heard *you*.'"
5. Assyria mocked and blasphemed God and so God turns the tables on them. He mocks them in their foolish ignorance.
2 Kings 19:22 NAU - "Whom have you reproached and blasphemed? And against whom have you raised *your* voice, And haughtily lifted up your eyes? Against the Holy One of Israel!"

- I. Do you not know, they ones whom you mock will mock you?
2 Kings 19:21 NAU - "This is the word that the LORD has spoken against him: 'She has despised you and mocked you, The virgin daughter of Zion; She has shaken *her* head behind you, The daughter of Jerusalem!"
- A. The ones Sennacherib thought were helpless were actually of great power
1. Sennacherib did not know that God was fighting on their behalf
 2. The daughter of God rises up to mock the arrogant Assyrian king.
- B. We only appear to be weak
1. The world hates us, dismisses us, mocks us.
 2. They do not know who they are speaking against. We are the children of the living God. We can boldly speak against our enemies because God is on our side.
- II. Do you not know the foolishness of your arrogance?
- A. Do you dare mock God?
2 Kings 19:22 NAU - "And against whom have you raised *your* voice, And haughtily lifted up your eyes? Against the Holy One of Israel!"
1. Do you not know He is the source of all things?
 2. Assyria believed it was all their doing.
2 Kings 19:23-24 NAU - "Through your messengers you have reproached the Lord, And you have said:
 "With my many chariots"
 "I came up to the heights"
 "I cut down its tall cedars *and* its choice cypresses."
 "I entered its farthest lodging place"
 "I dug *wells* and drank foreign waters"
 "I dried up All the rivers of Egypt."
- B. Do you not know who ordained it all?
2 Kings 19:25 NAU - "Have you not heard? Long ago I did it; From ancient times I planned it. Now I have brought it to pass, That you should turn fortified cities into ruinous heaps."
1. God was bringing judgment upon His people and using Assyrian as His tool.
Isaiah 10:5 NAU - "Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger And the staff in whose hands is My indignation,"
 2. It was God who equipped the Assyrians to carry out this task – although their power appeared great they were only instruments of the wrath of God.
 3. In their sinfulness they thought the power was their own –
Isaiah 10:13 NAU - "For he has said, "By the power of my hand and by my wisdom I did *this*, For I have understanding; And I removed the boundaries of the peoples And plundered their treasures, And like a mighty man I brought down *their* inhabitants,"
 4. They considered it an easy thing, like gathering eggs from a nest
Isaiah 10:14 NAU - "And my hand reached to the riches of the peoples like a nest, And as one gathers abandoned eggs, I gathered all the earth; And there was not one that flapped its wing or opened *its* beak or chirped."

5. They blasphemously equated Jehovah God with the gods of the other kingdoms
Isaiah 10:11 NAU - "Shall I not do to Jerusalem and her images Just as I have done to Samaria and her idols?"

C. The point is, the proud, arrogant Sennacherib failed to see God's all-encompassing rule.

1. Sennacherib thought it was all his doing
2. The reality is, he could do nothing unless God ordained it. He was only carrying out what God had determined from eternity.
3. This is a hard pill for proud men to swallow.

Proverbs 16:9 NAU - "The mind of man plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps."

Jesus to Pilate: **John 19:11 NAU** - "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above"

III. Do you not know that God was taking notice of your blasphemies?

2 Kings 19:27 NAU - "But I know your sitting down, And your going out and your coming in, And your raging against Me."

A. God knows all and sees all. This has always been a great comfort for the righteous
Psalm 33:18-19 NAU - "Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, On those who hope for His lovingkindness, ¹⁹ To deliver their soul from death And to keep them alive in famine."

1. The righteous man is never without the presence of God. God sees all, knows all, observes all. Nothing escapes His notice, nothing is hidden.
2. Like a shepherd watches over His flock, God watches over His people with Divine favor.

B. God also sees and knows the actions of the wicked

2 Kings 19:27 NAU - "But I know your sitting down, And your going out and your coming in, And your raging against Me."

1. King David described his enemies as those who pretended that God did not know, did not see.

Psalm 73:11-12 NAU - "They say, "How does God know? And is there knowledge with the Most High?" ¹² Behold, these are the wicked; And always at ease, they have increased *in* wealth." ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase *in* riches."

Psalm 94:4-7 NAU - "They pour forth *words*, they speak arrogantly; All who do wickedness vaunt themselves. ⁵ They crush Your people, O LORD, And afflict Your heritage. ⁶ They slay the widow and the stranger And murder the orphans. ⁷ They have said, "The LORD does not see, Nor does the God of Jacob pay heed."

- a. Most people live in a practical atheism, even some who profess to be Christians. They live as if God doesn't exist, as if He does not see.
- b. Would people do what they do in secret if they knew they were not alone? Would they speak their words if they knew God was present to hear each one?

5. The constant teaching of Scripture is that God sees – He knows
Genesis 6:5 NAU - "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."
Luke 12:2 KJV - "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known."

IV. Do you not know that you are under God's condemnation

2 Kings 19:28 NAU - "Because of your raging against Me, And because your arrogance has come up to My ears, Therefore I will put My hook in your nose, And My bridle in your lips, And I will turn you back by the way which you came."

Isaiah 10:12 NAU - "So it will be that when the Lord has completed all His work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, *He will say*, "I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria and the pomp of his haughtiness."

- A. The Assyrians knew well how to subjugate their defeated enemies
1. They would often pierce noses, lips, and cheeks to lead their enemies away. We were introduced to Tiglath-pileser in **Chapter 15**. He boasted, "I attached to their noses ropes (and) took them to my city."¹
 2. Another king wrote, "I pierced the lips of Elamite captives and hauled them off to Assyria. Through his jaw ... I passed a rope, put a dog chain upon him and made him occupy ... a kennel of the east gate of the inner (wall) of Nineveh ..."²
- B. God is describing their utter defeat
1. God will not be mocked. He will not allow sin to go unpunished.
 2. This should be a warning upon all who stand against Him today.
 3. **Verse 35** should cause all men to tremble at the mighty power of God.
2 Kings 19:35 NAU - "Then it happened that night that the angel of the LORD went out and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men rose early in the morning, behold, all of them were dead."
 4. And some twenty years later when Sennacherib was worshipping in the house of his god, Nisroch, he was assassinated by two of his own sons.

¹ Dale Ralph Davis, *2 Kings: The Power and the Fury*, Focus on the Bible Commentary (Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 2005), 286.

² *Ibid.*, 287.

Conclusion:

1. We return to the them of the sermon I preached two weeks ago. God will not be mocked.
2. On one hand, these verses are a fearful pronouncement of judgment upon a sinful people. But we must not overlook they are also a word of encouragement and comfort for God's people.
 - A. Their survival looked bleak. Even if they survive how will they eat. God says, **2 Kings 19:29-30 NAU** - "Then this shall be the sign for you: you will eat this year what grows of itself, in the second year what springs from the same, and in the third year sow, reap, plant vineyards, and eat their fruit.
³⁰ 'The surviving remnant of the house of Judah will again take root downward and bear fruit upward."
 - B. God expresses His zeal for the deliverance of His people. **2 Kings 19:31 NAU** - "For out of Jerusalem will go forth a remnant, and out of Mount Zion survivors. The zeal of the LORD will perform this."
 - C. God declares, I will not allow them to lay a finger on you. Sennacherib would return to his own land before shooting a single arrow. **2 Kings 19:28 NAU** - "Because of your raging against Me, And because your arrogance has come up to My ears, Therefore I will put My hook in your nose, And My bridle in your lips, And I will turn you back by the way which you came."
2 Kings 19:32-33 NAU - "Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, "He will not come to this city or shoot an arrow there; and he will not come before it with a shield or throw up a siege ramp against it.
³³ "By the way that he came, by the same he will return, and he shall not come to this city," declares the LORD."
3. Once again, we should wonder why we ever fear.

