

Trust

Hezekiah

Foundation

Bible passage : 2 Kings 18 & 19

Hezekiah became King of Judah in Jerusalem when it was a separate kingdom to Israel. In the fourth of his reign a large Assyrian army attacked and eventually destroyed Israel and then turned their attention to Judah and Jerusalem. The summary of Hezekiah's reign in chapter 18 verse 5 tells us that "Hezekiah trusted in the Lord". But, at first, Hezekiah did not trust the Lord and fearing the Assyrians he tried to buy them off by giving them many of the treasures of the Temple. This strategy failed and the mighty Assyrian army arrived outside Jerusalem and sent a threatening letter to the King.

"He trusted in the LORD God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him"

In the original Hebrew of the Old Testament the word for trust (*batach* in Hebrew), which was also used in verse 5, occurs in verse 19, 20, 21, 22, 24 and 30. This repetition is not clear in all translations but is very important. The Israelites were told by the leader of the Assyrian army, the Rabshakeh, not to trust in the Lord, nor for that matter in Egypt who they might have turned to for help. The Assyrians also tried to turn the Israelites against their king telling them not to listen if Hezekiah told them to trust in the Lord.

The result of this was that Hezekiah repented by tearing his clothes and covering himself in

The royal seal of King Hezekiah . Found in 2015 during archaeological excavations in Jerusalem.



sackcloth and demonstrated his renewed trust in the Lord by going to the Temple to pray (19.1) and asking the Prophet Isaiah to pray too. The Lord sent a message via Isaiah to reassure the King (v5) and telling him via the prophet Isaiah (v6) telling him not to be afraid of the Assyrians. By the Lord's doing a rumour of trouble caused the Rabshakeh to return to Assyria although the army remained behind.

The King of Assyria now sent a letter threatening Israel and telling Hezekiah not to be deceived by the God in whom he trusted. However, Hezekiah did trust in the Lord by taking the letter into the Temple where he "spread it before the Lord" and then he prayed.

This time the Lord sent a long message via Isaiah reassuring the king. Then the angel of the Lord destroyed much of the army of the Assyria so that they and their king returned home where two of his sons assassinated him and another son became ruler.

The whole dynamic of the passage is therefore about trusting in the Lord. Right at the start Hezekiah is commended as someone who did just that.



The Bible shows Hezekiah as a great example of what it means to trust God, even if at first he didn't.