**Hezekiah’s Tunnel**

So, I was watching the news last night when I saw some disturbing information. In Congressional testimony, recently retired FBI supervisory intelligence analyst George “Hill testified that on either Jan. 7 or 8, 2021, Bank of America provided the FBI’s D.C. field office a ‘huge list’ of individuals who used Bank of America credit or debit cards in D.C., or the surrounding Maryland and Virginia areas, on Jan. 5, 6, or 7, 2021. Bank of America then elevated to the top of the list anyone who had ever (through Jan. 6, 2021) used a Bank of America product to purchase a firearm.”

Perhaps you should stop reading this. It could be ‘guilt by association” for you. Why? Because Teresa and I were in D.C. for the Trump rally 1/6/2021 (never in the Capital), stayed at a hotel, and bought a gun long ago, all of which were paid for with a B of A debit card! Guess what? I am at the top of the FBI list!

I’ve had people look narrowly at me recently because they think that I don’t take seriously the perilous financial and political condition that the nation is in. “We could be bankrupt and in a police state anytime!” I’ve been told. I think I understand the peril we’re in, but I also understand the God who loves and works with us. He’s seen lots of human peril and delivered His people from it since forever.

**Why the Tunnel was Built.**

One of our most amazing experiences in Israel was trekking through Hezekiah’s tunnel. This was built about 700BC because Hezekiah expected the Assyrian army to surround and siege Jerusalem after they had done the same to the northern kingdom of Israel and its capital, Samaria. This in effect ended Israel until 1948 AD, a 2600 year pause! The Assyrians didn’t just threaten, they conquered all they attacked.

 2 Chron. 32:1-5 REV

After these things and these faithful acts, Sennacherib king of Assyria came into Judah and encamped against the fortified cities, and intended to break into them and capture them for himself.

 When Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come, and his face was set to fight against Jerusalem,

he took counsel with his officials and his mighty men to block off the water of the springs that were outside of the city, and they supported him.

So many people gathered together, and they blocked off all the springs and the brook that flowed through the land, saying, “Why should the kings of Assyria come and find abundant water?”

He strengthened himself and built up all of the wall that had been broken down and raised it up to the towers, and the other wall outside, and strengthened Millo in the city of David and made an abundance of weapons and shields.

 2 Kings 20:20 REV

Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah and all his mighty acts, and how he made the pool and the tunnel, and brought water into the city, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?



 Map of Hezekiah’s tunnel. FBI target in tunnel.

A main technique of ancient warfare was the “siege”. Here’s some info from Wikipedia. It was “a military blockade of a city, or fortress, with the intent of conquering by attrition. A siege occurs when an attacker encounters a city or fortress that cannot be easily taken by a quick assault, and which refuses to surrender. Sieges involve surrounding the target to block the provision of supplies and the reinforcement or escape of troops. Failing a military outcome, sieges can often be decided by starvation, thirst, or disease, which can afflict either the attacker or defender. It can take many months or even years, depending upon the size of the provisions the fortified position holds.”

The city of Jerusalem was watered by the Gihon spring on the east slope of the city. King Hezekiah and the elders realized that allowing the Assyrians access to the spring would be disastrous. Therefore, they built huge walls around the spring, including it in the city’s defenses and made a 1/3-mile tunnel through solid rock 2 feet wide and 5-6 feet high that brought the water into the city, making siege preparedness only a matter of food storage. The tunnel ended at the famous pool of Siloam, which was recently discovered underneath the Old City while trying to fix a sewer pipe in 2004.

Hezekiah prepared for the inevitable siege of Jerusalem against Assyria, the mightiest power in the world at that time. He provided heavily walled protection, weapons, shields, armies, stored food, and water. As you check the record, he even instructed the citizens what to say and what not say to the invaders. He was prepared in every way possible. But these were not average invaders, or even average evil invaders, these were historic, evil invaders. Here is a short study of the Assyrian war mind set.

**The Assyrians — The Appalling Lords of Torture** [Peter Preskar](https://medium.com/%40peter.preskar?source=post_page-----60fabb7a9642--------------------------------) Dec 27, 2020



The Assyrian relief depicting the torture of the defeated enemies.

Assyria created an enormous empire. They mastered the [art of war](https://medium.com/history-of-yesterday/assyrians-60c2bce20368). Unfortunately for their enemies, the Assyrians also mastered torture techniques. The Assyrians depicted the torture in great detail on the walls of the imperial palaces. They created tablets containing every single punishment the Assyrian army carried out. They cut off the limbs, gouged out the eyes, and then left those poor victims to roam around. Those poor people served as a living reminder of Assyrian cruelty.



The Assyrian relief depicting impalement.

The Assyrians were proud of mass executions. They loved to impale their victims on large stakes. Such sights instilled terror and fear into the rest of the population. The stake was driven into the body under the ribs and not through the anus as was customary in the Medieval ages. The victim’s weight caused the spikes to protrude deeper and deeper into the body. The slow death was terrifying! Although the impalement was the Assyrian preference, they also invented crucifixion.



The relief depicting the Assyrians flaying their prisoners alive.

The Assyrian kings were fond of flaying rebel leaders. The flaying process would start at the buttocks, thighs, or lower legs. They would cut the skin in strips and pull it off the living victim. The victim’s skin was hung in a visible place, like a city wall, as a reminder for the rest of the enemy.



The Assyrian relief depicting soldiers with severed heads at their feet.

Soldiers decapitated the defeated enemies and built pyramids out of their heads. The Assyrians also decorated trees with the heads of their enemies. One of the Assyrian accounts even boasts of the necklace made of severed heads. They would cut off legs, arms, noses, tongues, ears, and testicles. They would gouge out the eyes of their prisoners. They would burn small children alive. The Assyrian army was a professional army, and it was well organized, so their cruelty and brutality were systematic. The psychological warfare worked. The news of extreme terror spread fast. Entire cities surrendered at the mere sight of the approaching Assyrian army. The Assyrian kings bragged about their cruelty.

**Conclusion -** The brutality of the Assyrians was extreme, even for the ancient standards of cruelty. The Assyrians also knew and used brutality as a very effective tool of psychological warfare.

So, do you think that King Hezekiah and the citizens of Jerusalem took “seriously the perilous financial and political condition that the nation was in? “We could be skinned alive, dismembered, or impaled anytime!” they were tempted to think. I would think that their situation was more dire than ours by a factor of ‘many’. Give me bankruptcy or a police state anytime rather than being skinned alive or impaled alive on a stake! So how did Hezekiah and the Jerusalem citizens handle the situation?

 2 Kings 18:13-16

In the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them.

Then Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, “I have done wrong. Withdraw from me. Whatever you impose upon me, I will bear.” And the king of Assyria required of Hezekiah king of Judah 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold.

So Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of Yahweh and in the treasuries of the king’s house.

At that time Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the Temple of Yahweh and from the doorposts that Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid and gave it to the king of Assyria.

There are times that you prepare for all eventualities – fortify wells, dig hidden tunnels, enlarge walls, build armaments, prepare armies, instruct the citizenry, etc., and still nothing works. Hezekiah threw money at the problem. Assyria extorted Hezekiah’s and the temple silver and he also melted the gold off the temple doors. Hezekiah, at the end of his rope complied with Assyria. What happened?

 2 Kings 18:17a

Then the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rab-saris and Rab-shakeh from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a large army to Jerusalem. They went up and came to Jerusalem… .

Can you believe it? Hezekiah empties his and the temple’s gold and silver and gives it to the Assyrians as they asked… and they came to conquer Jerusalem anyways! Those big fat liars! Who knew that people who rammed stakes up alive torsos and dismembered enemies to scream around a sieged city and stripped skin of their prisoners would also (gasp!) lie?! News flash! Wicked people are … dishonorable. When push comes to shove, they will push and shove you – on a stake. The Assyrians came as they had previously indicated and as Hezekiah regrettably anticipated.

Then the king of Assyria sent spiritually loaded spokesmen who slung “verbal flaming arrows” of terror on the residents and leadership of Jerusalem. They ended their speech with these points:

 2 Kings 18:27,31

But Rab-shakeh said to them, “Has my lord [The king of Assyria] sent me to your lord [king Hezekiah] and to you to speak these words? Is it not to the men who sit on the wall, who will have to eat their own dung and drink their own urine with you?”

“Do not listen to Hezekiah. For this is what the king of Assyria says, ‘Make your peace with me and come out to me. Then each one of you will eat from his own vine, and each one from his own fig tree, and each one will drink the waters of his own cistern.

So, the choice is simple, Judeans. “If you come out of the besieged city and pledge allegiance to the king of Assyria, you will eat from your own vine and fig tree and drink water from your own cistern. If not, you’ll eat your own dung and drink your own urine! Have a nice day and siege!” What sweethearts! These Assyrians sure made the choice simple and clear, huh? Except the choice had also seemed simple and clear to Hezekiah, too. He had given in to Assyria’s demands and what did that get him? Nothing. And now what did he have? Surrounded by Assyrian ‘animals’ and the residents are faltering because of the spiritual verbal psychological warfare. Judean prisoners impaled, blinded, and dismembered screaming outside the walls, visible in the valleys below. And people say that the situation in the US is the worst situation ever! Please. A simple reading of the Bible reveals several REAL tough times like this one. The Judeans would have loved to be only bankrupt instead of impaled or flayed and yet they were already tyrannized. (Hezekiah was a king, right?) It seems that we have little historical context despite the Bible’s easy availability. So, what did Hezekiah do after the Assyrian verbal assault?

 2 Kings 19:1-6

And when King Hezekiah heard it, he tore his clothes and covered himself with sackcloth and went into the house of Yahweh.

Then he sent Eliakim who was Over the House, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz.

And they said to him, “This is what Hezekiah says, ‘This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke and of disgrace, for the children have come to the point of birth and there is no strength for giving birth.

It may be Yahweh your God will hear all the words of Rab-shakeh, whom the king of Assyria his lord has sent to defy the living God, and will rebuke the words that Yahweh your God has heard. Therefore lift up a prayer for the remnant that is left.’”

 So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah.

And Isaiah said to them, “Tell your lord this: ‘This is what Yahweh says, “Do not be afraid because of the words that you have heard, with which the servant boys of the king of Assyria have reviled me.

Behold, I will put a spirit in him so that he will hear a rumor and will return to his own land, and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.”’”

Everyone is looking for a formula for success. This is why self-help books sell so well and corporate trainings tout the “Steps to Success”. What does the Bible teach as the ‘steps to success’? Look at Hezekiah’s example. He did everything he could do. Sought and took advice from others. Marshalled manpower for inspired ideas and action. Built up the military and prepared the populace. He even paid off the attackers with millions of dollars – personally and nationally. And still he had vicious Assyrians surrounding him wanting God’s people to “eat their own dung and drink their own urine”.

The key to success is having a healthy relationship with God. Could it be that simple? Yes, it is. It always has been and always will be. Remember these words:

**God made the universe for the earth, the earth for man, and man to fellowship with Him.**

God’s not into formulas. If He gave man a formula, man wouldn’t need God, just the formula. Is it necessary for God to be involved to make water? No, it isn’t. Just follow the formula and H2O results.

Whether you pray or not, it doesn’t matter. Follow the formula and you’ll get the result every time.

God made everything so that man could fellowship with Him.

 2 Chron 16:9a

For the eyes of Yahweh go around throughout the whole earth in order to give strong support to those whose heart is wholly devoted to him.

God is “looking for” those who love Him to give them strong support. He wants to be involved in our lives, but because of free will, He must be invited in. If I appear inside your home uninvited you would consider me rude and perhaps think of calling the FBI (please don’t!). God has manners. He shows up when we invite Him with humility and trust. He did for Hezekiah. Yet, sometimes problems still persist.

 2 Kings 19:8-13

And Rab-shakeh returned and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah, for he had heard that he had departed from Lachish.

Now Sennacherib had heard a report concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia saying, “Behold, he has come out to fight against you.” So he sent messengers back to Hezekiah, saying,

“This is what you are to say to Hezekiah king of Judah: ‘Do not let your god in whom you trust deceive you, saying, “Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.”

Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the other lands, devoting them to destruction. So will you be rescued?

Have the gods of the nations rescued those whom my fathers have destroyed, such as Gozan and Haran and Rezeph, and the children of Eden that were in Telassar?

Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah?’”

“Jerusalem is a speed bump on our path to world dominion. All the others have fallen like dominos and so will you.” Pretty impressive. It’s hard to argue with facts. As John Adams once said, “Facts are stubborn things.” But you know what beats facts? Truth.

 2 Kings 19:14-19

And Hezekiah took the letters from the hand of the messengers and read them. Then he went up to the house of Yahweh and Hezekiah spread it out before Yahweh.

Then Hezekiah prayed before Yahweh and said, “O Yahweh, God of Israel, who is enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made the heavens and the earth.

Incline your ear, O Yahweh, and hear! Open your eyes, O Yahweh, and see! And hear the words of Sennacherib that he has sent to defy the living God.

 It is true, O Yahweh, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands

and have put their gods in the fire, for they were not gods, but the work of men’s hands, wood and stone, so they have destroyed them.

But now, Yahweh our God, save us, I beg you, out of his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O Yahweh, are God, you alone!”

With God, one person can change anything and everything.

 Jam. 5:16b KJV

 The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Hezekiah invited God into the situation and watch what happens. You know, you can prepare for all eventualities and still come up short. Notice how God doesn’t correct Hezekiah for fortifying the city or building a tunnel. God expects man to do his best. But man’s best could fall short if God’s not involved. When He’s invited with humility and trust, watch out!

 2 Kings 19:20-22, 32-37

Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, “This is what Yahweh the God of Israel says: ‘Because you have prayed to me concerning Sennacherib king of Assyria, I have heard.’

This is the word that Yahweh has spoken concerning him: “The virgin Daughter Zion has despised you and ridiculed you. Daughter Jerusalem has shaken her head at you.

Whom have you defied and blasphemed? Against whom have you exalted your voice and lifted up your eyes on high? Against the Holy One of Israel.

“Therefore this is what Yahweh says concerning the king of Assyria, ‘He will not come into this city nor shoot an arrow there, nor will he come before it with shield nor build up a siege ramp against it.

By the road that he came, by the same he will return, and he will not come into this city,’ says Yahweh.

 ‘For I will defend this city to save it for my own sake and for my servant David’s sake.’”

And that night the angel of Yahweh went out and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when they got up early in the morning, behold, all of them were corpses; dead men.

So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and he went away and returned home, and lived at Nineveh.

And as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons struck him down with the sword, and they escaped into the land of Ararat. And Esar-haddon his son reigned in his place.

From king of the world to stabbed by your own cowardly sons while worshipping a worthless god. One of the Bible’s great themes is “Pride comes before destruction”. The Assyrian king went the way of Humpty Dumpty. And soon the whole empire did, too. Babylon took them down.

So, the mighty FBI and other parts of the federal government are weaponized against Christian conservatives. And they are enlisting banks, social media, and educational institutions to help. So what? Are they bigger than the One who made time and space? Solar systems and nebula? DNA and the human eye? Don’t think so. The spirits and people behind these attacks are punks, trying to get their licks in while they can. Know why?

 Romans 16:20a

 And the God of peace will crush the Adversary under your feet swiftly.

One day the Adversary, his little adversaries, and their human associates “will be crushed under your [our] feet swiftly.” That verse is as true as John 3:16 or Genesis 1:1. Together with the Lord we will crush all the Satanic opposition to Christ forever. Think they know this?

 Matt. 8:28,29 NIV

When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way.

“What do you want with us, Son of God?” they shouted. “Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?”

What was the “appointed time” that the demons were asking Jesus about? It was the same time God told Satan about in Gen. 3:15 and Romans 16:20 foretells – Satan’s demise. And we help bring it about. Amazing, huh? These spiritual punks know the future and their “appointed time” and who will be the appointed executioners – Jesus and us.

Sometimes I see the questioning on saints faces when we discuss current political events as they wonder, “What have I done to deserve this treatment?” That’s the wrong question. The correct question is, “What will I be doing to deserve this treatment?" The answer is “Ending them!” What do you expect from cornered dogs? Fangs and barking. That’s all this is.

God listens to our prayers and delights to answer them. Let’s pray with confidence and intensity as Hezekiah did, for God to ignite the fire of revival in the world and inspire confidence in our hearts of who we are in light of Christ in us. And share the light of the indescribable love of God with those confused and terrorized by the screaming of condemned entities, who will soon be going the way of the Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks, Romans, communists, and other godless relics. Our God is listening, powerful, and faithful! Nothing can separate us from His love in Christ! Greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world (but not in the world for much longer)!