

# Where is your hope?

I believe the most essential thing we can do as believers is to learn how to trust in the Lord.

## A Clear Illustration

**Matthew 7:** <sup>24</sup> “Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. <sup>25</sup> Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won’t collapse because it is built on bedrock. <sup>26</sup> But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn’t obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. <sup>27</sup> When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash.”

## Isaiah 8:

<sup>16</sup> Preserve the teaching of God;  
entrust his instructions to those who follow me.  
<sup>17</sup> I will wait for the LORD,  
who has turned away from the descendants of Jacob.  
I will put my hope in him.

## King Hezekiah

**Isaiah 36:** In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah’s reign, King Sennacherib of Assyria came to attack the fortified towns of Judah and conquered them. **2** Then the king of Assyria sent his chief of staff from Lachish with a huge army to confront King Hezekiah in Jerusalem. The Assyrians took up a position beside the aqueduct that feeds water into the upper pool, near the road leading to the field where cloth is washed.

**3** These are the officials who went out to meet with them: Eliakim son of Hilkiah, the palace administrator; Shebna the court secretary; and Joah son of Asaph, the royal historian.

**4** Then the Assyrian king’s chief of staff told them to give this message to Hezekiah:

“This is what the great king of Assyria says: What are you trusting in that makes you so confident? **5** Do you think that mere words can substitute for military skill and strength? Who are you counting on, that you have rebelled against me? **6** On Egypt? If you lean on Egypt, it will be like a reed that splinters beneath your weight and pierces your hand. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, is completely unreliable!

**7** “But perhaps you will say to me, ‘We are trusting in the LORD our God!’ But isn’t he the one who was insulted by Hezekiah? Didn’t Hezekiah tear down his shrines and altars and make everyone in Judah and Jerusalem worship only at the altar here in Jerusalem?

**8** “I’ll tell you what! Strike a bargain with my master, the king of Assyria. I will give you 2,000 horses if you can find that many men to ride on them! **9** With your tiny army, how can you think of challenging even the weakest contingent of my master’s troops, even with the help of Egypt’s chariots and charioteers? **10** What’s more, do you think we have invaded your land without the LORD’s direction? The LORD himself told us, ‘Attack this land and destroy it!’”

**11** Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to the Assyrian chief of staff, "Please speak to us in Aramaic, for we understand it well. Don't speak in Hebrew, for the people on the wall will hear."

**12** But Sennacherib's chief of staff replied, "Do you think my master sent this message only to you and your master? He wants all the people to hear it, for when we put this city under siege, they will suffer along with you. They will be so hungry and thirsty that they will eat their own dung and drink their own urine."

**13** Then the chief of staff stood and shouted in Hebrew to the people on the wall, "Listen to this message from the great king of Assyria! **14** This is what the king says: Don't let Hezekiah deceive you. He will never be able to rescue you. **15** Don't let him fool you into trusting in the LORD by saying, 'The LORD will surely rescue us. This city will never fall into the hands of the Assyrian king!'

**16** "Don't listen to Hezekiah! These are the terms the king of Assyria is offering: Make peace with me—open the gates and come out. Then each of you can continue eating from your own grapevine and fig tree and drinking from your own well. **17** Then I will arrange to take you to another land like this one—a land of grain and new wine, bread and vineyards.

**18** "Don't let Hezekiah mislead you by saying, 'The LORD will rescue us!' Have the gods of any other nations ever saved their people from the king of Assyria? **19** What happened to the gods of Hamath and Arpad? And what about the gods of Sepharvaim? Did any god rescue Samaria from my power? **20** What god of any nation has ever been able to save its people from my power? So what makes you think that the LORD can rescue Jerusalem from me?"

**21** But the people were silent and did not utter a word because Hezekiah had commanded them, "Do not answer him."

**22** Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah, the palace administrator; Shebna the court secretary; and Joah son of Asaph, the royal historian, went back to Hezekiah. They tore their clothes in despair, and they went in to see the king and told him what the Assyrian chief of staff had said.

**Isaiah 37:** When King Hezekiah heard their report, he tore his clothes and put on burlap and went into the Temple of the LORD. <sup>2</sup> And he sent Eliakim the palace administrator, Shebna the court secretary, and the leading priests, all dressed in burlap, to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. <sup>3</sup> They told him, "This is what King Hezekiah says: Today is a day of trouble, insults, and disgrace. It is like when a child is ready to be born, but the mother has no strength to deliver the baby. <sup>4</sup> But perhaps the LORD your God has heard the Assyrian chief of staff, sent by the king to defy the living God, and will punish him for his words. Oh, pray for those of us who are left!"

<sup>5</sup> After King Hezekiah's officials delivered the king's message to Isaiah, <sup>6</sup> the prophet replied, "Say to your master, 'This is what the LORD says: Do not be disturbed by this blasphemous speech against me from the Assyrian king's messengers. <sup>7</sup> Listen! I myself will move against him, and the king will receive a message that he is needed at home. So he will return to his land, where I will have him killed with a sword.'"

<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, the Assyrian chief of staff left Jerusalem and went to consult the king of Assyria, who had left Lachish and was attacking Libnah.

<sup>9</sup> Soon afterward King Sennacherib received word that King Tirhakah of Ethiopia was leading an army to fight against him. Before leaving to meet the attack, he sent messengers back to Hezekiah in Jerusalem with this message:

10 "This message is for King Hezekiah of Judah. Don't let your God, in whom you trust, deceive you with promises that Jerusalem will not be captured by the king of Assyria. 11 You know perfectly well what the kings of Assyria have done wherever they have gone. They have completely destroyed everyone who stood in their way! Why should you be any different? 12 Have the gods of other nations rescued them—such nations as Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the people of Eden who were in Tel-assar? My predecessors destroyed them all! 13 What happened to the king of Hamath and the king of Arpad? What happened to the kings of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah?"

14 After Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it, he went up to the LORD's Temple and spread it out before the LORD. 15 And Hezekiah prayed this prayer before the LORD: 16 "O LORD of Heaven's Armies, God of Israel, you are enthroned between the mighty cherubim! You alone are God of all the kingdoms of the earth. You alone created the heavens and the earth. 17 Bend down, O LORD, and listen! Open your eyes, O LORD, and see! Listen to Sennacherib's words of defiance against the living God.

18 "It is true, LORD, that the kings of Assyria have destroyed all these nations. 19 And they have thrown the gods of these nations into the fire and burned them. But of course the Assyrians could destroy them! They were not gods at all—only idols of wood and stone shaped by human hands. 20 Now, O LORD our God, rescue us from his power; then all the kingdoms of the earth will know that you alone, O LORD, are God."

21 Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent this message to Hezekiah: "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Because you prayed about King Sennacherib of Assyria, 22 the LORD has spoken this word against him:

"The virgin daughter of Zion  
despises you and laughs at you.

The daughter of Jerusalem  
shakes her head in derision as you flee.

23 "Whom have you been defying and ridiculing?

Against whom did you raise your voice?

At whom did you look with such haughty eyes?

It was the Holy One of Israel!

24 By your messengers you have defied the Lord.

You have said, 'With my many chariots

I have conquered the highest mountains—

yes, the remotest peaks of Lebanon.

I have cut down its tallest cedars

and its finest cypress trees.

I have reached its farthest heights

and explored its deepest forests.

25 I have dug wells in many foreign lands

and refreshed myself with their water.

With the sole of my foot,

I stopped up all the rivers of Egypt!'

26 "But have you not heard?

I decided this long ago.

Long ago I planned it,

and now I am making it happen.

I planned for you to crush fortified cities

into heaps of rubble.

27 That is why their people have so little power  
and are so frightened and confused.

They are as weak as grass,  
as easily trampled as tender green shoots.  
They are like grass sprouting on a housetop,  
scorched before it can grow lush and tall.

28 "But I know you well—

where you stay  
and when you come and go.

I know the way you have raged against me.

29 And because of your raging against me

and your arrogance, which I have heard for myself,

I will put my hook in your nose

and my bit in your mouth.

I will make you return

by the same road on which you came."

30 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Here is the proof that what I say is true:

"This year you will eat only what grows up by itself,  
and next year you will eat what springs up from that.

But in the third year you will plant crops and harvest them;  
you will tend vineyards and eat their fruit.

31 And you who are left in Judah,  
who have escaped the ravages of the siege,

will put roots down in your own soil  
and grow up and flourish.

32 For a remnant of my people will spread out from Jerusalem,  
a group of survivors from Mount Zion.

The passionate commitment of the LORD of Heaven's Armies  
will make this happen!

33 "And this is what the LORD says about the king of Assyria:

"His armies will not enter Jerusalem.

They will not even shoot an arrow at it.

They will not march outside its gates with their shields  
nor build banks of earth against its walls.

**34** The king will return to his own country  
by the same road on which he came.

He will not enter this city,'  
says the LORD.

**35** 'For my own honor and for the sake of my servant David,  
I will defend this city and protect it.'"

**36** That night the angel of the LORD went out to the Assyrian camp and killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. When the surviving Assyrians woke up the next morning, they found corpses everywhere. **37** Then King Sennacherib of Assyria broke camp and returned to his own land. He went home to his capital of Nineveh and stayed there.

**38** One day while he was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisroch, his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer killed him with their swords. They then escaped to the land of Ararat, and another son, Esarhaddon, became the next king of Assyria.

## **Jehoshaphat**

**2 Chronicles 20:** After this, the armies of the Moabites, Ammonites, and some of the Meunites declared war on Jehoshaphat. **2** Messengers came and told Jehoshaphat, "A vast army from Edom is marching against you from beyond the Dead Sea. They are already at Hazazon-tamar." (This was another name for En-gedi.)

**3** Jehoshaphat was terrified by this news and begged the LORD for guidance. He also ordered everyone in Judah to begin fasting. **4** So people from all the towns of Judah came to Jerusalem to seek the LORD's help.

**5** Jehoshaphat stood before the community of Judah and Jerusalem in front of the new courtyard at the Temple of the LORD. **6** He prayed, "O LORD, God of our ancestors, you alone are the God who is in heaven. You are ruler of all the kingdoms of the earth. You are powerful and mighty; no one can stand against you! **7** O our God, did you not drive out those who lived in this land when your people Israel arrived? And did you not give this land forever to the descendants of your friend Abraham? **8** Your people settled here and built this Temple to honor your name. **9** They said, 'Whenever we are faced with any calamity such as war, plague, or famine, we can come to stand in your presence before this Temple where your name is honored. We can cry out to you to save us, and you will hear us and rescue us.'

**10** "And now see what the armies of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir are doing. You would not let our ancestors invade those nations when Israel left Egypt, so they went around them and did not destroy them. **11** Now see how they reward us! For they have come to throw us out of your land, which you gave us as an inheritance. **12** O our God, won't you

stop them? We are powerless against this mighty army that is about to attack us. We do not know what to do, but we are looking to you for help.”

13 As all the men of Judah stood before the LORD with their little ones, wives, and children, 14 the Spirit of the LORD came upon one of the men standing there. His name was Jahaziel son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah, a Levite who was a descendant of Asaph.

15 He said, “Listen, all you people of Judah and Jerusalem! Listen, King Jehoshaphat! This is what the LORD says: Do not be afraid! Don’t be discouraged by this mighty army, for the battle is not yours, but God’s. 16 Tomorrow, march out against them. You will find them coming up through the ascent of Ziz at the end of the valley that opens into the wilderness of Jeruel. 17 But you will not even need to fight. Take your positions; then stand still and watch the LORD’s victory. He is with you, O people of Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid or discouraged. Go out against them tomorrow, for the LORD is with you!”

18 Then King Jehoshaphat bowed low with his face to the ground. And all the people of Judah and Jerusalem did the same, worshiping the LORD. 19 Then the Levites from the clans of Kohath and Korah stood to praise the LORD, the God of Israel, with a very loud shout.

20 Early the next morning the army of Judah went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. On the way Jehoshaphat stopped and said, “Listen to me, all you people of Judah and Jerusalem! Believe in the LORD your God, and you will be able to stand firm. Believe in his prophets, and you will succeed.”

21 After consulting the people, the king appointed singers to walk ahead of the army, singing to the LORD and praising him for his holy splendor. This is what they sang:

“Give thanks to the LORD;

his faithful love endures forever!”

22 At the very moment they began to sing and give praise, the LORD caused the armies of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir to start fighting among themselves. 23 The armies of Moab and Ammon turned against their allies from Mount Seir and killed every one of them. After they had destroyed the army of Seir, they began attacking each other. 24 So when the army of Judah arrived at the lookout point in the wilderness, all they saw were dead bodies lying on the ground as far as they could see. Not a single one of the enemy had escaped.

**Habakkuk 1** This is the message that the prophet Habakkuk received in a vision.

2 How long, O LORD, must I call for help?

But you do not listen!

“Violence is everywhere!” I cry,  
but you do not come to save.

3 Must I forever see these evil deeds?

Why must I watch all this misery?

Wherever I look,

I see destruction and violence.

I am surrounded by people  
 who love to argue and fight.  
 4 The law has become paralyzed,  
 and there is no justice in the courts.  
 The wicked far outnumber the righteous,  
 so that justice has become perverted.  
 5 The LORD replied,  
 "Look around at the nations;  
 look and be amazed!  
 For I am doing something in your own day,  
 something you wouldn't believe  
 even if someone told you about it.  
 6 I am raising up the Babylonians,  
 a cruel and violent people.  
 They will march across the world  
 and conquer other lands.  
 7 They are notorious for their cruelty  
 and do whatever they like.  
 8 Their horses are swifter than cheetahs  
 and fiercer than wolves at dusk.  
 Their charioteers charge from far away.  
  
 Like eagles, they swoop down to devour their prey.  
 9 "On they come, all bent on violence.  
 Their hordes advance like a desert wind,  
 sweeping captives ahead of them like sand.  
 10 They scoff at kings and princes  
 and scorn all their fortresses.  
 They simply pile ramps of earth  
 against their walls and capture them!  
 11 They sweep past like the wind  
 and are gone.  
 But they are deeply guilty,  
 for their own strength is their god."  
 12 O LORD my God, my Holy One, you who are eternal—  
 surely you do not plan to wipe us out?  
 O LORD, our Rock, you have sent these Babylonians to correct us,  
 to punish us for our many sins.  
 13 But you are pure and cannot stand the sight of evil.  
 Will you wink at their treachery?  
 Should you be silent while the wicked  
 swallow up people more righteous than they?  
 14 Are we only fish to be caught and killed?  
 Are we only sea creatures that have no leader?  
 15 Must we be strung up on their hooks  
 and caught in their nets while they rejoice and celebrate?  
 16 Then they will worship their nets  
 and burn incense in front of them.  
 "These nets are the gods who have made us rich!"  
 they will claim.  
 17 Will you let them get away with this forever?  
 Will they succeed forever in their heartless conquests?

**Habakkuk 3:** This prayer was sung by the prophet Habakkuk:

2 I have heard all about you, LORD.

I am filled with awe by your amazing works.

In this time of our deep need,

help us again as you did in years gone by.

And in your anger,

remember your mercy.

3 I see God moving across the deserts from Edom,

the Holy One coming from Mount Paran.

His brilliant splendor fills the heavens,

and the earth is filled with his praise.

4 His coming is as brilliant as the sunrise.

Rays of light flash from his hands,

where his awesome power is hidden.

5 Pestilence marches before him;

plague follows close behind.

6 When he stops, the earth shakes.

When he looks, the nations tremble.

He shatters the everlasting mountains

and levels the eternal hills.

He is the Eternal One!

7 I see the people of Cushan in distress,

and the nation of Midian trembling in terror.

8 Was it in anger, LORD, that you struck the rivers

and parted the sea?

Were you displeased with them?

No, you were sending your chariots of salvation!

9 You brandished your bow

and your quiver of arrows.

You split open the earth with flowing rivers.

10 The mountains watched and trembled.

Onward swept the raging waters.

The mighty deep cried out,

lifting its hands in submission.

11 The sun and moon stood still in the sky

as your brilliant arrows flew

and your glittering spear flashed.

12 You marched across the land in anger

and trampled the nations in your fury.

13 You went out to rescue your chosen people,

to save your anointed ones.

You crushed the heads of the wicked

and stripped their bones from head to toe.

14 With his own weapons,

you destroyed the chief of those

who rushed out like a whirlwind,

thinking Israel would be easy prey.

15 You trampled the sea with your horses,

and the mighty waters piled high.



16 I trembled inside when I heard this;  
my lips quivered with fear.  
My legs gave way beneath me,  
and I shook in terror.  
I will wait quietly for the coming day  
when disaster will strike the people who invade us.  
17 Even though the fig trees have no blossoms,  
and there are no grapes on the vines;  
even though the olive crop fails,  
and the fields lie empty and barren;  
even though the flocks die in the fields,  
and the cattle barns are empty,  
18 yet I will rejoice in the LORD!  
I will be joyful in the God of my salvation!  
19 The Sovereign LORD is my strength!  
He makes me as surefooted as a deer,  
able to tread upon the heights.

**1 Chronicles 5:** 18 There were 44,760 capable warriors in the armies of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. They were all skilled in combat and armed with shields, swords, and bows. 19 They waged war against the Hagrites, the Jeturites, the Naphishites, and the Nodabites. 20 They cried out to God during the battle, and he answered their prayer because they trusted in him. So the Hagrites and all their allies were defeated.

## **Psalms 1**

1 Oh, the joys of those who do not  
follow the advice of the wicked,  
or stand around with sinners,  
or join in with mockers.  
2 But they delight in the law of the Lord,  
meditating on it day and night.  
3 They are like trees planted along the riverbank,  
bearing fruit each season.  
Their leaves never wither,  
and they prosper in all they do.  
4 But not the wicked!  
They are like worthless chaff, scattered by the wind.  
5 They will be condemned at the time of judgment.  
Sinners will have no place among the godly.  
6 For the Lord watches over the path of the godly,  
but the path of the wicked leads to destruction.

## **New Testament Verses**

**Romans 10:** 17 So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ.

## **Proverbs 3:**

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart;

do not depend on your own understanding.

6 Seek his will in all you do,

and he will show you which path to take.