

Survey of the Bible part 50 **2 Chronicles 32:7-8** Trust Your Deliverer

Last week we were discussing how King Hezekiah was faithfully seeking and following the Lord and how God had blessed him and Judah in the process. But in the midst of their blessing the enemy, (in this case the king of Assyria), decides this would be a good time to come against Hezekiah.

As you can imagine that when a nation gets word that someone wants to go to war with you and has the resources and power to do it successfully it can put a lot of stress on the people of that nation who don't want to go to war.

And so, naturally the people come to Hezekiah and ask what are they going to do? But instead of panicking Hezekiah does what is not logical and yet most practical. He relies on what he does not see but on whom He trusts.

2 Chronicles 32:7-8 ⁷ "Be strong and courageous, do not fear or be dismayed because of the king of Assyria nor because of all the horde that is with him; for the one with us is greater than the one with him. ⁸ "With him is *only* an arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles." And the people relied on the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.

Hezekiah and all of Judah knew that the hordes of Assyria were encamped and ready to strike them. They could actually see them. But God is one who cannot be seen.

Why then did Hezekiah rely on God who cannot be seen?

Hezekiah trusted in the God who had revealed Himself to Israel and trusted in the works of God in their midst over the years and the promises He made to Israel. And he took comfort in those promises and passed that comfort on to the people.

It's not that much different for you and me. How many times in life do we literally see a problem confronting us to where we have no earthly idea how to avoid that problem? And at some point, as Christians, we have to rely on our God whom we cannot see?

Why can we trust God in those situations?

Because we know that God has revealed Himself to this world. And the way in which He has revealed Himself gives us the

confidence that God does exist, He does love His people, He has every intention of being with us all throughout our lives and that He has every intention of bringing us home to Himself one day.

Why do we believe that when we've never seen this God in whom we trust?

We have seen this God. We see Him through the universe He's made. We see Him through the prophets who have spoken on His behalf and we've seen Him through His Son Jesus Christ.

The physical universe screams of a Creator.

Romans 1:20 ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, *His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen*, being understood *through what has been made*, so that they are without excuse.

But we also have eye witnesses to God's power and message to the world who have written down what they have experienced and have heard from God.

Numbers 12:6-8 ⁶ He said, "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, shall make Myself known to him in a vision. I shall speak with him in a dream. ⁷ "Not so, with My servant Moses, He is faithful in all My household; ⁸ With him I speak mouth to mouth, Even openly, and not in dark sayings, And he beholds the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant, against Moses?"

And so, we have the physical universe as proof that God exists. We have they witnesses in the O.T. that this Creator God has revealed Himself to man. But in these last days God has spoken to us in a most dramatic way.

Hebrews 1:1-3 ^{NAU} God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, ² in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. ³ And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

Jesus Christ has made known the Father whom we have not seen by showing us the Father through the incarnate Son of God. This is why Jesus could say, if you've seen me you've seen the Father.

This doesn't mean that Jesus became the Father or that the Father became the Son. It simply means that the Son, who is God, came into this world by taking on flesh so that we can see the very nature of the Father who is God.

One God, three persons, with the second person, the Son, revealing the Creator in a most unique way.

But back to Hebrews. Notice the word that the writer of Hebrews uses to describe the days in which Jesus Christ came into this world. It's two words: last days. The Greek word for last is *eschatos*.

What English word derives its meaning from this Greek word *eschatos*?

Eschatology. The study of the last days. We have a tendency to limit our study of the last days to the future. The truth of the matter is that unless we study the last days in light of the days of Christ's first coming we will miss some very important truths.

The last days began with Christ's incarnation and earthly ministry along with His crucifixion for the sins of His people and physical resurrection from the grave.

In God's timetable those are the beginning of the last days. And so, when the apostles wrote to the churches of their day it was understood that they were living in the last days. And Peter acknowledges this on the day of Pentecost.

Acts 2:16-18 ¹⁶ but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ 'AND IT SHALL BE *IN THE LAST DAYS*,' God says, 'THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL ¹MANKIND; AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY, AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS; ¹⁸ EVEN ON MY BONDSLAVES, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN, I WILL IN THOSE DAYS POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT And they shall prophesy.

And yet, here we are some 2,000 years later and we're still in the last days. One might ask the question, how long does this go on

until we come to the last day? Well, this was a question that even the apostles dealt with.

2 Peter 3:3-6 ³ Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with *their* mocking, following after their own lusts, ⁴ and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For *ever* since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." ⁵ For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God *the* heavens existed long ago and *the* earth was formed out of water and by water, ⁶ through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.

What is Peter saying about the coming of the Lord in judgment on the last day?

He is saying that just because God's ultimate judgment has not manifested itself yet does not mean it won't eventually come about. And if there is any doubt that the last day of His judgment will come, just go back in history and see His judgment on the world through the flood.

There is a future last day of judgment and God assures us that it will come as a thief in the night.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 ¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

What do we normally call this event?

The rapture. A word by the way that is not found in the Greek N.T., but a Latin word describing the catching away of God's people.

But notice when this catching away of God's people takes place and the context in which it happens.

The context is the coming of the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 4:15 ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

What is the coming of the Lord? Well, Paul makes it pretty clear when writing to the Thessalonians. Notice the context.

¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

What is this describing?

The resurrection, the rapture.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

This is the rapture, the resurrection, but it's also at the last trumpet of God.

Well, what is the last trumpet?

Well, the disciples of Jesus Christ were interested in this as well when they asked this question.

Matthew 24:3 ³ As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

And of course Jesus spoke of coming wars and rumors of wars, false prophets, great tribulation, and of course the abomination of desolation which is the great apostasy of the church.

But in regards to the end of the age, which is the last day of judgment, Jesus says this.

Matthew 24:29-31 ²⁹ "But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ "And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. ³¹ "And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

And so, as to the last trumpet that Paul spoke about in relation to the resurrection and the rapture it is the same last trumpet, or as Jesus calls it, the Great Trumpet where He comes to judge and to gather the elect from the four winds.

Paul speaks of this same event when addressing the Thessalonians.

2 Thessalonians 1:6-10 ⁶ For after all it is *only* just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, ⁷ and *to give* relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, ⁸ dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, ¹⁰ when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed-- for our testimony to you was believed.

Two things are happening here on that last day. Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, which is the language of judgment, as He deals out retribution to those who rejected the gospel. This is the Great White throne judgment.

Revelation 20:11-15 ¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one *of them* according to their deeds. ¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone's name

was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

But there's a second thing that is being described on this last day by Paul to the Thessalonians that happens on this same day of Great judgment.

2 Thessalonians 1:9-10 ⁹ These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, ¹⁰ when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed-- for our testimony to you was believed.

So, the same day of final judgment on the unbelieving world, known as the Great White Throne Judgment, which occurs at the Great Trumpet or Last Trumpet, is also the same day in which Jesus comes to be glorified in His saints which is when the final trumpet is sounded and the dead in Christ rise from the dead and we who remain will be changed in the twinkling of an eye.

But there's a third thing that happens on that same day. So, now you have the final trumpet of judgment on the unbelieving world, you have the resurrection of the just and the unjust and you also have the destruction of this present world.

2 Peter 3:7-10 ⁷ But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. ⁸ But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

We're not done yet, there's a fourth thing that happens on this same day.

2 Peter 3:11-14 ¹¹ Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! ¹³ But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in

which righteousness dwells. ¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,

There's obviously a lot happening on that day, but it's a day we need not fear because it's the day we come back home to be with the Lord forever on a new earth with new heavens. But the point I was making is that we, like Hezekiah, can trust in a God we have not seen because this God has not kept us in the dark about who He is and how He has proved that He is a God who created and saves a people for Himself, and the best way in which He proves this is what is written in Acts.

^{NAU} **Acts 17:31** because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, *having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.*"

This is the reason that though the enemy comes against us it is not something we should fear but it is a reason to trust in God who delivers us from the enemy and who will ultimately deliver us from this world of sin and curse. And He did it at the cross and His ultimate victory over death and the grave as He gives us that victory through Christ's resurrection.

I was hoping to get a little further with our text today, but I thought it would be helpful to consider why God's people trust God. This is not some blind faith we employ, but a faith in the works of our Creator who has revealed Himself to the world in His creation and through the prophets and apostles and in these last days in His Son Jesus Christ who will come on the last day to settle the matter once and for all.

Everything is moving toward that last day that appears to be a very busy day. But it's a day that though filled with the signs of the coming of the Son of Man will also be a day not unlike the days of Noah when people were marrying and giving in marriage and carrying on their normal lives. It will be a day we're told where the world will not be expecting the coming of the Lord.

Thus Christ comes like a thief in the night. But unfortunately for those who reject Christ and His gospel that day will be a day of judgment. For you and I it will be a day of great joy, great comfort, a day where we will be changed from the corruptible to the incorruptible in the resurrection, a day where our futures will be ensured in our Lord Jesus Christ and a day of witnessing the resurrection of a new world.

This is why we can say with Hezekiah...

2 Chronicles 32:7 ⁷ "Be strong and courageous, do not fear or be dismayed because of the king of Assyria nor because of all the horde that is with him; for the one with us is greater than the one with him.

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We'll visit this passage and those following next time and I promise we'll move through this portion as we discover that the enemy who comes against Judah and Hezekiah will actually resort to the exact same tactics that the serpent used in the Garden of Eden when drawing Eve away from the God in whom she was also told to trust.