

# Dr. John Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 27.1, 2 Kings 18-19, Part 1 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

## 1. Abstract of Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 27.1, 2 Kings 18-19, Part 1, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

**Dr. Oswalt's lecture analyzes 2 Kings 18-19**, focusing on Hezekiah's reign and his trust in God amidst the Assyrian threat. **The lecture highlights Hezekiah's reforms**, such as removing high places and destroying the bronze snake, actions reflecting his commitment to Deuteronomic law. **The Assyrian king Sennacherib challenges Hezekiah's faith**, attempting to undermine the Judeans' trust in God through psychological warfare and historical comparisons. **Oswalt emphasizes that Sennacherib's fundamental error lies in his ignorance of the unique power and nature of the Lord**, contrasting it with the defeated gods of other nations. **Ultimately, the text explores themes of trust, obedience, and the sovereignty of God** in the face of political and military pressure.

**2. 17 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 27.1 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Historical Books → Kings).**



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on27\_1.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 27.1, 2 Kings 18-19, Part 1

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. John Oswalt's lecture on 2 Kings 18-19, focusing on Hezekiah.

#### Briefing Document: Dr. John Oswalt on 2 Kings 18-19: Hezekiah, Man of Trust

##### Overview:

This session focuses on the reign of Hezekiah, King of Judah, as depicted in 2 Kings 18-19, particularly his confrontation with the Assyrian King Sennacherib. The central theme is Hezekiah's trust in the Lord, which sets him apart from other kings, contrasting with his father Ahaz's reliance on Assyria and foreshadowing his son Manasseh's wickedness. The lecture also explores the historical context, including the fall of the Northern Kingdom and the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem, as well as Sennacherib's attempt to undermine the Judean's faith in Yahweh.

##### Key Themes and Ideas:

1. **Hezekiah's Righteousness and Reforms:** Hezekiah is portrayed as a king who "did what was right in the eyes of the Lord" (2 Kings 18:3), specifically aligning himself with the standard of David and the written word. This is evidenced by his destruction of the high places, sacred stones, and Asherah poles (2 Kings 18:4).
  - *"Evidently, Hezekiah not only went back to the standard of David, he went back to the standard of the word. And said, oh my goodness, this is not right. We ought not to be worshipping Yahweh on these pagan places."*
  - The lecture emphasizes that Hezekiah even destroyed the bronze serpent made by Moses, which had become an object of idolatry, highlighting his commitment to pure worship. *"He broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made. For up to that time, the Israelites had been burning incense to it."*
1. **Hezekiah's Unique Trust in the Lord:** Oswalt stresses that Hezekiah's defining characteristic was his *trust* in God, a quality that distinguished him even from other good kings like Josiah, who was notable for his repentance. *"Hezekiah trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel. There was no one like him among all the Kings of Judah, either before him or after him."*
  - The lecture explains that trust is fundamental to all relationships, including the relationship between God and humanity. *"Every relationship is built on trust. I'm*

*going to commit myself to you because I believe that you will act in my best interests."*

1. **The Assyrian Threat and Sennacherib's Strategy:** The lecture details the historical context of Sennacherib's invasion in 701 BC, emphasizing the Assyrian's military power and their previous conquests, including the fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.
  - *"It is the date 701, and the Assyrian emperor Sennacherib came. Sennacherib tells us that he captured 46 fortified cities...Finally, only two fortresses remain standing in the land...One of those fortresses was Jerusalem."*
  - Sennacherib's strategy involved not only military force but also psychological warfare. He sent his third in command to Jerusalem to persuade the people to abandon Hezekiah and surrender. The Assyrians were well-informed, even speaking Hebrew. *"So here comes the third in command of the Assyrian army with a large army with him demanding that they surrender...Part of their homework is he knows Hebrew."*
1. **Sennacherib's Challenge to Yahweh:** Sennacherib's message to Hezekiah was designed to undermine the people's faith in God. He mocked their reliance on Egypt and argued that Hezekiah's religious reforms had angered Yahweh. The Assyrian king asserted that no god had been able to save other nations from his power.
  - *"Say to Hezekiah, King of Judah, don't let the God you depend on deceive you...Surely, you have heard what the Kings of Assyria have done to all the countries, destroying them completely. And will you be delivered? Did the gods of the nations that were destroyed by my predecessors deliver them?"*
  - Oswalt points out that Sennacherib's challenge was not merely a political or military one, but a direct confrontation with the power of Yahweh. *"This is a conflict between... It's not a conflict between Yahweh and the Assyrian gods. These Kings say I can take on your God."*
1. **Hezekiah's Initial Response and Subsequent Trust:** Hezekiah initially attempted to appease Sennacherib by paying a heavy tribute. However, Sennacherib broke the agreement and continued his siege. Ultimately, Hezekiah turned to the Lord in prayer, trusting in His deliverance.
2. **The Significance of Clinging to the Lord:** Oswalt emphasized the importance of clinging to the Lord, using Deuteronomic language to describe a deep and

personal relationship beyond a master-servant dynamic, reminiscent of Jesus' call to friendship with his followers. *"He clung to the Lord. Yes, yes. And that's another Deuteronomic word where Deuteronomy says to love him and fear him, to serve him, and to cling to him."*

**Points of Interest/Further Discussion:**

- The chronological complexities surrounding Hezekiah's reign and co-regency.
- The nature of the "high places" and the reasons for their removal.
- The parallels between the situation in Hezekiah's time and contemporary issues of trust, integrity, and the erosion of values.
- The significance of Isaiah's role as a prophet during this period.
- The different perspectives on the events in Kings and Isaiah.

This briefing provides a foundational understanding of the themes and issues covered in Dr. Oswalt's lecture, providing a basis for deeper study and reflection on the biblical text.

## 4. Study Guide: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 27.1, 2 Kings 18-19, Part 1

### Hezekiah: Man of Trust - A Study Guide

#### Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. What is unique about the way Hezekiah's reign is dated in 2 Kings?
2. What actions did Hezekiah take to reform religious practices in Judah, as described in 2 Kings 18?
3. How does the text differentiate Hezekiah's unique quality from that of King Josiah?
4. What is the significance of trust in the context of Hezekiah's reign and the broader relationship with God?
5. Describe the historical context of the Assyrian threat during Hezekiah's reign.
6. What arguments did the Assyrian third in command use to persuade Jerusalem to surrender?
7. What was Sennacherib's strategic motivation for demanding Jerusalem's surrender?
8. Why was the Assyrian army's withdrawal from Jerusalem a source of potential deception for the people of Judah?
9. What challenge did Sennacherib pose to Hezekiah regarding the power of the God of Israel?
10. According to Oswalt, what is Sennacherib's fundamental error in his challenge to Hezekiah?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. The dating of Hezekiah's reign is complicated by a co-regency period; his reign is calculated both from the co-regency with his father and from when his father died, creating some discrepancies in dating. The traditional dating method of counting from the start of a co-regency until death doesn't seem to work in Hezekiah's case.

2. Hezekiah removed the high places, smashed the sacred stones, cut down the Asherah poles, and broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made because the Israelites were burning incense to it. Hezekiah's reforms were rooted in a return to Deuteronomic law.
3. The text highlights that Hezekiah was unique in his trust in the Lord, while Josiah was exceptional in his repentance and seeking of the Lord, which highlights the importance of repentance in religious reform. These are two distinct, non-contradictory characteristics, each marking their respective king as uniquely devoted.
4. Trust is essential for a relationship, enabling commitment based on the belief that the other party will act in one's best interests. In the context of Hezekiah, his trust in God was a defining characteristic, setting him apart from his predecessors and influencing his actions in the face of the Assyrian threat.
5. During Hezekiah's reign, the Assyrian Empire was a dominant force, having already conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 BCE. This made the Assyrian border a close and constant threat to Judah, casting a shadow over the kingdom's future.
6. The Assyrian third in command argued that Jerusalem could not depend on its military strength, Egypt, or the Lord. The Assyrian official questioned the strength of their military, mocked their alliance with Egypt, and claimed that Hezekiah's religious reforms had angered Yahweh.
7. Sennacherib was strategically motivated to take Jerusalem to secure his rear while advancing towards Egypt. Jerusalem's location allowed it to cut off his supply lines.
8. The Assyrian army's withdrawal might have given the people of Judah a false sense of security, leading them to celebrate and believe that their deal with Egypt had succeeded. However, the withdrawal was not necessarily permanent, and the Assyrians could return with renewed threats.
9. Sennacherib challenged the power of the God of Israel by highlighting the Assyrian army's previous victories over other nations and their gods. He argued that if the gods of those nations could not save them from Assyrian conquest, then the God of Israel was no different and could not protect Jerusalem.
10. Oswalt believes Sennacherib's fundamental error was that he did not know the Lord, demonstrating ignorance of God's true nature and power. Sennacherib

mistakenly assumed Yahweh was like the powerless gods of the nations he had conquered, failing to recognize the unique and all-powerful nature of the God of Israel.

## Essay Questions

Consider the following essay questions, drawing on the text to support your arguments:

1. Compare and contrast the reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah. How did each king's decisions impact the kingdom of Judah?
2. Analyze the role of trust in Hezekiah's leadership. How did his trust in God influence his actions and the outcome of the Assyrian crisis?
3. Discuss the significance of Hezekiah's religious reforms in the context of the Deuteronomic law. Why were these reforms important, and what impact did they have on the religious life of Judah?
4. Examine the strategies used by Sennacherib to intimidate and persuade Jerusalem to surrender. How did he attempt to undermine the people's faith in Hezekiah and their God?
5. Explore the broader implications of the Assyrian crisis for the people of Judah. How did this event challenge their understanding of God's promises and their relationship with Him?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Hezekiah:** King of Judah known for his religious reforms and trust in God.
- **Sennacherib:** Assyrian king who invaded Judah during Hezekiah's reign.
- **Assyria:** A powerful empire that dominated the ancient Near East and threatened Judah.
- **Lachish:** A fortified city in Judah that fell to the Assyrians.
- **High Places:** Sites of worship, often associated with pagan practices, that Hezekiah removed.
- **Asherah Poles:** Wooden poles or trees representing the Canaanite goddess Asherah, which Hezekiah cut down.
- **Bronze Snake:** A bronze serpent made by Moses, which the Israelites had been worshiping and which Hezekiah destroyed.
- **Deuteronomy:** A book of the Hebrew Bible that emphasizes covenant loyalty and religious purity.
- **Co-regency:** A period when a king rules jointly with another, often his son.
- **Trust:** A firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something. In this context, Hezekiah's unwavering belief in God.



## 5. FAQs on Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 27.1, 2 Kings 18-19, Part 1, [Biblicalelearning.org](http://Biblicalelearning.org) (BeL)

### FAQ on Hezekiah and the Assyrian Crisis

- **What was unique about Hezekiah among the kings of Judah?**
- Hezekiah was unique for his unwavering trust in the Lord, unlike any king before or after him. He not only adhered to the standard of David but also strictly followed the word of God, demonstrated by his removal of the high places, smashing of sacred stones, and cutting down of Asherah poles. His complete reliance on God distinguished him from other kings, even those considered righteous.
- **Why did Hezekiah destroy the bronze snake that Moses had made?**
- Hezekiah destroyed the bronze snake because the Israelites had been burning incense to it for about 700 years, turning it into an object of worship. This act demonstrates Hezekiah's commitment to purifying worship and eliminating anything that could become an idol or distract from the worship of Yahweh. It underscores his devotion to the exclusive worship of God as prescribed in the law.
- **What was the political situation in Judah during Hezekiah's reign?**
- Hezekiah reigned during a turbulent time, with the Assyrian Empire expanding its influence. The Northern Kingdom of Israel had already fallen to Assyria, and Hezekiah's Judah was under threat. He initially attempted to form a coalition with neighboring nations to resist Assyria, but this failed. Judah became a target of Assyrian aggression, with many fortified cities captured.
- **How did Sennacherib, the Assyrian king, try to conquer Jerusalem?**
- Sennacherib's strategy involved capturing fortified cities around Jerusalem, including Lachish, to isolate the city. He sent his third-in-command with an army to Jerusalem to intimidate the Judean people into forcing Hezekiah to surrender. The Assyrian commander used psychological warfare, speaking in Hebrew to undermine Hezekiah's leadership and erode the people's trust in their king and their God. He used arguments to demonstrate that trusting in military strategy, Egypt, or even the Lord were all useless.

- **Why did the Assyrian commander speak Hebrew to the people of Jerusalem?**
- The Assyrian commander spoke Hebrew to the people on the wall to bypass the officials and directly address the populace. His intention was to sow discord and doubt, convincing the people that Hezekiah could not save them and that their only hope was to surrender to Assyria. He aimed to break their morale by undermining their confidence in Hezekiah and the Lord.
- **What arguments did the Assyrian commander use to convince the people of Jerusalem to surrender?**
- The Assyrian commander used several arguments. He dismissed their military strength as empty words, ridiculed their alliance with Egypt as a broken reed, and claimed that the Lord was displeased with Hezekiah's removal of the high places. He offered a false promise of a better life if they surrendered and warned them that Hezekiah could not deliver them from Assyria's power. He even asserted that the Lord had commanded him to attack Judah.
- **What was Hezekiah's initial response to the Assyrian threat?**
- Initially, Hezekiah attempted to appease Sennacherib by paying a heavy tribute of silver and gold, even stripping the temple of its treasures. This act demonstrates Hezekiah's initial miscalculation and perhaps a lack of complete trust in the Lord at the beginning of the crisis. He may have hoped that paying the tribute would satisfy the Assyrians and prevent further destruction. However, this appeasement strategy failed, as Sennacherib continued to threaten Jerusalem.
- **How does the narrative portray the conflict between Assyria and Judah as more than just a military or political struggle?**
- The conflict is portrayed as a clash of spiritual powers. Sennacherib challenges not just Judah's military or political strength but also the power of their God, Yahweh. He boasts that he has defeated the gods of other nations, implying that Yahweh is no different and cannot protect Judah. This frames the conflict as a test of faith, highlighting the importance of Hezekiah's trust in the Lord and the ultimate triumph of Yahweh over the Assyrian gods.