

Facing the Trial of Crisis- Father vs Son Rev. Collins Kung

In the last week's worship sermon, I talked about King Hezekiah's facing the trial of crisis. He trusted in the Lord to overcome the crisis. He was facing the invasion by the Assyrian army and the Assyrian general had arrived in Jerusalem. 2 Kings 18:17 *"And the king of Assyria sent the Tartan, the Rab-saris, and the Rabshakeh with a great army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. When they arrived, **they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is on the highway to the Washer's Field.**"* Hezekiah was facing the extreme pressure of Rabshakeh, which shaking the confidence of the people in Judah, he chose to go to the House of the Lord to pray. At the same time, he took the initiative to ask the prophet Isaiah for prayer. As a result, God sent a message of comfort and deliverance to him through the prophet. Hezekiah's performance is in sharp contrast with his father Ahaz.

Chapter 16 of 2 Kings wrote: Ahaz, the father of King Hezekiah, king of Judah in the southern kingdom, began to reign. The Bible describes him as an evil king. Unlike his father David had done what was right in the eyes of the Lord his God, he sacrificed and made offerings on the high places and on the hills and under every green tree and even burned his son as a sacrifice. At that time, the northern kingdom of Israel and Judah were in a state of hostility. The northern kingdom allied with the Syria kingdom, Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, came up to wage war on Jerusalem. They besieged Ahaz.

Isaiah chapter 7 wrote about the crisis at that time. Isaiah 7:2 *"When the house of David was told, "Syria is in league with Ephraim," the heart of Ahaz and the heart of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake before the wind."* God told the prophet Isaiah to comfort Ahaz. Isaiah 7:3 *"And the Lord said to Isaiah, "Go out to meet Ahaz, you and Shear-jashub your son, **at the end of the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the Washer's Field.**"* God was even willing to give a sign to Ahaz so that he could relax and calm down. This sign is the famous Immanuel prophecy in the Bible. Isaiah 7:14 *"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."*

However, Ahaz ignored it and chose to rely on Assyria to rescue Judah from the plight. He sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria and said, "I am your servant and your son. Come up and rescue me from the hand of the king of Syria and from the hand of the king of Israel, who are attacking me." He took the silver and gold that was found in the House of the Lord and in the treasures of the king's house and sent a present to the king of Assyria. Later, he personally went to Assyria to meet with the King of Assyria, introduced the Assyrian altar, built another Assyrian altar in the House of the Lord, and offered sacrifices there. And he moved the bronze altar that was before the Lord from the front of the House, from the place between his altar and the house of the Lord, and put it on the north side of his altar. This showed that Ahaz has no God in his heart.

The same crisis, the same place, but different reactions. Let's reflect deeply on the reactions of the two kings, hoping that you and me, whether in adversity or prosperity, can trust in God, remembering that we are redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ through His precious blood.

在上星期的崇拜，我講到希西家王面對危機的考驗，他專心倚靠神而渡過危機。他面對亞述大軍入侵的危機。當時亞述將軍來到耶路撒冷。王下 18:17「亞述王從拉吉派他珥探、拉伯撒利和拉伯沙基率領大軍，往耶路撒冷，到希西家王那裡去。他們就上來，去到耶路撒冷。他們到達以後，**就站在上池的引水道旁，在漂布地的大路上。**」面對拉伯沙基的極限施壓，動搖猶大國上上下下的信心，希西家選擇上耶和華的殿去禱告，同時亦主動找先知以賽亞代禱。結果，神藉先知送上安慰解救的信息。希西家的表現與父親亞哈斯形成強烈的對比。

列王紀下 16 章記載南國猶大王希西家王的父親亞哈斯登位，聖經形容他是個惡王，不像他祖宗大衛行耶和華他的神看為正的事。他在邱壇上，在山岡上和所有青翠的樹下獻祭和焚香，甚至焚燒他的兒子為祭。當時的北國以色列與猶大正處於敵對狀態，北國與亞蘭國結盟，並且亞蘭王利汛與以色列王利瑪利的兒子比加上來攻打耶路撒冷。他們把亞哈斯圍困起來。

以賽亞書第 7 章記載了當時的危機，賽 7:2「有人告訴大衛家說：“亞蘭已經在以法蓮地安營。”王的心和人民的心就都震動，像林中的樹被風搖動一樣。」神吩咐先知以賽亞去安慰亞哈斯。賽 7:3「耶和華對以賽亞說：“你和你的兒子施亞雅述出去，**在上池的水溝盡頭，就是在漂布者田間的大路上**，去迎接亞哈斯。」神甚至願意向亞哈斯發出兆頭，讓他可以放下心頭大石。這個兆頭就是聖經有名的以馬內利的預言。賽 7:14「因此主自己必給你們一個兆頭：看哪！必有童女懷孕生子；她要給他起名叫‘以馬內利’。」

可是，亞哈斯沒有理會，他選擇倚靠亞述解救猶大的困境。他差派使者去見亞述王提革拉毗列色，說：“我是你的臣僕，你的兒子，求你上來，救我脫離那起來攻擊我的亞蘭王和以色列王的手。”他拿耶和華殿裡和王宮寶庫內的金子和銀子，送給亞述王作禮物。後來，他親自到亞述會見亞述王，引入了亞述的祭壇，在耶和華的殿裡另建亞述祭壇，在那裡獻祭，卻把耶和華面前的銅祭壇，從殿從新壇與耶和華殿中間移至新壇的北邊。由此可見，亞哈斯心中從骨子裡沒有神。

相同的危機，相同的地點，不同的反應。兩個王的表現藉得我們深思，盼望你與我不論在逆境或順境，都能專心倚靠神，謹記我們是藉著主耶穌基督的寶血買贖回來歸給他。