

## NEWSLETTER

JUNE - 2023

## TAPIOLA APOSTOLIC LUTHERAN CHURCH

### SPEAKERS

**June 4: Ken Storm, *Holy Communion***

**June 11: Ivan Niemela**

**June 18<sup>th</sup>: Ken Storm**

**June 25: Charles Korhonen**

**Sunday Service: 11:00 a.m.**

**Wednesday Bible Study:  
7:00 p.m.**

### CONTACT

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[www.tapiolachurch.org](http://www.tapiolachurch.org)

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### The Conversion of King Hezekiah

*"I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee" - 2 Kings 20:5*

God promises to save all people who will call upon Him: all who will call upon Him in truth. Hezekiah was no exception to this, but it was God who had to call him many times before he finally reached out to be saved. So it is with us. And as He did in Hezekiah's time, God today still sends His Word and servants "into all the earth and unto the ends of the world" (Romans 10:18) to redeem lost souls, no matter who or where they are, yet many people continue to reject His calls to repent of their sins. King Hezekiah is an example of a person who served God all his life but was not saved until later in life.

Hezekiah grew up in an ungodly household, yet he "did that which was right in the sight of the Lord" (2 Kings 18:3) as an adult. In his youth he witnessed his father, king Ahaz of Judah, lock the temple doors, build altars and set up idols everywhere for pagan worship; Ahaz even endorsed child-sacrifice. Amazingly, despite growing up in this evil environment, the Word of God somehow reached Hezekiah's heart, which is something for us to appreciate. In his first year as king, Hezekiah removed the high places, broke the idols, cut down the groves and reopened the doors of the temple. He also reinstated the Passover celebration at Jerusalem (2 Chr 30:1), calling the people to abandon their pagan beliefs and to confess their sins at the temple door. Many across Judah and Israel laughed at this invitation but some humbled themselves and obediently went to Jerusalem (2 Chr 30:10-11). As a result, there was great joy amongst the worshippers to where their voices were heard throughout the land, even unto heaven (2 Chr 30: 26-27). Hence, God blessed Hezekiah with a long period of peace.

This peace was shattered when Sennacherib king of Assyria attacked Judah in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's rule. It had been relatively easy to trust God when things went his way but now Hezekiah had a choice to make: either give in to Sennacherib or pray for divine intervention. Hezekiah did not pray: instead, he sought to assuage Assyria with tribute money where "all the silver...in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house" plus the "gold from the doors of the temple...and from the pillars" (2 Kings 18:15-16) were sent to Assyria to buy peace. This strategy backfired. It only emboldened Sennacherib to demand Judah's full surrender. Sennacherib publicly shamed Judah saying that their God would be powerless against him as were the gods of the nations that Assyria had already defeated (2 Kings 19:10-12). When Hezekiah heard these new threats he finally went into the newly-opened temple to pray. He laid out the letter of demands from Sennacherib before the Lord and prayed, "Of a truth, Lord, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands...I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord God" (2 Kings 19:17, 19). God answered his impassioned plea by killing the 185,000-strong Assyrian army at night before they could attack Jerusalem (2 Kings 19:35-36). God had blessed Hezekiah again.

Truly, Hezekiah was blessed many times but he had one more enemy to defeat—sin. It happened during the attack of Sennacherib that, by God's grace, Hezekiah became mortally ill (2 Kings 20:1). God sent Isaiah to Hezekiah to say,

*“Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live”* (2 Kings 20:1). This call from God had nothing to do with his earthly home but with his spiritual home. In other words, there was sin in his life that needed to be dealt with, so, rather than asking Isaiah to pray for him, Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to God while Isaiah left the room. His answer to God recalled the good works that he did for God and the blessings that God gave to him, but he wept. He wept because all of his good works were *“as filthy rags”* (Isaiah 64:4) before God. However, when God heard his prayer and saw his tears He sent Isaiah back to deliver this message, *“Thus saith the Lord...I have heard thy prayer...I will heal thee...And I will add unto thy days fifteen years”* (2 Kings 20:5-6). What joy must have filled Hezekiah’s heart to be physically healed but not nearly as much as to know that God also healed him spiritually: *“Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back”* (Isaiah 38:17). Now he was saved!

Hezekiah served as a good example of a God-fearing man all his life. Yet, God saw that his heart was bound to sin, as are we all. God called him to repent of this sin throughout his life just as He did with Sennacherib and many others: God sent His prophets throughout the land preaching repentance but *“they would not hear”* (2 Kings 17:14). Thus, it is not how we live our life that determines if we are saved or not, but it is whether we answer God’s call to repent of our sins from a humble and contrite heart, which only God can provide. Pray that God will grant you the grace to confess the sin that He reveals to you and the grace to believe the word of reconciliation proclaimed to you by one of His servants, *“Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee”* (Matt 9:2).

*God’s Peace,*

Charles Korhonen