



# God Reveals the Coming Victory

**THEOLOGICAL THEME:** God saves us for the glory of His name and for our good.

Names always tell us something. For good or bad, whenever you hear a name, you usually have an image of something that is associated with that name. Songs like Johnny Cash's "A Boy Named Sue" humorously illustrate the discomfort that comes when a person's name does not accurately reflect his or her identity. Perhaps this is why every parent labors over the right name when they welcome a new child into the world. Sometimes we even give nicknames to others because certain actions seem to mark them for life.

Names are powerful precisely because they communicate ideas about those whom they identify. Perhaps this is why God is so intentional about His name. Admittedly, speaking of God means different things for various people, but when understood correctly, the name of God uncovers multiple reasons for worshiping Him. Not only do we benefit from understanding all that God's name entails but also from making His name known to others.



What is the first thing you think of when someone mentions God or Jesus?

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How will our understanding of who God is shape the way we live?

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Date of My Bible Study: \_\_\_\_\_

In this session, we will learn how God's glory is personally beneficial to those who follow Him. Understanding God's glory reveals the certainty with which we can receive His promises. There is never a dichotomy between displaying God's greatness and resting in His love. The ancient story of Assyria's calloused threats against Judah during the reign of King Hezekiah illustrates that God saves us for the glory of His name and for our good. We, in turn, make known His glory so that others will rest in His grace.

## 1. The kingdoms of this world rise up and oppose God's people (2 Kings 19:8-13).

*<sup>8</sup> The Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria fighting against Libnah, for he heard that the king had left Lachish.*

*<sup>9</sup> Now the king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Cush, "Behold, he has set out to fight against you." So he sent messengers again to Hezekiah, saying, <sup>10</sup> "Thus shall you speak to Hezekiah king of Judah: 'Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you by promising that Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.*

*<sup>11</sup> Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, devoting them to destruction. And shall you be delivered? <sup>12</sup> Have the gods of the nations delivered them, the nations that my fathers destroyed, Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the people of Eden who were in Telassar? <sup>13</sup> Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of the city of Sepharvaim, the king of Hena, or the king of Ivvah?"*

At first glance, the subjects of temptation, trials, or suffering do not seem obvious within this historical narrative of Judah. A closer look, however, reveals that many of the challenges disciples of Christ face today follow the same pattern found within these verses.

But why is it so difficult to walk as a child of God in a contemporary world? Why do the kingdoms of earth rise up against the people of God? There are two things to keep in mind:

### Voices from the Church

"Isn't it interesting that God gave us only ten commandments and one of them focused on His name? The commandment means more than avoiding using God's name in a slang or profane way. It means that those who are in relationship with Him must honor His name in their lives. The name of God has to do with character, and when we live in covenant relationship with Him, we become accountable for reflecting His character."<sup>1</sup>

—Ken Hemphill

### **Satan is the ruler of this world.**

First, Satan has a limited source of power in this world. Since the garden of Eden, a war has been raging between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). Because creation has been subjected to sin, Satan temporarily functions as “the god of this world” (2 Cor. 4:4) and the “prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2).



What are some ways Satan is wreaking havoc in the world today, and how should Christians respond?

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### **Your trials are not always about you.**

Second, seeing the backdrop to evil in the world helps us understand that every hardship and suffering we face is not necessarily about us. Granted, Satan walks around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5:8). He is the serpent of old, anxious to accuse the family of God (Rev. 12:10). But his attacks are also part of a much larger war that is not primarily about the single individuals affected by the hardships created.

When Assyria came against Hezekiah and the Southern Kingdom of Judah, the primary target was “your God in whom you trust” (19:10). By listing other nations and the false gods who were unable to save them, the servants of Assyria were satanic tools used to mock the name of Yahweh by lumping Him in the same category (19:12). Through these mouthpieces, Satan mocked the notion that God was able to deliver His people (see 18:22-24).

Ultimately, this is why the kingdoms of the world rise up against God’s people. It is not because we are significant. Nor is it because our happiness or lack thereof can alter the course of the ancient war between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. God’s people are mocked, tempted, targeted, and persecuted in order to call God’s name into question. Our lives are a battleground for God’s glory, and Satan is anxious to prove that the God we serve is no different than the false gods of dead religions.



What is your first reaction whenever bad things happen in your life?

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How will seeing hardship through the lens of God's glory change how you handle life's challenges?

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## 2. God's people ask God to save them and exalt His name (2 Kings 19:14-19).

*<sup>14</sup> Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD and spread it before the LORD. <sup>15</sup> And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD and said: "O LORD, the God of Israel, enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth. <sup>16</sup> Incline your ear, O LORD, and hear; open your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to mock the living God. <sup>17</sup> Truly, O LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands <sup>18</sup> and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone. Therefore they were destroyed. <sup>19</sup> So now, O LORD our God, save us, please, from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O LORD, are God alone."*

Obviously, Hezekiah asked the Lord for the salvation of Judah (19:19). But note also the strong emphasis on the integrity of God's name. Divided into three parts, his prayer magnified the power of God, stated the problem facing the nation, and then appealed directly to God for help.

Angered by the fact that Sennacherib mocked the living God (19:17), Hezekiah desired all the kingdoms of the earth to know there is but one true God (19:19). Contrary to the pagan nations that fell to Assyria previously, Israel's God was not made of wood or stone. The king was eager for the exaltation of his God as much as he was the deliverance of his people.

Prerequisite to this approach is the confidence that God's personal glory will be practically beneficial in our lives. We pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10), precisely because of our conviction that nothing is more satisfying than making God's name known through the growth of His kingdom. There is never a dichotomy between the provision we need and the glory that God deserves. When God promotes His glory, it results in the good of His people.



What do these verses teach us about prayer?

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How should we approach God with our requests?

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When our understanding of life's purpose is centered on God rather than ourselves, our focus is free to shift away from receiving gifts from the Lord to simply making His name known. Like Hezekiah, we should seek the Lord's activity in our lives as a testimony to His goodness and grace. Our ambition, above all else, is to bless the name of the Lord forever (Dan. 2:20).



How do we personally benefit when God makes His glory known?

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## 99 Essential Christian Doctrines

### 24. God's Glory

The glory of God is His manifest work, the way He represents His perfect character through His activity. It also refers to His excellent reputation and is given as one of the reasons we are to praise His name. Another sense of the word is the inherent beauty of God, the unbearable brightness and beauty of His being as He radiates His own attributes and characteristics for all to witness. The Scriptures speak of humanity as having "fallen short" of God's glory (Rom. 3:23) because we have rejected the purpose for which God created us—to glorify Him.

### 3. God is victorious for the sake of His name and His people (2 Kings 19:20,32-37).

*<sup>20</sup> Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Your prayer to me about Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard.*

The response Hezekiah received from the Lord is a reminder that God is eager to hear us when we pray with a kingdom agenda. Not only is God willing to hear us when we cry out to Him, He is also willing to intervene on our behalf for the sake of His name.

*<sup>32</sup> “Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria: He shall not come into this city or shoot an arrow there, or come before it with a shield or cast up a siege mound against it. <sup>33</sup> By the way that he came, by the same he shall return, and he shall not come into this city, declares the LORD. <sup>34</sup> For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David.”*

*<sup>35</sup> And that night the angel of the LORD went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. <sup>36</sup> Then Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went home and lived at Nineveh. <sup>37</sup> And as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons, struck him down with the sword and escaped into the land of Ararat. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.*



With their backs against the wall, the only hope for Judah’s victory over Assyria was the unilateral action of God. Then, just as Isaiah predicted (19:7), Sennacherib fell in defeat as God fought to preserve His people. Tied to His promises to David (19:34), God eagerly protected those who belonged to Him. The sudden death of 185,000 Assyrian soldiers (19:35) not only speaks of God’s power but also His relentless determination to take care of His own. Whether it’s the execution of a multitude or the execution of His own Son, God stands ready to do whatever is necessary to save those who humbly seek the kingdom of heaven.



Why is the Lord eager to be victorious for His people?

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What does this tell us about His love for us and His desire to see His name exalted?

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### **God is motivated by His character and glory.**

The glory of God is not only a revelation of His power but also a reflection of His unwavering character and trustworthiness. By connecting the protection God provided in these verses to the promises He previously made to David (cf. 2 Samuel 7), failure to act would have violated the character and trustworthiness of the Lord. Once established, God guaranteed that the throne of David would continue perpetually through the Messiah. Until then, the preservation of His people was a means to fulfill His promise. This is the same God who promised a Redeemer in the garden of Eden, and His intention was no different here. God's name is tied to His conduct, which was, and is, impeccable.

### **God is motivated by love and compassion for His people.**

A strong emphasis on God's pursuit of personal glory might tempt us to doubt His compassion toward us. Thus, it is helpful to understand God's love and compassion as a *complement to* rather than a *contradiction of* His character. Because compassion toward His people is the ultimate expression of His glory, we need never fear God's unwavering commitment to us. He is love (1 John 4:8), and therefore, He is eager to lavish us with His affection (Deut. 7:7-8). We can be certain that He delights in us (Zeph. 3:17) so profoundly that even the angels in heaven take notice of His elaborate gift of grace (1 Pet. 1:10-12).

### **Voices from the Church**

"Those who deserve the judgment of God have become the recipients of his delight. He doesn't just tolerate forgiven sinners. We who have trusted Christ fill His heart with gladness. He hasn't just made room for us in heaven; he has made room for us in his joyful heart."<sup>2</sup>

—Scotty Smith



What problems arise when we focus solely on God's desire to receive glory (apart from His compassion)?

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What problems arise when we focus solely on God's compassion (apart from His desire for glory)?

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## Conclusion

Admittedly, we don't enjoy being around people who live for themselves to the neglect of others. God's pursuit of His glory, however, is fundamentally different from the narcissistic fallenness that plagues so much of humanity. Because no person or thing is more glorious than God, a failure to promote Himself would be idolatrous. In addition, because God embodies love (1 John 4:16) with a nature that is good (Jas. 1:13), magnifying His glory is universally beneficial for all people, especially those who are born again.

For these reasons, the children of God should live to make God's name known rather than for the advancement of their desires or agendas. God does not exist for us; we exist for Him. Because we are created for God's glory (Isa. 43:7), aligning ourselves to this purpose brings freedom, peace, and joy. When self-preservation dies, our lives become beacons of glory that point back to the One who is more glorious than any other (Matt. 5:16).

**CHRIST CONNECTION:** Hezekiah prayed for God to manifest His glory by saving His people from the pagan kingdom that was rising against them. God exalted His name by answering Hezekiah's prayer. Jesus also prayed for the salvation of His people, and through His death and resurrection, He accomplished the ultimate manifestation of God's glory through defeating the enemy and saving His people.





# HIS MISSION, YOUR MISSION

**MISSIONAL APPLICATION:** God calls us to live on mission for His kingdom because we know that God is victorious over His enemies.

1. How can our contentment and peace in the world through faith in Christ open doors for the mission of sharing about Christ?

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2. What needs to change in our lives so that we would begin praying for God's glory to be known and not just for help through our circumstances?

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3. How should God's victory over His enemies impact us as we live on mission for His kingdom?

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