

“Will a Man Mock God”
2 Kings 18:17-37
(Preached at Trinity, September 11, 2022)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Assyria under King Sennacherib has been marching across the land conquering city after city. His brutality was beyond our comprehension.
Cyril Barber wrote: “Sennacherib systematically attacked the fortified cities until forty-six had been conquered. Lachish held out the longest, but in the end it, too, succumbed. Once the city walls had been breached, the residents were slaughtered. Archaeologists excavating this site have uncovered a pit containing approximately 1,500 skeletons.”¹
2. Advancing upon Hezekiah, he sent three of his trusted officials to taunt him –
2 Kings 18:17 NAU - "Then the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rab-saris and Rabshakeh from Lachish to King Hezekiah with a large army to Jerusalem. So they went up and came to Jerusalem."
Tartan was probably Sennacherib's general.
Rab-saris was probably Sennacherib's chief officer.
And Rabshakeh was his butler, but likely chosen for his linguistic skills.
And his words were blasphemous.
3. Sennacherib saw God as nothing greater than any of the other gods of the nations he'd conquered.
2 Kings 18:32-35 NAU - "But do not listen to Hezekiah when he misleads you, saying, "The LORD will deliver us." ³³ 'Has any one of the gods of the nations delivered his land from the hand of the king of Assyria? ³⁴ 'Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah? Have they delivered Samaria from my hand? ³⁵ 'Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their land from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?"
2 Kings 19:10-12 NAU - "Thus you shall say to Hezekiah king of Judah, 'Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you saying, "Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria." ¹¹ 'Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the lands, destroying them completely. So will you be spared? ¹² 'Did the gods of those nations which my fathers destroyed deliver them"
4. His blasphemies spoken through Rabshakeh were without shame.
He arrogantly declared that the forces of Assyria were a much better source of confidence. More powerful than any nation, more powerful than God.
2 Kings 18:23 NAU - "Now therefore, come, make a bargain with my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses, if you are able on your part to set riders on them."

¹ Cyril J. Barber, *The Books of Kings: The Righteousness of God Illustrated in the Lives of the People of Israel and Judah*, vol. 2 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2004), 441.

5. He declares God is impotent to help Judah against the unstoppable power of Assyria.
2 Kings 18:29-30 NAU - "Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you from my hand; ³⁰ nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, "The LORD will surely deliver us, and this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria."
6. We marvel at such blasphemy. Who would so shamelessly mock God? Who would dare speak such things without fear?
- A. One might say Rabshakeh was merely using psychological warfare – a tool used by leaders of military campaigns. It was just military tactics. It wasn't really anything personal. He didn't even know Israel's God. But that's the point.
- B. Israel's God is the one true God. The only God before whom all men must bow. Rabshakeh knew enough about God to leave him without excuse. All are accountable to Him.
7. Who would dare mock Almighty God? The answer is terrifying. In our fallen condition all of us are blasphemers.
- I. This is the heart of fallen humanity.
- A. The Bible describes it over and over
1. Paul described it in Romans 1
Romans 1:21-22 NAU - "For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools,"
2. Psalm 2 also describes it well
Psalm 2:1-3 NAU - "Why are the nations in an uproar And the peoples devising a vain thing? ² The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, ³ "Let us tear their fetters apart And cast away their cords from us!"
- a. Fallen men naturally despise the authority of God
- b. They deny the anointed Son.
- c. They are blind to their condemnation.
Psalm 2:4, 10-12 NAU - He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them."
 "Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; Take warning, O judges of the earth. ¹¹ Worship the LORD with reverence And rejoice with trembling. ¹² Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish *in* the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!"
3. They found great pleasure mocking Christ as He was crucified.
Mark 10:33-34 NAU - "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles. ³⁴ "They will mock Him and spit on Him, and scourge Him and kill *Him*, and three days later He will rise again."

- B. Most people would deny that they are blasphemers of God.
1. Most believe in their heart that they are basically good people. They are not perfect but they would never mock God.
The truth is they mock God daily.
 2. The First Commandment demands God's supremacy.
"Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."
 3. The Third Commandment declares that He must be approached with holy reverence.
"Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain"
 - a. God's name is the essence of His divine being. To fail to give Him homage is to take His name in vain.
 - b. To approach Him, to call upon His name demands reverence. Any irreverent expression towards God is blasphemy. It is mocking His infinite holiness.
 4. The problem with fallen humanity is we fail to comprehend His infinite majesty of God – His weightiness.
By our irreverence we see God as small and insignificant.
Few pay much attention to a small ladybug. But a charging rhinoceros?
God is infinitely greater than anything we can imagine.
 5. Paul is saying in Romans 1 that although the lost man knows of a certainty that God exists, he suppresses the truth. He hides his eyes from it and hardens his heart against it.
In the darkness of his sinful heart he lives his lives as if God is not there; as if God does not know; as if God does not see.
His life is a daily mockery of God.
 6. They have no fear of God. God is infinite. He is possesses all power and dominion. He rules over all and all will stand before Him to give account, bearing their sin and condemnation.
Most see God as insignificant. Even professing Christians come before Him without holy reverence. This is because they see Him as insignificant.

II. We need to understand, God will not be mocked. He will not be treated with irreverence.

- A. The Bible clearly reveals that God will not allow foolish men to rise up against His rule.
1. In the Garden Adam and Eve rose up against the supreme authority of God. Satan promised they would become as gods.
Genesis 3:5 NAU - "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."
They denied the reign of God and God cursed them and all their posterity.
 2. In the days of Noah the entire earth had risen in rebellion –
Genesis 6:5 NAU - "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."
God crushed the entire earth.
 3. In the city of Babel they rebelled against God and declared their independence Again, God crushed their rebellion and scattered them

4. In the city of Sodom they decided they could set their own standards. God destroyed them.
 5. God has never allowed Himself to be blasphemed.
Leviticus 24:16 NAU - "Moreover, the one who blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall certainly stone him. The alien as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death."
- B. So what are we to think of Sennacherib and his officials?
1. They thought God was no different from the gods of all the pagan nations, gods of their own invention, gods who were impotent and unable to help them, unable to stop the advance of the Assyrian army.
They failed to understand God is the source of all things. They also failed to understand God heard their words, knew their thoughts, and would not excuse their blasphemy.
 2. Their words revealed their irreverence and exposed their condemnation. Isaiah wrote of their condemnation.
Isaiah 33:10-11 NAU - "Now I will arise," says the LORD, "Now I will be exalted, now I will be lifted up. ¹¹ "You have conceived chaff, you will give birth to stubble; My breath will consume you like a fire."
2 Kings 19:6-7 NAU - "Isaiah said to them, "Thus you shall say to your master, 'Thus says the LORD, "Do not be afraid because of the words that you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me. ⁷ "Behold, I will put a spirit in him so that he will hear a rumor and return to his own land. And I will make him fall by the sword in his own land."
- C. The entire world has risen up to declare their independence. They shake their fist before God in vain mockery.
1. They deny His Law. They declare evil to be the ultimate good. We can see this with the whole LGBTQ movement. It is man declaring their own standard of human sexuality and demanding that the whole world accept their behavior. Few today dare speak the truth.
But God will not be mocked.
Isaiah 5:20-21 NAU - "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! ²¹ Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes And clever in their own sight!"
 2. In denying the Gospel people are making a mockery of Christ. They deny such allegations. I'm not mocking Christ. I just don't have any place for Him. He is not my Lord and Master.
 3. The Gospel is not optional. It is not a mere offer to accept or reject. It is a command. Embrace the King! Turn from your wicked ways!
Acts 17:30-31 NAU - ". . . God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should repent, 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."

Conclusion:

1. The warfare of mockery continues. The people of this world continue to mock God, pretending He does not see and has no power to prevail.
2. And as the people of God, we are the objects of mockery. This has always been the case. **John 15:19-20 NAU** - "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. ²⁰ "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also."