

Isaiah OT651-Essay
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Jay Harper-3/5/23

The one new thing I've learned is that the Christian life is not easy. Living for Jesus can be challenging and difficult if we are to live holy lives in this post-Christian era in America. If Christ is the Lord of our lives, we will experience adversity and persecution. Paul tells us that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (II Tim. 3:12) Trusting God is easy when we're not in the heat of the battle. It's easy to trust God financially when enough income is coming in and I have a year's salary saved up for contingencies. It's easy being a Monday morning quarterback after the game is over. Most if not many of us are like King Ahaz. Most of us do not fall on our knees and cry out like Job, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him" (Job. 13:15). Fear grips our hearts and instead of trusting God, we are challenged to trust people or things. Oswalt brings out two great points about why Hezekiah was able to live above the fray (Oswalt p.406-408). First, Hezekiah's had *wholehearted devotion*. Unlike his wicked father Ahaz, the pagan altars, idols, and temples were destroyed. The bronze serpent that Moses had made in the desert was also destroyed (Num. 21:19). The temple in Jerusalem, was cleaned out and reopened. The Levitical priesthood and the Passover were reinstated (II Chronicles 29:5, 30:1). Under Hezekiah's reforms, revival came to Judah. Hezekiah wasn't perfect but his whole heart was directed toward God. When our heart is directed toward God when the trials of life test us our natural inclination will turn toward God and not people or things. Unlike Ahaz, the Bible says, he did not that which was right in the sight of the LORD his God, like David his father" (II Kings. 16:2). Oswalt says it like this: "We do not know how carefully Hezekiah listened to Isaiah across the years, but the biblical record depicts

a man who had, from the outset, tried to do what he believed God wanted” (Oswalt p.406). Secondly, if we’re going to stand firm in the faith *we must trust God*. Trusting God must become a way of life and not just an event. When Abraham sacrificed Isaac it was because he trusted God his whole life. He trusted God when he left Haran (Gen. 12:1). He trusted God after the battles with the five kings (Gen. 14). He trusted God with the birth of Isaac at ninety-nine years old. Oswalt states: “We need to trust God with the small things of our lives so that when the crisis comes, it is easy for us to continue trusting him. We need to allow God to demonstrate his love and care to us on a daily basis by taking our hands off some things that we could supply for ourselves and letting God supply them in his way and in his time” (Oswalt p. 407). The other dimension of trust is *faith*. I believe every Christian’s life is marked by windows of opportunities that demand a radical step of faith in order to follow Christ and fulfill his purpose in life. The reason why we never see God move in a supernatural way is that “without faith, it is impossible to please him” (Heb. 11:6). My God have our whole heart and trust because he is “a very present help in the time of trouble” (Psa. 46:1).