

2 KINGS 19:14-19 --“Sennacherib’s Threat and Hezekiah’s Prayer”

2Ki 19:14-19 “And 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. [15] Then Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said: “O LORD God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. [16] 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 reproach the living God. [17] Truly, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands, [18] 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 destroyed them. [19] Now therefore, O LORD our God, I pray, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the LORD God, You alone.”

The Biblical Setting:

- Hezekiah begins his reign as king over Judah in Chapter 18. He did what was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father David had done. He removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars, cut down the wooden image and broke Moses’ bronze serpent in pieces. He trusted in the Lord God of Israel so that after him was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him.
- In the fourth year of his reign, the Assyrian king Shalmaneser besieged Samaria and took it three years later.
- In the fourteen year of his reign, King Sennacherib took all the fortified cities of Judah. Out of fear, Hezekiah gave Sennacherib all the silver that was in the treasuries of the king’s house and stripped the gold from the doors of the temple and gave it to the king of Assyria.
- The king of Assyria sent a great army against Jerusalem. His leader, Rabshakeh spoke boldly to Jerusalem right outside its walls, saying that no one including their God could help them, just as the gods of other surrounding nations were helpless against Assyria.
- Beginning in Chapter 19, when Hezekiah heard, he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth and went into the house of the Lord. He called on Isaiah to intercede. Isaiah prayed and said not to be afraid of the king of Assyria’s blasphemous words that the Lord would send a spirit on him and he would return to his own land.
- Rabshakeh returned to Lachish and found his army had moved to Libnah to fight there. Also that Tirhakah king of Ethiopia was coming to make war against the Assyrian army. Rabshakeh was sent with a letter to Hezekiah, threatening to destroy Jerusalem. Hezekiah’s response was to go to the house of the Lord, alone, and pray:

Sennacherib’s Threat and Hezekiah’s Prayer - 2Ki 19:14 “And 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.

- **Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD:** Hezekiah **did exactly what any child of God should do** with such a letter. **He took it to the house of the LORD** (to the outer courts, not the holy place), and he **spread it out before the LORD**. In this, Hezekiah boldly and effectively fulfilled the later command of **1 Peter 5:7** : *casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you*. He reacted to this second letter in a different manner. He didn’t go to Isaiah. **He went to the temple and prayed alone, taking his plea directly to the Lord.**

2Ki 19:15 **Then Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said: "O LORD God of Israel,**

- **God of Israel:** This title for God reminded Hezekiah - and the LORD also, in our human way of understanding - that the LORD God was the covenant God of Israel, and that He should not forsake His people.
- As recorded in **Isaiah 37:16**, Hezekiah also used another title when he addressed God, crying out “**O LORD of hosts.**” This title for our God essentially means, “**LORD of armies.**” Hezekiah was in a crisis that was primarily *military* in nature, so it made sense for him to address the LORD first according to the aspect of God’s nature that was most needful for him. “**LORD of armies, send some troops to help us!**”

the One who dwells between the cherubim,

- Here, Hezekiah saw the great majesty of God. Surely, **the One who dwells between the cherubim** would never allow the Rabshakeh’s blasphemies to go unpunished.

You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth.

- **You are God, You alone:** **God** is a simple title for our LORD, but perhaps the most powerful. If He is **God**, then what can He *not* do? If He is **God**, then what is *beyond* His control? Hezekiah realized the most fundamental fact of all theology: **God is God, and we are not! God is God, and the Rabshakeh or the Assyrians are not!**

You have made heaven and earth.

- In recognizing the LORD God as Creator, Hezekiah saw that the LORD had all *power* and all *rights* over every created thing. We can almost feel Hezekiah's faith rising as he prayed this!

2Ki 19:16 Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see;

- Hezekiah **knew very well that the LORD did in fact hear and see the blasphemies of Rabshakeh**. This is a poetic way of asking God to *act upon* what He has seen and heard, assuming that if God *has seen* such things, He will certainly act!

and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God.

- **Hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God:** In his prayer, Hezekiah **drew the contrast between the living God and the false gods** of the nations the Assyrians had already conquered.

2Ki 19:17 Truly, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands,

- He owns Sennacherib's triumphs over the gods of the heathen, but distinguishes between them and the God of Israel

2Ki 19:18 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 destroyed them.

- Those false gods were **not gods, but the work of men's hands; wood and stone**, so they were not able to save them from the Assyrians. But **Hezekiah prayed confidently that the living God would save them**,

2Ki 19:19 Now therefore, O LORD our God, I pray, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the LORD God, You alone.

- He prays that God will now glorify Himself in the defeat of Sennacherib and the deliverance of Jerusalem out of his hands: "**Now therefore, O LORD our God, I pray, save;** for if we be conquered, as other lands are, they will say that You are conquered, as the gods of those lands were: but, Lord, distinguish Yourself, by distinguishing us, and let all the world know, and be made to confess, that **You are the LORD God**, the self-existent sovereign God, **You alone.**, and that all pretenders are vanity and a lie." **The best pleas in prayer are those which are taken from God's honor;** and therefore the Lord's prayer begins with *Hallowed be Thy name*, and concludes with *Thine is the glory*. Cf. **Ex. 30:12** – Moses' prayer at the time of the golden calf incident.

SUMMARY:

- King of Assyria, 2nd invasion of Judah, seeks to terrify Jerusalem. Sends the Rabshakeh (Chief/governor/Chief of Staff)
- Upon hearing report of speech, Hezekiah Tore clothes/covered himself w sackcloth-**recognized the danger** for what it was and went **into the house of the Lord**. Hezekiah sent Eliakim & Shebna to Isaiah asking for **prayer**
- Isaiah answers prophetically from the Lord, Do not be afraid of the words from the servants of the king. The Lord will send spirit upon him, hearing rumor, will return to his own land and die.
- Now Rabshakeh upon returning finds departing from Lachish, fighting against Libnah, hearing king of Ethiopia coming, in desperation for Jerusalem to fall, sends messengers with **letter** to Hezekiah—blaspheming the God of Israel, comparing to false gods who have failed.
- **Hezekiah Receives letter; Read it; Went to the house of the Lord and Spread it before the Lord. He prays to the Lord!** Notice the **address!** **Request** (hear, see) **Compares living God to false gods**
- **SAVE US! That all may know YOU are the LORD God, YOU alone!**
- **"Because you have prayed....I have heard.... the angel of the Lord killed 185,000 in one night!"**

WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS!

1. *What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry Everything to God in prayer! Oh, what peace we often forfeit, Oh, what needless pain we bear, All because we do not carry Everything to God in prayer!*
2. *Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere? We should never be discouraged—Take it to the Lord in prayer. Can we find a friend so faithful, Who will all our sorrows share? Jesus knows our every weakness; Take it to the Lord in prayer.*
3. *Are we weak and heavy-laden, Cumbered with a load of care? Precious Savior, still our refuge—Take it to the Lord in prayer. Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer! In His arms He'll take and shield thee, Thou wilt find a solace there. Thou wilt find a solace there.*