

ISAIAH 37:14-21 – Sennacherib’s Threat and Hezekiah’s Prayer!

7/11/15 Sat Morn Prayer

Biblical Background:

- In the fourteenth years of Hezekiah’s reign, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them.
- Sennacherib sent Rabshakeh with a great army from Lachish to King Hezekiah, telling Jerusalem in a loud voice that their situation was hopeless, that Jehovah, their God would not be able to deliver them. The people held their peace.
- When this became known to Hezekiah, he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD and sent Eliakim and Shebna to Isaiah the prophet.
- Isaiah said, “Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard of the words which you have heard. “Surely I will send a spirit upon him and he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land, and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.”
- The king of Assyria then sent a letter saying, “Look! You have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by utterly destroying them and shall you be delivered?”

Isa 37:14 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.

Isa 37:15 Then Hezekiah prayed to the LORD, saying:

Isa 37:16 "O LORD of hosts, 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.

Isa 37:17 Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God.

Isa 37:18 Truly, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations and their lands,

Isa 37:19 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.

Isa 37:20 Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the LORD, You alone."

Vs. 14-20 - Hezekiah’s prayer. - Isa 37:14 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 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.
- We all, at one time or another, will receive nasty or very troubling letters. What should one do with them? Often, the best thing to do is to simply throw them away, especially if they are anonymous. But if they are to be read and kept, they should be spread . . . before the LORD. LORD, show me what there is in this letter that I need to hear. Show me what I need to disregard. Help me to see beyond this person’s sinful manner or tone and see if You have something in this for me.

Isa 37:15 Then Hezekiah prayed to the LORD, saying: Isa 37:16 "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 Gods nature that was most needful for him. LORD of armies, send some troops to help us!

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.

the One who dwells between the cherubim,

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

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

- 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 realizes the most fundamental fact of all theology: God is God, and we are not! God is God, and Rabshakeh or the Assyrians are not!

You have made heaven and earth.

- You who made heaven and earth: In recognizing the LORD God as Creator, Hezekiah sees that the LORD has all power and all rights over every created thing. We can almost feel Hezekiah's faith rising as he prays this!

Isa 37:17 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 all the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God.

Isa 37:18 Truly, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations and their lands.

- In his prayer, King Hezekiah draws the contrast between the living God and the false gods of the nations the Assyrians have already conquered

Isa 37:19 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.

Isa 37:20 Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the LORD, You alone."

- But Hezekiah prays confidently that the living God will save them, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the LORD, You alone.

V. 21 - The power of Hezekiah's prayer. - Isaiah brings the LORDs answer to King Hezekiah's prayer, and a word to Rabshakeh.

Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus says the LORD God of Israel, Because you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria,

- Because you have prayed to Me: The glorious answer which fills the rest of the chapter came because Hezekiah prayed. What if he would not have prayed? Then we are to think that no answer would have come, and Jerusalem would have been conquered.
- Hezekiah's prayer really mattered. How many blessings, how many victories, how many souls saved for Jesus glory, lie unclaimed in heaven until the LORD can say, "because you have prayed to Me?"

SUMMARY:

- Because Hezekiah prayed, the LORD gloriously answered, Jerusalem was not conquered!
- Whenever you receive letters of extremely bad news, what do you do?
- Do you read them and spread them before the LORD and pray?
- Prayer is powerful and it works!
- How many blessings? How many victories? How many souls saved for Jesus' glory, lie unclaimed in heaven until the LORD can say, "because you have prayed to Me?"
- Do we pray? Will we pray?

He is Able to Deliver Thee! - (William Ogden)

1. 'Tis the grandest theme through the ages rung; 'Tis the grandest theme for a mortal tongue;
'Tis the grandest theme that the world e'er sung, "Our God is able to deliver thee."
 - o Refrain:
He is able to deliver thee, He is able to deliver thee;
Though by sin oppressed, go to Him for rest; "Our God is able to deliver thee."
2. 'Tis the grandest theme in the earth or main; 'Tis the grandest theme for a mortal strain;
'Tis the grandest theme, tell the world again, "Our God is able to deliver thee."
3. 'Tis the grandest theme, let the tidings roll, To the guilty heart, to the sinful soul;
Look to God in faith, He will make thee whole, "Our God is able to deliver thee."