

Hezekiah's Prayer

Key Verse: *"O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD God, even thou only."*
—II Kings 19:19

Selected Scripture:
II Kings 19:14-37

SENNACHERIB, KING OF Assyria, had previously invaded the northern ten-tribe kingdom of Israel and taken its people captive. Eight years later, he determined to invade the two-tribe kingdom of Judah. Sennacherib first sent letters to Jerusalem, and subsequently his general Rabshakeh with an armed host, demanding the full surrender of the kingdom of Judah.—II Kings 18:17-35

These letters boasted of Assyria's power and of having conquered many nations already. They also falsely claimed that Israel's trust in the Lord their God was useless, because other nations which Assyria had conquered had trusted their own gods in vain. When Hezekiah heard this "he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD." He also sent men to tell the Prophet Isaiah all about this, and to ask him to pray "for the remnant that are left."—II Kings 19:1-5

The Prophet Isaiah said to Hezekiah's men, "Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria has blasphemed me. Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword

in his own land.”—vss. 6,7

Hezekiah went into the house of the Lord, laying before God the letter received from Sennacherib. He beseeched the Lord to have mercy upon his covenanted people and to grant them deliverance from this enemy. (vss. 14-19) Then Isaiah sent word to Hezekiah, saying, “Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, that which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, I have heard.” The Lord’s judgment upon Sennacherib was then stated.—vss. 20-34

It required great faith and courage on the part of Hezekiah and the people of Judah to resist the great power of Assyria. Soon afterward they beheld the fulfillment of the Lord’s declaration respecting Sennacherib and the Assyrians.—vss. 35-37

The Lord’s followers today may draw valuable lessons from this account. We should not lose sight of God’s power on our behalf, no matter how bleak our experiences may appear to be. We should rely upon his promises and seek his aid. The psalmist writes, “Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.” (Ps. 55:22, *New International Version*) The Apostle Peter admonishes, “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”—I Pet. 5:7, *NIV*

Israel recognized that the overthrow of Sennacherib’s forces was because of God’s power and intervention. So too we at the present time should fully trust the Lord and recognize his overruling hand in response to our prayers. “Without faith it is impossible to please him.” “This is the victory [Greek: the means of success] that overcometh the world, even our faith.”—Heb. 11:6; I John 5:4

We should not only trust the Lord for his goodness and providential care, but also remember his promises, claiming them before him in our prayers. In addition, we should seek to recognize, in every experience of life, how God’s providence is directing our way and causing all our experiences to work together for our eternal good.—Rom. 8:28■