

EPISODE NO. 196

2 Kings 19:1-36

King Hezekiah Sought God's Will from Isaiah, the Prophet

1 When King Hezekiah heard the message, he tore his clothes. And he put on some rough clothing. Then he went into the temple of Yahweh. 2 Hezekiah sent Eliakim, Shebna, and the older priests to Isaiah. Eliakim was the palace manager, and Shebna was the royal assistant. The men were all wearing rough cloth when they came to Isaiah, the son of Amoz. Isaiah was a prophet. 3 These men told Isaiah: “This is what Hezekiah says: ‘Today is a day of sorrow and punishment and disgrace. Why? It is sad, like when a child should be born, but the mother is not strong enough to give birth to it. 4 The king of Assyria sent his field commander to make fun of the living God. Perhaps Yahweh, your God, will hear what the field commander said. Perhaps Yahweh, your God, will punish him for what he said. So, pray for the few people who are left alive.’ ”

5 When King Hezekiah’s officers came to Isaiah, 6 Isaiah said to them, “Tell your master this: Yahweh says: ‘Don’t be afraid of what you have heard! Don’t be scared by the words which the servants of the king of Assyria have spoken against Me. 7 Listen! I am going to put a spirit in the king of Assyria. He will hear a report that will cause him to go back to his own country. And, I will cause him to die by the sword there!’ ”

8 The field commander heard that the king of Assyria had left Lachish. So, the field commander left Jerusalem and found the king fighting against the city of Libnah.

9 Sennacherib received a report that Tirhakah was coming to attack him. Tirhakah was the Cushite king of Egypt. When the king of Assyria heard this, again he sent messengers to Hezekiah. The king of Assyria said: 10 “Tell this to Hezekiah, the king of Judah: ‘Do not let your god, upon whom you depend, deceive you by promising that Jerusalem will not be delivered into the hands of the king of Assyria! 11 Listen, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done. They have completely defeated every country. Do not think that YOU will be spared! 12 The gods of those nations did NOT save them. My Assyrian predecessors destroyed them. My ancestors defeated the cities of Gozan, Haran, and Rezep. They defeated the people of Eden living in Tel-Assar. 13 Where are the kings of Hamath and Arpad? Where is the king of the city of Sepharvaim? Where are the kings of Hena and Ivvah?

King Hezekiah Prayed to God

14 Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it. Then he went up to the temple of Yahweh. Hezekiah spread the letter out in front of the One Who Is Always Present. 15 And he prayed to Yahweh: “O Yahweh, God of Israel, Your throne is between the golden angels! Only YOU are the one true God of all the kingdoms of the earth. YOU made the heavens and the earth. 16 Hear, O Yahweh, and listen! Open your eyes, O Yahweh, and see! Listen to the words that Sennacherib has spoken to insult the living God!

17 It is true, O Yahweh, that the kings of Assyria HAVE destroyed these countries and their lands. 18 These kings have thrown the gods of these nations into the fire. But they were not gods — they were only wood and rock statues which human beings made! So, the Assyrian kings have destroyed them. 19 But now, O Yahweh, our God, please save us from the king’s power! Then all the kingdoms of the earth will know that You, O Yahweh, are the ONLY God!”

Isaiah Reassured King Hezekiah

20 Then Isaiah, the son of Amoz, sent a message to Hezekiah. Isaiah said, “Yahweh, the God of Israel, says this: ‘I have heard your prayer to Me about Sennacherib, the king of Assyria!’ 21 So, this is what Yahweh has said against Sennacherib:

‘The Virgin Daughter of Zion
hates you and makes fun of you!
The people of Jerusalem
laugh at you, as you run away.
22 You have insulted Me and spoken against Me.
You have raised your voice against Me.
You have a proud look on your face.
You opposed Me, the Holy One of Israel!
23 You have used your messengers
to insult the Lord.
You have thought:
“I have many chariots.
With them, I have gone up to the tops of the mountains.
I have climbed the highest mountains of Lebanon.
I have cut down its tallest cedar trees;
I have cut down its best pine trees.

I have reached its farthest places.

I have gone to its forests, no matter how dense!

24 I have dug wells in foreign countries;

I have drunk water there.

By the soles of my feet,

I have dried up all the rivers of Egypt.”

25 “ ‘O king of Assyria, surely you have heard.

Long ago, I, Yahweh, planned these things.

Long ago, I did it.

Now I have caused them to happen.

I allowed you to turn those strong, walled cities
into piles of rocks.

26 The people living in those cities were weak.

They were scared and put to shame.

They were like grass in the field.

They were like tender, young grass.

They were like grass that grows on the housetops.

It is burned by the wind before it can grow up.

27 “ ‘I know when you relax,

and when you come and go.

I know how you speak against Me.

28 You speak strongly against Me.

And, I have heard your proud words.

So, I will put My hook in your nose.

And I will put My bit in your mouth.

Then I will force you to leave My country

the same way that you came!’ ”

29 Then God said, “Hezekiah, I will give you this sign:

"This year you will eat the grain that grows wild.

And, the second year, you will eat what grows wild from that.

But, in the third year, you should plant grain and harvest it.

Also, plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

30 Some of the people in the household of Judah will be saved.

Like plants that take root downward,

they will grow strong and have many children.

31 A few people will come out of Jerusalem alive.

There will be a few from Mount Zion who will survive.

The strong love of Yahweh of the armies of heaven will cause this to happen!

32 “So, this is what Yahweh says about the king of Assyria:

‘Sennacherib will not enter this city!

He will not even shoot an arrow here.

He will not fight against it with shields.

He will not build a ramp to attack the city walls.

33 He will return to his own country the same way he came.

He will not enter this city!’ says Yahweh.

34 “God says, ‘I will defend this city and save it!

I will do this for Myself and for David, my servant.’ ”

185,000 Assyrians Died

35 That night, the Angel of Yahweh went out. He killed 185,000 men in the Assyrian camp. The Jewish people got up early the next morning. And, they saw all the dead bodies! 36 So, Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, left. He went back to Nineveh and stayed there.