

### Jerusalem Delivered from the Assyrians

#### 2 Kings 19

**2 Kings 19:1-13** - *“And so it was, when King Hezekiah heard it, that he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. Then he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. And they said to him, “Thus says Hezekiah: ‘This day is a day of trouble, and rebuke, and blasphemy; for the children have come to birth, but there is no strength to bring them forth. It may be that the LORD your God will hear all the words of the Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to reproach the living God, and will rebuke the words which the LORD your God has heard. Therefore lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left.’”*

*So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah. And Isaiah said to them, “Thus you shall say to your master, ‘Thus says the LORD: “Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me. 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.””*

*Then the Rabshakeh returned and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah, for he heard that he had departed from Lachish. And the king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, “Look, he has come out to make war with you.” So he again sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, “Thus you shall speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying: ‘Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you, saying, “Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.” Look! You have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by utterly destroying them; and shall you be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered those whom my fathers have destroyed, Gozan and Haran and Rezeph, and the people of Eden who were in Telassar? Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?’”*

#### Background Notes

After the Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom of Israel, they turned their attention to the southern kingdom of Judah (2 Kings 18). In chapter 19, we learn of Hezekiah’s reaction to this threat from Assyria. Verse 1: *“And so it was, when King Hezekiah heard it, that he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord.”* The king humbled himself before the Lord! That’s always a good action for the Lord’s people to take when we’re faced with a difficult situation.

Then Hezekiah went to the prophet Isaiah and asked for prayer. Again, this is always what believers should do when they are threatened or distressed in any way. We should ask godly believers to pray with us! The Lord heard the prayers of His people and sent an answer through His servant Isaiah (v6-7).

Meanwhile Sennacherib was threatening Jerusalem and hoping for a quick surrender. He sent a written letter, threatening Hezekiah. Again, good King Hezekiah did the right thing. He prayed, and he turned the matter over to the Lord.

## Doctrinal Points

**2 Kings 19:14-34** - *“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. 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. 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. Truly, Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands, 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. 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.”*

*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, I have heard.’ This is the word which the Lord has spoken concerning him: ‘The virgin, the daughter of Zion, has despised you, laughed you to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem has shaken her head behind your back! ‘Whom have you reproached and blasphemed? Against whom have you raised your voice, and lifted up your eyes on high? against the Holy One of Israel. By your messengers you have reproached the Lord, and said: “By the multitude of my chariots I have come up to the height of the mountains, to the limits of Lebanon; I will cut down its tall cedars and its choice cypress trees; I will enter the extremity of its borders, to its fruitful forest. I have dug and drunk strange water, and with the soles of my feet I have dried up all the brooks of defense.”*

*‘Did you not hear long ago how I made it, from ancient times that I formed it? Now I have brought it to pass, that you should be for crushing fortified cities into heaps of ruins. Therefore their inhabitants had little power; they were dismayed and confounded; they were as the grass of the field and the green herb, as the grass on the housetops and grain blighted before it is grown. ‘But I know your dwelling place, your going out and your coming in, and your rage against Me. Because your rage against Me and your tumult have come up to My ears, therefore I will put My hook in your nose and My bridle in your lips, and I will turn you back by the way which you came.*

*‘This shall be a sign to you: you shall eat this year such as grows of itself, and in the second year what springs from the same; also in the third year sow and reap, plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them. And the remnant who have escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant, and those who escape from Mount Zion. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.’*

*“Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the king of Assyria: ‘He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor build a siege mound against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return; and he shall not come into this city,’ says the Lord. ‘For I will defend this city, to save it for My own sake and for My servant David’s sake.’”*

## **1. The Lord sends encouragement in the day of distress.**

What a wonderful answer to Hezekiah’s prayer! Notice two things about his prayer:

- 1. It was short and to the point.** You don’t have to pray long prayers for your prayers to be effective!
- 2. He requested deliverance for the sake of God’s Name and God’s glory (v19).** Would we have requested deliverance for the glory of God? Or would we have prayed for deliverance to avoid being captured and killed by the cruel Assyrians?

The Lord sent His wonderful and encouraging answer to Hezekiah through the prophet Isaiah. In verses 21-24, Assyria was denounced for blaspheming the God of Israel, and for her pride in claiming that all her victories were by her own strength. In verses 25-26, the sovereignty of God was seen over all these events. God planned from eternity past that Assyria would be allowed to capture Judah’s fortified cities, but they would go no farther. In verses 27-28, God said that He knows all about Assyria’s plans and strategy to capture Jerusalem. But instead of leading captives away from Jerusalem, Assyria herself would be dragged away and sent back to Assyria - by the one true God, the God of Judah!

In verses 29-33, God assured His people that no siege ramps would be built against the walls of Jerusalem. No Assyrian siege would cause starvation and death. In fact, not even one arrow would be shot at Jerusalem! Sennacherib would not conquer the city of Jerusalem. Rather, he would return to Assyria by the way he had come.

The Lord Himself would defend Jerusalem. He would save it for His own Name’s sake and for the sake of His servant, David (v34). The Lord sends encouragement in the day of distress.

## **2. The Lord sends deliverance in the day of distress.**

*2 Kings 19:35-37 – “And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the Lord went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned home, and remained at Nineveh. Now it came to pass, as he was worshiping in the temple of Nisroch his god, that his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. Then Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.”*

This account of the miraculous deliverance of Jerusalem against overwhelming odds is recorded three times in the Bible: in Isaiah 37, in 2 Chronicles 32, and here in 2 Kings 19. Furthermore, the accuracy of these biblical accounts is supported by Assyrian annals of Sennacherib. In a series of clay prisms, Sennacherib's scribes recorded in cuneiform his campaign against Judah, including his attempted capture of Jerusalem. These prisms can be seen in the British Museum, the Israel Museum, and the Museum of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

In this translation of the cuneiform record, Sennacherib boasted: "As for Hezekiah, the Judahite, he did not submit to my yoke. I laid siege to 46 of his strong cities, walled forts, and to countless villages in their vicinity, and conquered them. I drove out over 2000,000 people. Hezekiah himself I made prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence like a bird in a cage."

But Sennacherib's annals don't include a record of Sennacherib conquering the city of Jerusalem and capturing Hezekiah. Why not? Because of this great miracle!

God may have used natural causes like sudden virulent plague, but regardless of the method God used, **it was a miracle!** God's perfect timing came in answer to Hezekiah's prayer. Sennacherib returned home where his two sons, Adrammelech and Sharezer, killed him (v36-37). Assyrian records support this accurate biblical account.

Can the Lord still send deliverance for His people in the day of distress? Of course He can! The Lord sends deliverance in the day of distress.

## Practical Application

### Thank the Lord for His omniscience.

In verse 27, God said to Sennacherib through the prophet Isaiah, *"But I know your dwelling place, your going out and your coming in and your rage against me."* And Psalm 139:2 says, *"You know my sitting down and my rising up. You understand my thought afar off."*

What's the difference between 2 Kings 19:27 and Psalm 139:2? The difference is that 2 Kings 19:27 has to do with the unbeliever, while Psalm 139 was written to encourage the believer.

We can thank the Lord for His omniscience in both cases. Aren't you glad about that? Thank the Lord that He knows everything about us - and thank the Lord He knows everything about the godless forces that oppose us. Thank the Lord for His omniscience!