

KING HEZEKIAH AND THE ASSYRIAN BULLIES

A huge army waits outside the city of Jerusalem. "Give up!" say the bullies. "No one can save you now!" But King Hezekiah knows better.

by Heather Cole

Hezekiah was a good king. He trusted God and always tried to do the right thing for his country, Judah. But when he had been king for 14 years, something terrible happened.

Another king wanted to get even more space and power. So he sent armies to take over the countries around him. That included Judah! This greedy king's name was Sennacherib, and he ruled Assyria. Assyria was already bigger and stronger than the other countries around.

QUIZ TIME

In what city did King Hezekiah live?

The people fought back, but it was no use. Assyria always won.

Assyria's armies took over the cities of Judah one by one. Then they came to Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the city where Hezekiah lived!

A BULLY

One of the leaders of the Assyrian army marched up. He was called the Rabshakeh, and he wanted to scare the people. If they were scared, they might give up! Hezekiah and his people were very frightened, but they tried not to show it. Hezekiah sent three of his most trusted officials to talk to the Rabshakeh. Some of the people of Jerusalem watched and listened from the wall.

QUIZ TIME

What did the Rabshakeh want to do?

The Rabshakeh looked around him. He spoke loudly so that all the people could hear him. "You talk tough, but it sure does not look like you are ready for war! Who do you expect to save you? Is it Egypt? Egypt can't be trusted! Or will you say, 'We trust in the Lord our God'? Your God wants me to defeat you! Say we gave you two thousand horses. Could you even find enough men to ride them into battle? You still wouldn't have a chance!"

Then the Rabshakeh said that his message was not just for the king. "Don't listen to King Hezekiah! The king of Assyria says, 'Make peace with me and come out to me. I will take you away to a land that is just as good as this.'" (The Assyrians took away people's land after they

beat them. They made them start over in a new place. The Rabshakeh tried to make this sound not so bad.)

The Rabshakeh went on. “Hezekiah might say that your God will save you. But we have taken over lots of nations. Did their gods ever save them?”

A PRAYER

The other nations prayed to idols, not the true God. Idols cannot save anyone. But the officials did not answer. (Hezekiah had said, “Do not answer him.”) Instead, they went back into the city. They tore their clothes, which showed they had very bad news. Then they told King Hezekiah what the Rabshakeh had said.

King Hezekiah tore his clothes too. On his own, there was no way to win. He knew that they needed to pray. He also sent his trusted officials to the prophet Isaiah to ask him to pray for help too.

God listened and answered! Isaiah told them what God said: “Do not be afraid of the words that you heard.”

The servants of the king of Assyria had *blasphemed*. They had insulted God. Now God promised to protect Jerusalem. Sennacherib would go back to Assyria and be killed there.

A LETTER

But when Sennacherib saw that they still had not given up, he sent a letter to Hezekiah. The letter said, “Don’t let your God fool you! Jerusalem will not be safe. Think of all the nations Assyria has destroyed! Have their gods saved them? And what do you think happened to their kings?”

Right away, Hezekiah took the letter to the house of the Lord. He showed God what the letter said. Then he prayed. “You are God, You alone. You made heaven and earth. See how Sennacherib insults You! It is true that the kings of Assyria have destroyed many lands and their gods. That was because they were not real gods! People made them out of wood and stone. So God, save us from Sennacherib so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the Lord, You alone.”

Hezekiah understood. This was not just about him. The Assyrians and other nations did not know the right way to live. They did not know God. God wanted to teach these people. He wanted them to learn that He can protect and He can punish. He is in control.

QUIZ TIME

What does “blaspheme” mean?

QUIZ TIME

What did Hezekiah do when the king of Assyria sent him a letter?

A MIRACLE

QUIZ TIME

What did God promise to do?

God listened to Hezekiah. He sent Isaiah the prophet to tell Hezekiah His answer. God promised to save the people of Judah who were left! And about the king of Assyria, God said, “He shall not come into this city. He will not shoot a single arrow here. He will not trap the people inside. He will go back the way he came.”

The next morning, the Assyrian camp was full of dead soldiers! God had killed 185,000 Assyrians. Sennacherib decided to go home and leave Jerusalem alone. But as God had said, he was not safe there. His own sons killed him while he was bowing to an idol of a false god.

The people of Jerusalem were saved. God had answered Hezekiah’s prayer!

QUESTIONS

Here are some questions to think about or talk about as a family.

1. Sennacherib and the Rabshakeh were bad examples. What did they do wrong? How can we keep from making the same mistakes?
2. Think of some times when you felt frightened like Hezekiah. How might praying help?
3. Hezekiah prayed that God would show all people who He is. Why do you think he did that?
4. God talked to Hezekiah through a prophet. Today He talks to us through our Bibles! What do you think He wants us to learn from this story?

More of the story of Hezekiah and the Assyrian bullies can be found in 2 Kings 18 and 19 and Isaiah 36 and 37.

You can learn more about how to pray in our article [“How to Talk to God.”](#)



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Neither religion nor science has satisfactorily addressed these issues, so people today are of divided opinions, confused or, worst of all, don't care anymore. The ancient words of the prophet Isaiah ring so true today: "Truth is fallen in the street." Why? Is it because God was right when He warned that humans are inclined to reject Him and usually choose not to know Him?

We are here for people who are searching for answers, who are ready to prove all things or who are hungry for more than what they've been taught most of their lives about God, the Bible, the meaning of life and how to live. We want to help you truly understand the good news of the gospel and fulfill Jesus Christ's admonition to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."

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