

LESSON 3
September 15, 2024

Unit I: Leaders Set Worship Example
Is It Inevitable?

DEVOTIONAL READING: Romans 8:29-39
BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: 2 Kings 19:1-34
PRINT PASSAGE: 2 Kings 19:14-20, 29-31

KEY VERSE

Now therefore, 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. (2 Kings 19:19, KJV)

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“Now, LORD our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone, LORD, are God.” (2 Kings 19:19, NIV)

Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

- Distinguish Hezekiah’s response to God from those of other Old Testament kings.
- Value prayer in the face of a crisis.
- Journal, e-mail, or text as a form of worshipful, reverent, honest prayer at a time of crisis.

***Key Terms**

Cherubim(s) (verse 15)—Hebrew: *kerub* (*ker-oob'*): the original Hebrew word for “cherubim” is *keruwm* (which is the Hebrew plural form of “keruv” and refers to a particular type of angel commonly known by their childlike facial features. They are considered as an order of angels—the guardians of the throne of God.

Prayed (verse 15)—Hebrew: *tsela* (*tsel-aw'*): entreated; conversed with God in faith; passionately pleaded to God; petitioned God for divine favor that may or may not include one’s pouring out his or her emotions and desires, crying out for help, drawing near to God, and kneeling before the Father.

Remnant (verse 30)—Hebrew: *sheruth* (*shay-rootth'*): something left over, a remainder; the survivors of a community following a disaster or catastrophe; biblically, it is the remaining representation of the righteous people of God after divine judgment.

Reproach (verse 16)—Hebrew: *cherpah* (*kher-paw'*): criticism, disapproval, blame, scorn, or disgrace for something one has said or done; it can also be an expression of rebuke or censure; “ridicule” (NIV). In the Bible, reproach is often associated with sin, immorality, or idolatry.

Zeal (verse 31)—Hebrew: *qinah* (*kin-aw'*): passion; warmth of feeling for or against; eagerness; devoted enthusiasm for a person or thing. The zeal of the Lord is closely related in meaning to the



The Biblical Context

The book of 2 Kings is a part of the Old Testament, providing a detailed account of the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The events described in 2 Kings 18–19 occurred around 853 BC. This book section focuses mainly on King Hezekiah, who ruled over Judah during a critical period. Hezekiah was known for being one of the godliest rulers of Judah. He made sure to do everything right in the eyes of the Lord, following in the footsteps of his father, King David. Hezekiah made sure to destroy pagan worship centers, remove idols, and even break the bronze snake that Moses had fashioned during the exodus—as it had become an object of worship. In 701 BC, the Assyrian king Sennacherib invaded Judah and managed to overrun all the fortified cities, except for Jerusalem. Hezekiah panicked and tried to pay off Sennacherib, but this ransom failed to deter the Assyrian king. Sennacherib's officers told Hezekiah that it was foolish of him to align with Egypt against Assyria—as Egypt was weak. They also claimed that God was upset with Hezekiah for removing the high places in Judah against His wishes. Faced with this situation, Hezekiah turned to prayer and sought the counsel of the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah prophesied that God would defend Jerusalem and that Sennacherib would not prevail. That very night, the angel of the Lord struck down 185,000 Assyrian soldiers, leading to their retreat. This event marked a turning point in Judah's history—as Jerusalem was saved from Assyria's invasion.

jealousy of God. In ancient Israel, the term defined the Lord's intense love, protective dedication, and everlasting loyalty toward His people and His divine purposes.

*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 2)

Introduction

Tyrone Flowers, despite enduring a tumultuous childhood marked by foster care, adversity, and violence, found a remarkable path through faith and prayer. His story exemplifies the profound value of prayer in the face of life's darkest moments. After being shot and left paralyzed, Tyrone faced immense pain and anger. However, he made a pivotal decision: he forgave the man who had harmed him. He released his bitterness and let go of his desire for vengeance in a heartfelt prayer. This act of forgiveness transformed his heart and allowed healing to begin. Tyrone's disability forced him to seek God like never before. Through prayer, he discovered a calling—a purpose that transcended his physical limitations. Instead of dwelling on self-pity, he turned his pain into a force for good. Despite the hardships Tyrone faced, God used them for good. His disability became a platform for ministry, empathy, and impact. In 2 Kings 19, King Hezekiah faced a dire threat from the Assyrian king. Similarly, Tyrone Flowers endured immense pain after being shot and left paralyzed. Both men responded by turning to prayer. Hezekiah sought the prophet Isaiah and went to the house of the Lord to pray. Tyrone sought God like never before, making prayer his lifeline.

ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT

Seeking God in Times of Crisis (2 Kings 19:14-19)

KJV

14 And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.

15 And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth.

16 LORD, bow down thine ear, and hear: open, LORD, thine eyes, and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God.

17 Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands,

18 And have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them.

19 Now therefore, 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.

NIV

14 Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it. Then he went up to the temple of the LORD and spread it out before the LORD.

15 And Hezekiah prayed to the LORD: "LORD, the God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth.

16 "Give ear, LORD, and hear; open your eyes, LORD, and see; listen to the words Sennacherib has sent to ridicule the living God.

17 "It is true, LORD, that the Assyrian kings have laid waste these nations and their lands.

18 "They have thrown their gods into the fire and destroyed them, for they were not gods but only wood and stone, fashioned by human hands.

19 "Now, LORD our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone, LORD, are God."

King Hezekiah received a threatening letter from King Sennacherib instead of a verbal message from the field commander or anonymous messengers. Sennacherib's condescending tone is evident in **verse 14**, but Hezekiah responded as before by going up to the Temple of the Lord, praying personally, and trusting in Isaiah's earlier words. Hezekiah spread the letter out before the Lord in a symbolic act, emphasizing that this was a matter for God alone to handle. Hezekiah's prayer in **verses 15-19** has a simple structure that can also be found in other parts of the Bible, especially in psalms of complaint or lament. The prayer begins with an invocation in **verse 15**, followed by a description of the situation or a lament in **verses 16-18**, and ending with a supplication in **verse 19**. Hezekiah asked God to save Jerusalem so that His glory could be seen by all the nations, which was His purpose in establishing Israel. Yahweh's power is not limited to Israel alone, as Sennacherib had thought, and His reign is not threatened along with Jerusalem. The Lord is the God over all the kingdoms of the earth, including Assyria and the nations whose "gods" were powerless before Assyrian power—and He made heaven and earth. The prayer concludes by turning the opening divine characteristics (**verse 15**) into a plea that through God's deliverance, all the kingdoms of the earth (over whom God reigns) may know that the Lord alone is God (**verse 19**).

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How do you respond when faced with a crisis or threat?

God Hears and Responds to Our Cries (2 Kings 19:20, 29-31)

KJV

20 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent 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.

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29 And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof.

30 And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.

31 For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this.

NIV

20 Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent a message to Hezekiah: "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I have heard your prayer concerning Sennacherib king of Assyria."

.....

29 "This will be the sign for you, Hezekiah: This year you will eat what grows by itself, and the second year what springs from that. But in the third year sow and reap, plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

30 "Once more a remnant of the kingdom of Judah will take root below and bear fruit above.

31 "For out of Jerusalem will come a remnant, and out of Mount Zion a band of survivors. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this."

Hezekiah faced a difficult time and sought guidance from the prophet Isaiah. God had heard his prayer, and God's response would impact the entire kingdom of Judah (**verse 20**). The promise of restoration was for the remnant, and prayer united them as a community (**verses 30-31**). The promise of a remnant taking root and bearing fruit symbolizes hope and restoration. God's zeal ensures fulfillment. We can find hope through prayer in our crises because God specializes in transforming brokenness into beauty, despair into hope, and ashes into new beginnings. We must pray for restoration, healing, reconciliation, and renewal, and trust that God's zeal is at work, even when circumstances seem bleak. Moreover, we should remember the three-year timeline: eating what grows by itself, then what springs forth, and, finally, sowing and reaping (**verse 29**). Answers to prayer are not always instant; they require persistence. Hezekiah had to wait for God's promise to be fulfilled, and in our crises, we must continue praying even when answers seem delayed.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What aspects of God's response help you to persist in prayer?

A Closing Thought

In closing, let us remember that prayer is not merely a desperate cry in times of crisis; it is our lifeline to the Almighty. When the storms rage around us, we can find solace in seeking God's face through prayer.

Your Life

It is vital to seek God continuously and trust that His timing is meaningful. During difficult times, prayer is a lifeline connecting us to God. It sustains us, provides guidance, fosters community, instills hope, and reminds us of God's faithfulness. Let us follow the example of Hezekiah by turning to prayer, knowing that the zeal of the Lord Almighty can achieve great things even during our darkest hours.

Your World!

We are not alone. The body of Christ stands united in prayer. Reach out to fellow believers. Pray together, encourage one another, and lift each other up.

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, we trust in Your unwavering love and sovereignty. You are the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. In times of uncertainty, help us anchor our faith in Your promises. May we find solace in knowing that You hold all things together. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Conclusion

(Preparing for Next Week's Lesson)

As you prepare for next week's lesson, consider your response to this question: "Have you ever discovered something unexpected that changed your perspective?" Read 2 Chronicles 35:1-6, 16-19.

Home Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY, September 16	"Abstain from Immorality"	(1 Corinthians 5)
TUESDAY, September 17	"Worthy Is the Lamb!"	(Revelation 5:6-14)
WEDNESDAY, September 18	"God Forgives Those Who Repent"	(2 Chronicles 34:8, 14-27)
THURSDAY, September 19	"Restore Us Again, O God!"	(Psalm 85)
FRIDAY, September 20	"Living in the Light of Christ"	(Ephesians 5:3-14)
SATURDAY, September 21	"A Day of Celebration"	(Exodus 12:3-17)
SUNDAY, September 22	"Sanctify Yourselves"	(2 Chronicles 35:1-6, 16-19)