

Hezekiah Knows Best

By

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Theme:

This play conveys the fact that through prayer we can stand against any temptation that is put our way, no matter how large or difficult to overcome.

Biblical Reference:

II Kings 18:29-33; II Kings 19:15-19

Approximate Running Time:

10-15 minutes

Props:

Cast of Characters:

Shepherd: A typical Bible shepherd complete with long flowing robe and walking stick.

Hezekiah

Eliakim - Palace administrator

Shebna - The secretary

Joah - the recorder

Scene: The interior of King Hezekiah's quarters. He is busy in prayer when Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah enter to begin their morning work.

Eliakim: Good morning King Hezekiah, how are you this fine morning?

Hezekiah: Grateful for the Lord's blessings on my life and on my kingdom. How are my trusted advisors this morning?

Shebna: We are well, your majesty.

Hezekiah: Would you like to join me for some breakfast this morning?

Joah: We would love to, but there is some pressing business that we have to attend to as soon as possible.

Hezekiah: What is it?

Eliakim: Two leaders from Sennacherib, King of Assyria, have come to speak with you this morning. They say that it is in response to your army.

Hezekiah: Do they look like they bring good news with them?

Shebna: What do you mean?

Hezekiah: You know - do they look like they're in a good mood or do they look like they're mad?

Joah: They don't look like they're in a good mood.

Hezekiah: That's not what I was hoping to hear.

Eliakim: What were you hoping to hear?

Hezekiah: I was hoping to hear that they looked like they were really, really happy.

Joah: I'm new here, remember, can somebody give me a clue as to what's going on?

Shebna: Sure, you know that we're at war with Assyria, right?

Joah: Right.

Shebna: We were fighting them for a long time when they finally got into Judah and captured it. So Hezekiah sent Sennacherib, King of Assyria a letter that said... [*Indicating that Hezekiah should fill in the rest.*]

Hezekiah: I pretty much wrote that we lost, you win, I'll give you whatever you want if you just get out of Judah and leave us alone.

Joah: What did he say to that?

Eliakim: The King of Assyria said that he would take about 11 tons of silver and about 1 ton of gold.

Joah: That's a ton of silver and gold.

Shebna: Actually, it was 11 tons of silver and 1 ton of gold.

Joah: I know that, I mean it's a ton of silver and gold, like it's a lot of silver and gold.

Hezekiah: You got that right. I didn't have enough lying around. I gave him every treasure that had gold and silver on it in the entire royal palace. That wasn't enough, so I had to go through the Temple of the Lord and look for silver and gold to give him. I even had to strip the gold off the doors and doorposts so that I would have enough to give him.

Joah: So, why is he here now?

Hezekiah: That's what I'm afraid of. Was it enough silver and gold or does he want more? Is he going to take what we gave him and attack us anyway? Is he going to say that we didn't give him anything and demand we pay him again?

Eliakim: This is war. He can do whatever he thinks he can get away with.

Joah: Why don't we meet with him to find out what he wants from us?

Hezekiah: Let's pray first. Lord God we come before you seeking your forgiveness for the ways we have turned from you in the past and we ask you now to give us guidance in this meeting with our enemy. Amen. Let them in.

*[Shebna exits and enters with the supreme commander and his chief officer.]*

Hezekiah: Welcome in the name of the Lord God Jehovah, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. What word do you have for us today?

SC: [Arrogantly.] This is what the great king Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, says: on what are you basing this confidence of yours? You say you have strategy and military strength - but you speak only empty words. On whom are you depending, that you rebel against me? Look now you are depending on Egypt, that weak country with a ruler who likes to have people depend on him. And if you say to me, we are depending on the Lord our God - well, isn't he the one whose high places and altars you removed to send us the gold and silver we asked for? Aren't you saying to Judah and Jerusalem and the people that you must worship before the altar in Jerusalem? Where is it now?

Hezekiah: Who are you to judge what I have done?

Officer: Come on - make a bargain with my master, and his master, the king of Assyria. I will give you two thousand horses to ride - if you have a good enough army to ride them! How can you resist the urge to join our army and us? You are depending on Egypt to save you. They cannot save you. They are weak and disgusting.

Hezekiah: I will not join your army. I will keep my friendship with Egypt no matter what you think of them.

SC: What if I were to tell you that the Lord your God himself told me to march against you and your pitiful country and destroy it?

Hezekiah: [Very upset.] How dare you come here to insult me and my God! Get them out of here!

[Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah begin to escort them out.]

SC: You and your army don't have a chance against Assyria.

Officer: Give up now and we'll let you live. Fight and we won't make any promises.

Hezekiah: Get out of here!

[Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah are able to get them out. They exit but remain just offstage. They are clearly heard by the audience. Hezekiah drops to his knees and weeps as the Supreme Commander and Officer speak to the People of Judah.]

SC: Let me give you a warning, all you people of Judah, those in the village square, those in their houses, those standing on the wall for protection, those in the army, those who are young and old - all people of Judah should hear my voice and take heed or you will remain in the filth you now find yourself in.

Officer: Hear the words of the great King Sennacherib, The King of Assyria as spoken by the Supreme Commander of his mighty army.

SC: Do not let Hezekiah deceive you. He cannot deliver you from my hand. Do not let Hezekiah persuade you to trust in the Lord when he says, "The Lord will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the King of Assyria. Do not listen to Hezekiah.

Officer: Choose life with King Sennacherib, The King of Assyria, and not death here with Hezekiah.

SC: The King of Assyria wants to make peace with you and come and be friends with him. Then every one of you will be able to eat the best fruit in the world and drink the best water in the world until he is able to take you to a land like your own, where you will be able to plant new fields and have your own food and drink.

Officer: Choose life with King Sennacherib, The King of Assyria, and not death here with Hezekiah.

SC: Do not listen to Hezekiah for he is lying to you when he says, "the Lord will deliver us." Has any god of any nation really done then any good? There hasn't been a god of any nation who has been able to stand against me and my army, says the King of Assyria, why should your God or your land be any different?

Officer: Choose life with King Sennacherib, the King of Assyria, and not death here with Hezekiah.

SC: I will return in a few days. I want to hear your answer then, oh great Hezekiah. And all you people, let your king know that you want life with King Sennacherib, the King of Assyria!

Officer: Until then! Company move out!

*[Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah enter. They have obviously been affected by the words of the Supreme Commander and his officer. They move towards Hezekiah with tenderness.]*

Eliakim: Hezekiah, you know he's just spreading lies.

Shebna: We know the Lord our God is the one we need to follow.

Joah: What can we do to help you right now?

Hezekiah: Go to the prophet Isaiah and ask him what the Lord would have us to do. Isaiah is my only hope. I can't make any decisions until you have returned with his message. Until then I will be here in prayer.

*[They exit. Hezekiah continues to pray. Eliakim and Shebna return.]*

Eliakim: We have spoken with Isaiah.

Shebna: He told us to say, this is what the Lord says: Do not be afraid of what you have heard - those words the men from Assyria used to blaspheme me. Listen to me. I am going to take care of him.

[*Joah enters.*]

Joah: [*Unrolling a scroll.*] This message just came for you from the Supreme Commander of the army of Sennacherib, the King of Assyria. It says, do not let the god you depend on deceive you when he says that Jerusalem will not be handed over to the king of Assyria. Surely you know that we have completely destroyed other cities and thrown their gods into the fire. Why will you be any different?

Eliakim: What should we do?

[*Joah exits.*]

Hezekiah: We can only pray. Oh Lord, God of Israel, you alone are God over all of the kingdoms of the earth. You have heard what was said here today. You have spoken to your prophet Isaiah. You know what is written on this scroll before me. The Assyrians have done all of these horrible things and we're afraid of what they'll do to us. Please protect us and give us victory so that everyone on the whole earth will hear of it and know that you alone are the Lord God.

[*Joah enters.*]

Joah: Another message has just arrived for you, oh king Hezekiah.

Hezekiah: Not another one. Who is this one from?

Joah: It is from Isaiah.

Hezekiah: [*Enthusiastically.*] Read it.

Joah: This is what the Lord says concerning the king of Assyria: he will not enter this city or even shoot an arrow at it. He will not march against it or even come close to it. He will be sent back the way he came and he will not enter this city, declares the Lord. I will defend this city and save it, for the sake of David, my servant. You do not have to fear.

Hezekiah: Praise God! He has saved us. [*They hug in celebration.*] Let us tell the people that the Lord has spoken and He is with us.

- CURTAIN -



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