

Explore the Bible: October 18

God Listens • Isaiah 37:14-20, 30-35

By Don Hicks



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As I sit at my computer this morning (7 a.m., October 2), I have just heard the President of the United States and his wife have been tested positive for COVID-19 coronavirus. I believe you will agree with me that this situation greatly points to the importance and TIMELINESS of a Bible lesson on "God Listens." This Bible study looks at the teachings of the Old Testament prophet on God listening.

Active, meaningful listening is an important part of every loving relationship. We have already studied lessons from Isaiah on *God Protects*, *God Saves*, and *God Reigns*. We will look closely at the teachings 29 centuries ago by the prophet Isaiah. Today we can use the Apostle Paul's teaching to Timothy about living by God breathed scripture: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (KJV).

What does it mean when you say someone listens? Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary says to listen means "to hear with thoughtful attention: Heed (to a plea)." God does indeed give us thoughtful (even loving) attention and heeds our pleas. An early proof of this lesson the title was, "God Answers."

There isn't much meaningful difference between God Listens and God Answers. God Answers would bring to mind New Testament verses such as Matthew 7:7; Luke 11:9; John 16:24; James 4:3, etc. For the sake of space, we will only look at the Sermon on the Mount: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened," Matthew 7:7-8 (KJV).

Assyrian King Sennacherib sent a threatening letter to Judah's King Hezekiah, trying to intimidate him into surrendering. Sennacherib even taunted the LORD God of Israel in his demeaning letter. Hezekiah made a very wise decision, probably partially out of fear. He took the Assyrian king's letter demanding the surrender of the kingdom of Judah and Jerusalem to the temple, laid it before God, and asked for God to help. God listened. God answered King Hezekiah's earnest plea fully and in a very amazing way.

Here is part of Hezekiah's fervent prayer: "O LORD of Hosts, God of Israel, enthroned on the cherubim, thou alone art God of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth. Turn thy ear to me, O LORD and listen; open thine eyes, O LORD, and see; hear the message that Sennacherib has sent to taunt the living God. It is true, O LORD, that the kings of Assyria have laid waste every country, that they have consigned their gods to the fire and destroyed them: for they were no gods but the work of men's hands, God, save us from his power, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou, O LORD, alone art God" (Isaiah 37:15-20).

Here is God's answer to King Hezekiah's prayer as recorded by Isaiah:

"He shall not enter this city
nor shoot an arrow there,
he shall not advance against it with shield
nor cast up a siege-ramp against it.

By the way on which he came he shall go back; O LORD
this city he shall not enter.

This is the very word of the LORD.

I will shield this city to deliver it,

For my sake and for the sake of my servant David" (Isaiah
37:33-35 NEB).

The very next verse tells that the angel of the Lord struck
down 185,000 Assyrian soldiers, and the next morning they were
found dead in their camp. Sennacherib struck camp and headed
home the way he came. He never shot an arrow at Jerusalem nor
set up siege-ramps against it. Sennacherib went home totally
defeated and Jerusalem was saved.

Remember no matter what happens, *God Reigns, God Protects, and
God Listens.*

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