

July 23 Answers

- 1) The Assyrian invasion of Judah. When the Assyrian king Sargon II died (722–705 BC) and his son Sennacherib took the throne, **rebellion** broke out in several parts of the Assyrian Empire. In the east, Merodach-Baladan II retook the throne of **Babylon**, and in the west, Hezekiah seized the opportunity to gain Judean independence. He stopped paying **tribute** and even went so far as to attack Philistia, an Assyrian puppet state and an encroacher on Judean land (2 Kgs 18:7–8). It took some time for Assyria to respond, but in 701 BC, Sennacherib **invaded** Judah and attacked all the fortified cities (2 Kgs 18:13). At first Hezekiah tried to **buy** Sennacherib off, but when he realized Assyria could not be dissuaded, Hezekiah rallied the people and encouraged them to trust in God. He said, “There is a **greater** power with us than with him. With him is only the arm of **flesh**, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles.” (2 Chr 32:7–8 NIV). Like the people of Judah, we should take encouragement from this. There’s no reason to fear the enemy when we are on God’s side! Sennacherib sent some of his officials, accompanied by a large army, to Jerusalem and told the people: ‘Don’t let Hezekiah deceive you! Your god cannot deliver you from my hand! Look at what I did to the **gods** of all the other nations! Surrender now and I’ll let you live!’ Hezekiah then did what we should do when we’re confronted by such an enemy. He **humbled** himself and cried out to God for help. God told him through Isaiah not to be afraid, and God promised to deal with Sennacherib personally.