Memorial Day
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IN NOMINE JESU

2 Kings 19: 14-20 Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the House of the Lord, ar spread it before the Lord. And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord, and said: "O Lor the God of Israel, who art enthroned above the cherubim, Thou art the God, Thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; Thou hast made heaven and earth. Inclir Thy ear, O Lord, and hear; open Thy eyes, O Lord, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to mock the living God. Of a truth, O Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands, 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 were destroyed. So now, O Lord our God, save us, I beseech Thee, from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that Thou, O Lor art God alone." Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Your prayer to Me about Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard.

CHRIST AND WORLD AFFAIRS

Originally May 30 was set aside to remember the many thousands of brave men who died in the Civil War to preserve the unity and peace of the Union. Toda Memorial Day is the day in which we remember all our dear dead, but especially those who have died in the conflict of war to win for us and our families and the generations to come a lasting peace. What people so often forget - even on this day when we are called upon to remember - is the Voice of God. The mighty acts o: God have always taken place against the backdrop of world history. All the world a stage, said Shakespeare, but here there is no make-believe. This is the real thing, a matter of life and death, as both the living and the dead can testify. History began with God: In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. Hi tory will end with God: Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands. They shall perish, but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed. But Thou art the same, and Th years shall not fail.

Between these two cataclysmic events of world history, God rules. He ha not abdicated control, whatever men may think and however self-sufficiently they may conduct themselves. God is still God, a fact He has repeatedly demonstrated i the affairs of men both by Word and Action. World history is the record of God's action in judgment upon all unrighteousness of men. Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Greece, Rome, Spain, France, and Germany give mute testimony that His judgments are sure and righteous altogether. Only 32 years ago a man arose in Ger

many to boast that he was founding a Reich which would last a thousand years. Hi words were backed up by military successes which almost made him master of Europe - almost! A dozen years later he was dead, and his dream was dead with him. Hit is dead, as are Stalin and Mussolini, mute witnesses to the power of the God whom they defied. For those who insist today that history is an accident, which someh operates in their favor and against everyone else, giving them the right to steam roller their way to power over prostrate peoples and nations, there are sermons enough in the dust of the earth for them to discern their own fate. Upon those w prefer to ignore the prophetic voice of history, the great God who is standing in judgment over history can add a new chapter to that long and disastrous record, which will once again assert His power, so often derided and disregarded by men a the price of their own destruction.

War is a curse upon mankind. When all the evidence is in, it is a curs upon both victor and vanquished. To the conquered, it has always brought humiliation and death. For the conqueror, victory has all too often been the occasion o that pride which goeth before the fall. Today war brings death to both victor an vanquished. Another world conflict almost certainly would bring death in horrify forms to untold numbers of people. This past week President Johnson reported tha one jet airplane today can carry more explosive force than the sum total of all t bombs that were dropped in World War Two. He went on to say that today's nuclear explosions would make the A-bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nigasaki look like mere flickers. What is more, the possibility of war cannot be ruled out. In spite of everything that has been said about the impossibility of war with the development of these new and terrifying weapons, war is still possible. Refusal to face this realistic fact is to bury one's head in the sand. Refusal to listen to the Voice of God and to repent of our pride is to run the imminent risk of inviting God's judgment upon ourselves.

Hezekiah, king of Judah, tried at first to get along without God in his opposition to the Assyrians. He found it expedient to ally himself with Egypt and Philistia. For some reason the Assyrians moved against Ehypt and Philistia first, brutally crushing the revolts

in those countries. Finally, however, the attention of the Assyrian king was dra to Judah. King Sennacherib came up against the capital city of Jerusalem with a mighty army. The prophet Isaiah had warned Hezekiah against making foolish alliances and had urged him to put his dependence on God. The 10th chapter of Isaiah gives a vivid picture of the Assyrian armies rolling over their enemies on their way toward Jerusalem. This very day, said the prophet, the Assyrian will halt at Nob; he will shake his fist at the mouth of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jer salem. Sennacherib's armies arrived before the city in 701 B.C. and began a dram tic siege. In an account which archaeologists have found, Sennacherib described Hezekiah as a caged bird, whom I shut up in Jerusalem his royal city. Hezekiah's faith in God was not courageous enough to enable him to stand up in such a crisis Meekly he said to the king of Assyria: I have done wrong; withdraw from me; whate you impose upon me I will bear. The result was that Hezekiah had to strip the temple of the Lord of its silver and gold and deplete the treasury of the whole nation in order to appease the Assyrian king. As later events proved, if Hezekiah had stood firm and had not temporized with the Assyrians, he would have enjoyed God's deliverance sooner and would have spared his countrymen the shame and expens of the levy which the Assryians imposed upon them.

Sennacherib was not satisfied, however. Sending his armies to Jerusalem he demanded unconditional surrender. First the Assyrians tried psychological warfare. Seeking to undermine the confidence of the people, they said, You think tha mere words are counsel and strength of war, implying that the king of Jerusalem wa merely bluffing and had little strength to back up his pretensions. Then the Assyrian commanders disparaged the alliance with Egypt: Behold, they said, you are relying now on Egypt, that broken reed of a staff, which will pierce the hand of any man who leans on it. Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who rely on him. They paraded their military power, offering to supply Judah with 2,000 horses if cavalrymen could be found who would mount them. The implication, probably correct was that the king of Judah did not have that many cavalrymen at his disposal. The heaped ridicule upon Hezekiah for relying upon the Lord God, calling out to the

people: Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria! Thus says the king "Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you out of m hand. Do not let Hezekiah make you to rely on the Lord by saying the Lord will surely deliver us and this city will not be given into the hand of the king of As syria....Has any of the gods of the nations ever delivered his land out of the ha of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the g of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? Who among all the gods of the countries have delivered their countries out of my hand that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand? Hezekiah called the proph Isaiah to ask him the Word of the Lord. Isaiah replied, Thus says the Lord: Do n be afraid because of the words that you have heard, with which the servants of th king of Assyria have reviled Me. Behold, I will put a spirit in him, so that he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by th sword in his own land. Once more the king of Assyria approached the king of Judal with an official written communication: Thus shall you speak to Hezekiah, king of Judah: Do not let your God on whom you rely deceive you by promising that Jerusale will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold you have heard wha the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, destroying them utterly. Shall you b delivered? Hezekiah went up into the temple of the Lord and spread out this lette before him. There he prayed: O Lord, the God of Israel, who art entroned above th cherubim, Thou art the God, Thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; Thou has made heaven and earth. Incline Thy ear, O Lord, and hear; open Thy eyes, O Lord, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib which he has sent to mock the living Go Of a truth, O Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands and have cast their gods into the fire; for they were no gods but the work o men's hands of wood and stone; therefore they were destroyed. So now, O Lord our God, save us, I beseech Thee, from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that Thou, O Lord, art God alone. The prophet Isaiah responded in behalf of the Lord God: Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, "Your prayer to Me about Sennacherib, king of Assyria, I have heard." That night the angel of the Lord went

forth and slew 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. When men arose early in the morning, behold, there were dead bodies all over. Sennacherib, king of Assyria, departed and went home and dwelt at Ninneveh and there was slain by his own sons.

If anything is to be learned from the story of Hezekiah, it is that the leaders of people in every part of the world have a tremendous responsibility not only to their people but to God from whom all blessings flow. Citizens have a responsibility, too, not only to their governments and to each other but to God w has placed us into the world for such a time as this. The figure of Hezekiah on his knees, asking God to make good his own serious mistakes, is the one to rememb God is good out of pure goodness. He sent His Son Jesus Christ to die for the si of men. In His goodness He offers forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation to al who truly believe. Indeed, He offers faith - the kind of faith that can stand up in the midst of crisis. The real hope of our world for avoiding disaster rests i those people of all lands who have truly committed themselves in faith to Christ, King of kings, and Lord of lords. The ruling Christ takes a hand in world affair in the interest of people who have put their trust in Him. He Himself has called them the salt of the earth and the light of the world. If Christians are to fulfill their function in the world, they must be salt and they must be light. To this kind of loyalty to the living Christ I invite you. The prophets of the Most High God have never been exactly popular. No matter! With reverence and courage -in the power of the Spirit - they dare to stand up for God and for His Christ, knowing that Christ rules and the sufferings of this present time are not worthy t be compared with the glory which, by God's grace, shall be revealed in those who love the Lord and the day of His appearing. Amen.