

# Achilles and the embassy book ix of the iliad

[Literature](#), [Mythology](#)



Achilles' Decision on the Embassy An extremely large problem in the world today and in Homeric times as well, is people not knowing how to set their pride aside and clean up their own messes. In Book IX of The Iliad, we see Agamemnon's struggle with war and Achilles personal war in his own head. Achilles is not a door mat for Agamemnon, nor should he be; Achilles is a great warrior. Book IX truly illustrates what kind of men they both are. Achilles is right to refuse the embassy in Book IX because he keeps his honor as a man and a warrior intact.

Agamemnon is a man of terrible character and he does not understand what honor is at all. Sending others to do his dirty work is morally wrong. He has shamefully treated Achilles as if he is a second-class citizen, and he always has. Agamemnon barely makes an attempt to win Achilles, the greatest warrior Homeric times have ever known, over. He offers Achilles many women and gifts, including " the one he took away at first, Briseus' daughter, and he [swears] a solemn, binding oath in the bargain he never mounted her bed" (332-334).

Agamemnon offers everything in the book to Achilles begging him to come back, but what really shows his character is that he sent others to propose the deal. Even worse, he says if Achilles accepts he can come back if Achilles would " bow down to [Agamemnon] I am the greater king, I am the elder-born, I claim-the greater man" (192-193). Achilles is a remarkable warrior and an honorable man. He has been treated as second-rate to Agamemnon for a long time. Agamemnon needs Achilles on his side if he wants any hope of defeating the Trojans and even he admits it through Odysseus in multiple pages of Book IX.

If he honestly thought winning the war without Achilles leading the Achaean troops he would not have even bothered sending Odysseus, Ajax, and Phoenix. Agamemnon may be a better king and war strategist than Achilles would be, but he is not the warrior that Achilles is, he could never achieve the same status. Achilles gives the Achaean soldiers hope and drive that Agamemnon cannot provide. Achilles has dealt with the way he has been treated for long enough. He just wants to go home and live his life instead of risking it for someone who thinks he is better than Achilles.

He retains more of his honor going home and living a full life than if he would accept the bribe that has been placed in front of him. At least that way Achilles is not telling the world that he can be bought. Agamemnon needs to personally go to Achilles and ask for forgiveness. Not accepting the embassy is definitely the most appropriate choice that Achilles can make. By rejecting Agamemnon's feeble pleas to return to battle he is more likely to live a long, happy life. Achilles shows the world that he cannot be purchased by anyone and that he is not a spineless door mat who is okay with being treated in such a terrible manner constantly.

In the defining moments of Book IX we see how completely opposite Achilles and Agamemnon are of each other. Achilles is the hope of an entire army and Agamemnon can clearly not get his act together. Agamemnon should have gone to Achilles himself instead of sending others, to ask him to come back. If he knew what he was doing Agamemnon would have approached him and spoken to him as a true equal and apologized for all of his wrongdoings. Refusing the embassy is the right thing for Achilles to do; it keeps his honor undamaged as a warrior and a man.