

**Monday, July 1**

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**2 Kings 18:13 - 19:37**

**18 13** In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah's reign, King Sennacherib of Assyria came to attack the fortified towns of Judah and conquered them. **14** King Hezekiah sent this message to the king of Assyria at Lachish: "I have done wrong. I will pay whatever tribute money you demand if you will only withdraw." The king of Assyria then demanded a settlement of more than eleven tons of silver and one ton of gold. **15** To gather this amount, King Hezekiah used all the silver stored in the Temple of the LORD and in the palace treasury. **16** Hezekiah even stripped the gold from the doors of the LORD's Temple and from the doorposts he had overlaid with gold, and he gave it all to the Assyrian king. **17** Nevertheless, the king of Assyria sent his commander in chief, his field commander, and his chief of staff from Lachish with a huge army to confront King Hezekiah in Jerusalem. The Assyrians took up a position beside the aqueduct that feeds water into the upper pool, near the road leading to the field where cloth is washed. **18** They summoned King Hezekiah, but the king sent these officials to meet with them: Eliakim son of Hilkiah, the palace administrator; Shebna the court secretary; and Joah son of Asaph, the royal historian. **19** Then the Assyrian king's chief of staff told them to give this message to Hezekiah: "This is what the great king of Assyria says: What are you trusting in that makes you so confident? **20** Do you think that mere words can substitute for military skill and strength? Who are you counting on, that you have rebelled against me? **21** On Egypt? If you lean on Egypt, it will be like a reed that splinters beneath your weight and pierces your hand. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, is completely unreliable! **22** "But perhaps you will say to me, 'We are trusting in the LORD our God!' But isn't he the one who was insulted by Hezekiah? Didn't Hezekiah tear down his shrines and altars and make everyone in Judah and Jerusalem worship only at the altar here in Jerusalem? **23** "I'll tell you what! Strike a bargain with my master, the king of Assyria. I will give you 2,000 horses if you can find that many men to ride on them! **24** With your tiny army, how can you think of challenging even the weakest contingent of my master's troops, even with the help of Egypt's chariots and charioteers? **25** What's more, do you think we have invaded your land without the LORD's direction? The LORD himself told us, 'Attack this land and destroy it!'" **26** Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah, Shebna, and Joah said to the Assyrian chief of staff, "Please speak to us in Aramaic, for we understand it well. Don't speak in Hebrew, for the people on the wall will hear." **27** But Sennacherib's chief of staff replied, "Do you think my master sent this message only to you and your master? He wants all the people to

hear it, for when we put this city under siege, they will suffer along with you. They will be so hungry and thirsty that they will eat their own dung and drink their own urine.” **28** Then the chief of staff stood and shouted in Hebrew to the people on the wall, “Listen to this message from the great king of Assyria!**29** This is what the king says: Don’t let Hezekiah deceive you. He will never be able to rescue you from my power. **30** Don’t let him fool you into trusting in the LORD by saying, ‘The LORD will surely rescue us. This city will never fall into the hands of the Assyrian king!’ **31** “Don’t listen to Hezekiah! These are the terms the king of Assyria is offering: Make peace with me—open the gates and come out. Then each of you can continue eating from your own grapevine and fig tree and drinking from your own well.**32** Then I will arrange to take you to another land like this one—a land of grain and new wine, bread and vineyards, olive groves and honey. Choose life instead of death! “Don’t listen to Hezekiah when he tries to mislead you by saying, ‘The LORD will rescue us!’ **33** Have the gods of any other nations ever saved their people from the king of Assyria? **34** What happened to the gods of Hamath and Arpad? And what about the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah? Did any god rescue Samaria from my power?**35** What god of any nation has ever been able to save its people from my power? So what makes you think that the LORD can rescue Jerusalem from me?” **36** But the people were silent and did not utter a word because Hezekiah had commanded them, “Do not answer him.” **37** Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah, the palace administrator; Shebna the court secretary; and Joah son of Asaph, the royal historian, went back to Hezekiah. They tore their clothes in despair, and they went in to see the king and told him what the Assyrian chief of staff had said.

**19 1** When King Hezekiah heard their report, he tore his clothes and put on burlap and went into the Temple of the LORD . **2** And he sent Eliakim the palace administrator, Shebna the court secretary, and the leading priests, all dressed in burlap, to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. **3** They told him, “This is what King Hezekiah says: Today is a day of trouble, insults, and disgrace. It is like when a child is ready to be born, but the mother has no strength to deliver the baby. **4** But perhaps the LORD your God has heard the Assyrian chief of staff, sent by the king to defy the living God, and will punish him for his words. Oh, pray for those of us who are left!” **5** After King Hezekiah’s officials delivered the king’s message to Isaiah, **6** the prophet replied, “Say to your master, ‘This is what the LORD says: Do not be disturbed by this blasphemous speech against me from the Assyrian king’s messengers. **7** Listen! I myself will move against him, and the king will receive a message that he is needed at home. So he will return to his land, where I will have him killed with a sword.’” **8** Meanwhile, the Assyrian chief of staff left Jerusalem and went to consult the king of Assyria, who had left Lachish and was attacking Libnah. **9** Soon afterward King Sennacherib received word that King Tirhakah of

Ethiopia was leading an army to fight against him. Before leaving to meet the attack, he sent messengers back to Hezekiah in Jerusalem with this message: **10** “This message is for King Hezekiah of Judah. Don’t let your God, in whom you trust, deceive you with promises that Jerusalem will not be captured by the king of Assyria. **11** You know perfectly well what the kings of Assyria have done wherever they have gone. They have completely destroyed everyone who stood in their way! Why should you be any different? **12** Have the gods of other nations rescued them—such nations as Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the people of Eden who were in Tel-assar? My predecessors destroyed them all! **13** What happened to the king of Hamath and the king of Arpad? What happened to the kings of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah?” **14** After Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it, he went up to the LORD’s Temple and spread it out before the LORD. **15** And Hezekiah prayed this prayer before the LORD: “O LORD, God of Israel, you are enthroned between the mighty cherubim! You alone are God of all the kingdoms of the earth. You alone created the heavens and the earth. **16** Bend down, O LORD, and listen! Open your eyes, O LORD, and see! Listen to Sennacherib’s words of defiance against the living God. **17** “It is true, LORD, that the kings of Assyria have destroyed all these nations. **18** And they have thrown the gods of these nations into the fire and burned them. But of course the Assyrians could destroy them! They were not gods at all—only idols of wood and stone shaped by human hands. **19** Now, O LORD our God, rescue us from his power; then all the kingdoms of the earth will know that you alone, O LORD, are God.” **20** Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent this message to Hezekiah: “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I have heard your prayer about King Sennacherib of Assyria. **21** And the LORD has spoken this word against him: “The virgin daughter of Zion despises you and laughs at you. The daughter of Jerusalem shakes her head in derision as you flee. **22** “Whom have you been defying and ridiculing? Against whom did you raise your voice? At whom did you look with such haughty eyes? It was the Holy One of Israel! **23** By your messengers you have defied the Lord. You have said, ‘With my many chariots I have conquered the highest mountains— yes, the remotest peaks of Lebanon. I have cut down its tallest cedars and its finest cypress trees. I have reached its farthest corners and explored its deepest forests. **24** I have dug wells in many foreign lands and refreshed myself with their water. With the sole of my foot I stopped up all the rivers of Egypt!’ **25** “But have you not heard? I decided this long ago. Long ago I planned it, and now I am making it happen. I planned for you to crush fortified cities into heaps of rubble. **26** That is why their people have so little power and are so frightened and confused. They are as weak as grass, as easily trampled as tender green shoots. They are like grass sprouting on a housetop, scorched before it can grow lush and tall. **27** “But I know you well— where you stay and when you come and go. I know the way you have raged against me. **28** And because of your raging against me and your arrogance, which I have heard for myself, I will put my hook in your nose

and my bit in your mouth. I will make you return by the same road on which you came.” **29** Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Here is the proof that what I say is true: “This year you will eat only what grows up by itself, and next year you will eat what springs up from that. But in the third year you will plant crops and harvest them; you will tend vineyards and eat their fruit. **30** And you who are left in Judah, who have escaped the ravages of the siege, will put roots down in your own soil and will grow up and flourish. **31** For a remnant of my people will spread out from Jerusalem, a group of survivors from Mount Zion. The passionate commitment of the LORD of Heaven’s Armies will make this happen! **32**“And this is what the LORD says about the king of Assyria: “His armies will not enter Jerusalem. They will not even shoot an arrow at it. They will not march outside its gates with their shields nor build banks of earth against its walls. **33** The king will return to his own country by the same road on which he came. He will not enter this city, says the LORD . **34** For my own honor and for the sake of my servant David, I will defend this city and protect it.”**35** That night the angel of the LORD went out to the Assyrian camp and killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. When the surviving Assyrians woke up the next morning, they found corpses everywhere. **36** Then King Sennacherib of Assyria broke camp and returned to his own land. He went home to his capital of Nineveh and stayed there. **37** One day while he was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisroch, his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer killed him with their swords. They then escaped to the land of Ararat, and another son, Esarhaddon, became the next king of Assyria.

### **Acts 21:1 - 17**

**21 1** After saying farewell to the Ephesian elders, we sailed straight to the island of Cos. The next day we reached Rhodes and then went to Patara.**2** There we boarded a ship sailing for Phoenicia. **3** We sighted the island of Cyprus, passed it on our left, and landed at the harbor of Tyre, in Syria, where the ship was to unload its cargo. **4** We went ashore, found the local believers, and stayed with them a week. These believers prophesied through the Holy Spirit that Paul should not go on to Jerusalem. **5** When we returned to the ship at the end of the week, the entire congregation, including women and children, left the city and came down to the shore with us. There we knelt, prayed, **6** and said our farewells. Then we went aboard, and they returned home. **7** The next stop after leaving Tyre was Ptolemais, where we greeted the brothers and sisters and stayed for one day. **8** The next day we went on to Caesarea and stayed at the home of Philip the Evangelist, one of the seven men who had been chosen to distribute food. **9** He had four unmarried daughters who had the gift of prophecy. **10** Several days later a man named Agabus, who also had the gift of prophecy, arrived from Judea. **11** He

came over, took Paul's belt, and bound his own feet and hands with it. Then he said, "The Holy Spirit declares, 'So shall the owner of this belt be bound by the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem and turned over to the Gentiles.'" **12** When we heard this, we and the local believers all begged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. **13** But he said, "Why all this weeping? You are breaking my heart! I am ready not only to be jailed at Jerusalem but even to die for the sake of the Lord Jesus." **14** When it was clear that we couldn't persuade him, we gave up and said, "The Lord's will be done." **15** After this we packed our things and left for Jerusalem. **16** Some believers from Caesarea accompanied us, and they took us to the home of Mnason, a man originally from Cyprus and one of the early believers. **17** When we arrived, the brothers and sisters in Jerusalem welcomed us warmly.

### **Psalm 149:1 - 9**

**149 1** Praise the LORD ! Sing to the LORD a new song. Sing his praises in the assembly of the faithful. **2** O Israel, rejoice in your Maker. O people of Jerusalem, exult in your King. **3** Praise his name with dancing, accompanied by tambourine and harp. **4** For the LORD delights in his people; he crowns the humble with victory. **5** Let the faithful rejoice that he honors them. Let them sing for joy as they lie on their beds. **6** Let the praises of God be in their mouths, and a sharp sword in their hands— **7** to execute vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples, **8** to bind their kings with shackles and their leaders with iron chains, **9** to execute the judgment written against them. This is the glorious privilege of his faithful ones. Praise the LORD !

### **Proverbs 18:8**

**18 8** Rumors are dainty morsels that sink deep into one's heart.