

<b>King of Assyria</b>	<b>2 Kings 18:13-19:37 2 Chronicles 32:1-23</b>	<b>Monday April 23</b>	<b>Judean Hill Country Lachish</b>
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Once again, the Assyrian army invaded Judah; Hezekiah was king of Judah.

When the Assyrians arrived at Jerusalem, the commander of their army called for a meeting with Jewish officials outside the walls of the city.

He said, “Sennacherib, the great king of Assyria, sends this message to Hezekiah: On what do you base this confidence of yours? Do you think that mere words are strategy and power for war? Why do you resist my great army? Are you relying on Egypt to come and help you? Egypt, that broken reed of a staff. Listen. They won’t come!

“Are you trusting in the Lord your God? Why? It was your God who sent us here to destroy you!”

While the commander was talking, the people of Jerusalem were on the city walls— listening to everything he was saying. He spoke in Hebrew and was loud enough so they could hear.

The Jewish officials said, “Please, speak to us in your language; we understand it. Don’t speak to us in the language of Judah within the hearing of the people who are on the wall.”

But the commander continued speaking in Hebrew even louder. “Has my master sent me to speak these words only to you and to your master, and not to the people sitting on the wall, the people who are doomed with you to eat their own dung and to drink their own urine?”

He pointed to the men on the wall and shouted, “Hear these words from the great Sennacherib, the great King of Assyria. ‘Don’t let Hezekiah deceive, he won’t save you. Don’t be tricked into trusting the Lord. We have conquered many nations; their gods couldn’t protect them. Your city will be delivered into the hands of the King of Assyria. Your God cannot stop him.

“Make your peace with me and surrender. Then everyone of you will eat from your own vines and from you own fig trees. You will drink water from your own cisterns until I come and take you away to a land like your own. A land of grain and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive oil and honey that you may live and not die.”

The people were silent and didn’t answer him. When King Hezekiah heard this report, he ripped his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the Temple to pray. He sent his messengers to the prophet Isaiah asking him to pray for God’s people.

Isaiah sent word to Hezekiah. “Thus says the Lord, ‘Don’t be afraid of words. I myself will put a spirit in him so that he will hear a rumor and return to his own land; I will cause the king to fall by the sword in his own land.’”

Suddenly, the commander heard of trouble back in Assyria. Thinking his king needed him, he took the entire army and left.

Now, sometime later, King Sennacherib once again moved his army toward Jerusalem. Along the way, he sent a letter to Hezekiah. “Did your God tell you that you’re safe from me? Don’t believe him! I’ve conquered the gods of many other nations and burned them with fire. They couldn’t protect their nations. What makes you think your God will protect you?”

Hezekiah took this letter to the Temple. He spread it out before God and prayed. Isaiah now sent a message to Hezekiah, but it wasn't addressed to him. It was God's answer to Sennacherib.

It said, "Who do you think you are? I've told Jerusalem to spit on you. Who do you think you're mocking? I'm the one who put you in power so you could judge other nations. Are you so arrogant that you yell at me? Here's what I'm going to do to you. I'm going to put a hook in your nose, and a bit in your mouth. Then I'll take you back to the barn from which you came!"

Thus said the Lord about the King of Assyria, "Don't worry about Sennacherib. Not one arrow will hit the walls of Jerusalem. He won't set up a siege ramp. Instead by the way that he came, he shall return. I'm your defense! I'll fight this battle. I'll save the city."

That evening the army of Assyria set up camp. And that very night the angel of the Lord set out and struck down 185,000 soldiers in the camp of the Assyrians. When morning dawned, Sennacherib had nothing more than an army of dead bodies.

He quickly returned home to Nineveh and knelt down before his idol. At that point two of his sons came in and killed him as Isaiah had prophesied. Sennacherib, the great king of Assyria, was dead, and Jerusalem was at peace.