

## ISAIAH 37

### *185,000 Assyrians Struck Down*

#### *Hezekiah Sends for Isaiah*

1 As soon as King Hezekiah heard it, he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of Yahweh. 2 And he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, Shebna the secretary, and the senior priests, covered with sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz. 3 They said to him,

Thus says Hezekiah, This day is a day of distress, of rebuke, and of disgrace. Children have come to the point of birth, and there is no strength to bring them forth. 4 It may be that Yahweh your God will hear the words of the Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to mock the living God, and will rebuke the words that Yahweh your God has heard. Therefore lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left.

5 When the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah, 6 Isaiah said to them,

Say to your master, Thus says Yahweh: Do not be afraid because of the words that you have heard, with which the young men of the king of Assyria have reviled me. 7 Behold, I will put a spirit in him, so that he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land, and I will make him fall by the sword in his own land.

8 The Rabshakeh returned and found the king of Assyria fighting against Libnah, for he had heard that the king had left Lachish.

#### *Sennacherib Taunts Yahweh by Letter*

9 Now the king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Cush,

He has set out to fight against you.

And when he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah saying,

10 Thus shall you speak to Hezekiah king of Judah: Do not let your God in whom you trust (בטח) deceive you by promising that Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. 11 Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, devoting them to destruction. And shall you be delivered? 12 Have the gods (אֱלֹהִים) of the nations delivered them, the nations that my fathers destroyed, Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the people of Eden who were in Telassar? 13 Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of the city of Sepharvaim, the king of Hena, or the king of Ivvah?<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Assyrians love to make threats and intimidate people.

### *Hezekiah's Prayer of Trust*

14 Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it. And Hezekiah went up to the house of Yahweh and spread it before Yahweh. 15 And Hezekiah prayed to Yahweh:

16 Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. 17 Incline your ear, Yahweh, and hear. Open your eyes, Yahweh, and see. And hear all the words of Sennacherib that he has sent to mock the living God (אַלֹהִים חַיִּים). 18 Truly, Yahweh, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations and their lands 19 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. 20 So now, Yahweh our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone are Yahweh.<sup>2</sup>

### *Yahweh's Response*

21 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah saying,

Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel: Because you have prayed to me concerning Sennacherib king of Assyria, 22 this is the word that Yahweh has spoken concerning him:

She despises you, she scorns you—the virgin daughter of Zion. She wags her head behind you—the daughter of Jerusalem.

23 Whom have you mocked and reviled? Against whom have you raised your voice and lifted your eyes to the heights? Against the Holy One of Israel! 24 By your servants you have mocked Yahweh, and you have said,

With my many chariots I have gone up the heights of the mountains, to the far recesses of Lebanon, to cut down its tallest cedars, its choicest cypresses, to come to its remotest height, its most fruitful forest. 25 I dug wells and drank waters, to dry up with the sole of my foot all the streams of Egypt.

26 Have you not heard that I determined it long ago? I planned from days of old what now I bring to pass, that you should make fortified cities crash into heaps of ruins, 27 while their inhabitants, shorn of strength, are dismayed and confounded, and have become like plants of the field and like tender grass, like grass on the housetops, blighted before it is grown. 28 I know your sitting down, your going out and coming in, and your raging against me. 29 Because you have raged against me and your complacency has come to my ears, I will put my hook in your nose and my bit in your mouth, and I will turn you back on the way by which you came.

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<sup>2</sup> This may be the greatest concentration of God's name, Yahweh, in the Bible.

30 And this shall be the sign for you [Hezekiah]. This year you shall eat what grows of itself, and in the second year what springs from that. Then in the third year sow and reap, plant vineyards, and eat their fruit. 31 And the surviving remnant of the house of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward. 32 For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant, and out of Mount Zion a band of survivors. The zeal of Yahweh of hosts will do this.

33 Therefore thus says Yahweh concerning the king of Assyria: He shall not come into this city, shoot an arrow there, come before it with a shield, or cast up a siege mound against it. 34 By the way that he came, by the same he shall return, and he shall not come into this city, declares Yahweh. 35 For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David.<sup>3</sup>

### *185,000 Assyrians Struck Down*

36 And the angel of Yahweh went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. 37 Then Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, returned home, and lived at Nineveh. 38 And as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons, struck him down with the sword. And after they escaped into the land of Ararat, Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.

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<sup>3</sup> This is quite a long statement from Yahweh.

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