

SENNACHERIB MOCKS YEHOWAH (II KINGS 18-19)

Parts: **Narrators (1 or 2)**
 Sennacherib
 Hezekiah
 Messengers,
 the Rabshakeh
 Eliakim
 Isaiah

Narrator (1):

And in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. Then Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish.

Messenger:

"Thus says Hezekiah: 'I have done wrong; turn away from me; whatever you impose on me I will pay.'"

Sennacherib:

"Tell Hezekiah, King of Judah, that he must pay me 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold."

Narrator (1):

So Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of Yehowah and in the treasuries of the king's house. At that time Hezekiah stripped the gold from the doors of the temple of Yehowah, and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.

Narrator (2):

Then the king of Assyria sent the Tartan, the Rabsaris, and the Rabshakeh from Lachish, with a great army against Jerusalem, to King Hezekiah. And... when they had come up, they came and stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool, which was on the highway to the Fuller's Field. And when they had called to the king, Eliakim..., who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah..., the recorder, came out to them.

The Rabshakeh:

"Say now to Hezekiah, `Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: "What confidence is this in which you trust? You speak of having counsel and strength for war; but they are vain words. And in whom do you trust, that you rebel against me? Now look! You are trusting in the staff of this broken reed, Egypt, on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him.

"But if you say to me, `We trust in Yehowah,' is it not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away, and said to Judah and Jerusalem, `You shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem?'

"Now therefore, I urge you, give a pledge to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you 2000 horses—if you are able on your part to put riders on them! How then will you repel one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put your trust in Egypt for chariots and horsemen?

"Have I now come up without Yehowah against this place to destroy it? Yehowah said to me, `Go up against this land, and destroy it.' "

Eliakim (said to the Rabshakeh):

"Please speak to your servants in the Aramaic language, for we understand it; and do not speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people who are on the wall."

The Rabshakeh:

"Has my master sent me to *your master* and to *you* to speak these words, and not to the men who sit on the wall, who will eat and drink their own waste with you?"

(*in a loud voice*) "Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria! Thus says the king: 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he shall not be able to deliver you from his hand; nor let Hezekiah make you trust in Yehowah, saying, "Yehowah will surely deliver us...."' Do not listen to Hezekiah; for thus says the king of Assyria: "Make peace with me by a present and come out to me; and every one of you eat from his own vine and every one from his own fig tree, and every one of you drink the waters of his own cistern; until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive groves and honey, that you may live and not die." But do not listen to Hezekiah, lest he persuade you saying, "Yehowah will deliver us."

"Has any of the gods of the nations at all delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim and Hena and Ivah? Indeed, have they delivered Samaria from my hand? Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that Yehowah should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?"

Narrator (2):

But the people held their peace and answered him not a word; for the king's commandment was, "Do not answer him." Then Eliakim, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn, and told him the words of the Rabshakeh.

Eliakim:

"O King; Sennacherib has demanded our surrender, and has blasphemed our God in the ears of all the people."

Narrator (1):

And so it was, when King Hezekiah heard it, that he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of Yehowah.

Hezekiah (to Eliakim and Shebna):

"Go, get the Elders of the priests, cover yourselves with sackcloth, and go to Isaiah the prophet with this message."

Eliakim (with others before Isaiah):

"Thus says Hezekiah: `This day is a day of trouble, and rebuke, and blasphemy; for the children have come to birth, but there is no strength to bring them forth. It may be that Yehowah your God will hear all the words of the Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which Yehowah your God has heard. Therefore lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left.' "

Isaiah:

"Thus you shall say to your master, 'Thus says Yehowah: "Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me. Surely I will send a *spirit* upon him, and he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.' "

Narrator (2):

Now the Rabshakeh returned and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah, for he heard that he had departed from Lachish. And the king heard concerning Tir-ha-kah king of Ethiopia, "Look, he has come out to make war with you." And again he sent messengers to Hezekiah.

Sennacherib:

"Thus you shall speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying: 'Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you, saying, "Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria." 'Look! You have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by utterly destroying them; and shall you be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered those whom my fathers have destroyed, Gozan and Haran and Rezep, and the people of Eden who were in Telassar? Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Se-phar-vaim, Hena, and Ivah?' "

Messenger (*takes letter to Hezekiah*):

"A letter to King Hezekiah from Sennacherib, the king of all the earth."

Narrator (1):

And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of Yehowah, and spread it before Yehowah. Then Hezekiah prayed before Yehowah.

Hezekiah:

"O Yehowah, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth.

Incline Your ear, O Yehowah, and hear; open Your eyes, O Yehowah, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God.

Truly, Yehowah, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands, and have cast their gods into the fire; for they were not gods, but the work of men's hands -- wood and stone. Therefore they have destroyed them. Now therefore, O Yehowah our God, I pray, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are Yehowah, You alone." (Hezekiah returns to palace)

Isaiah (*enters throne room*):

"Thus says Yehowah: 'That which you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard. This is the word which Yehowah has spoken concerning him:

"The virgin, the daughter of Zion,
 Has despised you,
 laughed you to scorn;
 The daughter of Jerusalem
 Has shaken her head
 behind your back!
 Because your rage against Me
 and your tumult
 Have come up to My ears,
 Therefore I will put
 My hook in your nose
 And My bridle in your lips,
 And I will turn you back
 By the way which you came." "

"Therefore thus says Yehowah concerning the king of Assyria:

'He shall not come into this city,
 Nor shoot an arrow there,
 Nor come before it with shield,
 Nor build a siege mound against it.
 By the way that he came,
 By the same shall he return;
 And he shall not come into this city,'
 Says Yehowah.
 'For I will defend this city, to save it
 For My own sake
 and for My servant David's sake.' "

Narrator (1):

And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of Yehowah went out and killed in the camp of the Assyrians 185,000 men. And when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned home, and remained at Nineveh.

Narrator (2):

Now it came to pass, as he was worshiping in the temple of Nisroch his god that his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. Then Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.

(The End)