

## Isaiah 36:1-22 **Sennacherib Boasts Against Yehowah**

### Sennacherib Against Judah & Jerusalem (2 Kings 18:13-37; 2 Chronicles 32:1-19)

<sup>1</sup> Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them.

<sup>2</sup> Then the king of Assyria sent the Rabshakeh (chief of the officers) with a great army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. And he stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller's Field.

<sup>3</sup> And Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came out to him.

### Challenge against finding help from Egypt

<sup>4</sup> Then the Rabshakeh said to them, "Say now to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: "What confidence is this in which you trust? <sup>5</sup> I say you speak of having plans and power for war; but they are mere words. Now in whom do you trust, that you rebel against me? <sup>6</sup> 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.

### Challenge against faith in Yahweh Eloheynu

<sup>7</sup> "But if you say to me, 'We trust in the Lord our God,' 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?'"

### Call for surrender

<sup>8</sup> Now therefore, I urge you, give a pledge to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses — if you are able on your part to put riders on them!

<sup>9</sup> 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?

### Claim of endorsement from Yahweh

<sup>10</sup> Have I now come up without the Lord against this land to destroy it? The Lord said to me, 'Go up against this land, and destroy it.'

### Judean request for communication in Aramaic, not in Hebrew

<sup>11</sup> Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to the Rabshakeh, "Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand it; and do not speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people who are on the wall."

### Message is for men on the wall warning against coming siege and starvation

<sup>12</sup> But the Rabshakeh said, "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?"

<sup>13</sup> Then the Rabshakeh stood and called out with a loud voice in Hebrew, and said, "Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria!

<sup>14</sup> Thus says the king: 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you; <sup>15</sup> nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord, saying, "The Lord will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.'"

### Call for Surrender to live at peace under Assyrian dominion

16 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; 17 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.

### Second warning against trust in Yahweh

18 Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, "The Lord will deliver us." Has any one of the gods of the nations delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria?

19 Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Indeed, have they delivered Samaria from my hand?

20 Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?"

### Report to Hezekiah

21 But they held their peace and answered him not a word; for the king's commandment was, "Do not answer him."

22 Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn, and told him the words of the Rabshakeh.

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### Facts Revealed:

#### Sennacherib Against Judah & Jerusalem (2 Kings 18:13-37; 2 Chronicles 32:1-19)

✧ Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against **all the fortified cities of Judah and took them.**

Then the king of Assyria sent the Rabshakeh (chief of the officers) with a great army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. And he stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller's Field.

And Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came out to him. [Isaiah 36:1-3]

✧ At this time, Assyria had already taken the northern kingdom of Israel away captive and had taken the fortified cities of Judah the southern kingdom.

✧ Sennacherib king of Assyria was with his armies laying siege against Lachish the last of the fortified cities of Judah with Jerusalem the final city for the total conquest of Judah.

✧ Lachish is in the low lands of south west Judah.

✧ He sent his top commander with his armies to Jerusalem to begin its siege.

✧ Now the Assyrian armies are surrounding Jerusalem the last fortified city of Judah and the capital city where king Hezekiah resides and the Temple of Yahweh stands.

✧ The Rabshakeh is the chief officer over the Assyrian armies, and Sennacherib is the king of Assyria.

✧ Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah were the chief officers of the kingdom of Hezekiah king of Judah.

✧ The aqueduct was the main source of water for the city of Jerusalem.

### Challenge against seeking help from Egypt

✧ Then the Rabshakeh said to them, "Say now to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: "What confidence is this in which you trust? I say you speak of having plans and

power for war; but they are mere words. Now in whom do you trust, that you rebel against me? 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. [Isaiah 36:4-6]

✧ Don't turn to Egypt for help, they can not stand against the King of Assyria.

### Challenge against faith in Yahweh Eloheynu

✧ "But if you say to me, 'We trust in Yahweh Eloheynu (the Lord our God),' 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?'" [Isaiah 36:7]

✧ Those who do not know Yahweh feel all gods are the same and only the fantasy of the mind of men which has no real ability to defend anyone from the power of the tyrants.

✧ Besides, the Assyrians know that Hezekiah has removed all idolatry from Judah in favor of one Elohiym, Yahweh Elohey Yisrael, and since they view all so called gods as the same, they can not believe the God of Israel is any different.

### Call for surrender

✧ Now therefore, I urge you, give a pledge to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand 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? [Isaiah 36:8-9]

✧ When men mock God, they scoff at the apparent weakness of men.

✧ You are weak and Egypt cannot help you.

### Claim of endorsement from Yahweh

✧ Have I now come up without the Lord against this land to destroy it? The Lord said to me, 'Go up against this land, and destroy it.'" [Isaiah 36:10]

✧ In order to sway Hezekiah, he even claims divine authority for his invasion.

✧ It was because of the sins of the people of Judah that God allowed the Assyrians to get as far as they did.

✧ Yahweh also allowed it to demonstrate to Israel and the Assyrians He has the power to overcome all haughty arrogant humans who scoff and mock His Holy Name, that the world may know the power of El Shaday (God Almighty).

### Judean request for communication in Aramaic, not in Hebrew

✧ Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to the Rabshakeh, "Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand it; and do not speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people who are on the wall." [Isaiah 36:11]

✧ The leaders of Judah desire to keep the conversation confidential so the common people wouldn't understand what was being said.

### Message is for men on the wall warning against coming siege and starvation

✧ But the Rabshakeh said, "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?"

Then the Rabshakeh stood and called out with a loud voice in Hebrew, and said, "Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria!

Thus says the king: 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you; nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord, saying, "The Lord will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.'" [Isaiah 36:12-15]

✧ The enemy is using psychological warfare against the people in hope of frightening them into surrender.

✧ The description of starvation under siege is great motivation for a weak enemy to cave in to a superior force out of fear.

### Call for Surrender to live at peace under Assyrian dominion

✧ 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; <sup>17</sup> 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. [Isaiah 36:16-17]

✧ If fear doesn't cause them to surrender, perhaps enticement will work.

✧ Still the promise of carrying the people from their own land is included in the bargain.

### Second warning against trust in Yahweh

✧ Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, "The Lord will deliver us." Has any one of the gods of the nations 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? Indeed, have they delivered Samaria from my hand?

Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?" [Isaiah 36:18-20]

✧ This time he openly declared his disdain toward hope in any god, based on experience where none of the previous nations were delivered from his hand by their gods, and he views Yahweh to be as powerless as the idols of other nations.

### Report to Hezekiah

✧ But they held their peace and answered him not a word; for the king's commandment was, "Do not answer him."

Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn, and told him the words of the Rabshakeh. [Isaiah 36:21-22]