**Year 2, Proper 21, Friday: Evening Prayer**

*The First Lesson. The Reader begins*

## A Reading from the Second Book of the Kings

When King Hezeki'ah heard the words of Rab'shakeh, he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord. And he sent Eli'akim, who was over the household, and Shebna the secretary, and the senior priests, covered with sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz. They said to him, “Thus says Hezeki'ah, This day is a day of distress, of rebuke, and of disgrace; children have come to the birth, and there is no strength to bring them forth. It may be that the Lord your God heard all the words of the Rab'shakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to mock the living God, and will rebuke the words which the Lord your God has heard; therefore lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left.” When the servants of King Hezeki'ah came to Isaiah, Isaiah said to them, “Say to your master, ‘Thus says the Lord: Do not be afraid because of the words that you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have reviled me. Behold, I will put a spirit in him, so that 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.’” The Rab'shakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria fighting against Libnah; for he heard that the king had left Lachish. And when the king heard concerning Tirha'kah king of Ethiopia, “Behold, he has set out to fight against you,” he sent messengers again to Hezeki'ah, saying, “Thus shall you speak to Hezeki'ah king of Judah: ‘Do not let your God on whom you rely deceive you by promising that Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, destroying them utterly. And shall you be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered them, the nations which my fathers destroyed, Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the people of Eden who were in Tel-assar? Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of the city of Sepharva'im, the king of Hena, or the king of Ivvah?’” Hezeki'ah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezeki'ah went up to the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord. And Hezeki'ah prayed before the Lord, and said: “O Lord the God of Israel, who art enthroned above the cherubim, thou art the God, thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth. Incline thy ear, O Lord, and hear; open thy eyes, O Lord, and see; and hear the words of Sennach'erib, which he has sent to mock the living God. Of a truth, O Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands, 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. So now, O Lord our God, save us, I beseech thee, from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou, O Lord, art God alone.” Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezeki'ah, saying, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Your prayer to me about Sennach'erib king of Assyria I have heard.”

*The Reader concludes* The Word of the Lord.

*The Second Lesson. The Reader begins*

**A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles**

As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the tribune, “May I say something to you?” And he said, “Do you know Greek? Are you not the Egyptian, then, who recently stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand men of the Assassins out into the wilderness?” Paul replied, “I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cili'cia, a citizen of no mean city; I beg you, let me speak to the people.” And when he had given him leave, Paul, standing on the steps, motioned with his hand to the people; and when there was a great hush, he spoke to them in the Hebrew language, saying: “Brethren and fathers, hear the defense which I now make before you.” And when they heard that he addressed them in the Hebrew language, they were the more quiet. And he said: “I am a Jew, born at Tarsus in Cili'cia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gama'li-el, educated according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as you all are this day. I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, as the high priest and the whole council of elders bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brethren, and I journeyed to Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished. “As I made my journey and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone about me. And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?’ And I answered, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And he said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting.’ Now those who were with me saw the light but did not hear the voice of the one who was speaking to me. And I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ And the Lord said to me, ‘Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.’ And when I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus. And one Anani'as, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, came to me, and standing by me said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight.’ And in that very hour I received my sight and saw him. And he said, ‘The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Just One and to hear a voice from his mouth; for you will be a witness for him to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name.’”

*The Reader concludes* The Word of the Lord.