

Reading 1

1 Kings 3:1-5 **3** Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt and married his daughter. He brought her to the City of David until he finished building his palace and the temple of the LORD, and the wall around Jerusalem. ²The people, however, were still sacrificing at the high places, because a temple had not yet been built for the Name of the LORD. ³Solomon showed his love for the LORD by walking according to the instructions given him by his father David, except that he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places.

⁴The king went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices, for that was the most important high place, and Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. ⁵At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, 'Ask for whatever you want me to give you.'

1 Kings 9:1-5 When Solomon had finished building the temple of the Lord and the royal palace, and had achieved all he had desired to do, ²the Lord appeared to him a second time, as he had appeared to him at Gibeon. ³The Lord said to him:

'I have heard the prayer and plea you have made before me; I have consecrated this temple, which you have built, by putting my Name there for ever. My eyes and my heart will always be there.

⁴'As for you, if you walk before me faithfully with integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did, and do all I command and observe my decrees and laws, ⁵I will establish your royal throne over Israel for ever, as I promised David your father when I said, "You shall never fail to have a successor on the throne of Israel."

1 Kings 4:7, 20-1, 5:13-14 ⁷Solomon had twelve district governors over all Israel, who supplied provisions for the king and the royal household. Each one had to provide supplies for one month in the year.

²⁰The people of Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand on the seashore; they ate, they drank and they were happy. ²¹And Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River Euphrates to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. These countries brought tribute and were Solomon's subjects all his life.

¹³King Solomon conscripted labourers from all Israel – thirty thousand men. ¹⁴He sent them off to Lebanon in shifts of ten thousand a month, so that they spent one month in Lebanon and two months at home. Adoniram was in charge of the forced labour.

1 Kings 11:1-2, 4 ^{11:1} King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter. ²They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, 'You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods.' Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. ... As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been.

Reading 2

2K.18:1, 3-7 **18** In the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, Hezekiah son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign. He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father David had done. ⁴ He removed the high places, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles. He broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made, for up to that time the Israelites had been burning incense to it. (It was called Nehushtan. ^[b])

⁵ Hezekiah trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel. There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him. ⁶ He held fast to the LORD and did not stop following him; he kept the commands the LORD had given Moses. ⁷ And the LORD was with him; he was successful in whatever he undertook. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him.

2K.18: 13-5 **13** In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah's reign, Sennacherib king of Assyria attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them. ¹⁴ So Hezekiah king of Judah sent this message to the king of Assyria at Lachish: 'I have done wrong. Withdraw from me, and I will pay whatever you demand of me.' ... ¹⁵ So Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the temple of the LORD and in the treasuries of the royal palace.

2K.18: 17, 19-20 **17** The king of Assyria sent his supreme commander, his chief officer and his field commander with a large army, from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem....

19 The field commander said to [Hezekiah's chief officials], 'Tell Hezekiah: "This is what the great king, the king of Assyria, says: on what are you basing this confidence of yours? ²⁰ You say you have the counsel and the might for war – but you speak only empty words. On whom are you depending, that you rebel against me?"

2K.19: 1-2, 6-7 When King Hezekiah heard this, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and went into the temple of the LORD. ² He sent Eliakim the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary and the leading priests, all wearing sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. Isaiah said to them, 'Tell your master, "This is what the LORD says: do not be afraid of what you have heard – those words with which the underlings of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. ⁷ Listen! When he hears a certain report, I will make him want to return to his own country, and there I will have him cut down with the sword.'"