

THE ONE YEAR BIBLE Reading For August 2:

2 Chronicles 32:1-33:13:

2 Chronicles 32:1-23 gives a much shorter account than 2 Kings 18:17-19:37 of the 701 B.C. invasion by the Assyrian king, Sennacherib. In Kings this episode was the most prominent aspect of Hezekiah's reign. For the chronicler it provides an example of how the LORD blessed the king for his faithfulness.

Like with so many of the godly kings of Judah before him, Hezekiah failed the LORD and sinned gravely before the end of his life (32:24-33). First, we are told that after God healed the king of illness (see 2 Kings 20:1-11), he grew proud because of his accomplishments which brought God's wrath (32:25). However, since he and Judah eventually humbled themselves, wrath did not come during his days (32:26). Next, envoys from Babylon came to inquire about the sign of the sun's shadow moving backward (2 Kings 20:8-11) and to see his wealth. This was a test from the LORD to see what was in his heart. Though the chronicler does not tell us, Hezekiah failed the test (2 Kings 20:12-19). Part of what the chronicler is teaching us is that the godly kings of Judah were not enough. There must come a future king who always did the will of God, by whom God's people could stand in perfect covenant relation with God.

Chapter 33 tells of Hezekiah's son, Manasseh, who reigned 55 years, the longest reign of any king of Judah. He was evil and reversed all the reforms of his father (1-9). In response, the LORD brought Assyria against Judah which eventually led to Manasseh's repentance (10-13). The chronicler again displays that faithfulness to the LORD brings His blessing; unfaithfulness brings His curse. O, how God's people need Messiah!

Romans 15:23-16:9:

Now that Paul has set forth the gospel and dealt with how the Roman Christians can overcome their divisions through that gospel (1:1-15:22), he turns to share with them his desire to come to Rome, his desire go to Spain (and for them to be on board with that mission), and his desire to go to Jerusalem with gifts to help the poor saints there (15:23-29). He asks them to pray for him as he goes to Jerusalem, to be delivered from the unbelieving Jews there, that his service would be acceptable to the saints, and that he would be able to come to them (15:30-33). Of course, we know from Acts 21-28 that Paul was taken into custody when he got to Jerusalem, ended up imprisoned in Caesarea by the sea for two years before being brought to Rome and placed under house arrest. So, certainly these prayers were answered, but in ways no one could have envisioned. This forms a good reminder to us that it is often difficult to see what the LORD is doing, but we must trust Him to work out of His wisdom, for our benefit, and to His glory.

Romans 16:1-9 is part of Paul's commendations and greetings. He commends the deaconess, Phoebe, to the Romans who is carrying the letter and then asks the readers to greet certain Christians for him (including Priscilla and Aquila, who have returned to Rome now that the edict of Claudius has been rescinded by Nero). Paul's greetings here in Romans 16 show the love Paul had for fellow believers. Though he was a passionate,

courageous missionary and theologian, he also had a very warm heart for the Church. By God's grace may the same be true of us!

Psalm 25:16-22:

As David cries out to the LORD for help, we not only see the openness and honesty in prayer so characteristic of the Psalms, we also see David pray for the nation as well (22). This may reflect the reality that the nation, not just David, faces enemies (see verse 19). It may also reflect that as things go with the king, so they go with the nation. As such, we not only are reminded to pray to God when we face trials, we also are reminded that our ultimate state is decided by our king—in other words, by the fact we are united to Jesus Christ.

Proverbs 20:16-18:

Verse 16 warns us to beware of people who are unreliable in financial dealings. Make sure you have some security. Verse 17 warns against deceitful business dealings. They may appear to bring profit in the short run, but their real fruit will be as unwanted and distasteful as gravel in the mouth. Finally, verse 18 reminds us of the importance of seeking counsel, especially in hard decisions.