



## Second Chronicles - Chapter Thirty Two

### III. 2 Chronicles 10:1-36:23 - The Kingdom of Judah Down to the Exile (continues/concludes)

#### III.I 2 Chronicles 29:1-32:33 - Hezekiah (continues/concludes)

##### Summary of Chapter Thirty Two

Having captured the northern kingdom of Israel, the Assyrian king Sennacherib turned his attention to Judah, so Hezekiah prepared for a siege. He had all the local water sources outside of the city stopped up to deprive the Assyrians of the water they would need, he strengthened and rebuilt the walls and the armoury, but above all he encouraged the people not to fear the Assyrians because Judah had God on their side.

Sennacherib responded by sending messengers to tell the people of Jerusalem not to trust in the word of Hezekiah or to rely on God because the Assyrians had swept all before them despite other nations relying on their gods and they said that the God of Israel and their king could not protect them from the final outcome of the siege.

In response, Hezekiah and Isaiah prayed to the Lord for deliverance. God sent his angel to decimate the Assyrian army and Sennacherib had to return to his home land in disgrace, where he was assassinated by his own sons.

Hezekiah became ill and was on the point of death because he had become proud of his achievements. He turned again to the Lord and repented of his pride and the Lord healed him, extending his life and reign over Judah. Thus he and his people prospered, knowing both wealth and security from their adversaries, because God favoured them due to the re-establishment of the temple services and a people who had returned to their God.

### III.I.vii 2 Chronicles 32:1-19 - Sennacherib's Invasion

The Chronicler's account of Sennacherib's invasion in 701 BC greatly condenses and simplifies the record given in 2 Kings Chapters 18-19. That earlier account depicts a rather more ambivalent but still fundamentally positive portrait of Hezekiah. The Chronicler omits these details to present Hezekiah at his faithful best, but his principal concern is to highlight the uniqueness and supremacy of Israel's God, and his ability to save or deliver his people from their enemies; Sennacherib's constant taunting use of this verb should be noted.

<sup>1</sup> After these things and these acts of faithfulness, King Sennacherib of Assyria came and invaded Judah and encamped against the fortified cities, thinking to win them for himself.

#### 2 Chronicles 32:1

After these things and these acts of faithfulness. Like Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 20:1), Hezekiah's faithful acts are followed by an aggressive invasion, an event that becomes an occasion for testing the king's faith and resourcefulness. This is often the case during life that attacks come against those who are faithful to God.

King Sennacherib of Assyria came and invaded Judah. This was part of his larger campaign in the region, including the conquest of the northern tribes. It might be said that the Chronicler is not telling the complete story here. He does not include what is learned from 2 Kings 18:13-16, that Hezekiah unwisely and unsuccessfully tried to satisfy Sennacherib with gold and treasures from the temple. It did not work, and after conquering almost all the fortified cities of Judah, the king of Assyria prepared to set a siege against Jerusalem. He clearly expects the reader to be familiar with 2 Kings Chapters 18-20, but, whereas the Chronicler normally adapts sections of earlier Scripture, here everything has been amplified and summarised in order to concentrate on the theme of Yahweh's supremacy.

<sup>2</sup> When Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come and intended to fight against Jerusalem, <sup>3</sup> he planned with his officers and his warriors to stop the flow of the springs that were outside the city; and they helped him. <sup>4</sup> A great many people were gathered, and they stopped all the springs and the wadi that flowed through the land, saying, 'Why should the Assyrian kings come and find water in abundance?' <sup>5</sup> Hezekiah set to work resolutely and built up the entire wall that was broken down, and raised towers on it, and outside it he built another wall; he also strengthened the Millo in the city of David, and made weapons and shields in abundance. <sup>6</sup> He appointed combat commanders over the people, and gathered them together to him in the square at the gate of the city and spoke encouragingly to them,

saying, <sup>7</sup> ‘Be strong and of good courage. Do not be afraid or dismayed before the king of Assyria and all the horde that is with him; for there is one greater with us than with him. <sup>8</sup> With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God, to help us and to fight our battles.’ The people were encouraged by the words of King Hezekiah of Judah.

### 2 Chronicles 32:2-8

Hezekiah’s response to the threat of Assyrian invasion includes taking practical measures for the defence of Jerusalem (vv.2-6a), and encouraging the people not to fear the strength of men, the arm of flesh: <<*Thus says the Lord: Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals and make mere flesh their strength, whose hearts turn away from the Lord*>> (Jeremiah 17:5), but to have confidence in God’s help. This was recognised by an earlier king: <<*Asa cried to the Lord his God, ‘O Lord, there is no difference for you between helping the mighty and the weak. Help us, O Lord our God, for we rely on you, and in your name we have come against this multitude. O Lord, you are our God; let no mortal prevail against you’*>> (2 Chronicles 14:11).

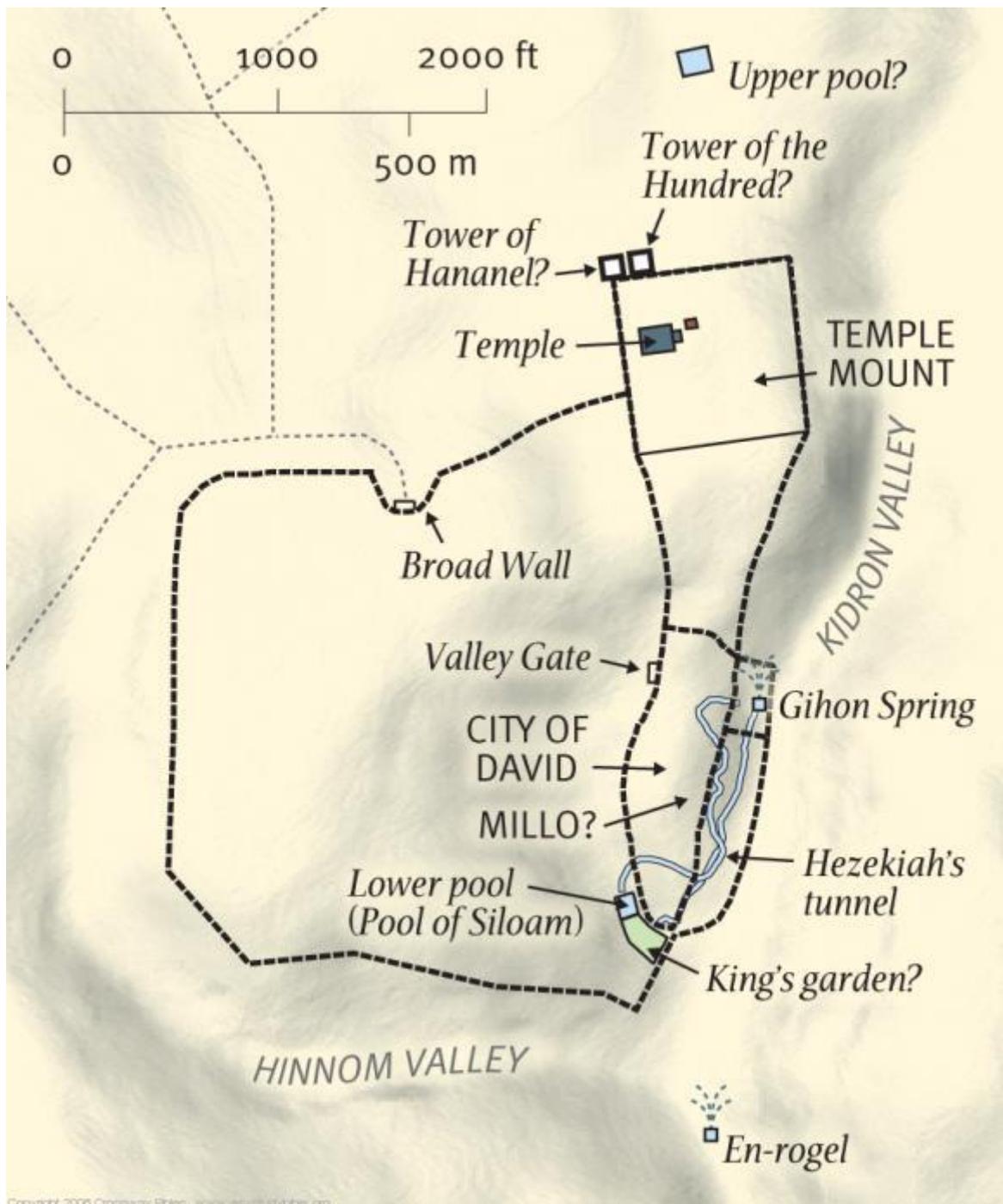
To stop the flow of the springs that were outside the city. This was done in preparation for the coming siege, and possibly in connection with the tunnel that Hezekiah directed to be cut to keep the water supply secure within the city (v.30). Jerusalem’s water supply was vulnerable to any attack, since it was totally dependent on two springs, Gihon in the Kidron valley and En-Rogel two miles to the south.

No doubt the Assyrian army suffered much through this, as a Christian army did eighteen hundred years after this. When the crusaders came in AD 1099 to besiege Jerusalem the people of the city stopped up the wells, so that the Christian army was reduced to a distressed state.

A great many people were gathered. This indicates just how the people had responded to Hezekiah and his reforms to turn the people back to God. They were now willing to serve God and their king, and to do what was necessary to protect their great city from the mighty Assyrians.

The wadi is a water course that is dry for part of the year. In this case it refers to the Kidron Brook that flowed just to the east of the city.

Hezekiah set to work resolutely and built up the entire wall that was broken down, and raised towers on it. This and the other preparations reflect how serious the threat was and how diligent Hezekiah was to defend Jerusalem and Judah. Part of a wall which could well be Hezekiah’s has been uncovered on the western hill. At seven metres thick, it is the thickest Iron Age wall known in Palestine, and was presumably designed to withstand powerful Assyrian battering rams.



### Hezekiah Fortifies Jerusalem (circa 702 BC)

In anticipation of an Assyrian attack, King Hezekiah of Judah fortified Jerusalem, repairing broken sections of the wall and redirecting the flow of water from the Gihon Spring into the city. He also equipped his army with weapons and shields, and appointed battle commanders over the people. Archaeological evidence suggests he also enclosed the western hill of the city with a new wall and built the Temple Mount around Solomon's temple.

Be strong and of good courage. Do not be afraid echoes David's charge to Solomon: *<<Then you will prosper if you are careful to observe the statutes and the ordinances that the Lord commanded Moses for Israel. Be strong and*

*of good courage. Do not be afraid or dismayed*>> (1 Chronicles 22:13), based in turn on Moses' and God's words to Joshua: <<*Be strong and bold; have no fear or dread of them, because it is the Lord your God who goes with you; he will not fail you or forsake you*>> (Deuteronomy 31:6), and: <<*I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go*>> (Joshua 1:9). Hezekiah understood that the defence of Israel did not depend only on walls, towers, shields and water supplies; it also depended on the strength, courage, and determination of their soldiers. And, in turn, these soldiers needed to trust in God to know they could prevail

For there is one greater with us than with him. Hezekiah was saying, "We have more power than they have" by quoting the words of the prophet Elisha: <<*He replied, 'Do not be afraid, for there are more with us than there are with them'*>> (2 Kings 6:16). This soon proved to be true by the slaughter made by the angel of the Lord in the Assyrian camp (v.21).

Outside it he built another wall. In the 1970 excavation of Jerusalem in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City, archaeologist Nahman Avigad discovered a wall 21 feet or 6.4m thick from the eighth to seventh centuries BC. It was probably the wall erected by Hezekiah to protect the city against the invading Assyrians. The city wall was also extended to accommodate the growth in population caused by the influx of refugees from the north as the other tribes of Israel were overrun.

The Millo. The Hebrew word means 'the fill.' It was a series of terrace walls, built on a steep slope, supporting the fill behind it in order to create level areas. Houses were then built on these artificial platforms, which were connected by narrow staircases. It was apparently the king's duty to look after this construction. During heavy rainfall, the fill became heavy and increased the pressure on the terrace walls, thus requiring regular maintenance of these walls. When this construction was neglected, the houses would fall down the steep slope and the city would disintegrate. Remains of these supporting walls have been found on the eastern slope of the city of David.

During the reign of King Hezekiah, the city of Jerusalem expanded more than ever before. Many refugees from the Assyrian invasion settled on the Western Hill, as the ancient city built by King Solomon on the Eastern Hill was not able to absorb them. New city walls encircled both hills, and thus Jerusalem became a city that was earlier described by David: <<*Jerusalem – built as a city that is bound firmly together*>> (Psalm 122:3). In David's day it was the spiritual cohesion of the people. This applied again thanks to Hezekiah's reforms but now had physical cohesion as well.



and he sends an army to Jerusalem to pressure Hezekiah to surrender. Refer also to 2 Kings 18:19-25, 18:27-35, and 19:9-13, which the address of Sennacherib's servants summarises. The speech follows the familiar pattern of psychological warfare, attempting to separate a people from their leader and to intimidate them into submission. Moreover, the people are constantly challenged on their confidence in the Lord, whom the Assyrians consider no more able to save or deliver than the gods of the other lands they had conquered. The blasphemy and hubris of Sennacherib and his officers in v.17 and v.19 are an affront to Yahweh's honour and invite his reply.

The mention of Lachish is important historically. Lachish was thirty miles southwest of Jerusalem. Archaeologists have discovered a pit there with the remains of about 1,500 casualties of Sennacherib's attack. In the British Museum there is the Assyrian carving depicting their siege of the city of Lachish, which was an important fortress city in Judah. An interesting wall relief taken from the excavation of Sennacherib's royal palace in Nineveh is persevered in the British Museum. It portrays the Assyrian king on a portable throne in his military camp outside Lachish. Prisoners of war are marching by on foot, and all the spoil from the city is being displayed on ox-wagons.



King Sennacherib's Throne



Prisoners of War



Assyrian War Chariot



The Siege at Lachis



Assyria Attacks Judah (701 BC)

During the reign of Hezekiah of Judah, Sennacherib of Assyria came and attacked cities along the western edge of Judah, and he sent officials to besiege Jerusalem and convince Hezekiah to surrender. The Cushite king Tirhakah advanced from Egypt to support Hezekiah according to 2 Kings 19:9 and Isaiah 37:9 but apparently failed. The siege of Jerusalem was broken when the angel of the Lord killed 185,000 Assyrians in a single night. Sennacherib withdrew and returned to Nineveh in Assyria, where his own sons killed him.

On what are you relying, that you undergo the siege of Jerusalem? These servants of Sennacherib, referred to as the Tartan, the Rabsaris, and the Rabshakeh in 2 Kings 18:17, tried to shake the trust Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem had in the Lord. One might wish that Hezekiah trusted in the Lord, and that this is what the Assyrians mocked. Instead, Hezekiah put his hope in an alliance with Egypt, and the Assyrians wanted him to lose confidence in that alliance. It was a great temptation for Hezekiah during this time to make a defensive alliance with Egypt, which seemed to be the only nation strong enough to protect Judah against the mighty Assyrians. As a prophet, Isaiah did everything he could to discourage Hezekiah and the leaders of Judah from putting their trust in Egypt; refer to Isaiah 19:11-17, 20:1-6, and 30:1-7. The Lord wanted Judah to trust him instead of Egypt.

Was it not this same Hezekiah who took away his high places and his altars? The Assyrian accusers knew that King Hezekiah had implemented broad reforms in Judah, including the removal of the high places; refer to 2 Kings 18:3-4. Yet in the Assyrians thinking, Hezekiah's reforms had really displeased God, so he should not expect help from the Lord God of Israel. The Assyrian would say, "Look at all the places there used to be where people would worship the Lord God of Israel. Now, since Hezekiah came in, there is only one place. More is always better, so the Lord God of Israel must be pretty sore at Hezekiah!" If the people were not careful, this argument of the Assyrians would start to make sense, when really it was demonic logic through and through. The message is 'beware who you listen to!' As David had said: <<***Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night***>> (Psalm 1:1-2 NIV).

Do you not know what I and my ancestors have done to all the peoples of other lands? The Assyrian's speech was intended to destroy their trust in God. His message was simple, and brilliant in its satanic logic: "The gods of other nations have not been able to protect them against us. Your God is just like one of them, and cannot protect you either."

<sup>16</sup> His servants said still more against the Lord God and against his servant Hezekiah. <sup>17</sup> He also wrote letters to throw contempt on the Lord the God of Israel and to speak against him, saying, 'Just as the gods of the nations in other lands did not rescue their people from my hands, so the God of Hezekiah will not rescue his people from my hand.' <sup>18</sup> They shouted it with a loud voice in the language of Judah to the people of Jerusalem who were on the wall, to frighten and terrify them, in order that they might take the city. <sup>19</sup> They spoke of the God of Jerusalem as if he were like the gods of the peoples of the earth, which are the work of human hands.

## 2 Chronicles 32:16-19

For anyone who had the spiritual understanding to see it, Judah could have started planning the victory party right then, when the Assyrian wrote: so the God of Hezekiah will not rescue his people from my hand. It is one thing to speak against Judah, its people and leaders. It was another thing all together to mock the Lord God of Israel this way, and count him as just another god.

The language of Judah was Hebrew; Aramaic was then the international language of the Near East; refer to 2 Kings 18:26-35.

### III.I.viii 2 Chronicles 32:20-23 - Sennacherib's Defeat and Death

This is an abbreviated account of God's response to the prayers of Hezekiah and Isaiah. He sent his angel to destroy the Assyrian army that was laying siege to Jerusalem, thus saving his people.

<sup>20</sup> Then King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz prayed because of this and cried to heaven.

## 2 Chronicles 32:20

King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah. The Chronicler omits the details of Hezekiah's prayer and Isaiah's prophecy of salvation that are recorded in 2 Kings 19:15-34. Apparently, he does so to focus on his familiar point that God has promised to hear his people's prayer in times of distress, as requested by Solomon: *<<When your people Israel, having sinned against you, are defeated before an enemy but turn again to you, confess your name, pray and plead with you in this house, may you hear from heaven, and forgive the sin of your people Israel, and bring them again to the land that you gave to them and to their ancestors>>* (2 Chronicles 6:24-25).

Cried to heaven. This had been the typical response of the Israelites when they found themselves in trouble. Hezekiah and Isaiah, through their faithfulness to God, might expect a positive outcome according to the Lord's will. However, there were many times that Israel turned away from the Lord but still expected him to come to their rescue, and he did: *<<Nevertheless they were disobedient and rebelled against you and cast your law behind their backs and killed your prophets, who had warned them in order to turn them back to you, and they committed great blasphemies. Therefore you gave them into the hands of their enemies, who made them suffer. Then in the time of their suffering they cried out to you and you heard them from heaven, and according to your great mercies you gave them saviours who saved them from the hands of their enemies>>* (Nehemiah 9:26-27).

<sup>21</sup> And the Lord sent an angel who cut off all the mighty warriors and commanders and officers in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he

returned in disgrace to his own land. When he came into the house of his god, some of his own sons struck him down there with the sword.

### 2 Chronicles 32:21

And the Lord sent an angel who cut off all the mighty warriors and commanders and officers in the camp of the king of Assyria. Simply and powerfully, God destroyed this mighty army in one night. One hundred and eighty five thousand died at the hand of the angel of the Lord according to 2 Kings 19:35. Against all the odds, and against every expectation except the expectation of faith, the Assyrian army was turned back without having even shot an arrow into Jerusalem. The unstoppable was stopped, the undefeated was defeated. The prophet Hosea made this same prediction: <<*But I will have pity on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the Lord their God; I will not save them by bow, or by sword, or by war, or by horses, or by horsemen*>> (Hosea 1:7).

Herodotus, the Greek historian, recorded that one night Sennacherib's army camp was infested with mice or rats that destroyed the arrows and shield-thongs of the soldiers. He probably got this tradition from Egyptian sources, and it could well be a somewhat garbled version of the event recorded here. Some have speculated that there was a natural means that the angel used. This has been thought to be bacillary dysentery which had a three-day incubation period. However God caused this to happen, this event ranks, in fact, with Israel's crossing of the Red Sea as one of the two greatest examples of the Lord's intervention to save his people.

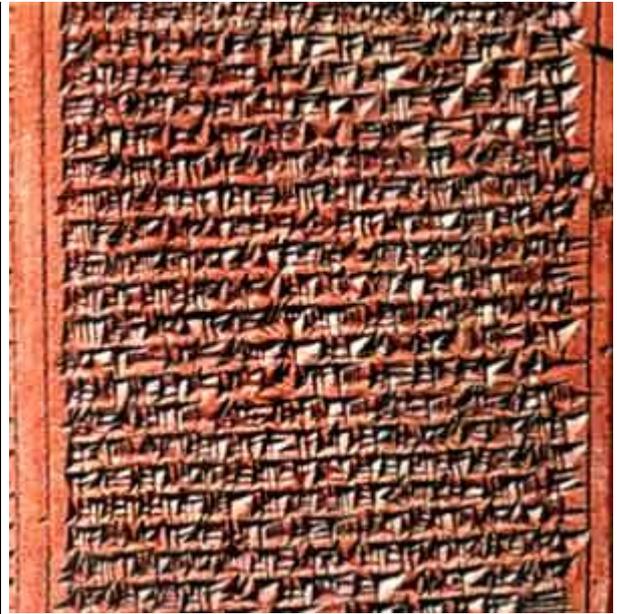
So he returned in disgrace to his own land. The Chronicler's addition highlights the element of confrontation between the arrogant Assyrian king and God himself, as David knew only too well: <<*I sought the Lord, and he answered me, and delivered me from all my fears. Look to him, and be radiant; so your faces shall never be ashamed. This poor soul cried, and was heard by the Lord, and was saved from every trouble. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them*>> (Psalm 34:4-7), and: <<*Let them be put to shame and dishonour who seek after my life. Let them be turned back and confounded who devise evil against me. Let them be like chaff before the wind, with the angel of the Lord driving them on*>> (Psalm 35:4-5). Although Sennacherib's army withdrew shortly afterward, his murder did not occur until 20 years later, in 681 BC.

The shame seems to have left his face rather quickly. After this retreat from Judah, Sennacherib commissioned a record, which is preserved in the spectacular Annals of Sennacherib, known as the Taylor Prism, which can be seen in the British Museum. It shows how full of pride Sennacherib's heart still was, even if he could not even claim he conquered Jerusalem. The inscription reads, "I attacked Hezekiah of Judah who had not subjected himself to me, and took forty-six fortresses, forts and small cities. I carried away captive 200,150

people, big and small, both male and female, a multitude of horses, young bulls, asses, camels, and oxen. Hezekiah himself I locked up in Jerusalem like a bird in its cage. I put up banks against the city. I separated his cities whose inhabitants I had taken prisoners from his realm and gave them to Mitiniti, king of Ashdod, Padi, king of Ekron, and Zilbel, king of Gaza and thus diminished his country. And I added another tax to the one imposed on him earlier.”



Sennacherib's Prism Record



Close-up of the Prism

The Biblical account concludes with the much debated statement that the Assyrian army was struck down in some way during the night with considerable loss of life, following which the siege was called off. The Assyrian Annals tacitly agree with the Biblical version by making no claim that Jerusalem was taken, only describing tribute from Hezekiah.

<sup>22</sup> So the Lord saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of King Sennacherib of Assyria and from the hand of all his enemies; he gave them rest on every side. <sup>23</sup> Many brought gifts to the Lord in Jerusalem and precious things to King Hezekiah of Judah, so that he was exalted in the sight of all nations from that time onwards.

### 2 Chronicles 32:22-23

Hezekiah recalls Solomon in the esteem and gifts he receives from foreigners: <<All the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put into his mind. Every one of them brought a present, objects of silver and gold, garments, weaponry, spices, horses, and mules, so much year after year>> (2 Chronicles 9:23-24).

### III.I.ix 2 Chronicles 32:24-26 - Hezekiah's Sickness

The Chronicler records briefly Hezekiah's illness that should have led to his death but the Lord relented, giving him a miraculous sign that he would recover.

<sup>24</sup> In those days Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death. He prayed to the Lord, and he answered him and gave him a sign.  
<sup>25</sup> But Hezekiah did not respond according to the benefit done to him, for his heart was proud. Therefore wrath came upon him and upon Judah and Jerusalem. <sup>26</sup> Then Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the Lord did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah.

#### 2 Chronicles 32:24-26

These events preceded Sennacherib's invasion by a few years; refer to 2 Kings 20:1-19 for a more detailed account of the illness, Isaiah's role and the sign God gave Hezekiah that he would not die at this time.

In those days. This happened at the time of the Assyrian invasion of Judah, because Jerusalem had not been delivered from the Assyrian threat yet: *<<I will add fifteen years to your life. I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; I will defend this city for my own sake and for my servant David's sake>>* (2 Kings 20:6). The events of this chapter are also recorded in Isaiah Chapter 38. This section represents a flashback to the period around 713-712 BC, some twelve years before Sennacherib's invasion and fifteen years before Hezekiah's death.

Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death. How Hezekiah became sick or what he was suffering from is not revealed. It may have been through something obvious to all, or it may have been through something known only to God. However, Hezekiah became sick, it was certainly permitted by the Lord.

The sign was the miraculous backward movement of the shadow, signifying the extension of Hezekiah's life in answer to prayer; details are recorded in 2 Kings 20:8-11. Related to this incident was the king's proud display of his wealth before the Babylonian envoys. This incurred the wrath of the Lord, but Hezekiah and the people's humble repentance is said to have spared Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah; refer to 2 Kings 20:16-18. This is in line with the promises of God: *<<if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land>>* (2 Chronicles 7:14). Even a good king such as Hezekiah could contribute to Judah's fate; like Josiah, however, he was spared from seeing it in his days: *<<I will gather you to your ancestors and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; your eyes shall not see all the disaster that I*

*will bring on this place and its inhabitants.’ They took the message back to the king>> (2 Chronicles 34:28).*

### III.I.x 2 Chronicles 32:27-33 - Hezekiah’s Prosperity and Achievements

The conclusion to the Chronicler’s account of Hezekiah’s reign mentions his other achievements and his prayers, as well as his lapse into sinful pride.

<sup>27</sup> Hezekiah had very great riches and honour; and he made for himself treasuries for silver, for gold, for precious stones, for spices, for shields, and for all kinds of costly objects; <sup>28</sup> storehouses also for the yield of grain, wine, and oil; and stalls for all kinds of cattle, and sheepfolds. <sup>29</sup> He likewise provided cities for himself, and flocks and herds in abundance; for God had given him very great possessions. <sup>30</sup> This same Hezekiah closed the upper outlet of the waters of Gihon and directed them down to the west side of the city of David. Hezekiah prospered in all his works. <sup>31</sup> So also in the matter of the envoys of the officials of Babylon, who had been sent to him to inquire about the sign that had been done in the land, God left him to himself, in order to test him and to know all that was in his heart.

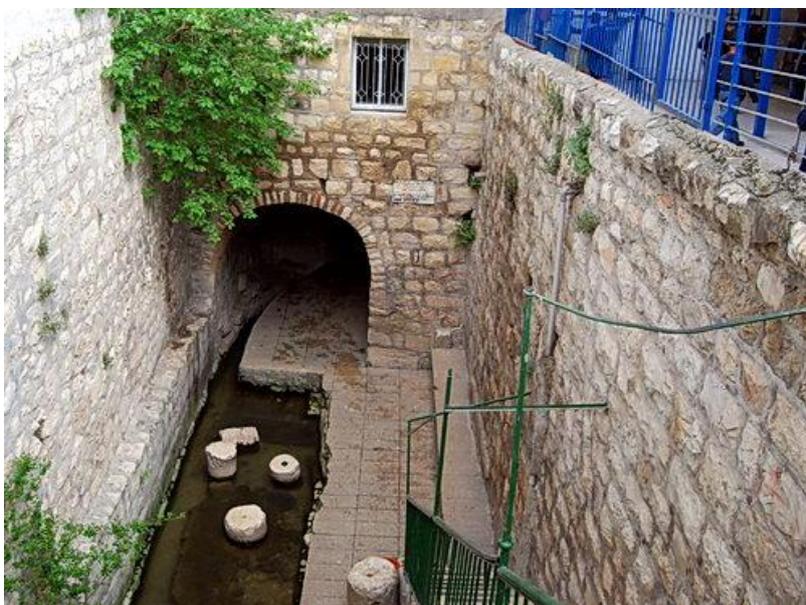
#### 2 Chronicles 32:27-31

Hezekiah had very great riches and honour are standard signs of divine blessing on faithful reigns; refer to 1 Chronicles 29:28, 2 Chronicles 1:11 and 17:5. Hezekiah often generously used these great riches for good, such as the offerings for the temple in 2 Chronicles 31:3, but sometimes he managed his and the kingdoms wealth foolishly; refer to 2 Kings 20:12-21.

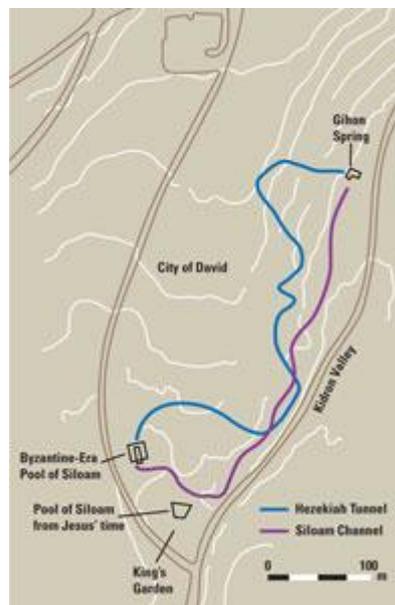
This same Hezekiah closed the upper outlet of the waters of Gihon and directed them down to the west side of the city of David. Toward the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> Century BC, Hezekiah built a new water system for Jerusalem, which incorporated part of the earlier system. A tunnel was constructed that brought water directly from the Gihon Spring to the Pool of Siloam. Two teams cut toward each other, one from the spring and one from the pool. The Siloam Inscription, which was discovered in the tunnel in 1880, describes the final moments of the meeting of the two teams.

The Gihon Spring in the Kidron Valley was Jerusalem’s crucial water resource, and a large quarter of a mile long conduit, often known as the Siloam Channel, brought water from there to a reservoir at the southern end of the city of David. Since this water supply lay outside the city’s walls and was vulnerable in time of siege, a subsidiary tunnel leading from the Siloam conduit allowed residents to access its water from inside the city walls. In preparation for the Assyrian attack, Hezekiah had an additional tunnel cut that diverted water

from the Gihon Spring directly underground to the Pool of Siloam, which now lay within the city walls, whereupon the old water system was apparently abandoned. An inscription cut into the conduit wall and known as the Siloam Tunnel Inscription commemorates this accomplishment.



The tunnel at the Pool of Siloam



The New Watercourse

So also in the matter of the envoys of the officials of Babylon. This unfortunate chapter in the life of Hezekiah is recorded in 2 Kings 20:12-21. He was flattered by the visit of the ambassadors from this up-and-coming world power, and showed them the riches of the kingdom which they later took by siege and war. In this case Hezekiah faced and failed under a temptation common to many, especially those in ministry - the temptation of success. Many men who stand strong against the temptations of failure and weakness fail under the temptations of success and strength.

When Sargon II ascended the Assyrian throne in 722 BC, Merodach-baladan, the Hebrew name for Marduk-apla-iddina II, had himself crowned king in Babylon, and the ensuing conflict in Mesopotamia lasted intermittently until Esarhaddon's reign in Assyria. This visit of Merodach-baladan's envoys to Jerusalem is best set during his first spell of kingship in Babylon (722-710 BC), before Sargon II reconquered Babylonia after 710 BC and drove him into exile.

<sup>32</sup> Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his good deeds, are written in the vision of the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. <sup>33</sup> Hezekiah slept with his ancestors, and they buried him on the ascent to the tombs of the descendants of David; and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honour at his death. His son Manasseh succeeded him.

## 2 Chronicles 32:32-33

The acts of Hezekiah, and his good deeds. Despite his pride and misjudgement, Hezekiah was a good king who had brought revival to a nation and had mostly put God at the forefront of what he and the people of Judah did.

The vision of the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. This is not the canonical Book of Isaiah's prophecy but a historical work now lost. However, the Book of Kings is probably the same as the book found in Scripture although it is clear in that book that other records were kept as well. These other works are frequently mentioned by the author(s) of the canonical Book of Kings. They were Israelite royal annals, preserved in palace archives and temple libraries or archives along with foreign annals and inscriptions of various kinds. No copy of any of these chronicles remains today; they are not found in the Bible, and they are different from the Books of 1 and 2 Chronicles. By the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Millennium BC and the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup>, literacy was widespread in and around Palestine, and writing was being employed in legal, business, literary, and religious texts. In Iron Age Israel itself, from 1200 BC all the way to the fall of Judah in 587-586 BC, writing was a pervasive phenomenon.

Hezekiah slept with his ancestors. There is no doubt that Hezekiah started out as a godly king, and overall his reign was one of outstanding godliness. Yet his beginning was much better than his end; Hezekiah did not finish well. God gave Hezekiah the gift of fifteen more years of life, but the added years did not make him a better or a more godly man.

and they buried him on the ascent to the tombs of the descendants of David. Hezekiah was buried on the sloping hill where the tombs of David's descendants were cut. This was because the royal Iron Age burial caves north of the city were full by this time and hereafter no Judæan king was buried in those rock-hewn caves.

**Notwithstanding the lapses of the latter days, the reign was most remarkable, especially when it is remembered how fearful the condition was into which the nation had come at this time.**

His son Manasseh succeeded him. Sadly, Manasseh did not follow in his father's footsteps and reverted to paganism, forsaking the Lord and leading the people back into apostasy.