

### Handout: Isaiah Lesson 13

*As to Hezekiah, the Jew, he did not submit to my yoke, I laid siege to forty-six of his strong cities, walled forts, and the countless small villages in their vicinity and conquered them by means of well-stamped earth ramps and battering rams brought near to the walls, combined with the attack by foot soldiers, using mines, breeches, as well as sapper work. I drove out of them 200,150 people, young and old, male and female, horses, mules, donkeys, camels, big and small cattle beyond counting, and considered them booty. Himself I made a prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence, like a bird in a cage.*

Annals of King Sennacherib

Hezekiah was either king from 727 to 698 BC or from 715 to 686 BC. The former dates are calculated by a synchronism with the reign of King Hosea of Israel (2 Kng 18:1) while the latter dates are derived from a synchronism between 2 Kings 18:13, Isaiah 36:1, and Sennacherib's inscriptions.

Part II of the Book of Isaiah covers the reign of good King Hezekiah of Judah. Chapters 36-39 can be seen as the connecting bridge between Isaiah Part I and Part III. This section can be divided into three main events:

Chapters 36-39 can be divided into three main events:

1. King Sennacherib of Assyria's invasion of Judah and God's deliverance (chapters 36-37)
2. King Hezekiah's illness and recovery (chapter 38)
3. The visit of King Merodach-Baladan's Babylonian embassy to Jerusalem (chapter 39)

Historical review of the leading figures of chapters 36-39:

- Sennacherib ruled Assyria from 705-681 BC. Based on Assyrian records the siege of Jerusalem took place in 701 BC.
- Hezekiah ruled Judah either from 727-698 BC or from 715-686 BC. The former dates are determined by a synchronism with Hoshea's reign (2 Kng 18:1), while the latter dates are derived from a synchronism between 2 Kings 18:13, Isaiah 36:1, and the Assyrian annals of Sennacherib.
- Merodach-Baladan revolted against the Assyrians and became king of Babylon from 721 to 710 BC when he was driven into exile by the Assyrians. He became king again in 703 BC and was killed the same year.

The practice of elevating the heir to co-ruler had become common when a Davidic king was ill and worried about a smooth succession for his son or when the nation was threatened by war:

- When King David was close to death, he made his son Solomon co-regent to safely secure Solomon's ascension to the throne of Israel (1 Kng 1:28-40).
- When King Asa became ill he made his son Jehoshaphat co-regent (1 Kng 15:23; 2 Chr 16:12).
- The threat of war made Jehoshaphat establish his son Jehoram as co-regent (1 Kng 22:4, 32-33; 2 Kng 8:16).

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- When Uzziah/Azariah was struck with leprosy, he made his son Jotham co-regent (2 Kng 15:5; 2 Chr 26:21).
- Jotham made his son Ahaz co-ruler during the threat of the Syro-Ephraimite War (2 Kng 15:32-16:9).

Sennacherib's invasion of Judah began in the year is 701 BC. Two of the 46 Judahite towns are mentioned in Sennacherib's assault against Judah in Isaiah chapter 36:

- Lachish was the largest and most important city in Judah after Jerusalem. Its ruins are believed to have been identified and are located about 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem and 15 miles west of Hebron.
- Libnah was one of the Levitical cities (Josh 21:13; 1 Chr 6:57). The city was west of Lachish.

Sennacherib's minister gives four reasons why there is no hope for Judah in 37:6-10:

1. They cannot rely on the Egyptians who have a history of failing in their alliances (verse 6).
2. They cannot rely on their God Yahweh because they have offended Him by removing so many altars of worship (verse 7).
3. They don't have the experienced manpower to fight the superior Assyrians (verses 8-9).
4. Since the Assyrians have marched on Judah and conquered its fortified cities unopposed, it is clear that Yahweh approves of their invasion and will give them victory (verse 10).

In 36:13-22 the Assyrian minister makes three arguments to persuade the people of Jerusalem to surrender:

1. King Hezekiah and Yahweh your God are as powerless and impotent as the king and the gods of the Northern Kingdom and are incapable of saving you.
2. If they surrender, they can stay on their own property until it is time for them to go into exile.
3. They will be exiled into a land of plenty that is very like their own land.

In Isaiah 37:14-20 Hezekiah's prayer can be divided into three parts:

1. He gives his profession of faith that Yahweh is the one and the only God who has sovereignty over all nations of the earth.
2. He lists the affronts to God by the Assyrian king and acknowledges the Assyrian victories.
3. He petitions God to save his people from the hands of the Assyrians as a sign to the other nations that Yahweh alone is God.

In Isaiah 37:21-29 there are three main points in Yahweh's response to Sennacherib:

1. The Assyrians have blasphemed the God of Israel and will be punished (verses 23-25).
2. The Assyrian boasts are empty boasts because God is in control of their destiny (verses 26-28).
3. God will send the Assyrian king back to his own lands (verse 29).