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The Historical Interlude Concerning the Crisis of the Fourteenth Year of Hezekiah **36:1 to 39:8**



These chapters are, in effect, the pivot on which the book turns, and appear to have been designed to act as a bridge between the two halves. Likewise, the issue of these chapters is central to the entire book. It is **the issue of trust**, and where that trust can ultimately be placed. Ironically, it was **the Assyrian** invader who put the issue most succinctly: **On whom are you depending (36:5)?** It is a question that **Isaiah** forces us to ponder again and again, and with good reason, for our response to it will determine the whole shape of our lives.¹²⁷

Shortly after the fall of the northern kingdom of **Isra'el**, the Assyrian king Sennacherib descended on **Judah**. **His** assault came in 701 BC, during the reign of Ahaz's son **Hezekiah** (to see a video of **King Hezekiah** click [here](#)). In **Chapters 28 to 35** we saw the prophecies that precipitated this crisis. Now in **Chapters 36 to 39** we will see the events of the crisis itself. Up until now, the book of **Isaiah** has been written in Hebrew poetry; in **Chapters 36 to 39** it is written in Hebrew prose. The poetry will continue in **Chapter 40**. The entire book is a poetic book, as well as a prophetic book. Of the **66 Chapters**, **62** are written in poetry and **only these 4 chapters are written in prose**. Two parallel passages described in this section

are **Second Kings 18:3 to 20:21**, and **Second Chronicles 32:1-31**.

These four chapters are important for two reasons. First, we will see the fulfillment of many prophecies in the first **35 Chapters** of the book. What was promised in the first **35 Chapters** will now become history. The second reason that these four chapters are important is that they are a transitional period from **Assyrian** domination to **Babylonian** domination. The second part of **Isaiah, Chapters 40 to 66**, focuses on **Babylon**. **Chapters 38-39** represent a flashback, since the events of 701 BC had not yet occurred (**38:6**) and the envoys of **the Babylonian** king **Merodach-Baladan** (who ruled 721-710 BC and again in 703 BC) arrived after **Hezekiah's** recovery from illness (**39:1**). **Just as Chapters 36-37 fittingly conclude Chapters 1 to 35, which have a strong Assyrian orientation, so also Chapters 38-39 form a suitable introduction to Chapters 40 to 66, which largely describe Judah's future relationship with the Babylonians.**¹²⁸ **In these two chapters Isaiah seeks to answer the questions, "Can God rescue Judah from Assyria?" and, "Can God be trusted?"**