

-Save This Page as a PDF-

Hezekiah and the Assyrians

36:1 to 37:38



With something of a jolt, **the prophet** calls us back to the grim realities of **his** own situation.¹²⁹ **The Assyrians** were convinced that **they** were invincible and that the **God** of **Isra'el** was no different from any of the other gods they had overcome on their westward march. As a result, in this section, **Isaiah** stresses the pride of **the Assyrians**, and that **her** arrogance would result in **her** judgment by **God**. **Judah** had been under **the Assyrian** yoke ever since **Chapter 7** because of the disobedience of **Ahaz** to the prophecy of **Isaiah**. **Assyria's** dominance continued through **Ahaz's** life and right into **the fourteenth year** of the reign of **his** son **Hezekiah**.

Hezekiah undertook sweeping religious reforms after **he** became king in the year 715 BC. **He** reinstated Temple worship and did away with the high places of pagan worship. But in foreign policy, **he** continued the subservience of **his** father. The whole land, including the Philistines, was subservient to **the Assyrians**. But in the year 713 BC, Ashdod, one of the five Philistine cities, rebelled. When this happened, **the Assyrian** king, Sargon II, came down and replaced the king of Ashdod. In the year 712 BC Ashdod rebels again under Egyptian agitation and this time Mo'ab and Edom rebel with the Philistines. Once again Sargon II comes down to control things. Mo'ab and Edom surrender immediately, and Sargon II takes Ashdod. This is the background of **20:1-6**. Consequently, from **7:12** onward, the Land is securely under **Assyrian** domination. As I pointed out earlier, **Hezekiah's** government had a pro-

Egyptian and pro-Assyrian element. The pro-Egyptian element was pushing for an alliance with Egypt against **the Assyrians**. **Isaiah** opposed this rebellion against **Assyria** as seen in the prophecies of **Chapters 28 to 35**.

In the year 705 BC Sargon II died and Sennacherib became king. **Hezekiah** probably reflected the anti-Assyria discontent of many in the nation. As a result, **Hezekiah**, encouraged by unrest all over **the Assyrian** empire, seemed to have joined a coalition of states in open rebellion. **He** not only joined the revolt against **the Assyrians**; **he** led it. This was in direct disobedience to the prophecy of **Isaiah (2 Kings 18:7)**. As **Hezekiah** joined the revolt, with Egyptian backing, alliances were made with both Edom and Mo'ab. The city of Gaza refused to join the revolt, so **Hezekiah** took the city and settled it with **Judeans (Second Kings 18:8)**. Hatti, the king of Eckron, another Philistine city, refused to join the revolt, although the citizens of Eckron wished to join the revolt. As a result, Hatti was deposed by the citizens and turned over to **Hezekiah**, who had Hatti imprisoned in **Jerusalem**. Much of this information comes from **the Assyrian** records. But we do have parallel accounts between the biblical account and **the Assyrian** account on what happened in the fourteenth year of **Hezekiah's** reign. The historical narrative in these chapters is mirrored in **2 Kings Chapters 18 and 19**.

With the rebellion in motion, **Hezekiah** began to prepare for an extensive siege. **He** plugged up all the available water sources outside of **Jerusalem** so the onslaught of **Assyrians** could not use them. In addition, **he** diverted water from an underground spring into the Pool of Salome within the walls of **Jerusalem**. This underground tunnel, which became known as **Hezekiah's** Tunnel, extended for about a half a mile. In doing this he hid away **Jerusalem's** main water supply and denied its access to **the Assyrians**. This tunnel is mentioned in **Second Kings 20:20** and **Second Chronicles 32:30**. Archaeologists have since discovered it.

Anytime we knowingly go against the word of **ADONAI**, we put ourselves at risk. Like a loving **Father, ADONAI** has our best interests at heart. **His** discipline is to protect us, not withhold good things from us. The lie of the Adversary is that **God** is holding out on us. After all, we can handle it. We don't need **Him**. This was the lie in the Garden of Eden. And it always ends up the same. Once we are separated from **His** protection, we end up in trouble.