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In the Fourteenth Year of Hezekiah's Reign

36: 1

In the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign DIG: The Assyrian army had already routed Egyptian forces twenty miles west of Jerusalem, and were fighting at Lachish, some twenty miles southwest. What would the people in Jerusalem feel as they saw this Assyrian army approaching their city? How does this invasion fulfill what Isaiah warned in 7:3, 18-25 and 8:6-8?

REFLECT: When was the last time you didn't listen to ADONAI or His Word and came face to face with the consequences of your actions? How did you react? Hezekiah went to the Temple and sought the LORD. That is still pretty good advice for us today.

In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah's reign, Sennacherib king of Assyria attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them (36:1).

In 701 BC **the Assyrians**, with **Sennacherib** as **their king**, came down like a flood from the north, destroying everything in **his** wake. **He** seemed invincible. **He** had captured every nation and city that stood in **his** path, or they submitted to **him**. The main part of **the Assyrian** army had come down the coast to Mount Carmel, and there **Sennacherib** split his army in two, with the main army coming down the coast. A smaller part of **his** army began to move down the central mountain range. There, a number of the rebelling nations, Edom, Mo'ab, and Amon, surrendered without fighting. This didn't help **Hezekiah** one bit. **The Assyrians** continued traveling down the coast and took the Philistine cities. After the Philistines were defeated, the main army began marching toward **Jerusalem**.

The cities defeated along this route are mentioned in **Isaiah 10:28-32** and **Micah 1:8-16**. **Micah** mentions them because this is **his** home territory. With the cities in the north taken, the last one standing was **Lachish**. While **Lachish** was still being besieged, **Hezekiah** sued for peace and gave **the Assyrian king eleven tons of silver and one ton of gold (Second Kings 18:14)**. In addition to **his** initial demands, **Sennacherib** said that **Hezekiah** must release Hatti, so **he** could

become **king** of Echelon again, which **Hezekiah** did. But even though **Hezekiah** paid **Sennacherib** handsomely and released Hatti, **the king of Assyria** decided to conquer the city anyway. **He** wanted **Hezekiah** to capitulate and to agree to deport all its citizens. At that point **Sennacherib** sent his **field commander** to **Jerusalem** to demand their surrender. **But then he went one step beyond where God permitted him to go, saying that ADONAI could not help the Jews. At that point the Egyptian records, the Assyrian records, and the biblical record all show that something happened that made this invasion of Jerusalem a failure.**

As **Sennacherib** was preparing to move against **Jerusalem** with **his** entire army **he** had to divert **his** attention because of the threat coming out of Egypt under the Cushite (Ethiopian) King Tirhakah (**2 Kings 19:9**). After defeating the Egyptian-Ethiopian army on the plains of Eltekeh in southern Palestine **he** invaded Egypt proper and forced her surrender, but after returning to **Jerusalem** **his** army was **annihilated (2 Chron 32:21)**.

In 1919 the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago purchased a fifteen-inch clay cylinder, called the Prism of **Sennacherib**. This artifact testifies to eight of **Sennacherib's** military campaigns. Regarding the third, the narrator describes **Sennacherib's** invasion of **Judah**. So here is **Sennacherib's** own version of what happened; keep in mind **the Assyrian** kings were not apt to admit their failures. When failure came, they would put a spin on it. They would word it in such a way that you wouldn't know that it was a failure. Here is what **Sennacherib** wrote about this campaign in **Isaiah 36** and **37**.



“In my third campaign I set out against Hatti, as for Lulli, the king of Sidon, the awe inspiring splendor of my lordship overwhelmed him, and he ran away. In the midst of the siege he fled and disappeared. Sidon the great, Sidon the small, the cities, strong and fortified, supplied with food and drink, well provisioned for its garrisons, the awe inspiring weapons of Assyria my lord, overwhelmed him. And they obeyed and bowed at my feet. I placed a symbol of the throne over them, and gifts given to me as overlord, given without ceasing, I imposed upon him. I forced others to submit to me. The Moabite, the Ammonite, and the Edomite, splendid gifts they brought before me and kissed my feet. Others, who did not submit to my yoke, I took to the gods of the house of his father, himself, his wife, his sons, his daughters, his brothers, the seat of the house of his father, I deported to **Assyria**. Others, I placed a tribute, the gift of alliance with my lordship I imposed upon him. Cities that did not bow quickly unto my feet, I besieged, I conquered and I took away the spoil. The officials, the nobility and the populace of Eckron, who had thrown Hatti their king, lord with a sworn treaty with **Assyria**, into chains, and gave him over to **Hezekiah** the Judean, like an enemy, they committed sacrilege, the Egyptian kings, the bowmen, the charioteers, the king of Ethiopia. An army without number they came, called upon, and came with their aide. In the plain of Elteckah. The battle line being drawn up in front of me, they sharpened their weapons. With the thrust of Assiure my god, I fought with them and brought about their defeat. The Egyptian charioteers, the princes, together with the charioteers with the king of Ethiopia I captured in the midst of battle. Elteckah I beseeched, I conquered, and I took away

the spoil. I approached Ekron and the officials, the nobles who devised the crime. I killed one hundred in the city. As for the ordinary citizens, the perpetrators of sin and infamy, I counted them as spoil. The remainder of those that were not guilty of sin and contempt, which had no punishment due them, I ordered their release. Hatti, the king from the midst of **Jerusalem**, I brought out as the lord on the throne. Over them I placed him. The tribute due to my lordship I imposed upon him. As for **Hezekiah**, the Judean, who had not submitted unto my yoke, forty six of the strong walled cities (and the small cities that surround them, which are without number), by piling up siege ramps, bringing rear battering rams, the battling of foot soldiers, and supplement of siege, I besieged and I conquered. 200,140 people, young and old, male and female, horses, mules, camels, oxen and small cattle from their midst without number, I brought out and counted as spoil. **Himself (Hezekiah), like a bird in a cage in the midst of Jerusalem, it’s capital city, I shut up. Earthworks against it I raised. I prohibited exit from the city.**

Beyond the formal tribute, the gifts of the land, in presence due to my lordship, I imposed against him. As for **Hezekiah**, himself, the awe-inspiring splendor of my lordship overwhelmed him. I took as tribute, 30 pounds of gold, 800 pounds of silver, costly stones, ivory armed chairs, elephant hide, ivory, ebony and all kind of valuable treasures, together with his daughters, his concubines, the male and female musicians to Nineveh my capital he sent to me. And for the payment of tribute and the performance of servitude, he sent his messengers.”¹³⁰

Sennacherib boasts of **his** siege of **Jerusalem**. **His** language leads the reader to expect that **he** captured **Jerusalem**, just as **he** had taken forty-six of **Judah’s** strong fortified cities (**36:1**). But at the end the account turns curiously quiet. **Isaiah** says that **Sennacherib** did not succeed in capturing the city of **Jerusalem** (**to see link click [Gw](#) - Then the Angel of the LORD Put to Death a Hundred and Eighty Five Thousand Men in the Assyrian Camp**). **The Assyrian king**, however, never states that **he** actually conquered the city. Although **the Assyrian** records are awkwardly silent, the Bible tells the rest of the story.